

## "Great Migration I The African Americans," November 12, 2013

**Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Narrator:** Their exodus created a problem. The southern economy was still largely agrarian, dependent upon African Americans to do the jobs no one else wanted at a wage few others would accept.

**David Levering Lewis, Historian:** People are leaving the South. And indeed, curiously enough, there is a pushback on behalf of many whites in the South who say, "Wait a minute. We have to calibrate our bestiality." If we start losing these people, why, that's not the game plan.

**Gates:** Who would cook? Clean? And care for the children? Till the fields. Harvest the crops.

**Isabel Wilkerson, Author:**

The interaction between the former slaveholders and those who had been enslaved had not changed fundamentally when it came to interpersonal interactions and the expectations of how one should behave.

**Gates:** And economic exploitation.

**Wilkerson:** And economic exploitation.

**Gates:** It's incredible, isn't it?

**Wilkerson:** It was like a bad marriage ... The Emancipation Proclamation had not live up to its name. People had not truly been free. The Great Migration is really about freedom. It's about identity. It's about claiming one's citizenship, one's American-ness. And it is ultimately about agency.