

Oxford University Press

**Hutchins Center for African & African American
Research at Harvard University**

CONTRIBUTOR'S MANUAL

African American National Biography

**Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham
Editors in Chief**

<http://hutchinscenter.fas.harvard.edu/aanb>

CONTENTS

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 PLANNING YOUR ARTICLE
 - 2.1 Readership
 - 2.2 Scope Description
 - 2.3 Word Allotment
 - 2.4 Consensus of Interpretation
- 3 WRITING YOUR ARTICLE
 - 3.1 Opening Paragraph
 - 3.2 Body of Text
 - 3.3 Marriages
 - 3.4 Death and Summation
 - 3.5 Living People
 - 3.6 Identifying People, Places and Things
 - 3.7 Dates
 - 3.8 Quotations and Permissions
 - 3.9 Citations
 - 3.10 Plagiarism
- 4 SOME NOTES ON STYLE
 - 4.1 Style, Grammar, spelling
 - 4.2 Spelling
 - 4.3 Punctuation
 - 4.4 Capitalization
 - 4.5 Dates
 - 4.6 Racial Terminology
 - 4.7 Explicit Racial Identification
 - 4.8 Gendered Terms
- 5 COMPILING YOUR “FURTHER READING” BIBLIOGRAPHY
 - 5.1 Purpose
 - 5.2 Number of Items
 - 5.3 Availability of Works
 - 5.4 Format
 - 5.5 Verification of Sources
- 6 KEYBOARDING AND SUBMITTING YOUR MANUSCRIPT

1

INTRODUCTION

We very much appreciate your willingness to contribute to the *African American National Biography* (AANB). More than a decade in the making, the AANB is now in its second edition, bringing the total number of lives profiled to nearly 5,000 entries online and in print. Our approximately 2,000 authors include Darlene Clark Hine on First Lady Barack Obama, John Swed on Miles Davis; Thomas Holt on W.E.B. Du Bois and the late John Hope Franklin on the pioneering black historian George Washington Williams.

A team of editors has been assembled by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, and we have reached out to hundreds of academic experts around the country. Your contribution to this project will help ensure the African American National Biography remains a milestone in the field of African American studies in the decades to come.

PLANNING YOUR ARTICLE

2.1 Readership

The encyclopedia will be used by students from the high school to the graduate school level, librarians, scholars, journalists, writers, and educated members of the general public. Write clearly and authoritatively to a general audience that shares your interest, if not your expertise, in the subject. With the general reader in mind, avoid technical vocabulary as much as possible. When technical vocabulary or colloquialisms are necessary, make their meaning plain within the context of your writing or give equivalents in English.

2.2. Scope description

Each AANB entry should be an original piece of writing, addressed to the educated general reader. Contributors should present the subject's life generally in chronological order, placing the subject's life and career into the broader context of American and especially African American history, with reference to other relevant people, events, organizations, and movements. Each entry should include a list of further readings, a contributor byline, and any online resources or illustration suggestions. We prefer entries to run at 500 or 750 words, absent special arrangement with one of the project editors.

2.3 Word allotment

The word count for your article is shown in your contract; it applies to your text only and does not include the bibliography or boxes.

Deviation from your word allotment—especially if your article is too long—will require editorial correction. If you find that, despite every effort, you are unable to keep your article to the number of assigned words, let your assigning editor know. Early consultation will help avoid cutting or rewriting at a later stage.

A manuscript page, typed or printed out, double-spaced on 8 ½ by 11-inch paper with generous margins will contain between 250 and 275 words depending on your font size. The following scale serves as a rough guide for number of words and pages. At the end of your manuscript, provide an actual word count if your program can generate it.

250 words	1 manuscript page
500	2 manuscript pages
750	3
1000	4

2.4 Consensus of interpretation

Your interpretation of particular issues is essential to the integrity of your article; at the same time, as a reference work, the encyclopedia has an obligation to present all significant sides of controversial and unresolved questions in a fair manner, striking a balance among diverse viewpoints. Avoid language that might be construed as partisan or polemical. Wherever appropriate, your article should alert readers to a debate, its implications, and where additional information can be found.

WRITING YOUR ARTICLE

3.1 Opening paragraph

All AANB entries will follow a standard format for their opening paragraphs, beginning with the first sentence. Below is an example of the AANB format for first sentences:

Parks, Gordon, Jr. (7 Dec. 1934 - 3 Apr. 1979), filmmaker, was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the eldest son of Sally Alvis and Gordon Parks, Sr., the latter an award-winning photojournalist, author, composer, and filmmaker.

Each entry should follow this format: entry term, complete dates of birth and death, occupation(s) or reasons for renown, place of birth, parents' names and occupations, if known. The subject of the entry should be identified at outset by the name that would usually be used in the historical record. For example, the entry on Joe Louis should begin "**Louis, Joe**"; his full formal name should be given later on: ". . . was born Joseph Louis Barrow. . ." The rest of the first paragraph should contain a brief account of the subject's early life and education, not an overview of his or her accomplishments.

3.2 Body of text

Present the subject's life generally in chronological order, focusing on the primary events that made the subject a notable person; significant events in private life should be woven into the chronology. Place the subject's life and career into the broader context of history, and especially African American history, with reference to relevant people, events, movements, organizations, etc.

3.3 Marriages

Refer to a marriage by giving the spouse's name before the marriage, the year the marriage occurred, and the number of children born to the couple. In the case of divorce, identify the year a marriage was terminated.

