

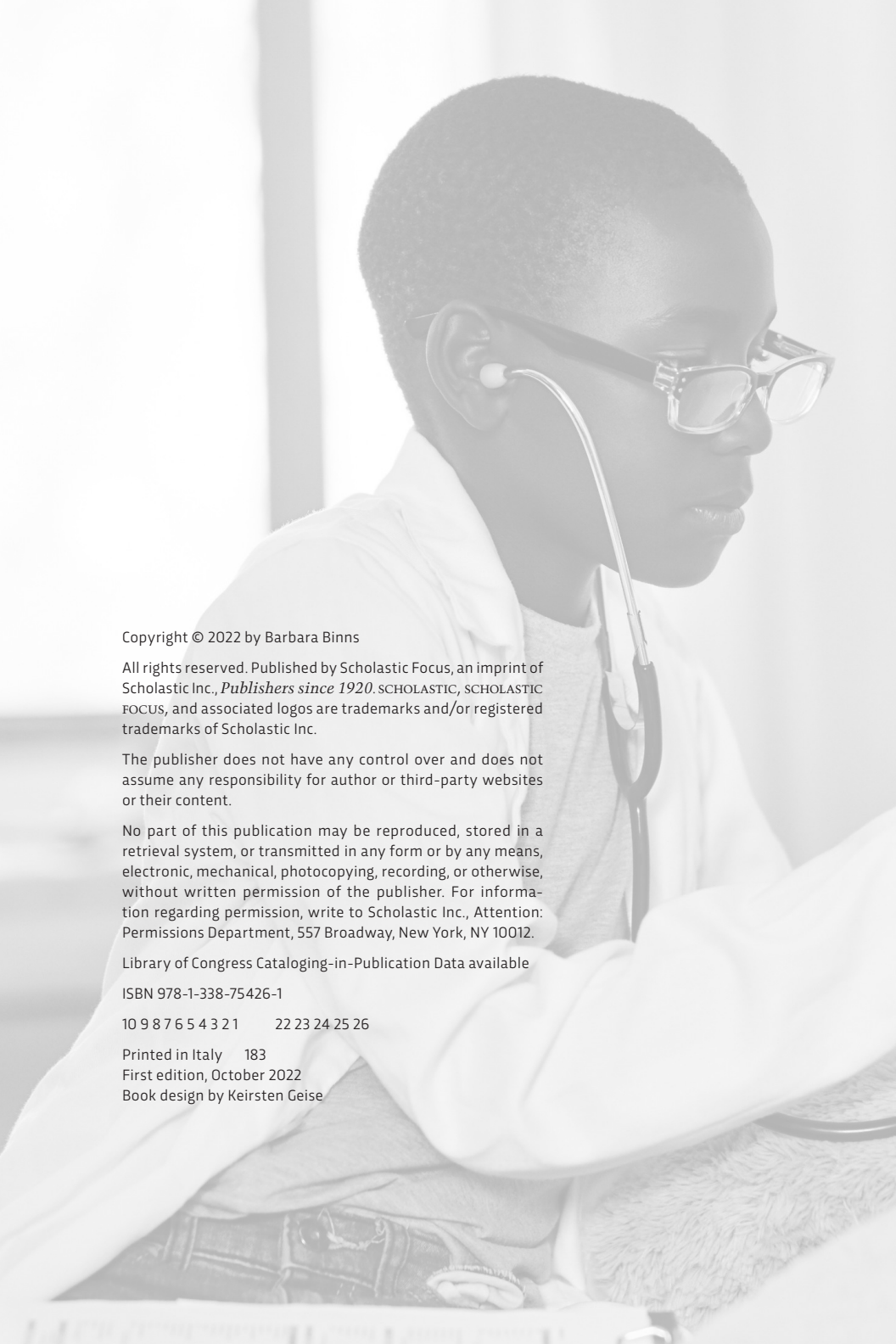


UNLAWFUL ORDERS

A Portrait of Dr. James B. Williams,
Tuskegee Airman, Surgeon, and Activist

BARBARA BINNS

SCHOLASTIC
FOCUS | NEW YORK



Copyright © 2022 by Barbara Binns

All rights reserved. Published by Scholastic Focus, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., *Publishers since 1920*. SCHOLASTIC, SCHOLASTIC FOCUS, and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

The publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, write to Scholastic Inc., Attention: Permissions Department, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data available

ISBN 978-1-338-75426-1

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 22 23 24 25 26

Printed in Italy 183

First edition, October 2022

Book design by Keirsten Geise



MEET JB WILLIAMS

ON OCTOBER 31, 1907, a Black man named Alex Johnson was arrested in Cameron, Texas. The charge: attempting to assault a white woman. Those kinds of accusations usually brought automatic death sentences with no evidence or proof of guilt required.

