

Appendix to Part IV:
Coming to Work, Staying to Live
Excerpts and Transcripts Relevant to Part IV

Appendix 4a.

Inquirer and Mirror

i. LUCK. Mr. Sampson D. Pompey reports to us that he has received from the Court of Commissioners on Alabama claims, the snug sum of \$957.00, with interest at four per cent for the past eleven years. Mr. Pompey was on board the bark *Congress, 2d*, of New Bedford, when she was captured and burned by the pirate *Shenandoah* in the Arctic Ocean in 1865; and the sum received is remuneration for losses sustained at that time. The receipt of the amount was as much a surprise to Mr. Pompey as the payment of some of the bills due for the *Inquirer and Mirror* would be to us, but he seemed to get along with his good fortune, and we congratulate him.

March 18, 1876.

ii. A Tribute.

In memory of Sampson D. Pompey, who died in Nantucket, April 29, 1909, the Thomas M. Gardner Post, G.A.R., on May 14, voted to extend its sympathy to his relatives and friends.

He was born in Nantucket seventy-nine years ago and was a Comrade of the Post since Oct. 28, 1891. He served with honor on the U. S. bark *Kingfisher* from September, 1861, to November, 1862. Previously he had been a seaman. Since the Civil War he has been a mariner and farmer, living mostly at Nantucket. His funeral was numerously attended by Comrades, Associates, and ladies of the Relief Corps, and the interment was in the Colored Cemetery.

He was faithful in the performance of his civil and religious duties. His great talent in whistling, song and recitation entertained many who will never forget him. His humility will help him now, for he has gone to give his account to "Him who hath respect unto the lowly." May he rest in peace.

G. M. W.

May 22, 1909

Appendix 4b.

SIASCONSET . . . is 50 miles off the mainland of Massachusetts. 'Sconset has the coolest and purest air; the warmest surf; the most brilliant sunsets; the grandest views of the ocean in sunshine, in calm, and in storm.

'Sconset air has sleep for the sleepless; rest for the restless; comfort for the comfortless; appetite for the appetiteless; strength for the strengthless; health for the healthless; vigor for the vigorless; color for the colorless; hope for the hopeless; spirit for the spiritless; power for the powerless; nerves for the nerveless; brains for the brainless; life for the lifeless and joy for the joyless.

'Sconset waters have bait for the baitless; fish for the fishless; clams for the clamless and lobsters for the lobsterless.

'Sconset society has fellows for the fellowless; girls for the girlless; fun for the funless; for Boston folks on Sunday morning (optional with New Yorkers) beans for the beanless; but with no saloon there is no jag for the jagless.

'Sconset has no noise; no mosquitoes; no malaria; no display and no visiting picnickers; no lockup and no wickedness.

'Sconset is a paradise for children; an earthly heaven for tired-out professional and businessmen and invalids.

'Sconset has picturesque little cottages with from six to nine rooms ready to jump into for comfortable housekeeping; with lamps lighted, beds made, tables set, and, if you want, tea-kettle boiling and provisions for a meal awaiting your arrival.

Rents \$90 to \$175 for the season. For full information address

UNDERHILL, Downing Bldg., New York, or GARDNER, Siasconset, Mass.

N.B. I provide cribs and cradles. There my responsibility ends. Tenants must furnish babies for themselves.

Appendix 4c.

Genealogy of the West family of Nantucket, based on information compiled by Adele Ames, Carl Cruz, and R. Andrew Pierce.

On his father's side, John R. West was descended from Tobias West, born in Virginia in 1788, and a woman known as Keziah. After Keziah's death, Tobias married another Virginia-born woman known as Mareshah (and later as Martha). These women's given names without surnames may simply reflect incomplete records, but considering the time and place, they suggest enslavement.

According to West family records, John Edward West, son of Tobias and Keziah, was born in Accomac, Virginia, in 1823, although other records give his birthplace as Philadelphia. In any case, the family moved to Philadelphia, where John Edward's younger brother was born and named Tobias after his father. By 1850 the brothers were working as barbers in New Bedford. In 1854 John Edward married Elizabeth W. Brown of Edgartown.

