



BlackEconomics.org®

57 Days in Fargo

**A Brief Sojourn to Research Black American
Migration to Capture Territory in the US Midwest”**

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Dedicated To:

Mother Eva Lee Wilson

An exceptional and brilliant Black (skinned) woman, who was shunned because of, but who reveled joyously but softly in, her Blackness. She delighted herself in the care of her family members, adopted strangers, and us. She comprehended that money was power in her Florida Jim Crow world and amassed a small real estate fortune with her janitor husband Deack James. And she enjoyed selected, some peculiar, delights of life—including photography, music, and sparse meals of coffee and burnt toast. She mastered the production of paper handicrafts. She was a self-taught expert in the use of early Kodak instamatic cameras. She exhibited her deep and abiding love for old Christian Hymns by teaching herself to play Hammond organs. She left us her greatest wisdom in seven divine words: ‘Only a trial can make a failure.’ Ironically, her Christian wisdom perfectly aligns with the Hindu’s Lord Brahman’s advice to Arjuna: “Just do the work.”

Bro. Henry Bevel

A Black American man who, no doubt, was the target of unimaginable indignities but who never knew them because he was above them. He overcame unbelievable pain. He defeated fatigue. He permitted no one and no thing to separate him from his love and worship of his Creator. He had an undying message for us during our childhood: “Son, you gone make a man.”

Abstract

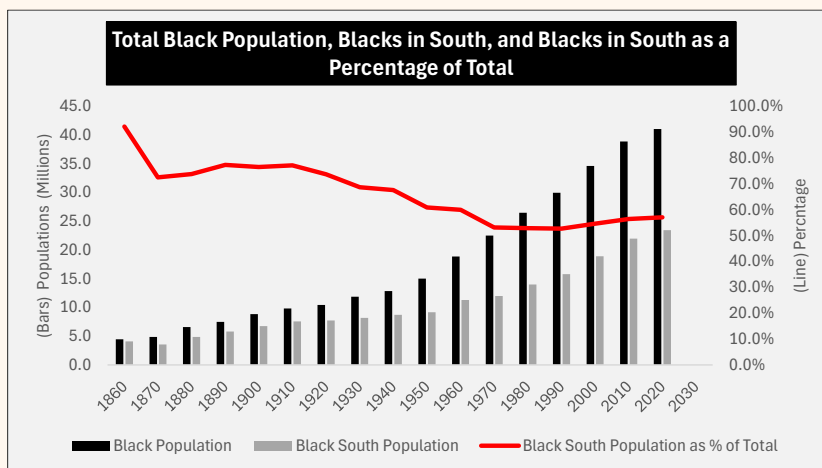
Initially intended as a brief missive, this is a rather detailed account (in places) of our most recent BlackEconomics.org's research efforts linked to our 2020 book and proposal entitled, *Exodus: A Book for Black Americans Suggesting a Way Out and Up*. It conveys our frank and mostly substantiated assessment of Fargo, North Dakota and the US Midwest versus the Southeast as an alternative destination for Black American migration to capture territory for future life in a substantially altered world. "God Bless the Child that's Got His Own." Black Americans had better begin scouring the Earth in search of a home."

Foreword

We begin by dispensing with the curious before presenting and analyzing the deadly serious. Yes, Fargo, North Dakota is the town depicted in a successful 1996 movie, and a long-time “anthology” television series on FX.ⁱ To our knowledge. These media facts have nothing to do with our brief sojourn in this small US Midwestern city with about a 133K population; about eight percent of the population is classified as “Black Alone” by the US Census Bureau,” but we hasten to correct that classification to “African American Descendant of Slaves (ADOS) and Non-ADOS Blacks.” Also, we acknowledge Black immigrants constitute a meaty portion of Fargo’s “Black” population.

Having satisfied the curious, we turn to the content of this important missive concerning prospective future Black American migration to the Midwestern U.S. Our January 2020 volume, [*Exodus: A Book for Black Americas Suggesting a Way out and Up*](#) (873 KB), which was motivated by a 2019 BlackEconomics.org strategy brief entitled, “[More than a Conqueror: One Black American Strategy](#)” (381 KB) is the logical impetus for our visit to Fargo, which was of short duration. Both works anticipate that evolving conditions and events might transform four US Midwestern states into highly viable and logical locations to relocate/migrate to in the future. The [*Exodus*](#) volume has a few core chapters specifically on this topic that include significant statistical data to support our arguments: The remaining four chapters provide background and substantiating information to reinforce the case for Black migration to Montana, North and/or South Dakota, and/or Wyoming.

As a competing recommendation to Black Americans, then *New York Times* op-ed columnist, Charles Blow published *The Devil we Know: A Black Power Manifesto* in 2020. While a well-written, sometimes eloquent, and parsimonious effort to persuade Black Americans to continue and accelerate the ongoing reverse migration of Black Americans to the Southern US, Blow’s volume is primarily anecdotal. There are nearly no relevant data that support an argument for continuation and acceleration of this Black reverse migration. As already noted, this is in direct contradistinction to [*Exodus*](#). We address these difference between the two works in a BlackEconomics.org December 2024 essay entitled, “[Moving South Again?](#)” (240 KB) and a March 2024 analysis brief entitled “[Moving South](#)” (391 KB).



For clarity on where the Black American population resided during the US post bellum era, consider chart on the left.

Source: A citation for the source of these statistics is provided in Endnote ii.ⁱⁱ

To amplify further, the overarching topic discussed in the just-mentioned works is the reason for, and methods/strategies by which, Black Americans can forge a population majority and/or seize political control of a territory now considered a US state so that Black Americans can improve our plight and prospects for our long-term future across multiple socioeconomic dimensions. Participants in this discussion go far beyond Blow and this author. Beyond our work with BlackEconomics.org, we participate in similar work with a [*Long-Term Strategic Plan for Black America* \(LTSPFBA, 1.5 MB\)](#) Implementation Team that produced a comprehensive strategic plan for Black America, and is implementing it (see www.LTSPFBA.org).

The plan for this missive is to provide more contextual background for our brief visit to Fargo; to highlight our primary observations and experiences while in Fargo that are directly related to our reason for being in this quaint city; and to present important anecdotes about Fargo as a temporary Black resident during December 2024 and January 2025.

Finally, we plan to augment this missive with brief responses to counter arguments that we have received since the 2020 release of [*Exodus*](#) that poooops from several angles the reasonableness of US Midwestern states as a potential future location of Black-controlled territory. While we will not provide long and formal versions of these counterarguments, we plan to engage sufficiently on them so that the rationale for our support for future Black American migration to selected US Midwestern states is crystal clear.

We provide this content now in lieu of a delayed presentation in the form of an appendix to, or a second edition of, [*Exodus*](#).

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Part I: Why Fargo and Why Now?

Our visit to Fargo was first indicated in 2012, when we were motivated to prepare what we labeled at the time a “working paper” entitled: “All it Takes is One.” This working paper recognized a very simple, historically, and verifiable reality that when two groups (Peoples) reside together with one group riding roughshod over the other and committing egregious wrongs against the other, then this is likely to produce a continuous cycle of hate and violence. This animus will only reduce or cease when the two Peoples are separated sufficiently and permitted to live without intervention by either group, one with the other. Importantly, although not mentioned in the Foreword to this missive, this truth is evidenced in [Exodus](#) because “All It Takes Is One” resurfaces as the third chapter in the book.