3.4 Death and summation

Cite the place of death near the end of the text. Place of burial should not be given unless particularly noteworthy. The date of death, which is identified in the opening sentence, need not be repeated. The concluding paragraph should not be a condensation of what you have already said, and it may be redundant to add anything to the chronological account of the subject's life. More often than not, however, an assessment of the subject's place in history ought to round out an article.

3.5 Living people

AANB entries should be timeless. If you are writing about a living subject, be sure not to end the entry with a magazine-like summation ("he lives in Pittsburgh with his wife and children"); instead, attempt to write in a style that will remain correct even after the subject passes on. Attempt to use concrete dates and the simple past tense, rather than open-ended timelines and the present tense. For instance, instead of writing "she continues to serve on several corporate boards," you should write, "in 1995 she joined the board of Acme Corporation, one of many corporate boards she served on beginning in the 1990s."

3.6 Identifying people, places and things

Most readers of your article will not be specialists. For their benefit, give, wherever appropriate, brief explanations to identify people, places, concepts, and objects mentioned in your article. For example:

Fannie Lou Hamer, a leader of the Southern Freedom Struggle, . . .

The International Sweethearts of Rhythm, the African American female swing band of the 1930s and 1940s, . . .

Signs, the early Black Women's Studies journal, . . .

3.7 Dates

Make generous reference wherever appropriate to dates or periods of major events, etc. For example:

The National Council of Negro Women, founded in 1935, was long active . . .

Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, a fictional retelling of the desperate act of Margaret Garner in 1835, . . .

3.8 Quotations and permissions

Whenever possible, avoid quotation from previously published works protected by copyright, even if the works are your own. We suggest this for two reasons: (1) to avoid having to secure written permission to reprint material from copyrighted sources and (2) to encourage you to write an original article.

Use quotations only when they are essential to full understanding. Cite personal interviews with author as follows:

Reeves explained: "I'd never heard a voice like that, that was so rich and deep and beautiful, just sang all over the place. I thought, 'You mean, there are those kinds of possibilities?'" (Interview with author, 2000).

If your article requires extensive quotation from previously published works, contact **aanbonline@oup.com** for guidance.

Indicate the source, with exact page numbers, for any quoted material as well as for interpretations and facts taken from secondary sources.

We will routinely check your article for material that may require permission to reprint. But the responsibility for determining copyright status of your sources and for judging the need for permission to reprint it is yours. Submit letters of permission to us along with your manuscript.

3.9 Citations

The AANB will **not include footnotes**. If your article requires an occasional citation of a specific source, give it in a short form in the text (with the page number in parentheses) and give the full reference in the bibliography. For example:

As Anna Julia Cooper suggests in *A Voice from the South* (p. 39) . . .

Citation of sources listed in the **Further Reading** should give author's surname and page number:

...where 15,000 people gathered to hear King declare Meredith's walk against fear "the greatest demonstration for freedom ever held in Mississippi" (Dittmer, p. 402).

If there is more than one book cited by that author, give a short title reference; e.g. if there were two books listed by Dittmer, the above reference would be (Dittmer, *Local People*, p. 405).

For sources not otherwise listed, give a short parenthetical reference:

...is in fact an "unrepentant black nationalist" (*New York Times*, 2 Feb. 2003)

Of this tendency, Lorde said in an interview, "There's always someone asking you to underline one piece of yourself.... But once you do that, then you've lost" (*Denver Quarterly* 16.1 [1981], pp. 10–27).

But try not to cite sources that are too specialized, academic, or old and inaccessible.

Biblical quotations: Identify chapter and verse, and translation, where relevant. Use AV for the King James version; e.g.: "which includes the line 'Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me' (*Psalms* 40.13 [AV])."

Please note that **entries submitted with incorrect 'Further Reading' sections will be returned. See Section 5 of this document for further information.**

3.10 Plagiarism

Your article should represent your own original scholarship. If you have written on the same topic for other reference works or in a journal article, try to reword and reorganize to offer a fresh approach to the topic. We realize that there are only so many ways to state facts, but we do not want to include already published material in our reference works. More importantly, we cannot infringe the copyrights of other publishers.

The Web makes it easy to search for information and to cut and paste it from other sources. If you do gather information and quotations from the Web, make sure that you identify the sources in whatever records or documents you maintain. Be cautious about the quality of information you find on the Web. It is easy to start research on a topic using Wikipedia, but Wikipedia is not refereed by scholars and the quality of its content is uncertain. Therefore, verify any item of information that you find there—and on similar sites—in trustworthy sources. (See also Online Sources 5.3 Availability of works.)

We occasionally find that an article contains plagiarized material. Using another author's exact sentences or phrasing without providing attribution is both plagiarism and copyright infringement. Simply including the source in the bibliography without quoting directly from that source is not considered attribution. Facts can and should be drawn from a variety of sources, but the presentation of the facts must be your own. For writing of this kind, especially in the case of biographies, we understand that facts can be related only in so many ways and that a biography necessitates a structure that may be the same from one book to another, but we expect contributors to submit work that contains their own original phrases and sentences. Simply changing a word or two here and there throughout a paragraph copied and pasted from another source is not sufficient.

