

Carton 7137

LEE BROWN

"STRONG ... " MSS, NOTES + CORRESP. c. 1997-1999

74/100

Lee Brown

Grid  
206-4168



5 Gammings  
1  
08-5-30  
552-3253  
552-0129  
Wed.  
WK 552-0129

✓ ee  
Brown

Subj: Re:Lee Brown  
Date: Tue, Sep 28, 1999 8:26 PM EDT  
From: dbirkenkamp@rowmanlittlefield.com  
To: RobertA648@aol.com

File: RFC822.TXT (888 bytes)

Dear Robert,

Thanks for your note. I'll phone about 10 your time Thursday.

best,  
--Dean

*Saul back w/ "penicillin"*

Dean Birkenkamp DBirkenkamp@Rowman.com  
Rowman & Littlefield Publishers  
5370 Manhattan Circle, #105  
Boulder, CO 80303  
tel: (303) 543-7835  
fax: (303) 543-0043

*Asst: Christina*

*103*

*Dean sez can't work*

*honorary \$300-\$500*

Reply Separator

*to Julianne Andrews*

Subject: Lee Brown  
Author: <RobertA648@aol.com>  
Date: 9/28/99 3:57 PM

Dear Dean,

Thanks for your e-mail. I can be available on Thursday between 9 am and 11 am Pacific Coast time. Does that work for you?

I'm sending a packet with possible photos (copies) and other material for book.

Best wishes,

Subj: Re:Fwd: Lee Brown  
Date: Tue, Sep 28, 1999 2:43 PM EDT  
From: dbirkenkamp@rowmanlittlefield.com  
To: Bookgirl66@aol.com, RobertA648@aol.com

*will send  
9-11-99*

File: RFC822.TXT (892 bytes)

Dear Robert Allen (and Jill),

I'm sorry I haven't managed to phone you yet, but I would like to do so either Thursday or Friday this week, if you could let me know a time convenient for you. (I'll be out of the office Wednesday). Meantime, do send on the photos and other items to me at the address below. I've heard nothing but great things about you from Jill, and I'm looking forward to working with you.

Best,  
--Dean

Dean Birkenkamp  
Rowman & Littlefield Publishers  
5370 Manhattan Circle, #105  
Boulder, CO 80303  
tel: (303) 543-7835  
fax: (303) 543-0043

DBirkenkamp@Rowman.com

\_\_\_\_\_Reply Separator\_\_\_\_\_

Subject: Fwd: Lee Brown  
Author: <Bookgirl66@aol.com>  
Date: 9/26/99 6:09 PM

Dean:

fyi.....

Date: Tue, Sep 28, 1999 3:57 PM EDT  
From: RobertA648  
Subj: Lee Brown  
To: dbirkenkamp@rowmanlittlefield.com

Dear Dean,

Thanks for your e-mail. I can be available on Thursday between 9 am and 11 am Pacific Coast time. Does that work for you?

I'm sending a packet with possible photos (copies) and other material for book.

Best wishes,

Robert

cells  
to

Jill 9/21/99

Dean Rinkencamp / will edit the Kona  
(Jill's mentor) book / did Kibria book

has he seen ms?

email w/ jar An Jill:  
bookgirl66@aol.com  
her house at 1

Wynne  
Dore

Donna  
9/22  
829-3951

Jill Kotherberg 9/20/99

is fantastic p's  
Nice, seamless  
great head  
good story  
Sorry won't get to work on,  
her position eliminated

303/279-4972 (w)

Alfredo - book/read at  
30 places

cells  
to

Jill 9/21/99

Dean Rinkencamp / will edit the Kawa  
(Jill's mentor) book / did Rinkencamp book

has he seen ms?

Email edgar An Jill?  
bookgirl66@aol.com  
boyfriend at horse  
Dove

Donna  
9/22  
8/29 3/9/97

email?

What not?  
Dean or  
edit

heard from Maggie?  
No

Alfredo - book/vent at  
30 places

Date: Fri, Sep 24, 1999 11:35 AM EDT  
From: RobertA648  
Subj: Lee Brown  
To: Bookgirl66

Dear Jill --

I told Lee Brown that you were no longer with Rowman and Littlefield. I didn't go into any details. I told him that a new editor whom you respected would be taking over our project. He was sorry that you wouldn't be continuing; he likes you a lot. He'd be happy to hear from you. His number is 415/441-3061. If the line is busy it means he is not home, as he always leaves the phone off the hook when he goes out.

I have a packet of xeroxes of possible photos for the book as well as the Acknowledgments page, Note on Sources, and List of Lee Brown's Tributes and Awards. Should I send these on to Dean Birkencamp, or wait to hear from him? I could also send a copy of this material to you.

Hope you're having a pleasant time in Denver.

Best wishes,

Robert

803 275-4972  
called 9/27

Subj: Re:Lee Brown MS  
Date: Mon, Aug 30, 1999 2:13 PM EDT  
From: jrothenberg@rowmanlittlefield.com  
To: RobertA648@aol.com

File: RFC822.TXT (887 bytes)

Hi Robert:

Great talking with you earlier. I'm so psyched about the book and have spread the news to my colleagues, who are very enthusiastic as well!!!! Let's talk soon about possible endorsers and contact info for Julianne M.

All the best,

Jill

\_\_\_\_\_Reply Separator\_\_\_\_\_

Subject: Lee Brown MS  
Author: <RobertA648@aol.com>  
Date: 8/30/99 10:53 AM

Dear Jill,

This is to confirm that I have finished a draft of the Lee Brown book. However, I'd like to give it a final read-through and make a few changes, additions and cuts it needs. I think this editing should take no more than a week. Okay if I get it in to you next week?

I understand Maggie is also completing her book.

Hope you've had a good summer.

Best,  
Robert

Subj: Fwd[2]:S in S MS  
Date: Thu, Sep 16, 1999 6:14 PM EDT  
From: cgatliffe@nbnbooks.com  
To: roberta648@aol.com, bookgirl66@aol.com

File: RFC822.TXT (888 bytes)

Dear Prof. Allen,

Hi, this is Jill's assistant. I just wanted to quickly assure you that we received your manuscript and that Jill will be in touch within a few days. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Christine Gatliffe  
Editorial Assistant  
CGatliffe@nbnbooks.com

\_\_\_\_\_  
Forward Header\_\_\_\_\_

Subject: S in S MS  
Author: <RobertA648@aol.com>  
Date: 9/15/99 2:03 PM

Jill --

Just a note to confirm that you received the Lee Brown MS.

Robert

----- Headers -----

Return-Path: <cgatliffe@nbnbooks.com>  
Received: from rly-yc04.mx.aol.com (rly-yc04.mail.aol.com

10/3/99

pagination

Strong in style

Intro 1-7

Prologue 8-19

Ch 1 20-34

Ch 2 35-55

Ch 3 56-84

Blk WKK on waterbent - 85-102

Ch 4 - ~~85~~ 103-124

Ch 5 125-155

Ch 6 156-174

Ch 7 175-198

Ch 8 199-209

Ch 9 210-217

trial of CB 218-288

Ch 10 239-245

Ch 11 246-259

Ch 12 260-273

Ch 13 274-284

Ch 14 285-300

Ch 15 301-310

Afterword 311-323

Index 324

Some 325

Lee Brown <sup>ms</sup> and wife  
Title: With RA (?) 9/18/95

Print out new  
revised version  
of LRM after  
changes made

SFD New Names

510/524-166A X301

510 / 530 - 94 94

Coll-  
with Johann  
Malveaux

Sarah Connor

415/487-4541

we had track  
later

8783

Call Linda / Carter re JA

LBMs Describe Lee Kwan as vigorous  
and animated in discussion; best conversation  
punctuated with "oh brother" as a phrase.  
The occasional compare L.K. with

Compare L.R. with  
Hers. H. for narrative  
re CP exp.

Message 9/10

Jerse Warm - Can't make Monday mtg

(prices for bids wait to be submitted)

he hasn't had change / busy

wants to postpone meeting to call Bill RA  
he may

L. K. Mrs Re examine my statement that L. K. did  
not have syphilis (~~to Alford~~)  
(SF Ch)

Lee Brown <sup>ms</sup> and wife  
Title: Wish RA (?) 9/18/95

→ Heutchen Pader

S P D

Weg Womies

## List of Invites

510/52x-166A x 301

510 / 534 - 94 94

Century 21

Shirah Cannon

915/487-4541  
we add tracks  
later

Mail. Avpt. no: 8783

— call Linda / Carter re JA

LBMS

Describe Lee Kwan as vigorous  
and animated in discussion; best conversation  
punctuated with "oh brother" An emphasis  
on occasional

Compare L.R. with  
Hers. Hudson manuscript  
re CP exp.

Message 9/10

Jerse Wann - Can't make Monday mtg

(prices for bids wait to be submitted)

he hasn't had change, / boy

want to postpone meeting to call Bill RA  
he may

L. H. M.

Re examine my statement that L.G. did not have syphilis (~~is already~~)  
(SF Ch)

LB MS

paraphrase long  
quote in local 207 history

to be

mention Murphy as a source  
note: all material review through  
re-interviewing

Also 2nd  
to FRI  
to FRI

Set off long quotes in Redwood  
chapter with ~~bookends~~ to  
make visually separate and less  
tedious / optional Sidebar

Note sociological significance of LP's experience  
as small town emergent leader  
(rank and file)

All  
during characterized by

Note: with L.P. & R.A. had <sup>also</sup> independently  
~~read~~ well known paintings The Narrative  
of Korea Hudson and admired it.  
Hudson's subtitle is a vague comment on the South

FRI Abstract of ~~above~~ <sup>and wrote memos expressing</sup> ~~interest in the effort to produce~~  
~~and requests for follow up~~  
informant to testify against Brown

Crucial in my life: ~~Brown's~~ <sup>mentor</sup> ~~wife's~~ name Bobbie(?)

