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**The "Negro Question": Philanthropy, Education, and Citizenship in the  
Gilded-Age South**


by

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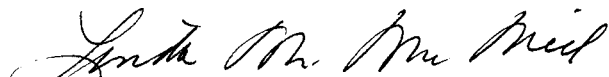
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## ABSTRACT

The “Negro Question”: Philanthropy, Education, and Citizenship in the Gilded-Age South

by

David L. Davis

This dissertation is a cultural and intellectual history of black education, nationalism, and empire. I argue that educational philanthropy played an indispensable role in the construction of Anglo-Christian nationalism in the nineteenth century, and Anglo-American empire in the twentieth. The Tuskegee idea, as embodied in the educational philosophy of Booker T. Washington and underwritten by corporate philanthropy, enabled advances in African American literacy, economic development, and land ownership. However, it packaged these advances in such a way that they accommodated disfranchisement and segregation as the dominant organizing principles of the southern and the national political order. Moreover, the principles of the Tuskegee idea proved adaptable to educating colonial subjects in Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and other imperial settings across the globe.

Tuskegee Institute became a laboratory for the working out of race relations in the South. The Tuskegee idea—a complex of theories regarding racial differentialization, progress, and the gradual accrual of citizenship rights for African Americans—played a

prominent role in the regional unification of the North and South into a modern nation-state, the exclusion of African Americans from the national family, and an entry point for the U.S. into the family of nations. As such, it played a key role in Gilded-Age contests over the meaning of citizenship for African Americans, for women, and for poor whites. Those who participated in these contests helped define the meaning of American nationalism in the modern era.

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and professional direction, has served as both an indefatigable advocate for my own professional development and a model of academic civility. As the managing editor of the *Journal of Southern History*, he set the tone of professional congeniality that made my service there as an editorial assistant among the most pleasurable of recent memory. To my wife Kristel Davis, whose sacrifices and encouragement have made it possible for me to live a life of the mind, all I can say is: Thank you. Last, I would like to thank my daughter Hannah for teaching me how to play and for rekindling in me the sense of imaginative wonder that had long been repressed under the weight of adult responsibility.

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## Introduction

### Philanthropy and Black Education as a Problem of Historical Interpretation

A condition Congress imposed upon southern states desiring to return to the Union after the Civil War was that their Reconstruction governments authorize state systems of public education in their constitutions. All eleven states of the former Confederacy did so, including those that had already returned to the Union through President Lincoln's "ten percent plan." However, poverty, the lack of qualified teachers, and the instability of Reconstruction governments made public education an extremely difficult proposition in the New South. Consequently, educational philanthropies such as the Peabody Education Fund, the John Fox Slater Fund, the Southern Education Board, and the General Education Board raised millions of dollars to assist in the construction of public education systems in southern states. In doing so, they joined northern missionary societies that had been supporting the education of black southerners since at least as early as 1863.<sup>1</sup>

However, there were differences in the approaches of the missionary societies and the newly incorporated foundations. The missionary societies established local schools for African Americans along with institutions for higher learning, such as Fisk, Howard, and Atlanta Universities that operated on the classical liberal arts university model. The foundations, on the other hand, coordinated their efforts with state governments to establish city schools and normal schools for teacher training; they became best known

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<sup>1</sup> Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988); James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Henry Allen Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South from 1619 to the Present* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1967).

for their support of industrial institutes, such as Hampton and Tuskegee. Both approaches were based on the understanding that African American freedmen required fundamental lessons in thrift, industry, morality, and citizenship, along with remedial training in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Additionally, most of the prominent African American colleges, including those mentioned above, received funding from both the missionary societies and the foundations. While the anti-slavery origins of the missionary societies lent them a generally more radical stance than that of the corporate foundations, their goals and methods overlapped to a large degree.<sup>2</sup>