We detect plagiarism in multiple ways. Members of the editorial board notice it, in-house OUP editors,

and other subject specialists look for it while reviewing manuscripts, as do our copyeditors and proofreaders when checking facts. We also employ sophisticated plagiarism detection software. Whether intentional or not, plagiarism is a serious betrayal of scholarly integrity and a breach of the contributor's contract. We will reject articles that include verbatim passages (other than quotations) from other works and cancel the contract. In the case of an author contributing multiple entries, if plagiarism has been detected in any one entry, we will cancel all contracts for entries by that author, whether or not we have uncovered plagiarism in all the entries.

SOME NOTES ON STYLE

In matters of style, Oxford follows *The Chicago Manual of Style* (15th edition) with some variations, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (11th edition), *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, and *The Oxford English Dictionary*. In cases where the dictionary presents two forms, use the first spelling (for example, “catalog,” rather than “catalogue”).

Avoid using **abbreviations** in the text; use abbreviations sparingly in parenthetical material.

Translate all material in **languages other than English**, except titles of works listed in the bibliography. The translation, in parentheses and without quotation marks, should immediately follow the non-English material. Underline single words or short phrases (so that they will be set in italics); put longer phrases in roman in quotation marks. Names of institutions, buildings, and geographical locations should be in roman. Foreign-language words and expressions listed in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* are considered English words and need not be italicized.

Make sure that **accent and diacritical marks** are clear and distinct. If there is any possibility of ambiguity, write the name of the mark above the mark.

Avoid using italics for emphasis or irony; reserve italics for non-English expressions and book titles.

4.1 Style, grammar, spelling, etc.

Style will be based on the *Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed.* (CM) Open-closed-hyphenated compounds, accent marks, etc. will be taken from the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dict., 11th ed.* (MW11). For questions of usage, consult the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary of English Usage*.

4.2 Spelling

In text, use the first variant given in MW11. For names, titles, etc., use the form used by the person, book, institution, etc.

4.3 Punctuation

The **serial comma** will be used (*peas, beans, and potatoes* **not** *peas, beans and potatoes*).

No comma after short adverbial words or phrases at the beginning of a sentence, as set out in CM 5.38: “During 1982 the occurrence of sun spots...” “In 1934 Johnson began a series of...” “Between 1921 and 1923 the unpredictable behavior of the...”

4.4 Capitalization

Black Arts Movement, the Depression

In the North, the South, etc.: capitalize specific regions (but *he walked north, he looked to the north* etc.).

Capitalize the subjects of degrees: “received a B.A in Journalism,” “an M.A. in Religion and Contemporary Society,” etc.

4.5 Dates

For birth and death dates use any of the following styles (mostly taken from ANB), depending on the specificity of information available:

Sargent, John Singer (12 Jan. 1856 - 15 Apr. 1925)
Rumsey, James (Mar. 1743 - 21 Dec. 1792)
Hughes, Langston (1 Feb. 1902? - 22 May 1967)
Houston, William Churchill (1746 - 12 Aug. 1788)
Salomon, Haym (c. 1740 - 6 Jan. 1785)
Seattle (1786? - 7 June 1866)
Howetson, James (? - 4 July 1777)
Bierce, Ambrose (24 June 1842 - 1914?)
Pocahontas (c. 1596 - c. 21 Mar. 1617)
Onesimus (fl. 1706 - 1717)
Dunham, Katherine (22 June 1909 -) [4 spaces after hyphen for living people]

Use the following for the months in birth and death dates and in source citations: Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.

In running text, exact dates should be in the form *7 April 1943* without internal punctuation and without abbreviations: “On 14 April 1912 an iceberg...”

4.6 Racial terminology

The generally unmarked terms of reference in AANB are *black* and *African American* (always unhyphenated); e.g. “...for the newly freed African American constituency. On 8 February 1869, in a speech on the suffrage rights of African Americans...”

Other terms are discussed below:

Afro-American: use only in titles, quotations, etc.

black, white: lower case, no caps (e.g. “...became the first black in the county to vote and serve on a jury.”) However, keep caps as they occur in quotations.

Negro: Use, capitalized, in contexts where historical or contextual considerations make it the most natural choice; e.g. “the Fifth Massachusetts Cavalry, a Negro regiment that was stationed in Maryland;” or [re: *Green Pastures* (film)] “A rather lavish version of a simple Negro interpretation of the Bible....”

Do not use the following words, except in quotations, unless there is a strong, contextual, and specific reason for doing so: *colored, mulatto, quadroon, octoroon*, etc. Such terms as *person of color, mixed-race, light-skinned*, might be better choices.

4.7 Explicit racial identification

Within an article, identify a person’s race when it is germane to the point being made, but not necessarily otherwise. If someone is generally/widely known, no mention of race should be necessary. When introducing a name into an article, identify race if it helps the reader get the point of what you are saying.

4.8 Gendered terms

The matter of adjudicating on gendered terms is a complex one. Avoid using dated or clearly problematic terms (*sculptress, aviatrix, poetess*). However, it is difficult to be dogmatic about a number of other

terms. While we will try to be reasonably consistent in first-sentence designations of entries, trust your sense of the subject and your own *sprachgefühl* (or ear for the language), especially in running text.

Actress: AANB will use *actress*. *Actress* is in unmarked frequent use throughout the language, though some object on the principle that to differentiate for gender is demeaning to women, especially when the “masculine” term is used for the generic sense (“All of the actors in the film....”).