(over)

Ch 3 <sup>mt.</sup> Charlotte Bass ✓

~~Referenced;~~  
Kendrick Alexander - mentioned that she  
later died in a tragic fire  
in her home.

New Orleans; Rose's last name: Robertson ✓

\* P. 91 ~~Summarize~~ paragraph ✓  
David Wells quote

Write +  
send

(OK)

\* p. 227 make FRT quote ✓  
a sidebar

Call Gene Vance re what is ✓  
a screenman? (x spelling)  
Screenman

AWARDS, TRIBUTES, HONORS -- LEE BROWN

Tribute Meeting, Women's Building, San Francisco, July 17, 1982

Letter of appreciation from Congressman Phillip Burton, July 7, 1982

Certificate of Appreciation, The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, San Francisco, June 26, 1985

Commendation, San Francisco Board of Supervisors, July 28, 1990

Certificate of Honor, Senior Action Network, San Francisco, November 19, 1992.

Certificates of Appreciation, San Francisco Coalition for Low Income Housing, February 21, 1992 and December 7, 1996

Certificate of Life Membership, NAACP  
September, 1992

~~Certificate~~ of Award for outstanding  
Service + Contributions, Potrero Hill  
Community Development Corporation,  
September 6, 1980.

~~Certificate of Award~~  
1985 New Bayview Newspaper  
publishes Award

9/22/95

\* L. B. says he did get a high school  
Diploma from Tokonawa, as well as  
a stem + vegetable

Books (L.B) titles

✓ (OK)

(1967)

Axhome of Kwame Nkrumah

Southern Africa / Black America:

Some Struggle, Some Fight (1977)  
by Bill Puley

A Guide to African History / Karel Davidson (1965)

A Glorious Age in Africa / Daniel Chi + Elliott Skinner 1965

Here I Stand / Paul Kobeson

Great Kulers of the African Past

Lavinia Doble + William A. Brown

The World and Africa / W.K.B. Dube

The Apartheid Handbook / Roger Simon

How Europe Underdeveloped Africa / Walter Rodney

Organize or Starve! The History of The

South African Congress of Trade Unions,  
Ken Luckhardt + Brenda Wall

Inside Africa / John Gunther

Africa's Gift to America / J.A. Rogers

The Whole World in His Hands  
Simon Kobeson

9/7/99

## STRONG IN THE STRUGGLE -- Table of Contents

Dedication ✓

Acknowledgments (to come) ✓

Introduction (RA) p. 1-6

Prolog: February 15, 1957 (RA) p 7-18

Chapter 1: Childhood p. 19-33

Chapter 2: On My Own 34-54

Chapter 3: Working in Los Angeles 55-83

Black Workers on the New Orleans Waterfront (RA) 84-101

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The Trial of Lee Brown (RA) 217-237

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Afterword (RA) 310-322

A Note on Sources (to come) ✓

Appendix: Photos, awards, honors, etc. (to come)

Enlitz version

**STRONG IN THE STRUGGLE** - book organization

Introduction (RA)

Part 1

Prolog (HUAC Hearing transcript) (RA)

From Childhood, to moves to Galveston, LA, to New Orleans, 1944  
Chapters 1,2,3,

Part 2:

Black Workers in New Orleans, History of Local 207 (RA)

Years with Local 207 to Trial  
Chs 4, 5,6,7,8, 9

Part 3

Summary of LB Trial & Outcome (RA)

Conviction, prison, release; making a new life, work in SF,  
relationship with Grace, retirement activities, LB summing up  
Chs 9A, 10,11,12,13,14

Afterword (RA)

STRONG IN THE  
American Working

5/31/99

My interest is in the  
protests/struggles,  
I am increasingly in  
as C. Wright Mills  
biography). In this  
workingclass leader  
workingclass leader  
Claudia Jones, Harry Haywood

Ask L.B.  
What specific  
things did he  
learn from Nelson?  
What'd he like most  
about him?  
① Elevator man  
story

/Development of an African

movements, spontaneous  
political economy & social change. I  
change and individual struggles (or  
intersection between history and  
the emergence of organic  
with that of other black  
Small, Ruby Doris Robinson,

Elements/steps in the development of Lee Brown's leadership/organizing skill

✓ Role of his Grandfather: What lessons did he learn from his grandfather?

-- LB perceived Grandfather as a model and mentor: a kind-hearted, generous, gentle man who  
people came to his house to discuss their problems (1,1) taught LB

① Ask L.B. what he  
learned from his grandfather  
Andrew Nelson?

② Why did he jump back  
and go to Texas?  
Did he stay with people  
he later released to?

③ Significance of women  
in relationships, leading  
about women's  
activity?

④ When did his mother  
move from Nelson, miss  
(birthplace) to New Orleans?  
What was she doing  
before marriage?  
How did parents meet?  
What did she do in later life?

④A Sugar Creek  
Who did he marry in Texas?  
After A?

✓ First spontaneous organizing experience-- Arizona railroad -- How did he act, what did he learn?

(1) Seize the initiative from the boss, (2) refuse to accept boss' definition of the situation, (3)  
mobilize workers

✓ Working with Hollywood NAACP -- What did he learn?

✓ Incident where girlfriend criticizes/shames him for playing demeaning stereotypical film roles

Experience as a railroad worker, what did he learn?

✓ Restaurant incident in Los Angeles -- LB again displays spontaneous leadership/organizing

## STRONG IN THE STRUGGLE: Lee Brown -- The Emergence/Development of an African American Workingclass Leader

5/31/99

My interest is in the study of social activism, including social movements, spontaneous protests/struggles, individual agency & leadership, ideology, political economy & social change. I am increasingly interested in the intersection between social change and individual struggles (or as C. Wright Mills put it in The Sociological Imagination the intersection between history and biography). In this book I look at Lee Brown as a case study of the emergence of organic workingclass leadership -- compare his leadership development with that of other black workingclass leaders such as Hosea Hudson, Nelson Peery, Joe Small, Ruby Doris Robinson, Claudia Jones, Harry Haywood

Elements/steps in the development of Lee Brown's leadership/organizing skill

- ✓ Role of his Grandfather: What lessons did he learn from his grandfather?
  - LB perceived Grandfather as a model and mentor: a kind-hearted, generous, gentle man who tried to help poor people; people came to his house to discuss their problems (1,1) taught LB how to share and get along with people (1,2) grandfather was self-employed and self-sufficient small farmer (1,2-3) *didn't take crap from anyone*
- ✓ Earliest awakening of sense of injustice: Segregated schools, whites attended longer -- 1, 10
- ✓ Joy of learning to read; limitation of formal schooling (1,10)
- ✓ Sex & Racial politics: Sexual harassment of Aunt T-Babe by white man; Uncle Tot accused of killing him (1,12)
- ✓ Emergence of independent streak -- Leaving home and going to work for white family, seeing variation among whites (1,13 -- 2/3)
- ✓ His cousin as a model of union man; joins union in Galveston; first strike experience
- ✓ First spontaneous organizing experience-- Arizona railroad -- How did he act, what did he learn?
  - (1) Seize the initiative from the boss, (2) refuse to accept boss' definition of the situation, (3) mobilize workers
- ✓ Working with Hollywood NAACP -- What did he learn?
- ✓ Incident where girlfriend criticizes/shames him for playing demeaning stereotypical film roles
- Experience as a railroad workers, what did he learn?
- ✓ Restaurant incident in Los Angeles -- LB again displays spontaneous leadership/organizing

Andrew Steve Nelson as LB's mentor/teacher

LB's penchant for seeking organizations that he thinks can advance black freedom: Muslims, NAACP, CP What did he learn/gain from each?

-- his early and continuing interest in Nation of Islam

-- his involvement with Local 207, the maturation of his leadership/organizing skills through day-to-day work as an organizer and VP

-- his political education with the CP: what basic things did he learn? *problems he saw*

LB confronts HUAC committee. Note elements in this confrontation: seizure of initiative, refuses to accept their defn of situation.

LB converts prison to educational experience

LB's relationship with Grace, his wife and fellow labor movement comrade

*Relationships with women - what he learned,  
problems, growth*

*His mother*

*Aunt Betty*

*Girlfriends (esp  
mother (more)  
many)*

*Mrs. Sims  
Rose*

*Moselle*

*Grace*

*Relationships  
Grand parents  
Parents  
T-Babe*

Lee Brown interview with Jill Rosenberg 8/21/98

met with in New Orleans 1955? - 210

Grand father was a mason 294  
and belong to <sup>the lodge</sup>

571 - reading matter - Marxist / Nationalist  
Mao, Lenin, Engels, Political Affairs, Daily Worker  
Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Bill Foster, books, without apparatus  
John Henrik Clarke

575 - white chairman in CP

\* 600 - critique of CP in Party to  
fight white chauvinism, build left-center  
in labor movement, stop  
merge of AKE - CID  
Likes Martin Luther King, Bill Hyman

Leadership  
11/1/55

658 Danger of Fascism  
Idea of Labor Leadership and mobilize the  
masses

730 MIA & Malcolm - Failure to win fight recently

\* 753 I must move the people but they  
need somebody to carry the ball, mobilize  
the masses That's the challenge

- 780

787 - Senior 1910s

side 2  
X 845 - Pull on school in community

901 need to rebuild  
movement, a

(over)

- 930 - Walter White, he reported for his  
undercover work
- 953 - Wagner leadership now - John Bond
- 992 - Kewer Mfuma - need to wake up  
need national & international struggle to  
to build union
- 160 - prejudice vs racism  
(workers) (bosses)

Lee Brown Retirement Activities

and 1981

Struggle in Local 2 in 1979 -- Unity Slate campaign with Jean Damu

Black Elderly -- Senior Action Network, National caucus and center  
on black aged, inc., Legal Assistance to the Elderly, Inc., Gray  
Panthers

Housing issues: Tenants Union, Potrero Hill Community Development  
Corp (?)