In addition, as divulged in the Foreword, and based on the simple realization transparent from “All It Takes Is One,” our 2019 strategy brief, “More than a Conqueror” is a reconsideration of the former work with the intent of advancing a solution to the “problem” made apparent by it. The strategy brief inaugurated our recommendation that Black Americans consider locations outside of the Southeast US as potential places to “capture” and create self-reliant, self-determined and peaceful places of freedom. The strategy brief builds the case for migrating to the Midwest mainly based on the logic inherent in bean counting. We illustrated that—population-wise—a far smaller migration of the Black population could enable “capture” of certain Midwestern states than would be required to “capture” certain Southeastern states.

As recounted in the Foreword, the 2019 strategy brief is followed by the release of [Exodus](#) in January 2020, where a slightly broader argument appears for Black American capture of Midwestern states. Since 2020, we have continued to socialize the Midwestern option in a variety of releases. Two of the most salient releases come to mind: (i) “[Moving South](#)” in March of 2024; and (ii) “[Moving South Again?](#)” in December 2024.

As we continued to contemplate the efficacy of the Midwestern option, conversations and arguments arose. A classic case of such discussions became a dialogue: “[Dialogue on the Pros and Cons of Black American Nation Formation](#)” from August of 2021. Over time these arguments shifted from concerns about the physical (geographical and climatological) advantages of a Black nation in the Southeastern regions, to economic arguments about the absence of a viable economy in the Midwest that would attract Black Americans because there are no jobs. In response to these arguments, we continued to conduct research to address them.

Fortuitously, in late 2022, we decided to take a “sabbatical” of sorts (if there is such a thing for retired persons) in Madison, Wisconsin where we undertook undergraduate degree studies. Given the work already described, we took nearly a week while in Madison during June of 2023 to drive to South Dakota where we spent a few days surveying Brookings and visiting its university and a nearby Indian Reservation. This visit motivated a decision to organize an elongated stay in Brookings for later in 2023, which did not materialize. Therefore, we did not prepare immediately a missive or summary of our experience in Brookings and have not had an opportunity to return to that task. However, we prepared brief summary notes of our meetings with a professor in the Agriculture Department at South Dakota State University and with officials with whom we met on

the Flandreau Tribal Reservation, which is just a 20-minute drive to the south of Brookings. We offer these summary meeting notes as Appendix I.

Late in 2024, we identified a structural economic argument against Black nation formation in the Southeast and discussed it briefly in the already mentioned analysis brief “[Moving South Again?](#)”

As the end of 2024 arrived, we were granted another opportunity to visit the Midwest. We reconsidered the data from Chapter Five of *Exodus*, and clarified that ND was the second ranked of the four Midwest states considered based on our statistical analysis—Montana was first. Remembering our 2023 trip to South Dakota, we settled on North Dakota and Fargo (the largest city in the state) as our destination for another phase of research on the Midwestern option. So here we are.

Part II: Observations about Fargo and Black American Future Migration

Introduction

Using a Black economic lens on Fargo as an infant city, consider Felix Battles' story. He was a slave who joined the Union Army to fight Civil War Rebels. About one year after Fargo and its companion town Moorhead were formed, Battles arrived in Moorhead and helped form the first Black Fargo-Moorhead community. He was a barber who benefited from the Black barber tradition all across the US at that time and became quite popular and wealthy. His offspring became highly trained in professional fields and his later descendants migrated away from Fargo-Moorhead in search of more opportunities in larger cities mainly to the east.

Therefore, Fargo has had Black Americans within its population from its inception. According to the US Census Bureau, 8.3 percent of Fargo's population in 2023 of 133.2 thousand was "Black Alone" (about 11 thousand). And while we observed Blacks in Fargo as part of our limited movements, almost all the Black persons we encountered did not appear to be ADOS (African American Descendants of Slaves). We made it our business to greet each Black person that we encountered and often received return greetings in forms that indicated non-ADOS origins. ADOS Black Americans that we encountered, except for students on the North Dakota State University (NDSU) Campus, were mainly identified in commercial settings engaged in performing menial labor or shopping as consumers.

Fargo's Black Population Today

Even the most cursory exploration of Fargo reveals that Blacks are certainly present. As already noted, however, it was necessary to determine whether the Black persons encountered were ADOS or non-ADOS. In short order, we determined that non-ADOS constituted the majority of Fargo's Black population. Based on our limited explorations of life in Fargo, we found this to be true whether walking in the neighborhood where we resided, meandering down Broadway Street in the heart of Fargo's business district, moving around the North Dakota State University (NDSU) campus, posting mail at the post office, visiting the local grocery store or supermarket, visiting the local shopping mall, or just riding around in an Uber. Unfortunately, there are no official statistics on the shares of ADOS vs. non-ADOS populations.

As the Introduction to this section of this missive conveys and based on common knowledge, a non-ADOS Black majority is undoubtedly a relatively new phenomenon in Fargo. Our analysis of lists of "Black owned" businesses in Fargo already reflect a hefty non-ADOS presence. Just perusing photographs available on the Fargo School District's website signaled a relatively high-proportion non-ADOS Black school population.ⁱⁱⁱ Also, a check of leading officials in Fargo City Government, the Fargo School District, and the Fargo Police Department resulted in the same conclusion, either by observing photographs or based on the names that were posted on related Internet websites. Therefore, if the trend continues, non-Black residents of Fargo may soon come to conflate non-ADOS with what it means to be Black—including for Black ADOS. Such an outcome may prove to be problematic down the road if and when Black (ADOS) Americans migrate to capture territory in the US Midwest.

Fargo's Climate

For some unknown reason, many Black Americans who reside in the American South are locked into a myth that Black people just cannot function well in relatively cold climates. This is obviously untrue when we consider that, although the origin of the species is in what was presumably a warm Africa weatherwise, those human Africans migrated the world over—including to the coldest parts of the Earth—and established civilizations that remain today. The takeaway appears to be not that Blacks cannot brave effectively cold climates, rather it is that humans are adaptable and can achieve anything they like.

But we should not hide our heads in the snow concerning this issue. If Blacks from the US South are to migrate to the US Midwest, there will be shock and awe when they encounter their first winter. If they migrate specifically to North Dakota, then they will experience extremely cold temperatures relative to southern temperatures.

On the other hand, if and when Black Americans broadly agree to a need for strategic and unified action and adopt a plan akin to the [*Long-Term Strategic Plan for Black America \(LTSPFBA\)*](#), then it should be possible to coordinate among ourselves the best strategy for migrating to the Midwest to capture control of territory to enjoy self-directed and more liberated lifestyles. In this case, it would be logical to direct Blacks already residing in colder climates to become the migrants headed to the Midwest. If and when this occurs, the issue of cold climates becomes a nonissue.

It is worth adding that, as you will see in Part IV of this missive, the evidence points toward a warming trend and is consistent with Climate Change science—a key factor in motivating our consideration of migrating to the Midwest to capture and control territory that surfaced long ago. Another factor to keep in mind is that, given the influx of immigrants, a recent and seemingly longwinded spate of fires and natural disasters, and a rapidly rising cost of living, the word is that many Californians have set, and are setting, their sights on the Midwest as the destination for their new homes.

As a segway to the next subsection on *Fargo Economics*, it is important to keep in mind that Fargo's and North Dakota's cold climates create increased demand for energy. *A priori*, this reality might serve as a downer for interest in migrating to the Midwest—especially for Black Americans living in the Southern US. And rightly so. Why? Because energy prices in the Southeastern US are higher than in other areas of the country (see "[Moving South Again?](#)"). The reality is that North Dakota boasts some of the lowest energy prices in the nation. This results largely from its ready access to petroleum-based energy sources that have already been mentioned. Rest assured then that residing in Fargo will not cause you to confront a heating bill that will bust your budget during each winter month.