Comedienne: AANB will use *comedian* rather than *comedienne*. While the latter may be appropriate in some (esp. historical) contexts, use of the former should not seem out of place.

Waitress: May be used in AANB.

COMPILING YOUR “FURTHER READING” BIBLIOGRAPHY

5.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Further Reading section is to cite the principal sources of information contained in your article, to call attention to some of the most useful works concerning the subject of your article, and to recommend other sources for information on the subject. Be selective in suggesting further reading; it should not be an exhaustive list of all works related to your topic.

Except for autobiographical works, the subject’s own works are not listed in the **Further Reading** section; mention important works in the body of the text by title (*in italics*) followed by publication date in parentheses. We are interested primarily in the biographical sources, not the literary or scholarly criticism (which can, of course, be referenced in the text when necessary).

List only the most important biographical sources, particularly those accessible to a general audience. The **Further Reading** section can have up to four parts. See the sample entries at the end of the manual for examples:

1. A statement in sentence form locating any significant collections or archives of the subject’s papers. (*Skip a line*)
2. Autobiography/-phies (*Skip a line*)
3. The two to four most important biographies or biographical sources (occasionally more for important figures with lengthier entries.) Where possible, list only journals that will be accessible to a general audience; there may, of course, be instances in which the primary information has only appeared in academic journals, in which case it should be listed. (*Don’t skip a line.*)
4. Obituary/-ies: Source and date for obituaries in well-known, accessible sources. (Most common are the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, but other obituaries, especially in African American-owned newspapers, may also be significant.)

5.2 Number of items

The **Further Reading** should not overwhelm the reader or the article. Emphasize the 3-4 most important sources of information about your topic and the most influential critical interpretations. Do not include the **Further Reading** in calculating the word count of your article.

5.3 Availability of works

The **Further Reading** section is intended as a guide, not a list of the most significant sources. Favor book-length works available in most libraries. Do not include journal articles, out-of-print works, and works only available in research libraries and archives inaccessible to most readers, unless these are the only sources available. You may consult other biographical dictionaries for information, but should not include these in Further Reading. Likewise use online resources sparingly, if at all, in your Further

Reading. Cite only trusted academic websites that have a degree of permanence. We will delete extraneous online resources. Because most users of the volumes will be nonspecialists, minimize references to specialized periodical literature whenever possible.

5.4 Format

Type the word “**Further Reading**” at the beginning of the list. Arrange items alphabetically by surname of author. Multiple works by a single author should be listed in alphabetical order by title. Use hanging indents and double spacing.

An item should include:

1. Names of authors in full, exactly as they appear in print. If there is more than one item by an author, repeat the author’s name; do not use a 3-em dash.
2. Titles of works in full, including subtitles. Italicize all titles, including end punctuation. **There is no need to add publisher and city of publication.**
3. Edition if it is other than the first. Note particularly if you are citing a reprint or a revised edition. If more than one edition is available, cite the most recently published edition.
4. Number of volumes of multivolume works. Give the volume number, when appropriate, for works in a series.
5. Names of editors and translators in full.
6. Date of publication in parentheses.

Samples:

1. Cass, Melnea

Further Reading

Melnea Cass's papers are kept at the Northeastern University Libraries in Boston, Massachusetts. Her oral history recorded with Tahí L. Mottl in 1977 is published in *The Black Women Oral History Project*, ed. Ruth Edmonds Hill, vol. 2 (1991). The original tapes and two folders of newspaper clippings and memorabilia are in the files of the Black Women Oral History Project, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Hill, Ruth Edmonds. “Melnea Cass “First Lady of Roxbury,” in *Notable Black American Women*, ed. Jessie Carney Smith (1992).

Obituaries:

Boston Globe, 20 Dec. 1978; *Bay State Banner*, 21 Dec. 1978.

2. Tolan, Eddie

Further Reading

Ashe, Arthur. *A Hard Road to Glory—Track and Field: The African-American Athlete in Track and Field* (1993)

Baker, William J. *Jesse Owens: An American Life* (1986)

Quercetani, Roberto L. *A World History of Track and Field Athletics* (1964)

Obituaries:

New York Times and *Detroit Free Press*, 1 Feb. 1967.

5.5 Verification of sources

Readers will depend on the accuracy, completeness, and consistency of your **Further Reading**. Cite only trusted academic, government, or subscription websites that have a degree of permanence. Do not cite bibliographic information from memory; verify each entry in your **Further Reading** against the original source.

6

KEYBOARDING AND SUBMITTING YOUR MANUSCRIPT

Send your manuscript to the editorial offices of Oxford University Press as an attachment to e-mail. Please indicate in a cover note the software program you used. Send the manuscript to

Tim Allen
aanbonline@oup.com

Please format your manuscript as follows:

- Allow generous margins (1 inch or 2.5 cm at top, bottom, and left and 1 ½ inches or 4 cm at the right).
- Do not use boldface type or special features. Set your program to left justification and ragged right, without hyphenating words at the ends of lines. Please use Times New Roman or other standard font, in 12-point size.
- Do not use section or page breaks in the body of your manuscript. We work almost entirely with electronic files rather than hardcopies, and remove breaks from every entry without exception. Including breaks only adds to the time it takes to process your work.
- Type your name following the bibliography exactly as you wish it to appear in print. Below your name, type your current affiliation (department and institution).
- On a separate sheet, provide suggestions for illustrations and online sources. Attach photocopies if at all possible.