South Africa anti-apartheid work

Peace & Freedom Party, Central committee member in 1981

NAACP

Local 2 Retirees

Health Care

Article writing for various newspapers

L.B. home stuffy with key in vest pocket  
3-piece brown suit, chain 3-4 yellow buttons  
guba pants in pocket, "unity" Africa button, may 1 Africa in hand  
Leather bag with Africa in hand  
Kitchen table / Dining chair  
Living room, bed, TV, easy chair  
3 book cases w/ flowers 2 x 1  
Elisak mohammed, million man  
hand paper  
wearing gloves

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JEE BROCK A SOUTHERN TRADE UNION LABOR LEADER

WAS BORN IN NEW ORLEANS LOUISIANA MAY 28, 1921. Been in the trade  
Union movement for <sup>46</sup>~~45~~ Years. At the age of seventeen years old he  
was a member of the labor local in Galveston Texas. Working in the  
ship yard. (A member of local 12 United Packing House CIO In Los.  
Angeles California. In New Orleans, Louisiana. He was the Vice  
President, WAREHOUSE AND DISTRIBUTION WORKERS' UNION, LOCAL 207  
Member of Political Action Committee local 207, ILWU-CIO  
Acting Executive Secretary Louisiana Civil Rights Congress Year 1955  
A member United Packinghouse Workers Of America, AFL-CIO. Local 591  
Associated with the National Council Of America-Soviet - Friendshi  
Inc. 1953.  
Miscellaneous Culinary Employees' Union. Local 110 AFL-CIO  
Shop Steward at the Fairmont Hotel IN 1963 S.F.C.  
Shop Steward at the Jack Tar Hotel 1968 S.F.C.  
Received a Aertifacate completing the eight weeks course of the  
Union Cousellers Program In Cooperation with the United Bay Area  
Crusade AFL CIO. 1973  
Associated with American Russian Institute ,S.F.C.  
Community Service Activities Successfully Completed an Training  
Council AFL-CIO.  
Appointed as a Delegate to the Local Joint Executive Board 1970  
For the Miscellaneous Culinary Employees' Union Local 110 AFL-CIO  
Appointed Picket Captain Local 110 1969  
Join the Bay Area Welfare Right Organization Inc. 1979  
Member of the Senior Citizen Program 1979  
Minister Of The Department Of Labor United African Decendant Peoples  
Republic. San Francisco, California.

NAACP, Peace & Freedom party, 500, Army party, SAN  
Ferdinand Union, Petron Hill

Lee Brown book structure

RA Introduction

Black Workers in New Orleans

History of Local 207

Prolog (HUAC)

Part I

From Childhood to move to New Orleans in 1944

Part 2:

Years with Local 207, Trial and Prison and release

(include summary of Lee Brown Trial)

Part 3

Making a new life, work in SF, relationships with Grace,  
retirement

Conclusion: Lee Brown's leadership

*His assessment of L.B. life*

*Appendix i L.B. articles / letters / photos*

LG - "Dress In Sudan"

STRONG IN THE STRUGGLE: Lee Brown -- The Emergence/Development of an African American Workingclass Leader

5/31/99

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Elements/steps in the development of Lee Brown's leadership/organizing skill

Role of his Grandfather: What lessons did he learn from his grandfather?

Earliest awakening of sense of injustice: Segregated schools, whites attended longer

July 7, 1907  
Hosea Hudson  
Nelson Peery  
Joe Small  
School

Emergence of independent streak -- Leaving home and going to work for white family, seeing variation among whites (1, 13-2, 3)

His cousin as a model of union man; joins union in Galveston; first strike experience

First spontaneous organizing experience-- Arizona railroad -- How did he act, what did he learn?  
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LB confronts HUAC committee. Note elements in this confrontation: seizure of initiative, refuses to accept their defn of situation.

LB converts prison to educational experience

LB relationship with ~~his~~ <sup>her</sup> ~~taba~~ <sup>Grace</sup>, his wife and fellow activists

7/28/99

Lee Brown description, setting in his apartment, a third-story walk-up in the projects in the Western Addition

A tall, husky, tan (or light brown), fellow who always dresses to make an impression, e.g. a three-piece brown pinstrip suit, with gold watch and chain in vest pocket, 5-6 pens and reading glasses in coat pocket, four buttons on lapels (Africa/Black USA Unity pin, NAACP Lifetime membership pin, Local 2 button, HERE button -- Restaurant workers international), wearing a black leather fez with map of Africa outlined on its front in green, yellow, red colors, uses a walking cane and wears brown boots. His voice can be deep and commanding, and he likes to adopt an exaggerated scowl while talking about racist and capitalist adversaries, but more often his eyes have a mischievous twinkle and he is quick to laugh.

His apartment has a small bedroom/livingroom with a photo of Elaijah Muhammad over prominently over his bed and another on the opposite wall, a Million Man March poster, TV/VCR, four sagging bookcases overflowing with well-thumbed books, newspapers and miscellaneous papers. In an alcove is a file cabinet crammed with more books, documents, photographs and papers. (DESCRIBE HIS BOOKS) *range 1 kitchen*

We talk at the formica kitchen table sitting on two folding chairs. The table usually has a big bowl of fruit in the center, papers scattered over it, and various canned and bottled foods from the welfare department on the table and on the floor. He offers me a bottle of Ginseng soda. I take a second bottle from the refrigerator for him. When I leave he watches from his window to make sure I'm not waylaid while walking to my car.

A man who delights in good food, though he seldom gets out to restaurants. A good cook, he enjoys preparing a favorite dish savory goat stew for the pleasure of friends. Each week he looks forward to two meals at a local community center with the hope that they might satisfy his appetite as the trade union struggle fed his spirit.

*magazines: The Crisis, TRS, ald, Sun Keynote*  
*Newspapers: The Final Call, PW, Muslim Journal, People Weekly World*  
*The Oakland Post*

Lee Brown back,

biography

Lee Brown back,  
~~biography~~ Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. by Charles W. Hamilton

Chama: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah

W. F. R. du Rou: A Reader by Meyer Weinberg

J. A. Koyama, C. L. Wenzel, J. H. Clark, J. E. Tucker

Intro to African Civilizations by John C. Jackson

The sheer origin of evidence by Check Data Dept

~~Islam~~ der Saracen hat ~~Arrival~~ by Elijah bekommen

Paul Ribarov Specks, ed by Philip S. Frow

The ~~can~~ before Columbus, by J Van Von Stey

Day class & Race, Oliver Cox

medica x Angla Dril, juliana malvaux

Label writing, black marker with, Shu

History, Geography, Political economy

Socialism, Religion, Philosophy

Robert L. Allen, Walter H. Allen, Central West

Habermas, Adorno, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin

*State of true  
- take a moment mind  
- socialist struggle (CP)  
= civil rights movement  
- Black nationalism  
- Americanism  
- American survival  
- American strength  
- American power  
- American influence*

ADWIR party

His thoughts on civil rights movement, black power, state of race today. Impact of Malcolm and MLK. State of NAACP. State of Muslims/black nationalism today.

of  
 when not with  
 impression of?

~~(ADWP party)~~

His views on new movements: Women/feminism, people of color movements, gay/lesbian. What relationship does he see between the movements and black people's struggles for justice and equality? Is there a danger of conflict between these different movements, for example Asian Americans against African

Americans over the issue of affirmative action, white women vs. women of color, native-born Chicanos vs. immigrants from Mexico? Isn't the right-wing strategy to try to split these groups as people of color are becoming the majority in California? What can be done to work against this divide-and-conquer strategy?

How he views prospects for socialism/communism today? Impact of collapse of Soviet Union. State of CPUSA today? His views of new organizations like Committees of Correspondence (is he a involved with C of C?) *Why left CP in 1994?*

Is socialism still a viable alternative? What kind of socialism? What kind of strategy should be used to achieve it?

Lee's feelings about war and peace: World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War, Kosovo, guerilla wars in Africa/Latin America, other wars? Are there just wars? What prospects does he see for peace and international social justice?

What does he think of South Africa today? The state of Africa generally? *Relationship US, South Africa*

What does he see as importance of electoral politics? Jesse Jackson, Willie Brown, other political leaders. Isn't electoral politics simply a bourgeois game to give the people the illusion of democracy? What can be accomplished in the electoral arena to make changes for the better? What is the importance of supporting candidates or campaigning for propositions?

How does he see role of social movements in progressive change? Is there a contradiction between working in social movements and working in electoral politics? How does he see the relationship between the two? What is role of leadership in social movements? How can effective, democratic leadership be developed? How do you deal with the problems of dictatorial and opportunistic leaders in social change movements?

What advice would he give to young people today who want to know what they can do to make a better life for themselves and others? What would he say to young people who feel that there are no strong social movements today, and the best thing they can do is look out for themselves and try to make money any way they can?

*What for political party?*

8/19/99 L B ms. \* / End till list  
of names for blurbs  
for Lee Brown

to do

A note on source (of ~~Lytham~~ Clark book)

~~Appendix on FBI investigation~~  
~~Fluorite to~~  
~~oral summary (see FBI)~~ Dedications?