Elizabeth Brown was the daughter of Abraham Brown and Lucy Wamp. Abraham Brown was born

around 1793 in Narragansett, Rhode Island. As a child, his father, Adam Brown, apparently was a slave of Robert Brown, who freed his slaves in 1762. In August 1817, Abraham Brown married Lucy Wamp, daughter of John and Welthan (Johnson) Wamp. Lucy was of Wampanoag, African, and white ancestry. From the 1820s the couple had a farm on Chappaquiddick.

Prior to her marriage to John Edward West, Elizabeth Brown was married to George A. Gardner of Nantucket. Their two-year-old daughter Lydia died in 1843. They were divorced in 1852.

The next generation connected with Indian heritage once again. John R. West, son of John Edward and Elizabeth (Brown) West, married Elizabeth Howard of New Bedford, a direct descendant of Cuffe Slocum and his Wampanoag wife, Ruth Moses, through Paul Cuffe and his wife, Alice Pequot. Elizabeth Howard's parents, Peter Fish Howard of Westport, Massachusetts, and Almira Johnson of Aquinnah were distant cousins. They lived in New Bedford.

Children born to John R. West and Elizabeth (Howard) West were Gertrude Elizabeth Warren (b. 1879), Almira Florence (b. 1880), and John Edward (b. 1881), all born in New Bedford. Their first Nantucket-born child, Raymond (1882), died at the age of four. A daughter died at birth. The other four Nantucket-born West children were Mabel B. (b. 1888), Ruth A. (b. 1891), Edith M. (b. 1894), and Carlton H. (b. 1896).

Appendix 4d

Letter from Grace Brown Gardner to Gertrude West in the private collection of Adele Ames.

Normal Hall

B[ridgewater] N[ormal] S[chool]

Feb. 3, 1898

Dear Gertrude:

I've been having lots of letters lately from home and they have all told me about the graduation and how well the class did and especially the valedictorian, and as I wasn't there to go up and shake hands after the show was over, I thought I'd send my congratulations this way.

All Friday evening I kept thinking about graduation, and I wanted to be there very much indeed, so much in fact that at about half past nine my feelings entirely overcame me and I went to bed and wept and wailed, and finally I positively howled; so you can see what a pleasant evening I spent.

I suppose it makes you feel quite big to be a graduate. It made me, and I kept on feeling that way until I got here. Then the feeling entirely disappeared.

I think that you talked some of going away to school and becoming a teacher. I hope you will, for I think you would like the work very much. I find I do.

I'm writing this in "Study Hour" when I ought to be studying, and I've heard it whispered among the girls that the matron was coming around to the rooms tonight, so I think I'd better close and get out my lessons, so will send you congratulations on the high rank you took and on the way in which you carried it off, if reports are true.

Sincerely your friend,

Grace B. Gardner
Normal Hall
Bridgewater, Mass.

Appendix 4e

Carlton West's testimony concerning the assault on him on December 1, 1930. Excerpt from "Carl West Brutally Assaulted With Intent to Kill," Inquirer and Mirror, Dec, 6, 1930.

It was nearing midnight when I answered the phone and was asked if I would come down to John Lobo's on Orange Street and take three men out to the cranberry bog. Even though it was late at night, the chance of earning an honest dollar looked good to me and I said I would be there within a few minutes.

The three fellows were waiting for me. One of them, the Barrows boy, sat on the front seat beside me, and the other two, Cruz and Vincent, sat behind. Nothing happened on the way out and they talked to me, asked me how business was, etc., and I had no idea they intended anything wrong.

But just after I turned off the state highway and headed along the road towards the bog, and without the least bit of warning, I received a terrific blow on the top of my head. One of the men (Cruz, I think) said: "Guess that has fixed him," and I was pulled over into the back seat and given some more blows, which stunned me completely.