Fargo Economics

Admittedly, we have not studied Fargo's economy in depth the way we have the economies of the four Midwestern states that were placed under the microscope in [*Exodus*](#). However, even our limited movements around the city revealed a seemingly obvious reality. The city's growth has always been of the organic or evolutionary variety. The first settlers came with no particular thought about a product or industry (possibly other than farming and accommodations for travelers

headed westward) around which to build the town. Over the years, residents have kept it simple, have absorbed new populations successfully, and have permitted an organic evolution of the economy. Of course, the city has benefited recently from an energy boom based on an inflow of workers who arrived to provide labor for a surge in fracking activities near Fargo. Before that, it undoubtedly benefitted significantly from the States of North Dakota and Minnesota decisions to develop universities in the area.

Actually, the economic history may be a modern storybook lesson in how towns of the old West developed as the nation was populated during the 19th century. It confirms the basic economic concept that population growth is a key stimulus to increases in economic demand and to economic growth. Seeing the swelling population and rising economic demand, economic producers work to supply goods and services to meet the demand. And, as those production efforts go forward, suppliers of the ancillary/supporting goods and services required by producers find their place in the economy. Given a fundamentally solid economy, growth surges are possible when unexpected economic events or conditions arise. This appears to be the very way that Fargo's economy has arrived at its current point. This scenario also signals how a surge in the Black American population can be accommodated as we migrate in to capture the territory. Of course, one must account for the dynamics of such a development; especially many White Americans' distaste for, and avoidance of, association with Black Americans. In other words, Black American strategists who orchestrate the Black migrations should discern how best to modulate the inflow so that responding strategic actions by Whites do not disrupt economic and other conditions dramatically and produce adverse economic outcomes that may have long-term economic consequences.

It is said that Black Americans only migrate to capture jobs. In the case of Black migration to the Midwest to capture territory, a different *modus operandi* must be emphasized and adopted. Potential Black migrators must be schooled in the economic evolutionary process that characterizes locales like Fargo. These migrators must plan to migrate with certain existing resources that will enable patience in settling into the locale and serving as the stimulus to "economic demand" that then creates the very jobs that they capture.

Quite frankly, our wintertime visit to Fargo coincided with typically less construction activity relative to other times of the year due to the cold and conditions required for certain types of construction work (this is clearly visible in seasonal factors for construction time series data). Accordingly, we do not recall observing any construction cranes, which is generally a tried-and-true indicator of construction activity. Also, we saw few, if any, signs indicating that construction activity was underway, but not visible, or that construction activity was in the offing in the near term. Of course, while exterior construction activity may not be observable, significant construction could be ongoing within new or existing structures' interiors.

However, one observation that we made immediately upon exiting the airport upon arrival was that a large construction project was underway at the airport to expand parking capacity and presumably to provide for other current and future requirements. The construction project appeared large enough to signal that local authorities expect robust growth and are planning for significant future growth. A check of recent population growth in and around Fargo, which was 5.7% at an annual rate from April 2020 until July 2023, if sustained, justifies the airport construction project, and will stimulate economic growth in broad terms for the city and its surrounding areas.^{iv}

As further substantiation of recent solid growth in Fargo, the city’s Annual Consolidated Financial Reports reveals that Fargo’s Total Expenses Budget grew 4.61% from 2020 to 2023 in nominal (inflation unadjusted dollars).^v However, the US Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that during the same period, North Dakota’s estimates of real (inflation adjusted) Gross State Product grew (2.62%), somewhat slower than the national growth rate (3.81%); and at a substantially slower rate than the US Southeast region growth (4.46%).^{vi} Also, as an indicator of the quality of life that might be expected in a Midwestern city like Fargo, we provide the following 2023 Census Bureau statistics for the city:^{vii}

Table 1.—Selected Economic Related Statistics for Fargo, 2023

Line No.	Categories	Estimated Value
1	Annual median household income	\$ 66,029
2	Percent of population who are high school graduates	95.3%
3	Percent of population with bachelor’s degree or higher	43.2%
4	Homeownership rate	44.1%
5	Median value of owner-occupied housing unit	\$269,800
6	Median rent	\$916

Of particular interest and in connection with the housing statistics provided in Table 1, we captured valuations of the following houses from Fargo’s Tax Assessor’s Office. Figure 1 below presents photographs of two houses that are of the typical variety found in various areas of the city. Without much analysis (including close inspection of the quality of the construction and the age of the structure), it is probably safe to say that one would be hard pressed to identify similar housing anywhere else in the nation at a lower price. However, given rapid migration to the area and other economic factors, demand is strong, and one should expect that these valuations will not last long at this level—i.e., they will rise.



Figure 1. Source: BlackEconomics.org photographs and visualization

Fargo's Black Businesses

First, we admit a shortfall. During our 57 days in Fargo, we did not visit and/or patronize a Black business. But then, again, we can seldom be found shopping other than at a grocer. Given our special dietary requirements and our geographical location in Fargo relative to the location of Black food-related businesses, we concluded that it would be very uneconomical to visit a Black food business only to confirm that no consumable items were available.

So how did we assess Black businesses in Fargo? By consulting one of today's all-knowing gods: Generative AI that is available for Googling. This is what we found from three Internet websites that provided information about Black businesses in Fargo.^{viii}

- The most comprehensive website was “Family Guide to Fargo, Moorhead, and Beyond” (<https://fargomom.com/black-owned-businesses-in-fargo/>), which identified over 90 Black businesses. The majority of these businesses can be classified as providers of: (A) Food [18] (restaurants or grocers); (B) Personal, mainly beauty care, services [22]; (C) Health and welfare services, including ministries [15]; and (D) Entertainment services [10]. These four types of businesses represent over two-thirds of all Black Business listed.
- The remaining two websites, Fargo, Inc. (<https://fargoinc.com/black-owned-businesses-to-support-in-fargo-moorhead-right-now/>) and The Black Community Shoppe (<https://www.blackcommunityshoppe.com/north-dakota>) identified considerably fewer Black businesses. This could be the result of a requirement to pay a fee to be listed.

As general comments concerning Black businesses in Fargo, they represent the types of first phase businesses that are required to meet the needs of new arrivals in a locale. Also, these businesses are indicative of the level and breadth of knowledge available in the population, and they reflect an absence of access to financial capital to initiate other businesses that are required to meet new arrivals requirements. An interesting aspect of the four types of Black business highlighted above is that “Personal, mainly beauty care, services” has the largest presence.” It reinforces an idea about which many have written: “Black Americans spend too much on the wrong things.” When it comes to spending on hair care, it seems that we continue to dislike our own phenotype that comes with beautiful, soft, kinky or curly hair and are willing to go to no end to transform it.

We emphasize new arrivals in this discussion because, as indicated throughout this missive, it is transparent that the majority of Blacks now residing in Fargo are non-ADOS.

Considering the foregoing in the context of migration to capture control, we observe that it is natural, with an entrepreneurial spirit present, to form businesses that meet the needs of our own people. And, if we reflect unity, love, and appreciation for ourselves and those in our community and remain awake and vigilant about fulfilling our strategic plan, then we will be certain to: (A) Not waste valuable financial resources on the provision and use of frivolous goods and services; (B) develop pools of financial capital that can be invested in Black businesses; (C) in time, develop Black businesses that move up the “complexity” chain (e.g., finance, insurance and real estate; construction; manufacturing; etc.) and provide for the needs of our people; and (D) provide high-quality employment for our growing and increasingly qualified work force.