In the mid-1870s white insurgents overthrew the Reconstruction governments, and state legislatures began to divert educational funding to other purposes—such as debt reduction—and also began favoring the education of whites over that of blacks. However, black southerners continued to wield limited political power and were able to advance their educational agendas apace. Simultaneously, both the missionary societies and the foundations began shifting their support from local schools to colleges and industrial institutes. By the end of the nineteenth century, African Americans had been disfranchised across most of the South, and those states that had not yet enacted disfranchisement soon would. The white supremacy movement that advanced disfranchisement did so through a combination of lynching, political malfeasance, and

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<sup>2</sup> Joe Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861–1890* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1986); Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South from 1619 to the Present*. James M. McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964); Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865–1873* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

race-baiting that created an atmosphere of intense paranoia regarding race relations in the South.<sup>3</sup>

In the midst of this violence and fear, the educational foundations began an effort to consolidate under an interlocking directorate and to rationalize their policies for philanthropic giving. The policies and initiatives that ensued reflected the extreme racial tension of those years in their conservative orientation toward race, education, and democracy. In consultation with conservative southern white political leaders and accommodationist blacks such as Booker T. Washington, the foundations enacted educational policies that focused primarily on advancing southern white agendas. The institutions of black education they supported, especially Tuskegee Institute, promoted a brand of education meant to inculcate improved morality among black southerners in an effort to qualify them for the citizenship that had recently been severely restricted by the white supremacy movement. Simultaneously, these industrial institutes also helped establish a leadership cadre of teachers, preachers, and businessmen who constituted much of the black middle class in the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup>

Although the money spent by the foundations, most of which went for the education of white southerners, was dwarfed by that spent by state governments, their influence went beyond the conditions they attached to their grants. The foundations' interlocking directorate was comprised of some of the most influential personalities of America's Gilded Age; and when they debated educational policy they were also

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<sup>3</sup> C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951); Louis R. Harlan, *Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the southern Seaboard States, 1910–1915* (Chapel Hill, 1958); Dewey Grantham, *The South in Modern America: A Region at Odds* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> Harlan, *Separate and Unequal*, 75–101; Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South*, 89–116; Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 79–109.

debating the character of the nation they believed themselves to serve.<sup>5</sup> The record they left behind reveals much more than their musings over educational philanthropy. It reveals their vision of American national identity and their efforts to see that vision in material form.

Yet the impact of the foundations was not limited to the United States. After the 1898 Spanish-American War, the United States became a colonial power. Tuskegee Institute, the foremost example of industrial education in the U.S. South, then became a model for industrial education in Africa, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, and the Philippines. By the early twentieth century, industrial education had become a byword for managing race relations across the globe. In an era of empire, emancipation, and commodity agriculture, the U.S. South became a proving ground for the working out of race relations, labor control, and bi-racial politics. Education, particularly industrial education, was the primary vehicle through which these problems were addressed. The solution represented by Tuskegee Institute came to be seen as a universal solution to the problem of race relations in the age of global empire.

The earliest histories of educational philanthropy and public education in the South were written by members of education philanthropy's interlocking directorate. They include Edwin Anderson Alderman and Armisted Churchill Gordon's *J. L. M. Curry: A Biography* (1911), Franklin W. Knight's *Public Education in North Carolina* (1922), and Charles William Dabney's *Universal Education in the South*, 2 vols. (originally published in 1936). These works offer mutually congratulatory accounts of the

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<sup>5</sup> William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001), 18-23; John H. Stanfield, "Philanthropic Regional Consciousness and Institution-Building in the American South: The Formative Years, 1867-1920," Jack Salzman, ed., *Philanthropy and American Society: Selected Papers* (New York: Center for American Culture Studies, Columbia University, 1987), 121-22.

selfless efforts of wise philanthropists based upon the heavily edited proceedings of various philanthropies and the memories of the authors who were themselves prominent players in the southern education crusade. Furthermore, they are consistent with the “Dunning school” of history that casts Reconstruction as a lamentable exercise in government profligacy, political malfeasance, and “Negro rule.” Their statistics are unreliable, their narratives are uncritically celebratory, and their interpretations are strongly influenced by racial paternalism. Their triumphalist narrative, constructed between 1903 and 1925, treats race only within the context of white beneficence toward blacks. According to this version, educational philanthropists dragged the recalcitrant South into the modern era through their successful promotion of universal education from 1900 to 1914.