SAMPLE ENTRIES:

Beckwourth, Jim (26 April 1800? - 1866?), mountain man, fur trapper and trader, scout, translator, and explorer, was born James Pierson Beckwith in Frederick County, Virginia, the son of Sir Jennings Beckwith, a white Revolutionary War veteran and the descendent of minor Irish aristocrats who became prominent Virginians. Little is know about Jim's mother, a mixed-race slave working in the Beckwith household. Although he was born into slavery, Jim was manumitted by his father in the 1820s. In the early 1800s, Beckwith moved his family, which reputedly included fourteen children, to Missouri, eventually settling in St. Louis. It has been suggested that Beckwith, an adventurous outdoorsman, was seeking an environment less hostile to his racially mixed family.

As a young teenager, after four years of schooling, Jim Beckwourth (as his name came to be spelled) was apprenticed to a blacksmith. Unhappy as a tradesman, he fled to the newly discovered lead mines in Illinois' Fever River region and then to New Orleans in search of greater adventure. Motivated by a lack of work and by the racism he encountered, Jim responded to a newspaper ad placed by the entrepreneurial fur traders Andrew Henry and William Henry Ashley. The ad called for "One Hundred MEN to ascend the Missouri to the Rocky Mountains"; Jim enlisted in 1824. The Ashley-Henry strategy, which Beckwourth emulated, combined direct beaver trapping with trading for furs at the Indian villages. He learned trapping and frontier skills alongside legendary mountain men Jedediah Smith and Jim Bridger, becoming a crack shot and expert bowie knife and tomahawk handler. Beckwourth was present at the first Mountain Man rendezvous at Henry's Fork on the Green River in 1825. He claimed to have been married briefly to two Blackfoot Indian sisters during this period.

While on a trapping expedition in the late 1820s, Beckwourth was captured by Crow Indians (Absaroke or Sparrowhawk people). How exactly Beckwourth came to live with the Crow remains unclear. During the years he lived with the tribe, Beckwourth became a valued Crow warrior and tribe member. He lived with a succession of Indian women and acknowledged one child, Black Panther or Little Jim. Beckwourth's tribal names--Morning Star, Antelope, Enemy of Horses, Bobtail Horse, Bloody Arm, Bull's Robe, and Medicine Calf--capture both the romance and the narrative value of his years living, hunting, and raiding with the Crow.

Leaving the tribe and the Ashley-Henry fur trading company behind in 1836, Beckwourth crisscrossed the Western frontier playing cards, prospecting, trapping, selling whiskey to Indians,

stealing horses, brawling in saloons, and guiding settlers. Hired by the U. S. Army as a muleskinner, messenger, and scout during the Seminole War of 1837, he fought against the Seminole, a confederation of Native Americans and run-away slaves. Subsequently, Jim traveled the Southwest working as a fur trader and translator for Andrew Sublette and Luis Vasquez on the Santa Fe Trail and as a wagon loader at Bent's Fort in Taos. In 1842, Beckwourth opened a trading post with his current wife, Louise Sandoval, in what is presently Pueblo, Colorado. A few years later, abandoning yet another family, Beckwourth answered the siren call of California, where he survived as a horse thief (claiming to have stolen over 2000 horses), a letter carrier, and from 1846 to 1847 as a guide for the American forces during the conquest of California.

The discovery of gold in 1848 brought Beckwourth to the Sierra mining camps. But while most forty-niners panned for gold, Jim invested in a more lucrative gamble: a passable travel route through the rugged mountain terrain. In 1850 he located the Beckwourth Pass near present-day Reno, Nevada. Capitalizing on his discovery, Jim built a wagon road servicing settlers and gold rushers and established a ranch and trading post in what came to be known as Beckwourth, California. A charming and personable host, Jim briefly reinvented himself as a hotel and saloonkeeper. The pass, which in its heyday accommodated 10,000 wagons annually, remained popular until the railroad supplanted wagon travel in 1855.

In 1858, Beckwourth traveled east to St. Louis, Denver, and Kansas City, until gold was discovered in Pikes Peak, Colorado. Beckwourth and his latest wife, Elizabeth Lettbetter, worked as shopkeepers in Denver, but Jim never quite adapted to city life and his marriage dissolved and he subsequently married a Crow woman named Sue. The Colorado Volunteer Cavalry hired Beckwourth to locate Cheyenne and Araphaho Indian camps in 1864. Jim's role in the subsequent Sand Creek Massacre permanently alienated him from the Indian tribes. Even after testifying before a military commission that his life had been threatened, Beckwourth never fully regained their trust.

The facts of Beckwourth's life remain in contention. Even the year of his birth is debated among historians. Much of the historical perplexity is the result of obfuscations in the autobiography that Beckwourth dictated to Thomas D. Bonner in 1854. Most significantly, the autobiography omits any mention of Beckwourth's race. While it was Bonner who altered the spelling of the name "Beckwourth," Jim was responsible for confusing dates, omitting details,

and lavishly embellishing the facts of his life, including his role in events, the number of rivals killed, money made, and battles waged. The book, published in 1856, put in print stories Beckwourth had been spinning for years. Storytelling was a valued skill and an important part of the period's oral tradition, and Beckwourth had spent a lifetime fashioning elaborate narratives with himself as the hero. The book found a ready audience amongst armchair travelers fascinated and titillated by the exoticism and liberation of frontier stories. Once the inaccuracies of his text were revealed, however, Beckwourth was quickly labeled and accepted as a liar. As a result, many early historians wrote him off as an unreliable and purposeful braggart while others, fueled by racism, attacked him on the basis of his "mixed blood." Today, historians generally agree that much of the text's basic narrative can be believed and that it represents an invaluable documentary record.