I cannot tell exactly what followed after that. I was tied up with my belt and a rope; a gag was placed over my mouth and I was blindfolded. I could feel the car bumping over a road and after going some distance it was stopped. I could not make any noise but I regained my senses enough to hear what they were saying to one another.

They stripped the clothes off me and robbed me of my pocket-book and my watch and chain—in fact, they took everything I had and left me in my underclothes. They were preparing to throw me into Gibbs Pond and drown me, but the Barrows boy pleaded with them not to do that and when they found they could not get very near the pond they changed their plans.

I do not know just where they went after that. It was a long rough ride, through lots of bushes before we got onto a hard road again. The fellow Cruz seemed to be the ringleader and the others did about as he said. He kept saying that they were going to end me and then get the others.

When he found I was conscious he turned to me and said: "Yes, we have got you, and next we are going to get Joe Fratus (meaning Sergeant Fratus of the state police), and then Mooney (meaning Sergeant

Mooney of the local police). I am getting \$500 for doing this job, and I am here to get you first. We will show you fellows that we mean business and will not be interfered with.”

Every once in a while I would be poked in the ribs with a revolver—at least, it felt like one, and Cruz told me that was what it was. They were disposed to torture me and I was beaten and abused while they drove the car—it seemed like hours.

I had no idea what direction they were headed, but finally I could hear surf, so imagined they had reached the south shore of the island. I heard them say they were going to throw me into the surf, but evidently they thought the road was a long ways from the water, for they talked it over a while in Portuguese and then started up the car again.

I lost my senses again, but came to and could feel the car rushing over a hard road. When it stopped again I heard one of them mention Madaket, so I imagine that was where we were. Evidently they intended to throw me into the surf there, but they seemed to be afraid the Barrows boy would know too much.

Seeing that I was half conscious, Cruz gave me another crack and said: “You know what it means to be taken for a ride, don’t you?” I nodded my head, for I could not talk with the gag in my mouth. He then said: “Well, that is what is going to happen to you. You know too much. We are here to get you first, and then we will get Fratus some night with a rope across the highway, and after that we’ll get that bald-headed Mooney.”

They were swearing and cursing everybody, but I was in such pain and my head was swimming around so that I could not take it all in. The car was headed back for town and all three had been driving at different times. We reached the town and I got a little sense of location then, for I could just peek out from one corner of the blindfold. We were stopped near the Poole house in sight of my home, but I could not call for help.

Two of them went away and came back shortly after with what they said was a gallon of moonshine. They said they were going to make me drink it, and one of them tipped it all over my face and throat. I thought all the time that they were going to finish me, after Cruz said I was going to be taken for a ride, and no one knows what I went through.

They started up the car again and went through a lot of bushes and trees, for I could hear them scraping the sides of the car. I was getting weaker all the time, but I found that they had not tied me very tightly and felt that I might get my hands free if I had a chance. But I knew it was no use, as they had a black-jack and a gun, and I would only be beaten up some more.

Finally they drove the car up into Prospect Hill cemetery and from their talk I realized they intended to leave me there. Guess they thought I was dead—that they had fixed me. I was tied, hand and foot, gagged and blindfolded, dumped in between the two seats. Just why they decided to leave me I do not know, but they stopped the motor and the three of them finally walked away.

I couldn’t make a sound with the gag in my mouth, but I worked as hard as I could and at last got it away. I then managed to turn my head up and reached the cord with my teeth, by which I was able to raise the rear curtain. I was afraid if I made a sound they would come back and finish me, so I waited until I felt sure they had left the cemetery.

By using what strength I could muster at intervals I was able to work the rope from my hands and gradually freed myself, but I was in terrible pain all the time and felt so faint that I would have to stop and rest from my efforts.

How I did it, I cannot tell, but I got over onto the driver's seat somehow and managed to start the motor. I could not drive very well at first and headed for the north cemetery gate, as that was the nearest, but I found it was locked. It took me a long time to get the car turned around but finally I reached the main entrance and came out on Joy Street. I had hard work holding myself at the wheel, I was so weak, and the blood was running down out of the places where I had been struck.