In the 1930s work by black authors such as W. E. B. DuBois and Horace Mann Bond rebutted this narrative. These works, though their impact at the time of publication might have been limited, became central to later revisionist scholarship. DuBois’ *Black Reconstruction in America* (1938) offered a Marxist perspective that recast the narrative of Reconstruction as a movement based on a quest for social justice instigated and sustained through the agency of black southerners. A key feature of that quest was the inception, among Reconstruction state governments, of public education in the southern U.S. DuBois claimed, with more than a little justification, that public education in the South was a black project. Horace Mann Bond’s *Negro Education in the American Social Order* (1934) employed statistical analysis to lay bare the gross inequities of per capita spending on public education that, in some cases, favored whites over blacks at a ratio of six-to-one. DuBois and Bond each offered critiques not only of previous education

scholarship but also of their contemporary public school system. These critiques informed countervailing historiographical trends for the next five decades.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Louis R. Harlan, August Meier, and Henry Allen Bullock produced a triumvirate of books that redefined the dominant interpretation of education philanthropy.<sup>6</sup> Their narrative framework remains standard today and proceeds as follows: after the Civil War, it was widely suggested that black education should be made a priority in order that African Americans could exercise their newly gained franchise wisely. Reconstruction governments, mission societies, and industrial philanthropists all agreed that southern state governments required a great deal of help opening and operating schools for whites and blacks and particularly in training teachers. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century progress proved frustratingly slow, but a rudimentary system of public education did emerge. Although most schools were racially segregated from the beginning, state spending on education at first was divided nearly equally between whites and blacks. Then around the turn of the century, a confluence of philanthropic largesse, heightened public awareness, and political activism initiated an “education crusade” that swept the South, carrying in its wake graded schools, brick buildings, and certified teachers. At the same time, however, state spending began heavily favoring white schools at the expense of black education. Also, from 1898 to 1900, a group of northern philanthropists and southern progressives convened in yearly conferences in Capon Springs, West Virginia, to rationalize the distribution of industrial philanthropy to southern schools. In a series of resolutions over the course of those three years, the participants resolved to concentrate their funding emphasis on white education

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<sup>6</sup> Harlan, *Separate and Unequal*; August Meier, *Negro Thought in American, 1880–1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington* (Ann Arbor, 1963); Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South from 1619 to the Present*.

and to restrict their support for black schooling to industrial programs such as that offered by Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute. This narrative characterized the Capon Springs conferences as an intersectional compromise between northern progressives and southern moderates whose options were severely limited by the extreme racial climate prevailing at the turn of the century. Implicit within this narrative is the assumption that public education is the primary agent of progress and democracy.

The above interpretation, however, overlooked the multitude of ways in which educational systems reproduce class and racial inequities through curriculum distribution. Students from families with favored socioeconomic status are directed toward a curriculum of college preparation. Students from the working class, encompassing the vast bulk of African Americans, are directed toward a curriculum characterized more by vocational training. The public educational system, however, is purported to be blind to socioeconomic status and, furthermore, to reward students according to merit. Therefore the curriculum distribution represents this reproduction of socioeconomic status as the result of students' own capacities and efforts. Critics of public education came to see it not as the agent of progress and democracy; but rather as the agent of the white middle class.<sup>7</sup>

The next scholarly revision, elaborated in the 1970s and 1980s, challenged the intersectional compromise thesis with one that interpreted the Capon Springs conferences as an effort between Booker T. Washington and northern industrialists to lock black