As a disclaimer, it is not certain whether all businesses on the three websites are currently operational and we are unable to confirm that all the businesses listed are, in fact, majority owned by Blacks Americans. We were able to consult with a few of the businesses listed on the websites by telephone and with a representative of one of the websites that produced the lists.

Fargo from an Uber

Our 57-day visit to Fargo was not perfectly consistent with what we envisioned. We did not anticipate the intensity of the cold, which constrained our movements, and our time being under the weather further limited our opportunities to move around the city and observe conditions and developments. What we saw of the city was seen mainly through Uber taxi movements. Our most important destinations were to the NDSU for a handful of visits; regular grocery shopping trips; we visited the local shopping mall once; and we had a few visits to Fargo's city center.

Generally, this movement did not produce occurrences outside the ordinary. Readers will find unusual or extraordinary occurrences/observations reported elsewhere in this missive. A constant and favorable occurrence, however, was that no matter the condition, Ubers fulfilled our taxi requirements and at very reasonable prices. Also, Ubers opened a window on to the range of ethnicities in Fargo

Conclusion

This section of the missive provided substantive insights about Fargo relative to its potential as a sight for future Black American migration and capture. As already indicated, we enjoyed much about Fargo. Absent the frigid cold, it is a pleasant place of residence for one interested in a quiet retired life. With two universities, it is a place where knowledge and learning are valued—albeit not a level or intensity experienced in locations with colleges or universities with more storied histories. Based on our limited exploration of the public school system, we believe that care should be taken to avoid it and to opt for an alternative for Black American youth. Crime is problematic; especially property crime. The latter is probably closely interrelated with the city's significant drug abuse problem. While we did not engage beyond basic greetings with White American locals, like everywhere else in the US we know that they will either accept or reject a Black American presence. If they reject, then they will relinquish their territory, which would, in part, be our objective.

At the same time, the history of the city is that it evolves/adapts to in-migration and economic and other types of developments. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to try to predict precisely future outcomes for the city. However, the look and feel of Fargo is such that one comes away with the notion that anything is possible. Consequently, when Black Americans begin to migrate to capture territory in the Midwest, then we would certainly urge consideration of Fargo as a favorable location. Our prayer is that we are alive to see all of this occur.

Part III: Fargo's Life, Sounds, and Experiences

Introduction

Fargo is a quaint little Midwestern city where, in the dead of winter, most people remain in their cozy homes behind their shuttered blinds unless they have pressing business to conduct. Of course, young and old students trek to classes at schools in their neighborhood or to the two university campuses. Our 57-day tenure in Fargo spanned two important European traditional holidays (Christmas and New Years), and MLK Day, which turned out to also be Inauguration Day for the nation's 47th President. Unfortunately, we suffered slightly from being under the weather for about two weeks beginning at the end of December and into early January. But our three weeks in December on the frontside of that illness, and the three weeks on the back side of it in January, enabled us to get out and about sufficiently to appreciate certain aspects of Fargo. As we look back about one month later, we even have a longing for the deep, dark, cold, and silent winter nights that permitted clear contemplation of any topic. In our case, we contemplated life in Black-controlled Midwestern territory in the not-too-distant future.

We continue here with brief revelations of selected considerations of Fargo's life, sights, sounds, and experiences that we had the privilege of observing and enjoying. We do not delve too deeply. The intent is to just convey a flavor that may stimulate your appetite to know more and even plan a visit to one of the proposed Midwestern states as the destination for Black migration and the capture of territory.

Life and Sights



Figure 2

Yes, money lubricates the wheels of life. Therefore, one of our first tasks after reaching Fargo and getting settled into our short-term rental apartment was to find a local bank to ensure that cash would be readily available if needs arose. We selected a very recently organized bank franchise located in the heart of downtown Fargo (Figure 2).^{ix} We walked in unannounced to establish an online checking account. The bank officer was hospitable, ushered us into a private office and we began to complete administrative requirements for the account.

Two points of interest are worth highlighting. First, given that our most recent checking account opening experience was several years ago, the number of options available for the various types of bank account was somewhat unexpected. Given the amount of funds involved, we agreed to decide on one of two types of online checking accounts that were offered: One account was of the traditional variety; the second was labeled “checking securely.”

Because our memory is not perfect, we will say that the key operational difference between the two accounts was that the “traditional” checking account permitted “overdrafts” (presumably with provisions for the account holder to cover overdrafts with another account within the bank or by some other means), while the checking “securely” account did not permit overdrafts (i.e., checks

floated for amounts beyond the account balance would simply be returned to payees due to “insufficient funds”). We enquired of the bank officer concerning the characteristic differences between the two accounts. He explained that the checking securely account did **not** include features to enhance transaction security to protect against theft or fraud, which would be consistent with what “securely” implies. Rather, checking securely, as already indicated, precludes overdrafts and related penalties. He invited us to opt for that account. We responded no thank you and signed up for the Traditional checking account.

Notably, both types of accounts were associated with \$0 fees if certain criteria were met (including the type of deposits made to the account, and daily and average account balances). If the criteria were not satisfied, charges would be assessed. The checking securely account was associated with a smaller fee than for the traditional checking account when the criteria were not met.

Importantly, consideration of the criteria associated with the two accounts revealed that a relatively low-income customer would opt for the checking securely account because the fee was lower and because their income might be insufficient to meet the criteria for the traditional checking account. Therefore, by opting for a checking securely account customers wittingly or unwittingly signaled that they were relatively poor and would likely be treated differently from relatively non-poor customers when information was made available to operators in the finance and other industries.

Also, the advantage that the bank officer used to attempt to sell us the checking securely account was that we would be protected from fees associated with overdrafts. What he failed to explain is that intended payees who received checks that were returned due to “insufficient funds” were very likely to assess their own fees for “returned checks.” Oh, the injustices the banking system can perpetrate on the poor to contribute to their poverty. The bank officer with whom we dealt was obviously hoping to exploit us because he assumed that we were relatively poor and ignorant of most banks’ racial and economically discriminatory practices—even though seemingly heavy fines are imposed by regulators because of these tactics from time to time.

Second, as the bank officer was finalizing opening of our checking account, he leaned over the desktop separating us and enquired, “and would you indicate your annual income?” Apparently, this has been institutionalized and is required information for certain banks. But given the nature of transactions that we planned to conduct with the bank, the information requested did not seem germane. After some discussion, we provided a number that really was a non-number because the range that we cited was not meaningful. The point being that bank officers may act in accordance with official bank policy and in compliance with regulators by requesting information, but you should benefit from a double take when information requests seem erroneous. They may appear innocuous to you, but be assured that banks use the information that is provided to determine how you will be treated. High income clients receive high-quality service and other advantages denied to low-income customers. Bottom line, we did not enter the bank seeking assistance from the bank that might require the bank to confirm our income level. We only sought an online checking account that entailed our money being deposited and withdrawn. If we miss-stepped, then we would be assessed fees or worse. Otherwise, the bank has no claim on us; we have a claim on the bank to the extent of the amount in the checking account. But firms will overstep their reach. As mothers tell their daughters in their youth: “Don’t give them an inch. If you do, then they will take a mile.”

Simple and seemingly innocuous occurrences can trigger and perpetuate biased perceptions. For example, given our research interests, one of our early tasks was to visit one of the local universities' library to obtain a citizen's card that enables access to selected library services. Upon entering and engaging with library staff (both student and staff employees), we were shocked by the physical size of certain employees. Without any intent to "body shame," this became a noticeable issue because, although we encounter "large" persons in Hawaii (in fact, Native Hawaiians are known for being large people, and their well-known and unique diet contributes to the production of that outcome), such large person sightings have increasingly declined during our recent travels on the mainland for a variety of reasons.