At first I thought I would stop and try to arouse Sheriff Johnson; then I thought I would try and get help by pulling the fire alarm on the corner; but then I felt that I could reach Main Street and knew there would be a policeman on duty there, so I kept on. I managed to blow the horn by leaning over onto the steering wheel, and landed near the police station. No officer happened to be there, but I grabbed the phone and asked central to ring the police signal. In a moment Sergeant Mooney and the boys were there and helped me. I thought I was gone for sure, for Cruz said several times that he was here to get me.

Appendix 4f

i. In Memoriam. Florence Adlina DeShields Wilson, April 13, 1899–April 12, 1996.

Florence Adlina DeShields Wilson came into this life on April 13, 1899, in the Parish of Pembroke on the island of Bermuda. She was the second oldest of eleven children born to Maude Louise and John Archibald DeShields. She was educated at Miss Crawford's School on Till's Hill in Bermuda. In 1922 she boarded a steamer bound for America. In 1925 she met our father and married him the following year. In 1926, Mother was pregnant with her first child when our father was stricken with a debilitating life-threatening disease which required that they be separated for several months. In August of that year in a foreign country, in the big city of New York, without her husband, she bore her first child and prayed for her husband's safe recovery and return.

From their union three children were born, Lois Wilson Akridge, Vivian Wilson Richardson, and Joan Rita Wilson. The family first settled in New York, then moved to Lakewood, New Jersey in 1928, where they remained for a period of eight years. In 1936 my father's employment necessitated a return to New York. It was in 1938 that my father began working seasonally on Nantucket on the Hughston Estate. My mother joined him in 1943, working on the estate in domestic service.

In the early fifties she confronted her employer on the estate in Nantucket where she was working regarding Social Security benefits that were not being paid. Her efforts paved the way for all the domestic workers on the estate to have benefits paid, including my father.

With two children going to high school, our mother successfully challenged the New York Public School system for attempting to send her children to the segregated high school annex which was approximately ten miles from our home as opposed to the main building, which was five blocks away. Mother was always relentless in her efforts to secure the best education she could for her children.

In 1956 she experienced the most difficult situation of a mother's life; she buried her oldest child, Lois Wilson Akridge. Again she rose to the challenge and, with my father, took on the task of raising our sister's two children, ages three and five. She was 57 years old.

For all these reasons and many more, our mother was a courageous heroine.

Our parents continued to work and live between New York and Nantucket until 1991, when they moved to Nantucket permanently.

On April 12, 1996, our dear mother peacefully slipped away.

Joan Wilson

ii. Essay by Joan Wilson-Godeau, 2004.

As I pondered the reasons for my parents' journey to America, it seemed impossible to respond without presenting a brief but illuminating historical perspective.

The islands of Bermuda are thought to have been first sighted in 1509 by the Spanish navigator Juan Bermudez, who was unable to land due to the coral reefs and rocky coastline. The island was reported to be uninhabited. A century later the English flagship *Sea Venture*, captained by Admiral Sir George Somers, left England for Jamestown, Virginia, reputedly with two American Indians aboard. The ship was wrecked on Bermuda's reefs, and Somers and the crew were forced to remain in Bermuda for nine months while three small sailing ships were constructed to complete the voyage to Jamestown. When the small ships left, three sailors remained on the island. They were Bermuda's first European citizens. In 1612 the Bermuda Islands were included in the Virginia Company charter, and sixty English colonists were dispatched there. Shortly after their arrival, the town of St. George was founded. Bermuda became a British crown colony in 1684.

According to Cyril Packwood, author of *Chained on the Rock: Slavery in Bermuda* (New York: E. Torres, 1975), the first black had arrived on the island in 1603 aboard a Spanish ship commanded by Captain Diego Ramírez. This means that the presence of people of color on Bermuda (African and Native American) predates the arrival of the settlers of 1612.