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas S. Popkewitz, Miguel A. Pereyra, and Barry M. Franklin, "History, the Problem of Knowledge, and the New Cultural History of Schooling," in idem, *Cultural History and Education: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Schooling* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001), 10–11.

southerners into a permanent subordinate caste.<sup>8</sup> According to this interpretation, educational philanthropists were not fighting a rearguard action against southern white race radicals; rather, they were full participants in the white supremacy movement who differed with southern conservatives only on the issue of how much education was needed to produce a docile black labor force. These studies emphasize the origins of industrial education in what James D. Anderson calls “a social ideology designed to adjust black southerners to racially qualified forms of political and economic subordination.” This ideology, according to John H. Stanfield, represented “elite responses . . . which were actually attempts to reassert the rigid class and racial orders reminiscent of the antebellum South.” These studies focus on the dynamics of social control and the role of educational curricula in furthering the regulatory aims of the corporate industrial order. Industrial education is represented primarily as an ideology of black subservience, and the dominant class advances its own interests through the curriculum of industrial education.<sup>9</sup>

Advances in historical methodologies over the past two decades make it possible to reconsider the question of educational philanthropy from an global perspective and from a point of view that places gender at the center of struggles over politics, education, and race relations. Viewing industrial education from a global perspective challenges the notion of the nation-state as a discreet category and the foremost agent of history. When one examines the global applications of industrial education, one finds that the mandate

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<sup>8</sup> Donald Spivey, *Schooling for the New Slavery: Black Industrial Education, 1868–1915* (Westport, Conn., 1978); William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865–1954* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001); Robert F. Arnove, *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism: The Foundations at Home and Abroad* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1982).

<sup>9</sup> Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 3; Stanfield, “Philanthropic Regional Consciousness and Institution-building in the American South,” 119.



for inculcating morality among non-whites was a central feature of defining social boundaries that delineated power relationships based on race, gender, and colonial status. Furthermore, the imposition of social boundaries within the colonies was integrated with the process of constructing the imperial nation-state.<sup>10</sup> Viewed this way, educational philanthropy assumes a prominent place in the construction of modern America through its role in defining social boundaries in the South, the nation, and the world.

These theoretical devices are intended as an aid to—not as a substitute for—taking the philanthropists on the own terms. I have tried to address their aspirations as they conceived them. While recognizing the limitations imposed by ideologies and discourses of race and gender, I have tried not to overlook the positive accomplishments of philanthropic support for black education. At its best, education offered an escape hatch from poverty and exploitation along with the critical skills necessary to effectively question authority. It is better to be literate than not. It is better to be able to perform arithmetic than not. In a political economy dominated by a corporate industrial order, it behooves one to be acquainted with the expectations of the bourgeoisie.

The so-called Negro question has been a driving force behind American national identity from Emancipation to the present. The assumption lying at the heart of the “Negro question” was that underneath black or brown skin lay a stunted morality manifested as a penchant for petty theft and prevarication, an overactive and unrestrained

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<sup>10</sup> Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Joan Wallach Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis,” in idem, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 28–50; Catherine Hall, *Civilizing Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Cambridge, UK.: Polity, 2002); Ann Laura Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies,” *Journal of American History* 88 (December 2001), 829–71; Thomas S. Popkewitz, Franklin, and Pereyra, eds., *Cultural History and Education*; Thomas S. Popkewitz and Marie Brennan, eds., *Foucault’s Challenge: Discourse, Knowledge, and Power in Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1998).

sex impulse, and an underdeveloped sense of independence, personal responsibility, and drive for self-improvement. These cultural assumptions, widely shared across racial and ideological lines, continue to influence public discourse on the topic of black family life.<sup>11</sup> The following chapters narrate the development of a public education system in the post-Reconstruction U.S. South that constituted a cultural laboratory where education, racial ideology, and turn-of-the-century nationalism intersected. Within this cultural laboratory, educational philanthropists debated the moral foundations of the American nation as they perceived it and launched an “education crusade” designed to support that moral edifice. Their primary concern in this effort was fashioning a response to the “Negro question,” which they perceived as the foremost threat to republican virtue in the United States. Their response constituted an extraordinarily thorough and sophisticated articulation of racial ideology as it evolved from 1867 to 1903. During this time, attitudes toward race and the nation gradually shifted from one of African-American inclusion predicated on the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to one of exclusion based on white supremacy.

