

**MORE  
DANGEROUS**

**THAN A**

**THOUSAND  
RIOTERS**

**LUCY PARSONS**

I am an anarchist



POWER SHIFT NETWORK

# FEATURED C NTENTS

**Shifting  
Identity**

**History of  
Resistance**

**Who is  
Lucy?**

**Life  
Timeline**

**All Your  
Favs Are  
Problematic**

**Selected  
Quotes**

**Research  
Questions**

Throughout this zine there are several underlined texts, click them to be taken to a source

# WHO IS LUCY



"Lucy E. Parsons was a leading figure in American socialism, anarchism and the radical labor movement.

She organized against capitalism and government, and she also helped organize the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World).

Described by the Chicago Police Department as "more dangerous than a thousand rioters" in the 1920s, Parsons had become a highly effective anarchist organizer primarily involved in the labor movement in the late 19th century, but also participating in revolutionary activism on behalf of political prisoners, ~~people of color~~ [Black people], the homeless and women."



**S. Parsons!**

WIFE OF THE

**Condemned**

WILL DELIVER A

**FREE**

**LECTURE**

**AT**

**KUMP'S HALL.**

**Monday**

**Evening,**

**Dec. 20,**

**1886.**

**Mrs. Parsons!**

WIFE OF THE

**Condemned Anarchist**

WILL DELIVER A

**Mrs. Parsons!**

WIFE OF THE

**Condemned Anarchist**

WILL DELIVER A

**FREE LECTURE**

**AT**

**KUMP'S HALL.**

Tenth and Main Sts.,

**Monday Evening, Dec. 20, 1886.**

At 8 o'clock.

Everybody should avail themselves of this opportunity to hear the most Talented and Eloquent Woman of the age. **FREE, FREE.**

**KNOW**

Tenth and

**Monday Evening**

At 8

**AT**

**KUMP'S HALL.**

**Monday**

**Evening,**

**Dec. 20,**

**1886.**

**Mrs. Parsons!**

WIFE OF THE

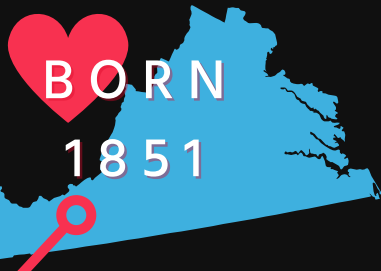
**Condemned Anarchist**

WILL DELIVER A

Everybody should avail themselves of this opportunity to hear the most Talented and



Lucy Parsons was born as Lucia Eldine Carter in Virginia to an enslaved woman named Charlotte. Her biological father was likely her enslaver, Thomas J. Taliaferro.



Toward the end of the Civil War, Taliaferro moved the enslaved people on his plantation west to Texas in an arduous, monthslong trek. Once there, it's likely that Charlotte and her family fled.

**Charlotte relocated her family to Waco, Texas, a town that seemingly had promise for freed Black people.**

She married an older freed Black man named Oliver Benton. She had a baby, likely with Benton, who died in infancy. She later met Albert Parsons, a white newspaper editor and former Confederate soldier who'd set his sights on getting a position in the Republican party.



# MARRIAGE 1872

Albert and Lucia were able to legally marry within the small window of time in 1872 when interracial marriage was legal and they both saw Chicago as a place of opportunity.

On the way there, Lucia shed her name, and her past life, and became Lucy Parsons, who no longer identified as Black, but as Mexican and Indigenous.



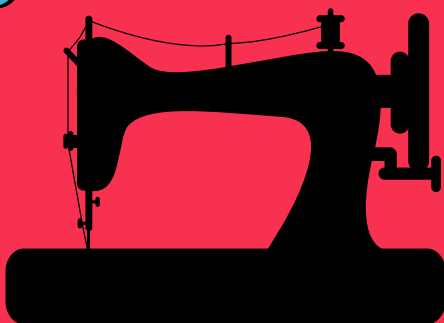
“ She clearly wanted to escape what it meant to be a Black woman at that time. The structures that were imposed on Black women, the limitations of what they could aspire to be. - Dr. Tera W. Hunter ”

Chicago 1873 -----> Mid - 1870's

Intro to radical  
labor  
organizing

Parsons helped launch the  
Working Women's Union,  
holding meetings in her  
dressmaking shop.

Stitching Together Lucy's  
Role In Labor Organizing



MAY  
DAY



MAY 1 - 1886

Parsons played a significant role  
in the fight for the eight-hour  
workday as well as the  
organization of the first May Day.