In the early seventeenth century the developing economy of Bermuda centered around tobacco, pearls, whale oil, silk, and sugar cane, but because Bermuda's arable land amounts to only six percent of its surface, there were no large-scale plantations. In need of labor to tend the crops and to dive for pearls, the British began the importation of blacks and Indians in 1616. These workers were seized from Portuguese and Spanish ships and imported from the West Indies and the Virginia Colony. According to Packwood, these workers were not at the time slaves but indentured servants, enjoying equal status with the Irish indentured servants also being brought to the island.

By 1622, when Bermuda's population numbered 1200, and a sizable number of these inhabitants were black, Britain began to pass laws that significantly affected the rights of blacks. A special act entitled "An act to restrayne the insolencies of the Negroes" (Act # 12) was the first law dealing specifically with blacks and the purposeful infringing of their rights. The law prohibited blacks from freedom of movement, from carrying weapons, and from independent barter. At about this time language referring to blacks and Indians changed from indenture to lifelong servitude, and slavery was legalized.

In the 1700s Bermuda had a fairly diversified economy in which female slaves served as concubines, cooks, domestics, house maids, nurse maids, sick nurses, laundresses, field hands, sellers of firewood, and weavers. Male slaves were employed as house servants, laborers, field hands, gardeners, carpenters,

sawyers, masons, caulkers, ship builders, boatmen, fishermen, sailors, pilots, whalemens, gunners, executioners, and transporters of salt from Turks Islands to Bermuda.

By the nineteenth century Bermuda's economy had evolved to a mercantile one focused on trading and piracy. The impetus for the abolition of slavery in 1834 came from English Quakers. Subsequently an oligarchical paradigm was put in place. The minority ruling whites had a stranglehold on both the import/export trade and the credit system, with the black majority at their mercy. Additionally, fishing and agriculture, two important industries for many black Bermudians, was crippled by merchants who found it more profitable to import food from the United States than to subsidize the local economy. According to Gordon Lewis, "The Atlantic West Indies (Bermuda and Nassau) thus entered the modern period politically antiquated, culturally depressed, and psychologically retarded. The white oligarchies . . . presided over a socio-economic power structure." (*The Growth of the Modern West Indies*, London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1968, p. 314.)

My parents, Clarence (born 1901) and Florence (born 1899), emigrated for the same reasons all disenfranchised immigrants journey to a new land. They were in search of freedom, employment, better working conditions, enhanced salaries, a better education for themselves and their children, and improved living conditions. Clearly, as can be seen from the historical sketch I have presented, the conditions in Bermuda were far from perfect for people of color.

My mother came first in 1922, probably on a visitor's visa, and returned to Bermuda after a short stay. I believe she came to visit her aunt who had moved to American in 1911. Returning to the United States in 1924, she came as an employee of a wealthy white family in Darien, Connecticut. It seems likely that this arrangement was made prior to her departure from Bermuda. In 1924 my mother met my father through relatives and friends, and they married in 1925. In that year she changed jobs and was in the employ of a Dr. Billings, who was at that time the head doctor at the New York Stock Exchange. She continued to work for him until my parents moved to Lakewood, New Jersey, in 1927.

My father came to the United States in 1924. Upon arrival, he worked a variety of jobs secured through the Blue Book Agency, which recruited "superior" domestics for wealthy white families. On one of these jobs my father was recommended for a full-time position in Lakewood working for a Mr. Lynch of the Humane Society. Following that employment and on the recommendation of Mrs. Lynch, my father began working at the Newman School for Boys in Lakehurst, New Jersey. My sister's recollection is that my father worked as cook and butler on both of these jobs.

By that time, my parents had two children: Lois, born in 1926, and Vivian, born in 1928. My father's next and last position in New Jersey was on the naval base in Lakehurst, where my father was head chef for Commander Rosendahl, a primary figure in the Hindenberg experiment. My parents remained in New Jersey until 1936. At that time my father was relieved of his duties for Commander Rosendahl because the Commander had remarried, and his southern white wife did not want any "niggers" around.