The discourse of “Negro uplift” reflected cultural assumptions about race and morality that were widely shared across class and racial lines throughout the western world. At the center of this discourse was the gospel of progress, the belief that God was directing the evolution of society from a natural state of barbarism and savagery to a rarified state of civilization that embodied divine will. The arc of race progress, described in terms of individual cognitive and social development, suggested that the “Negro race”

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<sup>11</sup> A sampling of such work would include Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *The Politics of a Guaranteed Income: The Nixon Administration and the Family Assistance Plan* (New York: Random House, 1973); Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (New York: Pantheon, 1976); Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, “A Genealogy of *Dependency*: Tracing a Keyword of the U.S. Welfare State,” *Signs* 19 (Winter 1994), 309–36.

was born into African barbarism, spent an innocent childhood in slavery, and then experienced Reconstruction as puberty. This was followed by an extended adolescence under Jim Crow, as blacks awaited an adulthood that seemed to grow ever more distant. Finally “Negro uplift,” brought about through industrial education, was intended to accelerate “Negro” race progress in an effort to close the gap between Afro-American and Anglo-Saxon morality.<sup>12</sup>

A southern ex-Confederate and former slaveowner, J. L. M. Curry, became the chief executive of foundation philanthropy during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Curry was a committed advocate of industrial education both as an answer to the “Negro question” and as a rebuttal to arguments against black education. One racial belief held in common by both the opponents and proponents of black education was the idea that slavery had constituted a restraining and civilizing force upon African Americans who, after emancipation, had tended to regress into “savagery and barbarism.” Such regression they blamed for widespread reports of black-on-white rape, which they believed led to lynching. Industrial education, argued Curry, offered a modern proxy for the civilizing force of slavery and would curb the outrage of black-on-white rape as well as the embarrassment of lynching, which tended to cast the South in an unfavorable light to the nation and the world. In 1890 Curry became the general agent for the Slater, in addition to the Peabody, education funds and helped make industrial education for blacks the official policy of both philanthropies. The discourse of “Negro uplift” offered an effective rebuttal to white objections against African American education. However, it

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<sup>12</sup> T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*; Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny After Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

was a double-edged sword that was later used as a rationalization for the white supremacy movement that picked up steam through the 1890s and by century's end culminated in constitutional disfranchisement of blacks and *de jure* segregation throughout the South.

Ironically, conservatives such as J. L. M. Curry constituted the voice of moderation when it came to turn-of-the-century race relations. By 1898 a younger class of reformers had come of age who spoke in terms of a "new nationalism"<sup>13</sup> and were guided by the ideal of Anglo-Saxon purity and brotherhood. The Spanish American War (1898) and the acquisition of Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines as actual or *de facto* colonies lent urgency to the American "Negro question" by internationalizing it. According to the new nationalists, industrial education and white supremacy had answered the "Negro question" not by making blacks safe *for* democracy but by making democracy safe *from* blacks, while leaving the possibility of future black political power open once the mission of "Negro uplift" was complete. That solution was then put forth both as a rationalization for maintaining control of the former Spanish colonies and as a model for their governance. The new nationalists also constituted the main body of the interlocking directorate that linked the Peabody and Slater Funds to two new philanthropies, the Southern Education Board and the General Education Board. This division between the old conservatives and the new nationalists was sometimes blurry and inconsistent but is nevertheless remarkably evident in the historical record. Regardless of their particular alignment however, most agreed that philanthropic efforts were better spent on whites than on African Americans. A well-educated white

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<sup>13</sup> Not to be confused with the theme of Theodore Roosevelt's 1912 presidential campaign, the "New Nationalism."

leadership class, they argued, would make better stewards of their black wards than they otherwise would, and race relations would improve through the absence of racial competition and the benevolence of white leaders.