Considering this phenomenon, we deduced that it may result from very cold winters that cause a significant reduction in physical activity, and, like Native Hawaiians, the local diet (meat and dairy products) could interact to produce obese conditions at higher rates than elsewhere in the country.

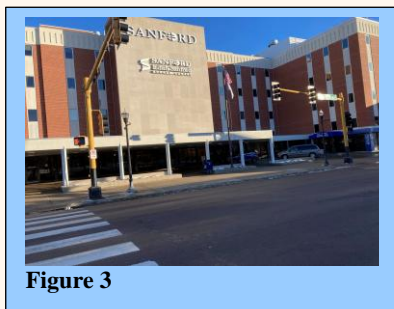


Figure 3

A related observation was a huge Sanford Breast (Cancer) Center (Figure 3) that we observed on most of our outings due to its proximity (two blocks away) from our apartment. It is common knowledge that obesity is often associated with cancer. The point being that obesity among Black women is also quite common and well documented. Therefore, when Black Americans choose Midwestern states as a migration destination, they should be cognizant of climate and diet effects on obesity levels and the potential for related health concerns.

We close this subsection by recounting our lone visit to the local mega mall, West Acres Shopping Center. We experienced a minor laptop computer malfunction while in Fargo and visited a shop in the mall to have it repaired. Having traveled some distance for the repair that consumed about 10 minutes of the technician's time, we decided to take time to explore the mall. It is relatively new, was beautifully designed, and the primary stores were of the highest quality. Of course, there was an ample supply of stores owned by local entrepreneurs selling mainly food and small consumable items. As we walked through the mall the following thought kept repeating in our mind: Shoppers in this mall reflect what one would expect of a people who have been programmed to consume. There were children attached to their parents tugging away to pull their parents to one shop or the other to fulfill their desire to possess this trinket or to eat that product. We saw relatively few Black Americans in the mall either as shoppers or as employees.

However, as we entered the longest corridor in the mall, we saw coming toward us a tall, thinly built, and very dark (what Black Americans would describe as a Sudanese-looking) Black male smartly dressed in a light colored "sweat or exercise suit." He was walking briskly, and it seemed logical to conclude that he might very well be an African immigrant who realized that a very practical way to remain healthy in Fargo, is to conduct walking exercise routines. And because winter does not accommodate exterior walks favorably, it makes all the sense in the world to visit the mall to perform the walking exercise. This realization carried us back nearly five decades as we recalled observing a similar practice especially by older residents of Madison, Wisconsin who would visit local malls regularly and complete their "daily walks."

Sounds

We are not surprised these days to see individuals with no access to external sounds because their earphones provide a rich sound environment of their choice to keep them entertained. However, as one taught to be wary of pumping too loud sounds into one's eardrums, we continue to enjoy simply listening to ambient noise present in our environment—including the rapid fire tapping on our laptop as we transform these thoughts into digital form.

Given our life experiences, there are three Fargo sounds worth mentioning: Nightly silence (in contrast to the nightly song of crickets in the south), vehicle sirens (unexpectedly similar to the pattern of sirens in Honolulu), and freight trains (oh so much like my childhood experience).

To comment further on Fargo's sounds, we were pleasantly surprised that in our apartment, deep into the night the silence was deafening—akin to a noise vacuum. The surprise was, in large measure, a response to the 180-degree difference in the quiet lives lived in small Midwestern cities/towns versus lifestyles in a somewhat bustling and busy Honolulu. The cold, the space between houses, and residing in a residential neighborhood where traffic was minimal resulted in very silent nights, which were not difficult to become accustomed to.

Given the proportion of elderly people in Honolulu; the proximity of our residence to two hospitals; police activity (Honolulu must have one of the highest policepersons per capita in the US); and a high volume of restaurants that may precipitate an above average number fire alarms, emergency vehicle sirens are an erratic and persistent fact of life in Honolulu. Having spent little time in Fargo in other neighborhoods we cannot comment on the incidence of emergency vehicle sirens. However, the previously mentioned proximity of our apartment to a major medical facility and to downtown Fargo resulted in the incidence of emergency vehicle sirens being much higher than anticipated.

A small joy of being in Fargo was the not-too-distant sound of freight train whistles. Railroad tracks traverse major streets in downtown Fargo, and we had the pleasure of actually seeing a freight train in operation. Although there are railroad tracks in Honolulu, one almost never sees or hears the sound of moving trains. Freight train movement through and around Fargo was frequent, and one could hear the occasional train whistle at various times during the day or late into the night. Hearing freight train whistles late into the Fargo night was nostalgic as it reminded us of our childhood when we would hear trains passing near our neighborhood several blocks from our residence as we would fall asleep for the night.

Experiences

We close this subsection by providing highlights of a cultural experience on the NDSU campus. When we visited the NDSU Library shortly after arrival, we observed a poster that announced a 30-minute one-act play from **Ira Knight Presents** entitled “**From Myth to Man: Martin Luther King, Jr.**” that was scheduled for 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 15, 2025 in the Beckwith Recital Hall. Straight away we decided to see the play. Two days before the event, we contacted NDSU's Center for Community and Belonging (CFCAB) and spoke with its director about the play, and she reinforced our decision to see it. And, although we were still experiencing lingering

effects of our illness, we made our way to the event. Mr. Knight, who is an employee of Duke University (not an academician) and who classifies himself as a self-supported artist performed the MLK role quite well.

After the play concluded, there was an elongated Q&A session to which we contributed. We raised certain controversial questions that will not all be revisited here, but we reveal one of our questions: “Why were no Black students in the audience of about 70 (our SWAG)?” Of course, January 15th was just five days before Inauguration Day, which was followed briskly by a flood of Presidential Executive Orders; the most salient of which for Black Americans being the halt of DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) programs throughout the Federal Government. Our concern about the nonexistence of Black students at the event was that it was indicative of a pattern of how governments (national, state, and local) allocate funds for DEI programs and assign spending authority to those who have little to no interest in optimizing returns from such funds for the stated intended beneficiaries of the funds. This concern is now OBE (overtaken by events).

The CFCAB’s Director was a Black American and the only other Black American attending the event was a professor in NDSU’s Education Department, who later informed us that he specialized in curriculum development. During a reception after the Q&A session, all four Blacks gathered in a standing group, introduced ourselves, and made small talk. We congratulated Mr. Knight on his performance, thanked the CFCAB’s Director for organizing the event and made known our concern about the lack of Black student attendance, and promised the Black professor in the Education Department a follow-up email message to provide more information concerning our ongoing work. By Friday (June 17, 2025), we transmitted an email message to the professor and followed up with a reminder during the next week. He never responded. However, based on the treatment we received from the point of our first visit to the NDSU campus to the library, to our telephone conversation with the Director of the CFCAB, to the Black professor in the Education Department’s failure to respond to our email message, which was quite innocuous, we could sense that our entire visit and our movements were tracked closely. Without being paranoid, it seemed that at least one of our former employers is concerned about the work we are performing and wants to minimize any impact that we might impose through our expression of mainly economic ideas.

Conclusion

This third section of our 57 Days in Fargo on interesting sights, sounds, and experiences was intended to provide a substantive flavor of selected events and encounters that might be had in North Dakota’s largest city. Our descriptions of our events and encounters are not overly exciting or “Earth shattering.” But be mindful that our visit to Fargo was during winter. Please do not conflate this limited list of events and encounters and/or their outcomes to be fully representative of what one should anticipate as possibilities in Fargo.