An inveterate adventurer and explorer, Beckwourth looked and dressed the part. Dark eyed, muscular and taller than six feet, he often dressed in embroidered buckskin, Crow leggings, ribbons, earrings, and gold chains and wore his thick dark hair loose to his waist or elaborately braided. Beckwourth was not, as has been claimed, completely illiterate. He spoke English with great skill, fluent French, some Spanish and a number of Indian dialects. The elision of race in his autobiography has been compounded by numerous painted portraits that untruthfully depict Jim as very light-skinned and by the 1951 film *Tomahawk*, which cast Jack Oakie, a white actor, as Beckwourth.

Mystery still surrounds Beckwourth's death in Crow territory near the Bighorn River in 1866. While it is generally believed that he died of sickness or food poisoning, the rumor lingers that he was purposefully poisoned by the Crow after rejecting offers to rejoin the tribe.

Further Reading

Beckwourth, James P. *The Life and Times of James P. Beckwourth, Mountaineer, Scout, Pioneer, and Chief of the Crow Nation of Indians as told to Thomas D. Bonner* (1856).

Mumey, Nolie. *James Pierson Beckwourth: An Enigmatic Figure of the West, A History of the Latter Years of His Life* (1957).

Wilson, Elinor. *Jim Beckwourth: Black Mountain Man and War Chief of the Crows* (1972).

Lisa Rivo

Lorde, Audre (18 Feb. 1934 - 17 Nov. 1992), poet, writer, and activist, was born Audrey Geraldine Lorde in Harlem, New York, the youngest of the three daughters of Frederic Byron Lorde, a laborer from Barbados, and Linda Bellmar, from Grenada. Lorde's parents came to the United States from the Caribbean with hopes of earning enough money to return to the West Indies and start a small business. During the Depression the realization that the family was going to remain exiled in America slowly set in. Growing up in this atmosphere of disappointment had a profound impact on Lorde's development as questions of identity, nationality, and community membership occupied her mind.

Ironically, this woman whose living and reputation derived from her skillful use of words, had to struggle as a child to acquire speech and literacy. She was so nearsighted that she was considered legally blind, her mother feared that she might be retarded, and her first memories of school are of being disparaged for being mentally slow. Either out of fear of her mother, a severe disciplinarian, or because of an undiagnosed speech impediment, Lorde did not begin to talk until she was four years old and was uncommunicative for many years thereafter.

Lorde received her early education at two Catholic institutions in Harlem, St. Mark's and St. Catherine's. In her fictionalized biomythography, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*, she recalls the patronizing racism of low expectations, the overt racism of bigotry, and the oppressive learning environment that stifled her creativity. The West Indian dialect that she heard at home and the unusual idioms that her parents used taught her that words could be used in different and creative ways. Freedom to construct words and sentences as she chose, however, was a right that she would have to fight for. Alternate spellings of her name and the adoption of new names were merely the most visible symbols of her struggle for self-definition. If Lorde was to be a rebel and a contrarian, then words would become her weapons of choice.

Lorde began writing poetry in the seventh or eighth grade. At Hunter College High School she met another aspiring poet, Diane de Prima, and they worked together on the school literary journal, *Scribimus*. However, when the school refused to print a love sonnet Lorde had written about her affection for a boy, she sent the poem to *Seventeen* magazine, where it was published.

After graduating from high school in 1951, Lorde worked and studied intermittently until 1959, when she received a B.A. degree from Hunter College. During much of the 1950s, Lorde supported herself as a factory worker, an X-ray technician, and in a number of other unsatisfying positions. A pivotal experience occurred in 1954, when Lorde spent a year at the National

University of Mexico. Though she had had a brief lesbian encounter while working at a factory in Connecticut, it was in Mexico that she began to free herself of the feelings of deviance that had inhibited her sexuality. When she returned to New York the following year, she immersed herself in the “gay-girl” culture of Greenwich Village and she continued to develop her craft as a member of the Harlem Writers Guild, which brought her into contact with such poets as LANGSTON HUGHES. It was also during this period that she became involved with “Beat Poets” Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and LeRoi Jones (AMIRI BARAKA).

In 1961 Lorde received an M.L.S. degree from Columbia University’s School of Library Service, and in March 1962 she married Edward Ashley Rollins, a white attorney from Brooklyn. They were married for eight years and had two children, Elizabeth and Jonathan, before divorcing in 1970. She held a number of posts at different libraries before becoming the head librarian at Town School Library in New York City, where she served from 1966 to 1968.

Lorde’s life took a dramatic turn in 1968 when she received a National Endowment for the Arts grant, resigned her position as a librarian, and accepted a post at Tougaloo College in Mississippi as poet-in-residence. While at this historically black college, Lorde’s first book of poetry, *The First Cities* (1968), received critical acclaim for its effective understatement and subtlety. It was at Tougaloo College that Lorde met Frances Clayton, who would become her long-term companion. Lorde’s second book, *Cables to Rage* (1970), captures the anger of the emerging Black Power movement and contains the poem “Martha,” in which Lorde first confirms her homosexuality in print. From this point on, Lorde observed that different groups (blacks, feminists, lesbians, and others) wanted to claim aspects of her life to aid their cause while rejecting those elements that challenged their prejudices. Of this tendency, Lorde said in an interview, “There’s always someone asking you to underline one piece of yourself--whether it’s Black, woman, mother, dyke, teacher, etc.--because that’s the piece that they need to key in to. They want to dismiss everything else. But once you do that, then you’ve lost” (*Denver Quarterly* 16.1 [1981], pp. 10–27).