This new nationalism involved more than the attitudes of a younger class of education reformers. It stemmed from a broad trend toward consolidation brought about by railroads, telegraphs, and increased federal regulatory power; in short, the cultural, political and technological transformation from an agrarian republic to an industrialized nation. This transformation carried with it a changed perception of the role of the federal government from an enforcer of individual rights to an instrument of the national will. In the mind of the new nationalists, such a transformation made it necessary to purge the nation of any and all impurities that might taint the national character in its expression of Anglo-Saxon morality. Thus the very tools that were assembled in an effort to bring the benefits of education to southern blacks in order to facilitate the exercise of their civic duties as American citizens were over time turned against that purpose and used to justify the exclusion of blacks from the new nationalism and the diversion of philanthropic largesse from black to white education.

The new nationalism was a process of constructing boundaries, of determining who was in and who was out of an expanding national territory. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution were meant to guarantee full citizenship for African Americans and secure their place within the nation. The discourse of "Negro uplift," intended to facilitate this inclusion, simultaneously helped to define the American nation as exclusively Anglo-Saxon. Refining that discourse was part and parcel of the process of defining American national identity during the McKinley era of territorial

expansion. Understanding it helps us understand the character of American nationalism at a critical historical moment when the United States openly embraced an agenda of territorial expansion abroad and a truncated citizenry at home.

This introduction would not be complete without a word about the use of sources. Philanthropic proceedings are notorious for the efforts of their authors to reflect a consensus and to offend the least number of people. Thus the proceedings cannot be relied upon for candor. Wherever possible, therefore, I have supplemented published records with manuscript sources. Fortunately, there exists an abundance of excellent research on the topics of philanthropy and black education, much of which has been devoted to separating the historical wheat from the obfuscatory chaff of foundation proceedings. Furthermore, although foundation proceedings are rife with what T. J. Jackson Lears calls “evasive banality,” the banalities they chose and the controversies they evaded shed their own light on philanthropic mentalities.<sup>14</sup> If foundation managers went out of their way to avoid antagonizing their readers, then they also demonstrate what type of message was most acceptable to the reading public. In their efforts to mediate between the sometimes opposing interests of northern philanthropists and southern politicians, foundation managers offer a gauge of national consensus on the Negro question. Finally, their homogeneity in terms of class, race, and gender reflects the overwhelming concentration of white, Protestant, upper-class men in public positions of power. Their discussions reflect the assumptions, prejudices, and the national vision of the power elite in America’s Gilded Age.

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<sup>14</sup> Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 7.

## Chapter 1

## Civility and Self-Help: The Peabody Education Fund

A central concern of Reconstruction state governments in the South, a concern that was mandated by the United States Congress, was the construction of a system of public education. However, the southern states were severely handicapped in that endeavor. The Civil War had bankrupted state treasuries, impoverished the region as a whole, destroyed its infrastructure, and removed much of its traditional leadership class. Stepping into this breach was a series of philanthropic foundations devoted to the promotion of public education in the South. These foundations were incorporated entities with overlapping boards of trustees drawn from the highest ranks of U.S. society. Their vision of public education, originally based on the New England common school, evolved into a complex program of intellectual training and moral uplift designed to meet the needs of the emerging political economy. The urban-industrial transformation that followed the Civil War underscored the need for a new set of industrial and managerial skills to be taught in public schools. It also ushered in a new national identity based on the re-unification of the North and South under a strong central government capable of both controlling and sustaining that transformation. Educational philanthropists, in mediating between southern politicians and northern industrialists, encountered fundamental questions regarding the national character and the implications of race relations upon it. Conservative by nature, the philanthropists sought conservative solutions, and in the welter of the Reconstruction experiment, this conservatism sometimes worked against the democratic aims of what Eric Foner has called “America’s

Unfinished Revolution.”<sup>1</sup> The philanthropists’ challenge was to design a system of public education out of whole cloth in the South. The system they designed both reflected and contributed to the national identity as it changed radically from 1867 to the early twentieth century. Their efforts began with the Peabody Education Fund.