We assure you that we saw, did, and experienced nothing in Fargo that was reminiscent of Black life in the Southeastern US, or in large urban areas across the country where there are sizeable pockets of Black American populations. However, what we know from US History is that, if and when Black Americans begin to migrate to Fargo-like locations, it does not take long for a blending of cultures to begin (willingly or unwillingly). At the same time, if Black American migration is for capturing control, one should anticipate the formation of a Creole (Black-White-Other) Culture

to then be followed by the fading of the Creole Culture and for the arising of a dominant Black Culture. When the Black Culture comes to dominate, then Black Americans can enjoy the benefits of self-reliance, self-sufficiency, self-determination, and an elevated form of liberty.

Part IV: Counterarguments to *Exodus* and Related Responses

Introduction

Black migration to capture US Midwestern territory entered our mind as part of a typical problem-solving exercise. The problem: Black Americans do not control the space where we reside. How can we achieve that outcome? Is the Southeastern US the most favorable location? Why? Are there better and easier locations to consider? Why not dig deeper and explore further than just a thought process concerning those alternative spaces?

Having responded to some of the foregoing questions and attracting interested parties to the analysis presented in *Exodus* and other submissions, those questions not answered or not answered satisfactorily bubbled up as counterarguments for rejecting the entire idea.

Undiscouraged by the counter arguments, we contemplated them and developed responses, which are presented in this section. As already noted in Part I of this missive, only brief presentations of counterarguments and our responses will be provided. At some future point, we may elaborate the counterarguments and our responses and present them as an addendum to *Exodus* or integrate them into a second edition of that work.

Only three substantive counterarguments have been aired: (1) What is the evidence concerning Climate Change in Midwestern States? (2) Are not landlocked locations very disadvantageous? and (3) Are there not valuable military advantages to coastal locations? Of our own accord, we present a fourth counterargument from a reverse perspective because of seemingly unrelated work: Are there not structural economic advantages or disadvantages to a Southeastern versus Midwestern location?

Evidence on Climate Change

Exodus includes statistics that convey information about climatological conditions for the four Midwestern States under consideration, but only for a point in time. Given the brevity of this presentation, we do not replicate on an updated basis that dataset. Rather, because we were in Fargo, which is representative of North Dakota and potentially some areas within South Dakota, we adopt a simple metric for comparing changes in climate for the most recent 55 years.

Table 2 provides average daily temperature statistics covering the period January 1, 1970 to January 31, 2025 and for four separately selected ten-year periods and one five-year period.

Table 2.—Average Daily Temperatures
For Fargo, 1970 – 2025

Period	Average Daily Temperatures	Change
01/01/1970 - 01/31/2025	42.03	
01/01/1990 - 12/31/1999	42.04	
01/01/2000 - 12/31/2009	42.26	0.21
01/01/2010 - 12/31/2019	43.04	0.79
01/01/2015 - 12/31/2024	43.72	0.68
01/01/2020 - 12/31/2024	44.06	

Table 3 provides statistics on Average Daily Temperatures for Fargo for the months of January and December—the months that span our visit to Fargo.

Table 3.—Average Daily Temperatures for Fargo
for January and December 1990 – 2024

Periods	Average January Temperatures	Change	Average December Temperatures	Change
01/01/1990 - 12/31/1999	6.53		15.91	
01/01/2000 - 12/31/2009	10.19	3.66	14.62	-1.29
01/01/2010 - 12/31/2019	11.26	1.08	16.27	1.65
01/01/2015 - 12/31/2024	11.97	0.70	18.43	2.17
01/01/2020 - 12/31/2024	12.77	0.81	19.41	0.98

Table 2 shows that there is a slight but definitive warming trend of the average daily temperature in Fargo. All periods from 1990 forward reflect warmer average daily temperatures than for the entire 1970 to 2025 span that was reviewed. From 2010 to 2024, the daily average temperature rose more than 0.7 degrees on average. For Table 3, only the month of December showed a decrease in the average daily temperature for the first decade of the millennium versus the 1990s. For 2010 forward, the average daily temperature in December rose well over one degree. As for January, for the 25 years following the start of the 21st century, the average daily temperature was well above average daily temperature in January during the 1990s. Like the month of December, starting in 2010, the average daily temperature in January rose almost one degree.

Note that the average daily temperature statistics are from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Center for Environmental Information. The specific dataset was the “Global Summary of the Month” from collection centers, and the collection point we selected for Fargo is the Hector International Airport. We obtained average daily maximum and minimum temperatures for each month from January 1970 to January 2025. We estimated average daily temperatures as the midpoint between the maximum and minimum temperatures.^x

In addition to the just provided daily average temperature statistics, we invite readers to consider a statement from Prof. David Clay of South Dakota State University’s Agriculture Department with whom we met during our June 2023 visit to Brookings (see Appendix I). Prof. Clay made it clear that South Dakota has been enjoying significant increases in crop yields in recent years mainly because of the extended growing season associated with warming conditions that some believe is a clear sign of Climate Change.

Landlocked Areas’ Problems

The importance of economics in our lives and nearly universal knowledge concerning imports and exports of goods and certain services via the sea, cause some to argue that a landlocked nation is automatically disadvantaged economically. The classic counter argument is Switzerland. And while the Midwestern states in question may be cold in winter much like Switzerland, they certainly do not compare with Switzerland’s economic prowess today. But what about tomorrow? That is the important question.

Keeping it simple and without attempting to delineate all the strategic transformations that the Midwestern states would have to undergo to attain the economic power of Switzerland, we present a composite of existing and likely future developments that may render concerns about landlockness irrelevant or nearly so.

- Fargo and North Dakota are fully integrated into the US efficient freight railroad system. When in Fargo, we were figuratively transported to our childhood home near railroad tracks and the clockwork-like wailing of freight train whistles as they sped along rails going west and east. Without confirming, it is presumed that rail freight operates as advertised; i.e., nearly any large product can be transported to its desired destination in the Midwestern states under consideration with double (time and economic) efficiency.
- And if not rail, then the trucking industry can perform amazing feats when transporting goods across the US. Certainly, in combination, it would not be surprising to find that goods from the more northern US seaports on either coast can find their way to a Midwestern state locale within three-to-four days. The speed of delivery may increase as driverless trucks are introduced.
- For North and South Dakota, which are adjacent to Minnesota and with access to Lake Superior, we should not forget about the Saint Lawrence Seaway that enables commercial traffic through the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean. This route for addressing the landlock concern is also time and economically efficient.
- The movie and television series *Star Trek* was amazing during our youth for its role in revealing that art can imitate future life through its use of technology not available in real time, but certainly available today. One evolving and related technology is 3-D Printing. Another is “transporting,” which we all remember along with the line: “Beam me up Scottie.” A future may be upon us sooner than we think when it will be possible to transport sizeable items over great distances by transforming/deconstructing their anatomical structure at one location and then retransforming/restructuring that anatomical structure at a very distant location. Access to this technology is likely to be available first for inanimate objects, with opportunities for humans to exploit the technology at a later point.

These four responses to the landlockness arguments against migrating to Midwestern states go far in reducing the relevance of the arguments. The unpredictability of the future and innovation argues for more such counterarguments to render the arguments against migrating obsolete.

Military and Security Advantages of Coastal Territories

This is essentially another landlockness argument against Black Americans migrating to Midwestern states to establish control. Upon close inspection, this antimigration argument is absent serious substance. Even with coastal territories that include deep water seaports, it is obvious that many national militaries have the capacity (navies) to blockade those seaports and their related territories by approaching them from the sea.