Our family moved briefly to Harlem after leaving New Jersey in 1936. By October of that year they had moved to the South Bronx, and I was added to the family in that month. During that time my father worked for Owen Davis, a playwright. He had been recommended by the Commander. Because Owen

Davis lived on Long Island, our family had to be separated. When that employment terminated, my father was able, on recommendation from Owen Davis, to secure a position as butler and part-time cook with the Hughstons, a wealthy family with homes in New York and Siasconset. The Hughstons summered on Nantucket from May to October. With that employment, my father began his journeys to Nantucket in the spring of 1938.

My mother and I joined my father on Nantucket for the first time in August 1941, my mother replacing Mary Mauldin who had resigned as personal maid for Mrs. Hughston. The entire family began summering on Nantucket in 1943.

In addition to his employment with the Hughston family, my father worked many side jobs. He catered, served cocktail and dinner parties, sold sandwiches and liquor at Scott's Dance Hall, and also took on small gardening jobs. By the mid 1940s he was well known around 'Sconset, and he often welcomed and helped new domestics get acclimated.

My father's and mother's first purchase of land, on the ocean side of Codfish Park Road, was in the mid- to late-nineteen-forties, and they paid the grand sum of thirty dollars. The house at 32 Codfish Park Road was purchased in 1950 for \$1,100.

In later years my father worked as cook and butler for John B. Fitzpatrick of New York and Nantucket. My mother, in later years, housecleaned for a number of Nantucket families. My mother retired at the age of 72, and my father worked to age 84.

Appendix 4g

Scott's Dance Hall, Siasconset, Massachusetts.

Essay by Vivian Wilson Richardson, 2004.

It is a gem! And what a gem, that island of Nantucket! It lies thirty miles south of Cape Cod in the broad Atlantic Ocean. Most everyone who is fortunate enough to visit Nantucket is enchanted by this jewel of an island, and I was no different. I arrived on the island of Nantucket during the early 1940s as a young teenager.

For several years my father was in the employ of a New York family who spent six months of the year on the island. Father was their butler and managed both the New York and Nantucket homes for this family. As a result, he had to spend half a year away from his family. After several years had passed, Papa brought his family to the island to spend their summers.

My older sister Lois and I found suitable employment to occupy our time and to obtain a little remuneration to save for our return to school in the fall. Little sister Joan had the whole village of 'Sconset at her disposal to run and play in.

Most African Americans were domestics for the wealthy families that populated the little village of 'Sconset where we lived. During our free time there was the big wide Atlantic at our doorstep. There were miles of roads to bike and beautiful and inviting moors of heath with rose-colored flowers to explore and an abundance of moorland flowers to admire. However, there were not many other activities to be enjoyed by people of color. That soon changed!

Scott's Hall became a center of enjoyment for African Americans and other working families in 'Sconset and the town of Nantucket. Scott's Hall was owned by a family of color who lived in Codfish Park in the little village of 'Sconset for a great many years. This family offered their building for the purpose of enjoyment for the working folk to hold their dances and related affairs. The building was quite large and was about a mile or more from the rotary in 'Sconset. It sat off from the 'Sconset road, partially obscured by scrub oak. It was reached by a sandy rutted path. The private Sankaty Golf Club lay not too distant from the hall. Also, Sankaty Lighthouse was in the near vicinity with its powerful beam of light protecting ships from the shoals and sandbars as they passed.

It was not long before people began flocking to Scott's Hall dances, which were held weekends. The music was supplied by recordings and makeshift instruments played by local Cape Verdeans. The music was quite musical and very danceable. Our father often made sandwiches and sweet treats and sold them to the dancing public. Cool beverages were also available. Scott's Hall was an oasis of fun and relaxation for the domestics and other working-class people. Scott's Hall became the place to enjoy your friends and spend a few hours away from work. A great many of the people who attended were domestics who had no home of their own on the island and "slept in." In a sense, to them this was an especially wonderful way of getting away from a job for a while.

When it all came to an end, it was a great loss to many folk who had looked forward to those fun-filled hours of dancing, laughter, and relaxation with friends.