Lucy was a  
founder of the  
International Ladies  
Garment Workers  
Union (ILGWU)



“  
**My mind is appalled at  
the thought of a  
political party having  
control of all the details  
that go to make up the  
sum total of our lives.**

Lucy Parsons

The Principles  
of Anarchism

”





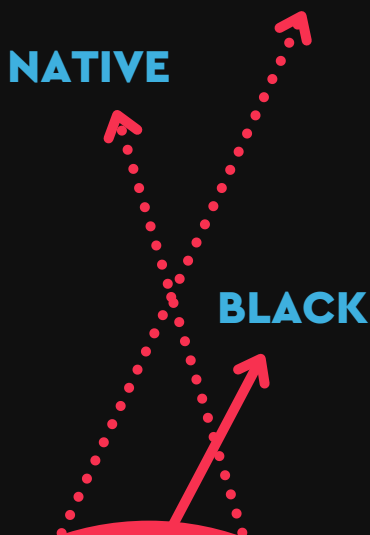
When we sought out to create this zine on Lucy Parsons it was to elevate a Black woman anarchist. We wanted to counter the mainstream narrative of **MEXICAN** anarchy that is often white washed and contributing to the erasure of Black Anarchy throughout history.

.....

But Lucy actively denied her Blackness and overtly made claims of Mexican & Indigenous identity.

**NOW**

**WHAT?**



# Reflection Questions



In a lot of ways this changes the story we thought we were going to tell. After a lot of research, combing through various versions of history, and deep personal reflection on the topics of race, survival, false claims to identity, assimilation, and the general historical erasure of Afro-Indigenous peoples...

We are brought to these questions:

- Did Lucy change her identity as a survival tactic?
- What do these conflicting claims to race/identity mean in the context of her labor movement work?
- How does Lucy's understanding of race inform her understanding of anarchism?

LIFE OF  
ALBERT R. PARSONS

Governor John P. Altgeld's  
Pardon of the Anarchists  
and His  
Masterly Review  
of  
The Haymarket Riot

LUCY E. PARSONS

Publisher

3130 NORTH TROY STREET  
CHICAGO, ILL.

The Famous Speeches of the  
Chicago Anarchists  
in reply  
to Why the Sentence of Death  
Should not be Passed Upon  
Them — Delivered in Court

PRINCIPLES OF ANARCHISM  
A Lecture by  
LUCY E. PARSONS

4/28 1938

Ewing C. Baskette  
304 Union Street  
Nashville Tenn.

Dear Mr. Baskette:

I regret to have to ~~have~~ inform you  
I can't find any of those books that  
you inquired about. I looked for them  
a long time.

How did you like the Life of Parsons?  
I presume you showed it to some of your  
friends, what did they think of it?

Yours Truly  
Lucy E. Parsons



A letter from  
Lucy Parsons to  
Ewing Baskette  
regarding his  
opinions on her  
book.



**LUCY PARSONS SPEAKS ON "LIBERTY."**

She Incidentally Gets in a Good Word for  
"Koresh" Teed.

Mrs. Lucy Parsons lectured last night at  
No. 116 Fifth avenue.

**"Each of you hungry tramps who  
read these lines avail yourselves  
of those little methods of warfare  
which Science has placed in  
the hands of the poor man,  
and you will become a  
power in this or any  
other land. Learn  
the use of  
explosives!"**

**A Word to Tramps**

**1884**





# THE HAYMARKET 8

## MAY 1 - 1886 - FIRST MAY DAY

Lucy, Albert, and their two children lead 80,000 working people down the streets of Chicago demanding an 8 hour work day with no reduction in pay.

## MAY 3 - 1886 - POLICE KILL 4 PROTESTERS

## MAY 4 - 1886 - HAYMARKET RIOT


In response to police murder, radicals call a mass rally in Haymarket Square. The meeting is raided by police and an unidentified person throws a bomb into the crowd killing 4 police, a riot ensues.

## OCTOBER - 1887 - HAYMARKET EXECUTIONS

8 Anarchists convicted for the murder of police, one being Albert Parsons, who is executed by public hanging. Lucy led efforts to defend the Haymarket 8.

# THE DANGER OF

# P E D E S T A L S



When we pedestal our favorite activists, community organizers, and movement leaders we strip them of their humanity creating distance between their public image and their ability to make mistakes.

Pedestals place ordinary people in a complex of superiority that distances them from criticism and accountability to the community they are affiliated with.

To resist and actively reject those who seek the social currency and capital that is affiliated with celebrity status, fame, and clout is fundamental to anarchist practices of decentralization, anonymity, and collectivity over individualism.