Very importantly, a founding assumption of a Black American strategy to migrate to territories (landlocked or with seaport access) to capture them by achieving a population majority is that forming a majority population is undertaken as a legal and acceptable outcome for those already

in the territory and by the broader nation. Consequently, with no impetus for conflict, blockades or any form of military action against Black Americans would not transpire. On the other hand, if such conflict arose, then Black Americans would prepare ourselves strategically well in advance to respond to the arising of conflict.

The Economic Structure of Southern versus Midwestern States

In the course of exploring states' efforts to raise revenue and the potential role of the prison industrial complex in assisting states in revenue collection, it became readily evident that Black American incarceration in Southern prisons was an important problem solver. Cheap Black prison labor was an important source of revenue for businesses that accessed that cheap labor. Also, Southern state governments generated a great deal of revenue from Black prison labor. But that is just the tip of the iceberg.

A broader view of Southern states' economies that have always included relatively sizeable Black populations is that they have always been functioning inefficiently because there are costs associated with imposing racial discrimination on that population. The costs may generate economic activity and more revenue, but a preoccupation with creating and sustaining systems that facilitate, perpetuate, and enforce racial discrimination inure costs. The opportunity costs of Southern economies steeped in racism and discrimination are lost opportunities to employ available resources to acquire or produce and adopt technological innovations and economic efficiency measures that can ensure the type of accelerated and enduring growth that states not burdened by Southern ways enjoy.

This realization clarified that there are distinct structural differences in the economies of Southern and Midwestern states that favor migration to the latter. Specifically, Black American capture of a state should inaugurate a transformation of the state's economy to produce what is desired by Black Americans. Simply stated, the economy of Southeastern states is so clogged with negative cogs that the desired and required transformations will take much longer to complete for Southern states than for Midwestern states that have much fewer negative cogs. We explore this point briefly in the already mentioned December 2024 essay, "[Moving South Again?](#)"

Conclusion

We expected opposition to [Exodus](#), and we have taken the salvos highlighted above. However, in our possibly rosy estimation, there are logical reasons for supporting Black migration to Midwestern states—especially when adopting a long-run view. The brief counterarguments presented in this section may serve to allay some concerns about our proposal, and we look forward to the prospect of refining and sharing these counterarguments in the future.

Part V. Summary and Conclusion

To be frank, we do not know precisely the origin of our motivation and interest in migration to capture territory in the Midwest. What we believe is that, *a priori*, life occurrences may appear inconsequential, but further inspection immediately or after the passage of time, can reveal the significance of those occurrences. Therefore, we remain faithful to the pursuit of the idea believing that this work may one day (hopefully sooner rather than later) contribute to a plan of action that produces very favorable outcomes for Black Americans. It will be even more joyous for us if the action that is taken is in response to crises; thereby proving that an “invisible hand” was moving in favor of Black Americans in anticipation of the crises. Such an outcome will reinforce that we are, in fact, a “chosen people” serving as proof of the divine. The divine makes possible miracles with a simple formula: “Making something wonderful out of absolutely nothing.”

Exodus, selected other written submissions, and the content of this missive point to positive prospects for, and important benefits from, migrating to capture territory in the US Midwest. The Midwest is one of the rare remaining portions of the US where near-virgin territory remains. There is evidence of certain ideal conditions and factors existing for growth and development in the area, and we count on the materialization of other conditions and factors which we have discussed to come into place and produce an excellent environment for Black Americans to live, work, grow, and maximize our potential as a People.

Despite the seemingly unfavorable aspects (namely our inability to manage the cold climes as we once did at an earlier age and our brief illness) of our 57 days of life in Fargo, this missive reports on the conditions that we observed and experiences we had that signal no reason to abandon the idea(s) that was the impetus for our traveling to Fargo. Moreover, our Fargo visit revealed no important faults in the logic that undergird our reasons for pursuing the idea of migrating to capture territory in the US Midwest.

Yet, we must admit that this visit to Fargo and our visit to Brookings, South Dakota during June of 2023 produced a cause for worry. At both locations, we saw that other non-White Americans see the same potential future for this region that we see and have already begun to enter the land. These “first movers” are beginning now—even before the more ideal conditions appear that we believe are forthcoming—to find and build their place in the existing society. We can hope that the ideal conditions that we believe are on the way will appear sooner rather than later, and that Black American will begin our migration soon. However, we cannot control the speed at which others lodge themselves firmly in place; making it difficult for us to dislodge them, if necessary, at some future point. This missive is very much about telling this story as a warning to Black Americans about what could be an excellent opportunity ripe for our exploitation. It could be that decisions to delay planning and implementing plans for migrating to capture territory in the Midwest might be a fatal error. But none of us will be able to argue that we were without knowledge of the opportunity.

We close this missive by referring readers to a just-produced BlackEconomics.org essay entitled, “[Revisiting Black American Leadership](#).” The essay clarifies that the Black American current condition can be attributed, in part, to our leadership’s erroneous adoption of a one-dimensional strategy (maximize educational attainment) for our development back in the late 1960s and early

1970s. Fortunately, that leadership failure has not produced our complete demise. Accordingly, we urge due consideration of “migration to capture territory in the US Midwest” as a reasonable strategy for Black America’s future development and security. We are not proposing that it replace the current widely held notion that Black migration should be mainly to the Southeastern US. However, experience tells us that it is probably unwise to adopt and implement a one-dimensional strategy. Black America’s current condition provides relevant evidence of outcomes when such a strategy is adopted.

Appendix I

Brief Meeting Notes: Brookings, SD Meetings

Prof. David Clay at Ravens Precision Farming Bldg. at SDSU
&
Mr. Garrie Kills A Hundred and Ms. Sarah Childers at the Flandreau Tribal Headquarters

On June 22, 2023

**Meeting with Prof. David Clay of SDSU
Wednesday, June 22, 2023 at 10:30 a.m.
The meeting lasted about one hour.**

Proposed Questions

- Would you please provide a brief history of farming in South Dakota?
- What are the best crops and best locations for crops in South Dakota?
- Are there farming sustainability issues?
- Are there water availability concerns?
- What is the outlook for the Brookings area: Farming; water; and technology?

In the 19th century as WI, MN, and SD became settled, the first major commercial crop was hard red wheat (which is used for bread making). However, the hard red wheat disease surfaced and became problematic for farmers. Wheat planting moved westward from Wisconsin, to Minnesota, and then to Eastern South Dakota. After the disease became a problem in Eastern South Dakota, the planting of hard red wheat moved to Western South Dakota and to more western states.

Hard red wheat was replaced by corn and soybean in the states and areas affected by the hard red wheat disease. Corn is used for feed, ethanol, and jet fuel. Soybean is primarily exported to Asia for food (tofu) or is used to make diesel.

Corn and soybean crop yields are expanding by over 2 bushels a year per acre due to warming climatological conditions that create a longer growing season. Also, there are better crop genetics (no GMO, but the crossing of the best plants), and better carbon and moisture conditions in the soil brought on by warming conditions.

Most of the farms in the Brookings area are family farms—not corporate farms. There is some vegetable farming, but vegetables and fruit (mainly apples) are from individual gardens and for personal consumption.

SD farmers practice some crop rotation (fallow) to manage disease, but much of the land is planted each season (no fallow). Tillage is not used in SD mainly because it leads to erosion and to loss of moisture.

For the foreseeable future, farmers in SD will continue growing corn and soybeans because they are profitable crops. This will change only to the extent that markets change (consumption patterns) and profitability changes.