During the 1970s, Lorde returned to New York, where she entered a productive period of writing, teaching, and giving readings. Her third book, *From A Land Where Other People Live* (1973), was nominated for the National Book Award for poetry. It was followed in rapid succession by *New York Head Shop and Museum* (1974), *Coal* (1976), *Between Ourselves* (1976), and *The Black Unicorn* (1978). In these works, Lorde develops her central themes: bearing

witness to the truth, transforming pain into freedom, and seizing the power to define love and beauty for oneself. Never does her work trade in clichés, employ hackneyed metaphors, or evoke saccharine sentiment. Lorde found a new voice in poetry that struck like a hammer but sounded like a bell on issues of race, gender, sexuality, and humanity.

Late in 1978, at the age of forty-four, Lorde was stricken with breast cancer. She had a mastectomy, but refused to wear a prosthesis to hide the effects of the surgery. Instead, she chose to face her ordeal openly and honestly by incorporating it into her writing. In many ways *The Cancer Journal* (1980) helped women to “come out of the closet” about this disease. Confronted with her own mortality, she published the autobiographical *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1980), which is essentially the story of her early life, and *Sister Outsider* (1984), a collection of speeches and essays. In *Burst of Light* (1988), which won the American Book Award for nonfiction, Lorde explains that “the struggle with cancer now informs all my days, but it is only another face of that continuing battle for self-determination and survival that black women fight daily, often in triumph.” Her final book of poems, *The Marvelous Arithmetics of Distance*, was published posthumously in 1993.

In an effort to help other women writers, Lorde co-founded Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press in 1980. She taught courses on race and literature at Lehman College, and John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and she was the Thomas Hunter Professor of English at her alma mater, Hunter College, until 1988. Lorde’s highest accolade was bestowed in 1991, when she was awarded New York’s Walt Whitman Citation of Merit, an award given to the poet laureate of New York State.

Six years after her mastectomy, Lorde was diagnosed with liver cancer. She sought treatment in America, Europe, and Africa before moving to St. Croix in the Virgin Islands with her companion, Gloria I. Joseph. Shortly before her death in November 1992, Lorde underwent an African ritual in which she was renamed Gambda Adisa, which loosely translated means, “Warrior: She Who makes Her Meaning Known.”

Further Reading

Lorde, Audre. *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1982).

Anderson, Linda R. *Women and Autobiography in the Twentieth Century: Remembered Futures* (1997).

Keating, AnaLouise. *Women Reading Women Writing: Self-invention in Paula Gunn Allen, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Audre Lorde* (1996).

Steele, Cassie Premo. *We Heal from Memory: Sexton, Lorde, Anzaldúa, and the Poetry of Witness* (2000).

Obituary: *New York Times*, 20 November 1992.

Sholomo B. Levy

Meredith, James Howard (25 June, 1933 -), civil rights activist, was born J. H. Meredith near Kosciusko, Mississippi, the son of Moses “Cap” Meredith, a farmer, and Roxie Smith Meredith, a school cafeteria worker. J. H. adopted the names James Howard when he entered the air force in 1951; until then he went by the initials given to him by a father who did not want neighboring whites to call his son by his first name only. Indeed, the stubborn--some might say, reckless--courage that James Meredith displayed in integrating the University of Mississippi owed much to the example of his father, who refused to display the deference expected of blacks in Jim Crow Mississippi. Cap Meredith viewed his eighty-five acre homestead as a sovereign state and ruled it like a patriarch. He restricted his children’s contacts with outsiders, black or white, and prohibited them from ever entering a white family’s home by the back door or from working in service to whites. The Merediths also instilled in their children a passionate belief in the power of education; all ten completed high school and seven would attend college, a remarkable feat in the segregated, desperately poor Mississippi hill country of the 1940s.

On graduating from high school in 1951, James Meredith joined the United States Air Force, serving first in Kansas and then Japan as a clerk-typist, rising in rank to staff-sergeant. After his military service, he hoped to return to Mississippi to study law and to carry out what he described in his autobiography as a “divine responsibility” to end white supremacy in his home state. In the meantime, he took classes at the University of Kansas, Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas, the U. S. Armed Forces Institute, and the University of Maryland’s Far Eastern Division in Japan. He also maintained a keen interest in the emerging civil rights movement, though he drew greater inspiration from DAISY BATES’ efforts to integrate the Little Rock schools than from the nonviolent philosophy espoused by MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. during the Montgomery bus boycott. Meredith later recalled that he found the concept of nonviolence

“crazy,” at least when applied to Mississippi (Doyle, p. 20). He believed that blacks could only secure full citizenship rights if supported by the full force of the United States military, as had been the case at Little Rock when President Eisenhower sent in the 101st Airborne Division to escort nine black students into Central High School. Meredith viewed his goal of ending white supremacy as a “war,” but after receiving an honorable discharge from the air force in 1960, he kept his powder dry for a time, returning home to study history and political science at Jackson State College, a black institution.