~~My closing remarks (?)~~

\* Photographs  
Letters / articles (?)

Local 2 History (?)

Download story on Dr.  
from FBI / Chris

of ~~Blacks~~ after in  
a ~~man~~ work  
of ~~com~~ a few months  
was shut to death  
from where I live)

L B relation w/ women  
thoughtless, based on physical  
opportunity - ~~5-12-1948~~  
(but does learn from ~~himself~~)

VS  
Thoughtful  
Partnering - based <sup>on</sup> partly  
on shared values  
Rose, Morella?, Grace  
(incompatible  
personalities  
possessive  
issues)

Note that ~~child~~  
was ~~child~~ to make  
a serious, thoughtful  
Centrist of L.B.

Afterword

Women - Comment

That L.B.'s mature  
political ~~relationship~~  
character <sup>was</sup> reflected  
in his <sup>relationships</sup>  
with women - from  
thoughtless ~~opportunity~~  
thoughtful partnering with  
a comrade in the  
struggle

8/19/99 L B Mrs. \* / End till list  
of names for L B  
for Lee Brown

to do

A note on source (of Sgt. Clark's book)

~~Appendix on FBI investigation~~  
~~Fluente to~~ ~~oral summary (see FBI)~~ Dedications?

~~My closing remarks (?)~~

\* Photographs  
Letters / articles (?)

Local 2 History (?)

Downloaded story on Drug Dealer murders  
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(14/15)

A ~~place~~ after interview  
in ~~man's~~ ~~place~~ ~~that~~ ~~to~~ ~~death~~  
C of ~~even~~ ~~a~~ ~~few~~ ~~months~~ ~~before~~ ~~that~~ ~~a~~ ~~farmer~~  
~~was~~ ~~shot~~ ~~to~~ ~~death~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~street~~, ~~2~~ ~~blocks~~  
~~from~~ ~~where~~ ~~I~~ ~~live~~)

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# Missing / Need in Lee Brown Interviews

- Period of his disillusionment with CP, or when he joins Black Nationalist group
- His Life with Grace Oliver Brown ✓ (OK)  
(See brief m. in folder on G. Brown)
- CP activities / Views on CP -  
Left-wing racism issue ✓
- More details on trial and prison experience
- problems he encountered in Hotel industry (accusation of drunkenness)
- activity from Army at Jackson (1/69) until retirement
- Peace & Freedom Party ✓

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of Ch 4  
p 122  
file

called 9/13/91 call N.O.  
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Annotations by Jill Rothberg

Lisa Wigutloff  
Westview Press  
5500 Central Avenue  
Boulder, CO 80301-2877

Dear Ms. Wigutloff:

I have read the book proposal and sample chapters for Robert Allen and Lee Brown's manuscript, *Strong in the Struggle*. The proposal makes a convincing case for a potentially very exciting book which would be an important contribution to the field of labor history. There are relatively few autobiographies of black communists organizing in the south and the west and there is certainly a need for books of this sort. I would imagine such a book would be widely used in classes devoted to American Studies as well as labor history. Obviously, there is also a market in African American and Ethnic Studies curriculum and I can imagine a fairly strong interest among the general American readership. I think Allen and Brown have an excellent idea and the proposal is persuasive.

Unfortunately, however, the sample chapters do not live up to the potential contained in the proposal. In its present state, the manuscript has all the problems of a very rough, first draft. It needs framing, depth, complexity, and analysis. As written, it is undigested and chronological with no apparent narrative. It records events without providing the reader with an understanding for why they are important or relevant. It doesn't build and develop toward insights and conclusions. Things just seem to happen in this account and the reader gets no feeling for the actual detailed problems and joys of organizing. While some of the description is fascinating, that too needs considerable development and thickening. For example, while the book is about working class organizing, Brown has almost no description of the work processes within which he was organizing. The material regarding his experiences with the Communist Party tends to be superficial and restricted to what is already on the record. Brown is sitting on a wealth of personal experiences that are potentially fascinating and could make a very important contribution to our understanding of the relationship between African Americans and the Communist Party. For this to happen, however, he needs to give us much more detail on the experience of everyday life in the C.P. and his personal relationship to that period. The questions which appear in parentheses throughout the manuscript suggest that someone else is having similar difficulties with this draft.

The proposal is excellent and promising; very much worth pursuing. Hopefully, with the very talented band of Robert Allen guiding future drafts, the manuscript will live up to its considerable potential.

I think so  
good raw material

yes!  
I agree  
Yes

Yes

Yes - needs to be integrated

I agree

needs freshening

and too as a story

(presentation)

delicate rather than narrative  
There is a story of a person here, but no movement or really leaves in it - he's potential to be rich

Yes



University of Colorado at Boulder

Lee Brown Ms. Review

Department of History

204 Hellems  
Campus Box 234  
Boulder, Colorado 80309-0234  
(303) 492-6683  
FAX: (303) 492-1868

January 26, 1998

Ms. Jill Rothenberg, Editor  
Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.  
5370 Manhattan Circle #105  
Boulder, CO 80303

Dear Jill:

Enclosed is my report on the Lee Brown manuscript. I suspect that much of what I have to say will only confirm some of your and Robert Allen's own thinking on what needs to happen next with this manuscript. I certainly think that this is a worthy project--Brown is a fascinating figure whose story can tell us a great deal--but one that will need some rethinking and recasting.

Because this document is still at a fairly early draft stage, I didn't mark it up with editorial suggestions, and therefore haven't returned it to you with this letter. Please let me know if you do want it back, and if there's any other facet of the project on which you'd like me to comment.

Sincerely,

Mark Pittenger  
Associate Professor,  
Director of Graduate Studies

Report on Manuscript:  
Lee Brown and Robert Allen,  
Strong in the Struggle:  
The Story of Lee Brown and Black Labor Militancy in the South & West

I will begin this report by responding to some general questions raised by Jill Rothenberg in her letter to me of November 24, 1997, and by commenting on Robert Allen's memo to Jill regarding his role in the project; I'll then proceed to some more detailed, chapter-by-chapter comments on the manuscript itself. But first I should say that, incomplete though it is, this manuscript seems to me the core of a potentially terrific and valuable work--one that might prove useful and engaging to scholars, teachers, and the general reading public. I offer what follows in that spirit of enthusiasm.

Jill asks whether this book might be used in university courses. I see a number of adoption possibilities here. I have taught courses in the history of American radicalism, labor history, and post-1945 US history, and would consider a book like this for any of those. In such specialized courses, it might fruitfully be paired, for example, with a secondary source such as George Lipsitz's Rainbow at Midnite to talk about the usually-overlooked role of labor in the immediate postwar years. It obviously has similar potential for courses in African-American history. But it also might be attractive for teachers of the large, introductory-level U.S. survey course, in which a basic textbook is typically supplemented by three or four other books--typically some combination of monographs, autobiographies, novels, etc. Many of us especially like to use memoirs, oral histories--sources that provide a distinctive, first-person voice that bears witness to the events that textbooks describe only at a distance. I currently use Anne Moody's Coming of Age in Mississippi in my "US Since 1865" survey, but would consider a book like this one because it not only offers first-person testimony about the Jim Crow South in roughly the same period, but also addresses labor issues for that period that simply don't get into the textbooks. It could be assigned in segments over the two or three weeks of the course that cover the years from the 1940s to the 1970s, which will be central to the book when completed.

As to this book's appeal for broader, nonacademic audiences, I'd like to respond affirmatively but don't know the first thing about marketing. Books of this sort--radical memoirs done in conjunction with a scholar--have certainly been appreciated by the academic world, but I don't know how successful beyond that realm were the collaborations between Dorothy Healey and Maurice Isserman, or Steve Nelson and (was it Rob Ruck?), or Vivian Gornick's Romance of American Communism. I know that All God's Dangers--featuring a completely unknown African-American former sharecropper with a strong, distinctive narrative voice and a personal history that was arguably less dramatic than Lee Brown's, won the National Book Award and was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection. That was an Avon imprint and probably had some corporate machinery behind it. But when you consider the recent refurbishing of the once-crased Paul Robeson's image, and the flurry of current discussion about the Amistad affair(s), it would

seem at least premature to assert that there's no place in popular discourse for the well-told story of a black Communist labor organizer.

Jill also asks how the events of Lee Brown's life might best be related to broader historical currents of the 1940s-1970s. This would of course mainly be Robert Allen's task, and the plans he sets forth in his memo seem on the mark. There are several contexts that would need to be clearly, albeit briefly, established. There's the history of American radicalism and the particular place of the race question within it, from the Debsian socialist movement's economistic dismissal of race as a category meriting attention, through the CP's tortured efforts to come to terms with race via the separate black nation thesis, the complex relations with the NAACP in the Scottsboro case, the anti-white-chauvinism campaign, and various grass-roots organizing efforts both North and South, etc. Then there's the broader history of black America, especially in the postwar period but taking account of the impacts of the Depression and New Deal and of World War II. And at the most general level, there's the history of the US from the 1940s to (the present?), emphasizing the Cold War, the domestic Red Scare, and developments in the labor movement. I don't mean to suggest a book-within-a-book here: all of these contexts could be sketched out in a few pages, and would seem to belong in the general introduction proposed by Professor Allen.