SD is also known for livestock production: Hogs, chickens, and bovine. As you know, Sioux Falls is a major slaughtering and meat processing center.

Prof. Clay agreed with Eric Witt of Brookings Municipal Utilities who informed us that SD is not a “water rich” state—unlike Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. Consequently, most SD crops do not involve irrigation. However, where aquifers are available, irrigation occurs.

Technology being brought to farming today includes the use of drones and auto steering, which permit farmers who are in tractors to focus on other work—administrative paperwork, planning, observation, etc.

SD uses few migrant workers. Those that exist are not used for field work, but for helping around the farm.

Note that SD is also well known for its dairy production: Milk, cheese, and butter.

**Meeting with Mr. Garrie Kills A Hundred and Ms. Sarah Childers
at the Flandreau Tribal Headquarters
Wednesday, June 22, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.**

We had no preset questions for this meeting.

The interview was mainly with Mr. Garrie Kills A Hundred to whom we were introduced by his son, David Kills A Hundred. The latter is the tribe’s public relations official. The former is a Cultural Expert for the tribe. Ms. Childers joined the conversation late during our one-hour-long meeting.

In response to a question concerning the origin of his surname, Mr. Kills A Hundred relayed a partial genealogy: There is David, his son, himself. He is preceded by his father Henry, his grandfather John, his great-grandfather Elijah, the name of his great grandfather was not recalled, and then his great, great, great grandfather, the original Kills A Hundred himself.

Mr. Kills A Hundred said that his father was of the Pine Ridge Tribe, one of nine tribes operating in SD. His mother was of the Flandreau Tribe. Typically, rights, privileges, and responsibilities are assigned matrilineally (this is consistent with African or at least West African traditions).

We took a substantial amount of time discussing the possible origins of the first humans in the Americas based on Professors Ivan Van Sertima’s and Runoko Rashidi’s work. Negroids came via two routes: Across the Bering Straits to North America and across the Pacific from Australia

and New Zealand to South America. Negroid were followed and absorbed by Algonquins and later by Mongoloids. So, Blacks (Africans) may very well be called indigenous.

We also discussed the current Reparations thrusts underway by Black Americans. We noted that many Black Americans are expecting cash payments. However, the original impetus for Reparations (Special Field Order 15 by Gen. Robert Sherman) involved Reparations in the form of land.

We popped the question: If the US Government (the main and most culpable and responsible party) agreed to pay Reparations to Black Americans in the form of certain Federally owned lands, how would so-called Native Americans respond?

Mr. Kills A Hundred said that he did not know about this Reparations thrust, but Ms. Childers appeared to be well informed about Reparations. However, Mr. Kills A Hundred said that, speaking candidly, some tribes might agree, others might not. He said that to generate support for obtaining Federal lands in the form of Reparations with agreement by Native Americans, it would be best to first convince selected and important Native Americans (individuals) who can drive outcomes within and across tribes. He noted that there are 523 tribes in the US.

Mr. Kills A Hundred reported that his tribe does not educate their children. He said that there was a boarding school which had about 1,400 students in the recent past. Now the school has only 70 students. In response to the questions, “What happened to the remaining students” or where did the remaining students attend school now), he responded, “that’s a good question.”

He said that his educational experience was one that reflected the following objective: “Kill the India and save the man.”

In response to a question about conditions on reservations across the country generally, he said there are some reservations that elicit “something needs to be done about conditions there,” but at the same time, there are reservations that elicit “the entire nation should adopt what this tribe is doing because it is excellent.”

He said that as with all people: Some people can handle fame, others cannot. Some people can handle money, some people cannot. And some people can manage situations, others cannot. He said that is the state of things among and across tribes nationally.

While discussing Reparations, Ms. Childers suggested that Black Americans consult with the Federal Government concerning its role in the deaths of literary hundreds of Black men who worked gold mines in and around Galen, Illinois. She said that the Federal Reserve Board took the gold.

Mr. Kills A Hundred said he was planning to engage with a new group: The Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women Institute (MMIWI). He said that, as a symbol of solidarity that might carryover to Reparations, it would be beneficial if Black Women joined this institute. [We plan to consider identifying possible Black American collaborators.]

Mr. Kills A Hundred said that the tribe is fully responsible for tribal land operations: Roads, water supply, sewer supply, etc. The resources to do this primarily include casino profits, taxes, and revenues that come from DOI managed assets.

He said that efforts are being made to bring “technology” to the tribes. For example, he recently initiated a “drones” program. The drones are being used for a variety of purposes. He said that some have readily accepted and adopted the technology; others have not.

Mr. Kills A Hundred and Ms. Childers thanked us for our interest and visit. They said that they would welcome a return visit. We thanked them in return.

[BBR:062623]

Endnotes

ⁱ This low-budget (\$7 million) *Fargo* movie grossed \$60 million. The movie won two of its seven Oscar Award nominations. Also, the “Fargo” television series was broadcast up to 2024.

ⁱⁱ Total Black Population statistics are from the US Department of Commerce, Census Bureau as presented by Wikipedia:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_racial_and_ethnic_demographics_of_the_United_States#Population_by_race_and_age_\(Census_2010_and_Census_2020\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_racial_and_ethnic_demographics_of_the_United_States#Population_by_race_and_age_(Census_2010_and_Census_2020)). Decennial Census statistics by State are from the US Department of Commerce, Census Bureau as presented by Wikipedia:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_and_territories_by_historical_population. (Ret. 021525)

ⁱⁱⁱ The author believes that it is possible to assign (with some error) ethnicity to many persons based on facial features, attire, etc. The conclusion drawn about non-ADOS in the Fargo School District population is based on observation of photographic images.

^{iv} US Department of Commerce, Census Bureau (2025). *Quick Facts*;

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/fargocitynorthdakota/PST045224> (Ret. 022625).

^v Fargo’s Annual Consolidated Financial Reports for 2020 and 2023 are available at: <https://fargond.gov/city-government/departments/finance/financial-reports> (Ret. 022625).

^{vi} US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, “Annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by State, SAGDP1 State annual gross domestic product (GDP) summary;”

https://apps.bea.gov/itable/?ReqID=70&step=1&gl=1*1vp6akl*ga*MjEwNjU1Njg2OS4xNzIzOTQ2MDY1*_ga_J4698JNNFT*MTc0MDY0NTI2OC4xOS4xLjE3NDA2NDUzMTUuMTMuMC4w#eyJhcHBpZCI6NzAsInN0ZXBzIjpbMSwyOSwyNSwzMV0sImRhdGEiOltbIlRhYmxlSWQlLC1MzEiXSxbIk1ham9yX0FyZWVEiLC1wIl1dfQ= (Ret. 022625).

^{vii} *Op cit.* (US Department of Commerce (2025), *Quick Facts*).

^{viii} The three websites are: “Family Guide to Fargo and Moorhead and Beyond” (<https://fargomom.com/black-owned-businesses-in-fargo/>); “The Black Community Shoppe” (<https://www.blackcommunityshoppe.com/north-dakota>); and “Fargo, Inc.” (<https://fargoinc.com/black-owned-businesses-to-support-in-fargo-moorhead-right-now/>). (Ret. 022725).

^{ix} Figure 2 reflects a portion of Broadway Street in the heart Fargo’s business district.

^x These data can be obtained from the NOAA NCEI Global Summary of the Month database at the following Internet address: <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/search/data-search/global-summary-of-the-month?bbox=46.983,-96.891,46.771,-96.679&pageNum=1> (Ret. 021925).