The student sit-in movement that began in Greensboro, North Carolina, in early 1960 had not yet spread to Mississippi, but Meredith joined a secret society on the Jackson State campus that distributed anti-segregation pamphlets and debated the possibility of active opposition to Jim Crow. In January 1961, however, having decided that it was time to move beyond debate, he applied for admission to the all-white University of Mississippi. MEDGAR EVERS, the field secretary of the Mississippi NAACP, offered his assistance and persuaded the national NAACP Legal Defense Fund (LDF) to provide Meredith with the legal expertise needed to overcome the university’s inevitable opposition. Meredith proved to be exactly the kind of determined plaintiff needed to win such a case, although his “Messiah complex” and self-righteousness often exasperated the LDF’s CONSTANCE BAKER MOTLEY (Doyle, p. 32). Such tenacity paid off, however, in June 1962, when Judge John Minor Wisdom of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals condemned the University of Mississippi’s “carefully calculated campaign of delay, harassment, and masterly inactivity” and ordered Meredith’s immediate admission. Only a “man with a mission and a nervous stomach,” Wisdom concluded, could have broken the color line at Ole Miss (Doyle, 33).

Yet Wisdom’s ruling neither completed Meredith’s mission nor settled the applicant’s stomach, because Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett vowed to defy what he called the “unlawful dictates” of the federal government, and even traveled to the Oxford campus to personally--and theatrically--block Meredith’s admission. Barnett’s flagrant defiance of federal authority climaxed in his inflammatory speech before an Ole Miss football game on September 29, 1962, one day prior to Meredith’s scheduled arrival on campus. One spectator later recalled that the students “were being whipped into a fever-pitch of emotion by their own leaders...it was just like the Nazis had done” (Dittmer, p. 140). What the crowd did not know was that Barnett, for all of his outward bravado, was secretly negotiating with Attorney General Robert Kennedy to

allow Meredith's admission. The next day, one hour after marshals escorted Meredith into his dormitory, thousands of white students, townspeople, and outside segregationists began an armed riot that left two men dead, injured 168 marshals, and left the bucolic, magnolia-lined campus looking more like a war zone. Federal authorities later confiscated scores of guns and other weapons from fraternity houses such as Sigma Nu, although that fraternity's president, later U. S. Senate majority leader Trent Lott, reportedly ordered his brothers away from the riot for their safety. Although President John F. Kennedy made a nationally televised appeal for calm, peace was only restored when he ordered in 23,000 combat troops. One day later, under heavy military escort, James Meredith became the first African American to register at Ole Miss.

After graduating nine months later, Meredith studied at Ibadan University in Nigeria and began a law degree at Columbia University in New York. In 1966, however, he set out on what appeared to be another iconoclastic mission: a "walk against fear" from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi, aimed at persuading blacks in his home state that it was now safe to register and vote. Meredith's march attracted the attention of only a few reporters until he was shot three times as he crossed the Mississippi border; fortunately, his assailant had been armed only with buckshot, but Meredith was hospitalized with some eighty pellets imbedded in his body. Images of the shooting brought the leading lights of the civil rights movement to Mississippi to continue Meredith's march. They succeeded in adding thousands of new black voters to the electoral register and Meredith rejoined the final leg of the march from Tougaloo College to Jackson, where 15,000 people gathered to hear King declare Meredith's walk against fear "the greatest demonstration for freedom ever held in Mississippi" (Dittmer, p. 402). The march also exposed fissures in the civil rights movement as younger activists, such as SNCC's STOKELY CARMICHAEL, responded to violent intimidation by state troopers by advocating a more aggressive philosophy of "black power," much to the consternation of King and others still committed to nonviolence.

After publishing a well-received autobiography, *Three Years in Mississippi* (1966), and receiving a law degree from Columbia in 1968, Meredith faded from public view. He taught briefly at the University of Cincinnati, ran several unsuccessful campaigns for Congress, and also managed a nightclub and a car rental business. Many who had lauded his courage at Ole Miss were incredulous, however, in 1989 when he took a position as a special assistant to Jesse Helms, the far-right-wing senator from North Carolina, and were horrified, two years later, when

Meredith advocated support for David Duke, a former--though unrepentant--Louisiana Klansman running for the U. S. Senate. Following the death in 1979 of June Wiggins, his first wife and the mother of his three sons, Meredith married Judy Allsobrook, a journalist, and adopted her son and daughter.

Defeating white supremacy in Mississippi was no easy task. It would take men and women as obdurately defiant as James Meredith, Medgar Evers, and FANNIE LOU HAMER to overcome a white majority determined to keep blacks as second-class citizens. As Evers later recalled, Meredith had “more guts than any man I know,” but he also found him to be “the hardest headed son-of-a-gun I ever met” (Doyle, p. 32).

Further Reading

James Meredith's papers are housed in the Department of Archives and Special Collections, J. D. Williams Library, University of Mississippi in Oxford, Mississippi.

Meredith, James. *Three Years in Mississippi* (1966).

Dittmer, John. *Local People: the Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (1994).

Doyle, William. *An American Insurrection: The Battle of Oxford, Mississippi, 1962* (2001).

Steven J. Niven

Please send contracts, submissions requests, and inquiries to the Assistant Editor

Tim Allen
Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, 8th Floor
New York, NY 10016

aanbonline@oup.com