Allen also proposes writing a brief introduction to each chapter, which will help further to orient the reader to more specific matters to be raised in the ensuing pages. I like his idea of "extended footnotes" providing context and explanation as the story progresses, and recommend that they appear on the page, not at the end of the book. You might also consider a bibliographic essay at the end, which would be especially useful for students in upper-division or specialized courses who might be doing further research, and for the general reader who just wants to know more. Allen's proposal to reconstruct the trial is a good one, as it will provide more detail and drama of the sort that the manuscript as a whole is somewhat lacking (more below on this). If he can figure out a way to get Brown's voice into that reconstruction, all the better--though this obviously poses potential problems with narrative flow. Perhaps he did this in his Port Chicago book? If not, another model might be Tony Lukas's Barnyard Epitaph (on the Chicago Eight trial), in which Lukas shifts between 3d-person omniscient narrator, sections of trial transcript, and first-person observer and commentator.

I especially like Allen's proposal to end with a dialogue between himself and Brown. In addition to the benefits Allen mentions, this would also break through the reader's (especially the student reader's) comfortable conception that this is all a story about the past that can be set aside and forgotten when finished.

I agree with Robert Allen's assertion in his book proposal that Lee Brown's story would be unique in the historical literature--that it would tell us things we don't know, or don't know much about. The western, as well as southern, focus; the emphases on unions, the NAACP and other organizations, and the CP; the Taft-Hartley imprisonment; and the story of an activist who outlived the Soviet Union but not his radicalism (a

welcome counternarrative to the "God That Failed/Second Thoughts" genre), and other matters yet to be set down on paper: all these are fresh and valuable. I do think, though, that you may want to consider just where the book will fit in the ongoing scholarly wars over communist historiography--in other words, how to avoid getting dissed by Draper

This book seems closer to the tradition of Gornick, Isserman, and Robin Kelley, for example--a tradition that has stressed grass-roots American communists' relative autonomy, creativity, and commitment to American concerns--than to the tradition of Theodore Draper and his descendants, which has emphasized the thesis that CP leadership (and by extension, all American communists and their allies) were finally just dupes of Moscow. Although I think that most in the former school are tired of this dispute and want simply to recognize Draper's contributions and move on, Draper continues to take a proprietary interest in the field and seems to make a point of reviewing (and attacking) anything that reflects the grass-roots perspective. Thus Draperite reviewers will want to know more about why Brown and others withdrew from the CP after Taft-Hartley: weren't they just being sneakily opportunistic? What options were available? (Phillip Murray and John L. Lewis simply refused, at least at first, to sign the affidavits, and foreswore using the NLRB.) Where did Brown stand on the 1956 revelations? Was he a naive dupe, or a cunning subversive (the only categories Draperites tend to see)? Brown may or may not have experienced such issues as central to his work, and the authors may not wish to engage them, but reviewers certainly will. Draperites will dismiss the book as just another Romance of American Communism unless these matters are laid out in the context of a broader explanation of Brown's relations with the CP. I'm suggesting more discussion of Lee Brown's political education, ideology, and commitments, which I think will make this a better, more satisfying work of history, and will also (if it's possible) end-run such critiques. I'll suggest particular points at which this could happen in my chapter-by-chapter comments.

Finally, I will also make reference in the comments that follow to what seems to me an issue of overriding importance: the authorial voice. Jill wrote to me that in reading the manuscript, she wanted to "know the person behind the plainly told story." I couldn't agree more strongly. As it stands, the narrative is far too much a simple, straightforward exposition of events. What needs to emerge here is a distinctive personality, expressed in the distinctive, identifiable language of an individual whom the reader can come to know and recognize through the text. While I want to know what Lee Brown has to tell me, most readers will also insist on being seduced, on being drawn into the story by the feeling that they are coming to know a unique person with his own language, his own characteristic modes of expression, his own way of telling his story. The current text doesn't read at all like spoken language; it reads like a sequence of carefully-composed "correct" sentences that can't exude much liveliness, humor, pain, or emotion of any sort. I don't know how this text was generated, but I'm guessing that getting more of Lee Brown's own (spoken) voice onto the page would vastly improve the readability of the book.

All of that said, here follow some observations on the individual chapters.

## CHAPTER ONE: CHILDHOOD

Here and elsewhere throughout the manuscript, material is introduced out of chronological order, approximate dates or Brown's approximate age are not given, and specific details are left out or introduced a page or two after a topic is broached, leaving the reader at sea in the meantime. Thus in the first few pages, who, altogether, lived on his grandfather's farm? What happened to the other sons/uncles? We're told on page 4 that Aunt Betsy was cruel and selfish, but no examples are given until page 5; rearrange to improve narrative flow and clarity for reader.

3) Specificity: how did his grandfather cut his leg (which led to his death)? Such details, if remembered, give the narrative more texture, and give the reader more of a sense for farm life.

6) How old was he when he started school? Give approximate age or year periodically to keep reader oriented.

10) Moves in with Dad Howard---who was he? If I've already met him, I've already forgotten who he was, there's such a barrage of characters in these early pages.

## CHAPTER TWO: OFF THE PLANTATION

15) Listening to court cases: does he remember any specific ones? Was this experience relevant to his developing sense of right/wrong, justice/injustice?

## CHAPTER THREE: LOS ANGELES

36-37) Clarity: Bertha (his girlfriend) becomes his friend Sydney's girlfriend? But he never calls her Bertha anymore, calling her Sydney's girlfriend instead--am I right that this is the same person?

37) He joins the NAACP: no lead-up to this or analysis or reflection, beyond recounting a few encounters with racism. What did it mean--generally, and to him specifically--to join this organization? Wouldn't this have been a pretty big deal, an important decision?

42) Here especially, but also elsewhere, the narrative gets very choppy--an endless string of briefly-noted events, jobs, girlfriends, rallies, and then more of the same. These come and go so fast, they don't add up to much. How about reducing the number of incidents & individuals noted, and providing more depth and reflection on ones that proved especially important to him. For example, more on the Zoot Suit Riots?

He mentions the war occasionally through here--girlfriends have husbands in the service, etc.--but did the war matter to him? How did he relate to it? Historians have

made much of the war's galvanizing effects on black consciousness and organization. Does his experience support or refute such claims?

46-7) Self-education: he notes that he collected books, but doesn't specify any. This is a matter of considerable interest to historians. What authors, what titles, especially influenced him? Can he be placed in the American tradition of radical autodidacticism? On page 55 he mentions a few subjects that he read about, but again no titles.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: NEW ORLEANS (1)

Here Robert Allen's introductory material on the background of Local 207 will be of great interest: how did it become a militant, interracial union; and how did Nelson, a black communist, come to be its president?

54-55) He attends a communist meeting at Nelson's behest; then attends others, and becomes a member. The straightforward exposition and limited discussion leaves the reader wanting to know much more. What was discussed? How was socialism introduced to him? Was this his first introduction? What was its appeal? What hesitations, if any did he have? Was this a sort of conversion experience (as such events are conventionally portrayed), or something different?

56) When he does talk about the appeal of communism, it again comes a little later than it should, with a girlfriend or two in between--and he doesn't really say why he came to favor socialism, focusing instead on specific issues like free education for all.

#### CHAPTER FIVE: NEW ORLEANS (2)

69) When he does talk about political ideology, it remains pretty vague: he asks Robeson whether socialism would help the workers; Robeson says yes. This needs more texture, detail, reflection. What exactly did socialism mean to him--revolution? the "progressivism" of the late '40s and '50s? How did he and other black communists relate to the CP program and ideology? How aware were he and his black comrades of the Party's history with the race question? When he worked on the Henry Wallace campaign, he doesn't mention the much-discussed issue of CP involvement. Did he participate as a "labor man," as a communist, or both?

70-71) Chased and shot at after meeting at church: more of this kind of material would be great. Here we aren't just told that he worked on voter registration; he gives us a feeling for what it meant to try to do this in Jim Crow Louisiana.

76) fears that "some anti-labor, Ku Klux Klansmen, and reactionaries" would jump them after court: explicate the connection between racism and anti-labor attitudes? Did he see these as naturally allied, as symbiotic? Was this part of a larger analysis of race and class

in the South? There are frequent hints of this--references to Jim Crow and monopoly capital being somehow connected (e.g. p. 107, and 122)--but how exactly did he see this operating? And why would he describe the court decision that blacks and whites could associate socially as "a victory for the workingclass in the South"--as principally a matter of class, not of race?

80-83) Generally fascinating stuff here--more details, more anecdotes, more stories (e.g., on organizing the Empire, LA fishermen). Great, fresh material on interracial labor organizing in 1940s-50s: community and church involvement, meat boycotts (prefiguring the organizing strategies of Montgomery?); taping a quarter to a deck of cards to symbolize the .25 raise--the more such details, the better.

### CHAPTER SIX: NEW ORLEANS (3)

Southern Conference Education Fund, Walter White, etc.: date/year? Place this in time for the reader.

88) Union campaign against Taft-Hartley: more on this? Details on his organizing trips through the state? Also on the struggle against the state right-to-work law (p. 89): details of the campaign in the legislature? Show the reader the nature and texture of grass-roots, labor-political organizing--this is a great opportunity to present the operations and "movement culture" of the southern interracial left.

In the face of Taft-Hartley, Local 207 officers "decided" to withdraw from the CP but to remain militant: more on how this decision was reached? How was it rationalized? What options were considered? Did he think this was the best course?

90) Letter from a "Board" in DC: note in text that need more info, charges, what board, etc. Presumably this was the NLRB, whose whole mandate had been modified by Taft-Hartley. The Board was no longer to be (as anti-New Deal Congressmen saw it) labor's special friend; now the Board was to "impartially" adjudicate the claims of labor, management, and the public.

91) All the stuff on Inland Waterway trying to fire Brown is unclear: what was at issue here? Who said and did what?