In October 1866 George Peabody and Robert C. Winthrop met beneath a portrait of Benjamin Franklin in the hall of Winthrop’s summer home in Brookline, Massachusetts. There, Peabody shared with Winthrop a letter he had prepared. Peabody acknowledged in his letter that the United States had emerged from the Civil War with enhanced power and prosperity and was “taking a higher rank among the nations.” He was concerned, however, that this prosperity should be “more than superficial,” that the nation’s “moral and intellectual development should keep pace with her material growth.” Therefore, he announced that he was giving one million dollars to advance “intellectual, moral, or industrial education among the young of the more destitute portions of the Southern and Southwestern States of our union.”<sup>2</sup> Thus was born the nation’s first corporate educational philanthropy.

Peabody’s 1866 gift letter was addressed to sixteen persons who constituted the original board of trustees for the Peabody Education Fund. Among them were soon-to-be-president Ulysses S. Grant, Admiral David G. Farragut, and others of similar status. Robert Winthrop, former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. senator

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<sup>1</sup> Foner, *Reconstruction*; James L. Leloudis, *Schooling the New South: Pedagogy, Self and Society, 1880–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Sean Denis Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age: From the Death of Lincoln to the Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (New York: New York University Press, 1993); Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 396–428.

<sup>2</sup> George Peabody to the trustees of the Peabody Education Fund, February 7, 1867, *Proceedings of the Trustees of the Peabody Education Fund*, 6 vol., (Boston, Mass.: Press of John Wilson and Son, 1875) [Henceforth referred to as *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*] I, 2–3; J. L. M. Curry, *A Brief Sketch of George Peabody and a History of the Peabody Education Fund through Thirty Years* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969, originally published by the University Press, John Wilson and Son, 1898), 18–22. On July 1, 1869, Peabody doubled his endowment to two million dollars. *ibid.*, 46–50.



from Massachusetts, was named chairman of the trustees. Serving as co-chairmen were the evangelical Episcopal Bishop Charles P. McIlvaine and Hamilton Fish. Fish, a former governor and U.S. Senator from New York, would later serve as President Grant's secretary of state. Representing the South were William Aiken of South Carolina,<sup>3</sup> William A. Graham of North Carolina,<sup>4</sup> and other high-ranking southerners. Over the career of the fund, trustees would include three U.S. presidents, two chief justices of the U.S. Supreme Court, several cabinet secretaries, governors, and other such luminaries, all white men. The social, political, and economic eminence of the trustees conferred upon the fund a great deal of credibility and clout. This stature helped make the idea of taxpayer-supported public schools respectable in the South, where education was widely considered a private matter and was frequently viewed as a dangerous experiment that threatened to upset southern race and labor relations.<sup>5</sup>

George Peabody was born in 1795 to a family of modest means in the town of South Danvers near Salem, Massachusetts. He attended the local common school before apprenticing, at age eleven, to a grocery store owned by Sylvester Procter. Later, he clerked at his brother David's dry-goods store in Newburyport. In 1811 a fire devastated most of that town and, although his brother's store was spared from the flames, its

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<sup>3</sup> Prior to the Civil War, Aiken had owned a large estate of over one thousand slaves. He served in South Carolina's General Assembly and also as governor. He opposed nullification and was a reluctance secessionist. From 1851–1857, Aiken served as Charleston's representative to the U.S. House of Representatives and was a close friend to Fish and Winthrop. Curry, *A Brief Sketch of George Peabody*, 97–101.