When word spread that Johnson would not receive the death penalty, hundreds of white people assembled around the jail. The mob used sledgehammers to break down jail doors and remove the prisoner. According to newspapers, the unstoppable, bloodthirsty crowd meant to have Mr. Johnson at any cost. The mob of

The SHAME of AMERICA

Do you know that the United States is the Only Land on Earth where human beings are BURNED AT THE STAKE?

In Five Years 1918-1922, Thirty-six People were publicly BURNED BY AMERICAN MOBS
60 Persons were lynched in 1922

3496 PEOPLE LYNCHED, 1889-1922

For What Crimes Have Mobs Nullified Government and Inflicted the Death Penalty?

The Alleged Crimes	The Victims	Why Some Mob Victims Died:
Murder	1,297	Not turning out of road for white boy in auto
Rape	591	Being a relative of a person who was lynched
Attacks on women	253	Jumping a labor contract
Crimes against the person	364	Being a member of the Non-Partisan League
Crimes against property	334	"Talking Back" to a white man
Miscellaneous crimes	463	"Insulting" white man
Absence of crime	184	
	3,496	

Is Rape the "Cause" of Lynching?

Of 3,496 people murdered by mobs in our country, only 591, or less than 17 per cent, were even accused of the crime of rape.

83 WOMEN HAVE BEEN LYNCHED IN THE UNITED STATES
Do lynchers maintain that they were lynched for "the usual crime?"
AND THE LYNCHERS GO UNPUNISHED

THE REMEDY

The Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill is Still Before the United States Senate

The Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill was passed on January 26, 1922, by a vote of 230 to 119 in the House of Representatives

The Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill Provides:

That culpable State officers and mobbists shall be tried in Federal Courts on failure of State courts to act, and that a county in which a lynching occurs shall be fined \$10,000, recoverable in a Federal Court.

The Principal Objection Advanced Against the Bill is upon the Ground of Constitutionality. The Constitutionality of the Dyer Bill Has Been Affirmed by

The Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives

The Judiciary Committee of the Senate
The United States Attorney General, legal adviser of Congress
Judge Guy D. Goff, of the Department of Justice

The Senate has been petitioned to pass the Dyer Bill by

29 Lawyers and Jurists including two former Attorney Generals of the United States

19 State Supreme Court Justices

24 State Governors

3 Archbishops, 85 bishops and prominent churchmen

39 Mayors of large cities, north and south

The American Bar Association at its meeting in San Francisco, August 9, 1922, adopted a resolution asking for further legislation by Congress to punish and prevent lynching and mob violence.

Fifteen State Conventions of 1922 (3 of them Democratic) have inserted in their party platforms a demand for national action to stamp out lynchings.

Lynching Creates Unrest. It Stimulated Northward Migration of Negro Workers from the South. It Injures Agriculture and Lessens Productiveness of Labor.

**THE DYER ANTI-LYNCHING BILL IS STILL BEFORE THE SENATE
TELEGRAPH YOUR SENATORS YOU WANT IT ENACTED**

If you want to help the organization which has brought to light the facts about lynching, the organization which is fighting for 100 per cent Americanism, not for some of the people some of the time, but for all of the people, white or black, all of the time.

Send your check to J. E. SPINGARN, Treasurer of the

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

70 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

An anti-lynching poster issued by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

angry white men moved “like the swollen stream of a mountain.” Anyone who tried to stop them would have been killed. Not even the sheriff tried to intervene.

Huddled behind the locked doors of his nearby medical office, Dr. Aaron Nixon could only listen in horror as Johnson cried while being tortured. Meanwhile, white spectators pulled out chairs and sat on the balconies of surrounding buildings to watch their victim being led across the courtyard to a large oak tree and lynched. The newspapers deemed the crowd “orderly.”

Johnson’s death was one of many lynchings that occurred in the area, and it was enough to make Dr. Nixon and his college friend, teacher Jasper Buchanan Williams, decide it was time to leave Cameron. Both men held a special hatred for the lynching of Black people that occurred year after year. Jasper Williams burned with a passion for civil rights. He was described as a “driving, ambitious man who realized much was wrong with society.”

They moved to El Paso, a place called Sun City that was rumored to be slightly less hostile to Black people.

Jasper may have had a personal reason for choosing El Paso as his new home. Clara Belle Drisdale, a former Cameron teacher and his future wife, now taught in El Paso.

Clara Belle Drisdale was born in Plum, Texas, in 1885, the eldest child of sharecroppers and former slaves. Sharecroppers farmed land owned by someone else, using a portion of the crops to pay for rent and the cost of seeds and other supplies. Sharecropping could be a good way for people with limited start-up funds to make a beginning, *if* the landowner was fair. The Drisdale family was lucky. The man who owned their land was fair in his accounting of their debts and payments. Besides, Clara Belle admitted years later, as a child she sometimes leaned on the scales just a tiny bit when it was time to weigh the crops she'd gathered to gain a little extra money.

Her family took the name Drisdale from their former owners. Her father never attended school but taught himself to read and write with an old spelling



Clara Belle Drisdale Williams.