94-95) Paul Washington case: information not presented sequentially, causing confusion. At first unclear whether Washington was a union man, because Brown refers to Local 207, not the Civil Rights Congress, taking action in his case. It's unclear whether the Congress was somehow affiliated with the union--until p. 95, when the connection is clarified. On 95, "Lawyers came in from the national office"--the national office of what? It isn't made clear until 97 that the Civil Rights Congress is a national organization with a Louisiana chapter.

Generally, the discussions of the Washington and O.C. Jugger cases remain rather general and detached. The reader really wants to know more about this. What were local reactions to the executions? More to the point, what were Lee Brown's own feelings? In the Jugger case, the detail about the electric chair is powerful and disturbing, but again the account is unrevealing about Brown--what were his feelings about Jugger's death, about the organizing effort's successes (if any), failure, and significance?

101-105) The Willie McGhee case: he tells us about it, but then doesn't know the outcome because of his own (unspecified) troubles. Surely this can be found out? This is a lot of pages to devote to a case without any resolution.

#### CHAPTER SEVEN: NEW ORLEANS (4)

Transition from previous chapter: did the "problems" he faced around the time of the Willie McGhee case have something to do with this convention? Or were these Taft-Hartley related problems? What's the chronology here? Did all these events overlap? He says on page 94 that in 1950 he worked on the Paul Washington and other "different cases"--so did all the cases discussed take place in 1950? If so, why does Chapter Six end with his facing troubles in 1950, and Chapter Seven begin with 1955? Or did these cases stretch out over several years?

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Again, what results, if any, came out of this conference? Did/does he think it had any lasting significance?

## CHAPTER EIGHT: THE TRIAL

127-28) Printing the union's response to the workers' lawsuit is confusing and hard to follow: sum this up in layperson's terms, quoting where appropriate.

The union lost that battle because the NLRB, the companies, and "government agents" wanted the workers fighting among themselves: was this just his feeling, or does he have evidence or further analysis to offer?

129) "To let nine men split the union. . ." How exactly did they split the union? Why was it proper that the president let the case go "on and on?"

Got the NLRB to oversee an election "so we could have a union shop." Clarify "union shop," and how this differed from their previous situation, under which they had a union contract but not a union shop.

130) Praise for Andrew Nelson: more on Nelson? How did he become radicalized? What did he teach Lee Brown? Specific anecdotes, beyond invoking generalities about monopoly capitalism?

131) Nelson's trial a crucial moment for him: he was "educated," and rededicated himself to the struggle. Describe particular trial scenes, using trial transcript, that brought him to this feeling, this crisis? And how exactly did his commitment change? How did it differ from what it had been previously?

132) The defense attorney was "good": how? What was good about him?

A black man testified against Nelson: what did he say? What did these mean to Brown?

132-133) "The authorities didn't consider the facts. . . reactionaries" wanted to destroy the union. More analysis here? How did the Cold War figure in; were there similar dispositions in other legal cases around the country; what was the role of race in the domestic Red Scare, and in the Cold War generally?

133) "due to my problems" somebody else became 1st Vice President: what problems? Was he now under subpoena too, or indicted?

What, during all of this, has happened to his wife and family? I think we haven't heard about them since p. 60. How did public and private issues intersect in his life (his wife had been or was an organizer too?)?

#### CONCLUDING COMMENT

As I said at the start, I think that a fine and valuable book can come out of this project. As Lee Brown and Robert Allen continue to work on it, I think that careful attention to matters of authorial voice, political analysis, chronology, context, and experiential detail will pay off in a compelling and significant contribution to historical literature.

recd 1/30/98



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January 26, 1998

Ms. Jill Rothenberg, Editor  
Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.  
5370 Manhattan Circle #105  
Boulder, CO 80303

Dear Jill:

Enclosed is my report on the Lee Brown manuscript. I suspect that much of what I have to say will only confirm some of your and Robert Allen's own thinking on what needs to happen next with this manuscript. I certainly think that this is a worthy project--Brown is a fascinating figure whose story can tell us a great deal--but one that will need some rethinking and recasting.

Because this document is still at a fairly early draft stage, I didn't mark it up with editorial suggestions, and therefore haven't returned it to you with this letter. Please let me know if you do want it back, and if there's any other facet of the project on which you'd like me to comment.

Sincerely,

Mark Pittenger  
Associate Professor,  
Director of Graduate Studies

Andrew Steers  
Nelson  
transcript

Report on Manuscript:  
Lee Brown and Robert Allen,  
Strong in the Struggle:  
The Story of Lee Brown and Black Labor Militancy in the South & West

I will begin this report by responding to some general questions raised by Jill Rothenberg in her letter to me of November 24, 1997, and by commenting on Robert Allen's memo to Jill regarding his role in the project; I'll then proceed to some more detailed, chapter-by-chapter comments on the manuscript itself. But first I should say that, incomplete though it is, this manuscript seems to me the core of a potentially terrific and valuable work--one that might prove useful and engaging to scholars, teachers, and the general reading public. I offer what follows in that spirit of enthusiasm.

Jill asks whether this book might be used in university courses. I see a number of adoption possibilities here. I have taught courses in the history of American radicalism, labor history, and post-1945 US history, and would consider a book like this for any of those. In such specialized courses, it might fruitfully be paired, for example, with a secondary source such as George Lipsitz's Rainbow at Midnite to talk about the usually-overlooked role of labor in the immediate postwar years. It obviously has similar potential for courses in African-American history. But it also might be attractive for teachers of the large, introductory-level U.S. survey course, in which a basic textbook is typically supplemented by three or four other books--typically some combination of monographs, autobiographies, novels, etc. Many of us especially like to use memoirs, oral histories--sources that provide a distinctive, first-person voice that bears witness to the events that textbooks describe only at a distance. I currently use Anne Moody's Coming of Age in Mississippi in my "US Since 1865" survey, but would consider a book like this one because it not only offers first-person testimony about the Jim Crow South in roughly the same period, but also addresses labor issues for that period that simply don't get into the textbooks. It could be assigned in segments over the two or three weeks of the course that cover the years from the 1940s to the 1970s, which will be central to the book when completed.

As to this book's appeal for broader, nonacademic audiences, I'd like to respond affirmatively but don't know the first thing about marketing. Books of this sort--radical memoirs done in conjunction with a scholar--have certainly been appreciated by the academic world, but I don't know how successful beyond that realm were the collaborations between Dorothy Healey and Maurice Isserman, or Steve Nelson and (was it Rob Ruck?), or Vivian Gornick's Romance of American Communism. I know that All God's Dangers--featuring a completely unknown African-American former sharecropper with a strong, distinctive narrative voice and a personal history that was arguably less dramatic than Lee Brown's, won the National Book Award and was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection. That was an Avon imprint and probably had some corporate machinery behind it. But when you consider the recent refurbishing of the once-crased Paul Robeson's image, and the flurry of current discussion about the Amistad affair(s), it would

seem at least premature to assert that there's no place in popular discourse for the well-told story of a black Communist labor organizer.

Jill also asks how the events of Lee Brown's life might best be related to broader historical currents of the 1940s-1970s. This would of course mainly be Robert Allen's task, and the plans he sets forth in his memo seem on the mark. There are several contexts that would need to be clearly, albeit briefly, established. There's the history of American radicalism and the particular place of the race question within it, from the Debsian socialist movement's economistic dismissal of race as a category meriting attention, through the CP's tortured efforts to come to terms with race via the separate black nation thesis, the complex relations with the NAACP in the Scottsboro case, the anti-white-chauvinism campaign, and various grass-roots organizing efforts both North and South, etc. Then there's the broader history of black America, especially in the postwar period but taking account of the impacts of the Depression and New Deal and of World War II. And at the most general level, there's the history of the US from the 1940s to (the present?), emphasizing the Cold War, the domestic Red Scare, and developments in the labor movement. I don't mean to suggest a book-within-a-book here: all of these contexts could be sketched out in a few pages, and would seem to belong in the general introduction proposed by Professor Allen.

Allen also proposes writing a brief introduction to each chapter, which will help further to orient the reader to more specific matters to be raised in the ensuing pages. I like his idea of "extended footnotes" providing context and explanation as the story progresses, and recommend that they appear on the page, not at the end of the book. You might also consider a bibliographic essay at the end, which would be especially useful for students in upper-division or specialized courses who might be doing further research, and for the general reader who just wants to know more. Allen's proposal to reconstruct the trial is a good one, as it will provide more detail and drama of the sort that the manuscript as a whole is somewhat lacking (more below on this). If he can figure out a way to get Brown's voice into that reconstruction, all the better--though this obviously poses potential problems with narrative flow. Perhaps he did this in his Port Chicago book? If not, another model might be Tony Lukas's *Damyard Epitaph* (on the Chicago Eight trial), in which Lukas shifts between 3d-person omniscient narrator, sections of trial transcript, and first-person observer and commentator.

I especially like Allen's proposal to end with a dialogue between himself and Brown. In addition to the benefits Allen mentions, this would also break through the reader's (especially the student reader's) comfortable conception that this is all a story about the past that can be set aside and forgotten when finished.

I agree with Robert Allen's assertion in his book proposal that Lee Brown's story would be unique in the historical literature--that it would tell us things we don't know, or don't know much about. The western, as well as southern, focus; the emphases on unions, the NAACP and other organizations, and the CP; the Taft-Hartley imprisonment; and the story of an activist who outlived the Soviet Union but not his radicalism (a

welcome counternarrative to the "God That Failed/Second Thoughts" genre); and other matters yet to be set down on paper: all these are fresh and valuable. I do think, though, that you may want to consider just where the book will fit in the ongoing scholarly wars over communist historiography--in other words, how to avoid getting dissed by Draper.

This book seems closer to the tradition of Gornick, Isserman, and Robin Kelley, for example--a tradition that has stressed grass-roots American communists' relative autonomy, creativity, and commitment to American concerns--than to the tradition of Theodore Draper and his descendants, which has emphasized the thesis that CP leadership (and by extension, all American communists and their allies) were finally just dupes of Moscow. Although I think that most in the former school are tired of this dispute and want simply to recognize Draper's contributions and move on, Draper continues to take a proprietary interest in the field and seems to make a point of reviewing (and attacking) anything that reflects the grass-roots perspective. Thus Draperite reviewers will want to know more about why Brown and others withdrew from the CP after Taft-Hartley: weren't they just being sneakily opportunistic? What options were available? (Phillip Murray and John L. Lewis simply refused, at least at first, to sign the affidavits, and foreswore using the NLRB.) Where did Brown stand on the 1956 revelations? Was he a naive dupe, or a cunning subversive (the only categories Draperites tend to see)? Brown may or may not not have experienced such issues as central to his work, and the authors may not wish to engage them, but reviewers certainly will. Draperites will dismiss the book as just another Romance of American Communism unless these matters are laid out in the context of a broader explanation of Brown's relations with the CP. I'm suggesting more discussion of Lee Brown's political education, ideology, and commitments, which I think will make this a better, more satisfying work of history, and will also (if it's possible) end-run such critiques. I'll suggest particular points at which this could happen in my chapter-by-chapter comments.

Finally, I will also make reference in the comments that follow to what seems to me an issue of overriding importance: the authorial voice. Jill wrote to me that in reading the manuscript, she wanted to "know the person behind the plainly told story." I couldn't agree more strongly. As it stands, the narrative is far too much a simple, straightforward exposition of events. What needs to emerge here is a distinctive personality, expressed in the distinctive, identifiable language of an individual whom the reader can come to know and recognize through the text. While I want to know what Lee Brown has to tell me, most readers will also insist on being seduced, on being drawn into the story by the feeling that they are coming to know a unique person with his own language, his own characteristic modes of expression, his own way of telling his story. The current text doesn't read at all like spoken language, it reads like a sequence of carefully-composed "correct" sentences that can't exude much liveliness, humor, pain, or emotion of any sort. I don't know how this text was generated, but I'm guessing that getting more of Lee Brown's own (spoken) voice onto the page would vastly improve the readability of the book.

All of that said, here follow some observations on the individual chapters.

## CHAPTER ONE: CHILDHOOD

Here and elsewhere throughout the manuscript, material is introduced out of chronological order, approximate dates or Brown's approximate age are not given, and specific details are left out or introduced a page or two after a topic is broached, leaving the reader at sea in the meantime. Thus in the first few pages: who, altogether, lived on his grandfather's farm? What happened to the other sons/uncles? We're told on page 4 that Aunt Betsy was cruel and selfish, but no examples are given until page 5; rearrange to improve narrative flow and clarity for reader.

3) Specificity: how did his grandfather cut his leg (which led to his death)? Such details, if remembered, give the narrative more texture, and give the reader more of a sense for farm life.

6) How old was he when he started school? Give approximate age or year periodically to keep reader oriented.

10) Moves in with Dad Howard---who was he? If I've already met him, I've already forgotten who he was, there's such a barrage of characters in these early pages.

## CHAPTER TWO: OFF THE PLANTATION

15) Listening to court cases: does he remember any specific ones? Was this experience relevant to his developing sense of right/wrong, justice/injustice?

## CHAPTER THREE: LOS ANGELES

36-37) Clarity: Bertha (his girlfriend) becomes his friend Sydney's girlfriend? But he never calls her Bertha anymore, calling her Sydney's girlfriend instead--am I right that this is the same person?

37) He joins the NAACP: no lead-up to this or analysis or reflection, beyond recounting a few encounters with racism. What did it mean--generally, and to him specifically--to join this organization? Wouldn't this have been a pretty big deal, an important decision?

42) Here especially, but also elsewhere, the narrative gets very choppy--an endless string of briefly-noted events, jobs, girlfriends, rallies, and then more of the same. These come and go so fast, they don't add up to much. How about reducing the number of incidents & individuals noted, and providing more depth and reflection on ones that proved especially important to him. For example, more on the Zoot Suit Riots?

He mentions the war occasionally through here--girlfriends have husbands in the service, etc.--but did the war matter to him? How did he relate to it? Historians have

made much of the war's galvanizing effects on black consciousness and organization. Does his experience support or refute such claims?

46-7) Self-education: he notes that he collected books, but doesn't specify any. This is a matter of considerable interest to historians. What authors, what titles, especially influenced him? Can he be placed in the American tradition of radical autodidacticism? On page 55 he mentions a few subjects that he read about, but again no titles.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: NEW ORLEANS (1)

Here Robert Allen's introductory material on the background of Local 207 will be of great interest: how did it become a militant, interracial union; and how did Nelson, a black communist, come to be its president?

54-55) He attends a communist meeting at Nelson's behest; then attends others, and becomes a member. The straightforward exposition and limited discussion leaves the reader wanting to know much more. What was discussed? How was socialism introduced to him? Was this his first introduction? What was its appeal? What hesitations, if any did he have? Was this a sort of conversion experience (as such events are conventionally portrayed), or something different?

56) When he does talk about the appeal of communism, it again comes a little later than it should, with a girlfriend or two in between--and he doesn't really say why he came to favor socialism, focusing instead on specific issues like free education for all.

#### CHAPTER FIVE: NEW ORLEANS (2)

69) When he does talk about political ideology, it remains pretty vague: he asks Robeson whether socialism would help the workers; Robeson says yes. This needs more texture, detail, reflection. What exactly did socialism mean to him--revolution? the "progressivism" of the late '40s and '50s? How did he and other black communists relate to the CP program and ideology? How aware were he and his black comrades of the Party's history with the race question? When he worked on the Henry Wallace campaign, he doesn't mention the much-discussed issue of CP involvement. Did he participate as a "labor man," as a communist, or both?

70-71) Chased and shot at after meeting at church: *None of this kind of material* ~~great~~ Here we aren't just told that he worked on voter registration; he gives us a feeling for what it meant to try to do this in Jim Crow Louisiana.

76) fears that "some anti-labor, Ku Klux Klansmen, and reactionaries" would jump them after court. ~~explicate the connection between racism and anti-labor attitudes?~~ Did he see these as naturally allied, as symbiotic? Was this part of a larger analysis of race and class

*explicate connection between racism and anti-labor attitudes*

in the South? There are frequent hints of this--references to Jim Crow and monopoly capital being somehow connected (e.g. p. 107, and 122)--but how exactly did he see this operating? And why would he describe the court decision that blacks and whites could associate socially as "a victory for the workingclass in the South"--as principally a matter of class, not of race?

80-83) Generally fascinating stuff here--more details, more anecdotes, more stories (e.g., on organizing the Empire, LA fishermen). Great, fresh material on interracial labor organizing in 1940s-50s: community and church involvement, meat boycotts (prefiguring the organizing strategies of Montgomery?); taping a quarter to a deck of cards to symbolize the .25 raise--the more such details, the better.

### CHAPTER SIX: NEW ORLEANS (3)

Southern Conference Education Fund, Walter White, etc.: date/year? Place this in time for the reader.

88) Union campaign against Taft-Hartley: more on this? Details on his organizing trips through the state? Also on the struggle against the state right-to-work law (p. 89): details of the campaign in the legislature? Show the reader the nature and texture of grass-roots, labor-political organizing--this is a great opportunity to present the operations and "movement culture" of the southern interracial left.

In the face of Taft-Hartley, Local 207 officers "decided" to withdraw from the CP but to remain militant: more on how this decision was reached? How was it rationalized? What options were considered? Did he think this was the best course?

90) Letter from a "Board" in DC: note in text that need more info, charges, what board, etc. Presumably this was the NLRB, whose whole mandate had been modified by Taft-Hartley. The Board was no longer to be (as anti-New Deal Congressmen saw it) labor's special friend; now the Board was to "impartially" adjudicate the claims of labor, management, and the public.

91) All the stuff on Inland Waterway trying to fire Brown is unclear: what was at issue here? Who said and did what?

94-95) Paul Washington case: information not presented sequentially, causing confusion. At first unclear whether Washington was a union man, because Brown refers to Local 207, not the Civil Rights Congress, taking action in his case. It's unclear whether the Congress was somehow affiliated with the union--until p. 95, when the connection is clarified. On 95, "Lawyers came in from the national office"--the national office of what? It isn't made clear until 97 that the Civil Rights Congress is a national organization with a Louisiana chapter.

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MEMO

9/26/97

To: Jill Rothenberg

From: Robert L. Allen

Subj.: Notes regarding my role in Lee Brown book

Aside from organizing and editing the material I am gathering from Lee Brown, there are four ways in which I could directly contribute to contextualizing and providing connective material for the book:

1. -- I see myself writing a general introduction to Lee Brown's memoir, describing the background of the black community in New Orleans and the background of the labor movement in that city. I would also tell the story of the establishment of Local 207 and its early history, drawing upon archival material at ILWU headquarters in San Francisco. I might also write some about how I met Lee, my impressions of him, how our relationship has developed.
2. -- I think it also makes sense for me to write a brief (1-2 page) introduction to each chapter, to give the setting and context, and to weave in comments within each chapter, where appropriate, to clarify or elaborate as needed. For example, such comments could be valuable in providing background on Paul Robeson when Lee talks about the time he spent as Robeson's bodyguard; describing the conditions facing black actors in Hollywood during the period when Lee worked with the Los Angeles chapter of the NAACP; looking at the role of the Communist party in the black community; outlining the situation of black hotel workers in San Francisco in

the early Sixties when Lee arrived; giving background information on the Black Panthers, Nation of Islam, senior citizens groups and other organizations with which Lee worked in San Francisco. I don't see these comments as lengthy discussions but more like extended footnotes or mini-appendices woven into the flow of the text to give readers the context of Lee's story at each turning point.

3. -- Certain chapters I would mainly write: for example, since Lee did not testify at the HUAC hearing and his subsequent trial under the Taft-Hartley law I would recount these events using the transcripts as sources. This would be similar to the way in which I recreated the trial in my book, The Port Chicago Mutiny, but in a more abbreviated form. Although Lee did not testify I think these sections could be enlivened by having Lee offer a running commentary on the characters and events, the kind of things he might have said as he sat watching the trial.

4. -- At the end of the book we could have a dialog/interview between myself and Lee about how he sees the future of the labor movement and race relations in the U.S. This would be an opportunity for Lee to sum up his experience and for us to talk about the relevance of his experience to the social, economic and racial conditions we face on the eve of the 21st century. It could also round out the sense of personal connection between the two of us.

BOOK PROPOSAL  
LEE BROWN: AFRICAN AMERICAN LABOR LEADER

By Lee Brown and Robert L. Allen

In 1958 Lee Brown, an African American labor leader in New Orleans, became the first person to be imprisoned under the anti-communist provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act. Shortly after heroically defying the House Un-American Activities Committee, Brown was brought to trial, convicted and sentenced to three years imprisonment at the federal penitentiary at Texarkana, Texas.

For more than 50 years Lee Brown has been at the forefront of the struggle for the rights of working people in this country. A self-educated man ("doctor of the working class" is how he describes his education), Brown took part in grass-roots labor struggles on the waterfront of Galveston, Texas, and in railroad labor camps in Arizona in the late 1930s, fought for jobs for black actors in the Hollywood film industry in the 1940s, and led struggles in the great hotels of San Francisco in the 1960s and 1970s.

Brown made history as one of the top leaders of a militant, interracial union in the Deep South during the late 1940s and 1950s. He was vice president of Local 207, Warehouse and Distribution Workers' Union (affiliated with the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union) in New Orleans. Also a member of the Communist Party, Lee Brown paid a high price for his commitment. In 1957 he was investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Brown refused to cooperate with HUAC. At the hearings he created a sensation when he adamantly refused to answer any questions until the Committee allowed him to make a statement. (He

had planned to pose his own set of questions to the committee, including: Was Senator Eastland a member of the Ku Klux Klan? For his insistence on having the right to make his own statement, Brown was accused of being a defiant, arrogant witness and ejected from the HUAC hearing.

The following year Lee Brown was charged with violating the Taft-Hartley law, which prohibited union leaders from being members of the Communist Party. Although he had previously withdrawn his membership in the Communist party to meet the requirements of the law, he was convicted nonetheless. He became the first labor leader imprisoned during the McCarthyite witchhunts, and he served the longest prison term of any of the Taft-Hartley victims.

Born to a farming family in Louisiana in 1921, Lee Brown first joined a union at age 17 when he was working on the dry docks in Galveston, Texas. It was there he had his first taste of labor conflict when the union called a strike in 1939 for better wages.

✶ Later he worked on the railroads in Arizona. When a foreman unfairly dismissed a worker, Lee told the others: "Let's call a meeting. Together we should stand up for this brother." The effort was successful, and Lee was started on a course of lifelong labor activism.

By World War II Lee was in Los Angeles working for RKO Studios and actively involved in the NAACP. He campaigned for better jobs for blacks in the film industry, and along the way he got to know many legendary black stars, including Lena Horne and Paul Robeson. He even had a couple of bit parts in films.

Paul  
Robeson

It was while working in Los Angeles at a warehouse that he joined the ILWU and became acquainted with its controversial leader, Harry Bridges.

After the war Lee returned to New Orleans where he got a job on the waterfront. He became an organizer for Local 207 of the packinghouse workers' union. Local 207 was known for its militancy and consequently disliked by the employers. With black and white members, its president, Andrew Nelson, was black -- a situation virtually unheard of in the South, and especially galling to local authorities. Brown's fearlessness and militancy got him chosen as vice-president of Local 207.

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Lee Brown's life spans the period of greatest labor activism in this country. Other recent black labor autobiographies, such as the books by Hosea Hudson and Harry Haywood, have focussed on the experiences of activists in the North and Southeast. Lee Brown's story is unique: A black labor activist in the South, Southwest and the West who worked with several different labor unions, as well as the NAACP and the Communist Party; an activist who paid the price of imprisonment for his political principles; a Communist who lived to see the collapse of the socialist world but who remains committed to the struggle for radical change. For Lee Brown, life and the

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The heart of the book will be Lee Brown's engaging, gritty and often humorous account of his early life; his introduction to the labor movement; his life in Arizona, Los Angeles, and New Orleans; his trial and imprisonment; his life since he moved to the San Francisco Bay Area; his retirement activities, and his reflections on his experiences. There will also be an introduction (or epilog) by Robert Allen outlining the role of African Americans in the labor movement and the Communist Party (emphasizing the South and West), and the impact of the Taft-Hartley law. An Appendix will include extracts from the HUAC hearing, FBI documents, the trial transcript, and newspaper accounts.

Lee Brown's memoir is an important book. It will be of interest to a wide audience of general readers, trade unionists, students, community activists and libraries.

also  
providing  
contextualization  
historical and  
social framework.  
(Lee can do some  
of this)

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Robert

**Strong in the Struggle:**  
**The Story of Lee Brown and Black**  
**Labor Militancy in the South & West**  
(working title)

by Lee Brown and Robert L. Allen

Sample Chapters

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**BOOK PROPOSAL**  
**LEE BROWN: AFRICAN AMERICAN LABOR LEADER**

By Lee Brown and Robert L. Allen

In 1958 Lee Brown, an African American labor leader in New Orleans, became the first person to be imprisoned under the anti-communist provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act. Shortly after heroically defying the House Un-American Activities Committee, Brown was brought to trial, convicted and sentenced to three years imprisonment at the federal penitentiary at Texarkana, Texas.

For more than 50 years Lee Brown has been at the forefront of the struggle for the rights of working people in this country. A self-educated man ("doctor of the working class" is how he describes his education), Brown took part in grass-roots labor struggles on the waterfront of Galveston, Texas, and in railroad labor camps in Arizona in the late 1930s, fought for jobs for black actors in the Hollywood film industry in the 1940s, and led struggles in the great hotels of San Francisco in the 1960s and 1970s.

Brown made history as one of the top leaders of a militant, interracial union in the Deep South during the late 1940s and 1950s. He was vice president of Local 207, Warehouse and Distribution Workers' Union (affiliated with the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union) in New Orleans. Also a member of the Communist Party, Lee Brown paid a high price for his commitment. In 1957 he was investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Brown refused to cooperate with HUAC. At the hearings he created a sensation when he adamantly refused to answer any questions until the Committee allowed him to make a statement. (He

had planned to pose his own set of questions to the committee, including: Was Senator Eastland a member of the Ku Klux Klan?) For his insistence on having the right to make his own statement, Brown was accused of being a defiant, arrogant witness and ejected from the HUAC hearing.

The following year Lee Brown was charged with violating the Taft-Hartley law, which prohibited union leaders from being members of the Communist Party. Although he had previously withdrawn his membership in the Communist party to meet the requirements of the law, he was convicted nonetheless. He became the first labor leader imprisoned during the McCarthyite witchhunts, and he served the longest prison term of any of the Taft-Hartley victims.

Born to a farming family in Louisiana in 1921, Lee Brown first joined a union at age 17 when he was working on the dry docks in Galveston, Texas. It was there he had his first taste of labor conflict when the union called a strike in 1939 for better wages.

Later he worked on the railroads in Arizona. When a foreman unfairly dismissed a worker, Lee told the others: "Let's call a meeting. Together we should stand up for this brother." The effort was successful, and Lee was started on a course of lifelong labor activism.

By World War II Lee was in Los Angeles working for RKO Studios and actively involved in the NAACP. He campaigned for better jobs for blacks in the film industry, and along the way he got to know many legendary black stars, including Lena Horne and Paul Robeson. He even had a couple of bit parts in films.

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CHAPTER ONE

I still worked hard on the farm -  
 Trying to help my relative and my self.  
 When we wasn't farming, we would  
 go and chop wood for the <sup>WHITE</sup> people homes.  
 We need the little money to help us get  
 along in the winter time. The white people  
 had warm houses in the winter, we never  
 had time to chop wood for our ~~house~~ <sup>seelves</sup>. The  
 black people would run out every day  
 trying to gather enough wood for ~~they~~ <sup>themselves</sup>,  
 when it got cold, But we made it  
 through the ~~with~~ <sup>through</sup> winter.

When I was living with TOT he  
 got in some kind of trouble. The white  
 people rode all night long on horses trying  
 to find him, they told me he was hiding  
 in the church steeple. Each family had to  
 gather their children up at night and go to  
 one house until morning, they rode all  
 night. We all still stayed in the one house  
 together until they stop riding.

TOT got away and made it to the  
 train station with help of some friends. Later  
 on my aunt ~~move~~ moved, taken me  
 and all her belonging, to her brother  
 in Evergreen Louisiana. I went to school  
 for a while when I was there.

What  
 trouble?

already in  
 the house

but in  
 the house