<sup>4</sup> Graham was a founder of North Carolina's Whig party, governor, U.S. Secretary of the Navy, and a U.S. senator (unseated in 1865). David C. Roller and Robert W. Twyman, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1979), 551–52.

<sup>5</sup> As William A. Link has noted, "In the antebellum southern belief system, education remained a matter of private choice and an area in which central, outside government had no place." Link, *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place: Schooling, Society, and Reform in Rural Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 7. According to Link, not until 1880 did white southerners grudgingly accept the idea of public, universal education. *ibid.*, 9.

customer base was destroyed. Afterward, Peabody joined with his uncle John in a dry-goods consignment operation in Georgetown, District of Columbia, and, two years later, he partnered with Elisha Riggs in a consignment house that offered imported merchandise. As their business expanded, Peabody and Riggs opened a firm in Baltimore and moved their base of operations there. Peabody's efforts on behalf of the merchandise house eventually led him to London's banking circles, where he became an international financier. In 1837 Peabody severed his interests with the Baltimore firm to devote himself full-time to his London brokerage. He went into business in 1854 with Junius Spencer Morgan, father of John Pierpont Morgan, who was also active in the partnership. By the mid-1850s George Peabody, who had become extremely wealthy, was spending less time on business affairs and contemplating a return to the United States.<sup>6</sup>

Peabody philanthropy began in 1853 with his gift of \$250,000 establishing the Peabody Institute in Peabody, Massachusetts. This gift to his hometown (which had been renamed in his honor) endowed a library, a lectureship, a music conservatory, and an art gallery. In 1859 Peabody was considering an endowment to England's Ragged Schools and shared his plans with Bishop Charles Pettit McIlvaine, an outspoken Episcopalian with a reputation for strict and fervent evangelicalism. However, the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury Anthony Ashley-Cooper, who was responsible for the schools, communicated through McIlvaine that a large gift to the Ragged Schools would not be welcome. Public opinion, which Shaftesbury shared, held that the Ragged Schools were sufficient to the needs of the poor without such a gift. Instead, Shaftesbury and McIlvaine

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<sup>6</sup> Franklin Parker, *George Peabody: A Biography* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1971, 1995), 3–86; Curry, *A Brief Sketch of George Peabody*, 1; John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, eds., *American National Biography* 24 Vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), XVII, 184–86. In 1884, J. P. Morgan was elected as a trustee of the Peabody Education Fund. Curry, *A Brief Sketch of George Peabody*, 96.

suggested that Peabody help convert London slums into affordable housing for the working poor. Shaftesbury's description to Peabody of housing for London's poor—"all ages and both sexes, crowded in the same room, brothers and sisters in the same beds, the crimes, the fevers, the dreadful air, the prostration of all energy, the impossibility of doing the people any good till they can  *dwell better . . .*"— foreshadows language educational philanthropists would later use to describe African American housing in Alabama.<sup>7</sup> Subsequently, in 1862 Peabody established a fund of two-and-a-half million pounds "to ameliorate the condition of the poor and needy" of London, suggesting that it be used "in the construction of such improved dwellings for the poor as may combine, in the utmost possible degree, the essentials of healthfulness, comfort, social enjoyment, and economy." Other Peabody gifts included \$150,000 to establish the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale and a matching \$150,000 to create the Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology at Harvard.<sup>8</sup> Peabody's philanthropic concerns, from the beginning, had focused on the home life of the poor.

Foundation philanthropy evolved from a tradition of Christian commonwealth charity that prescribed to seventeenth-century New England Puritans the duty to extend aid to town members in distress. Later, benevolent societies in northern cities incorporated themselves into legal entities to organize and rationalize care for widows, orphans, and the "deserving poor." The revival movements of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries challenged the Calvinist doctrine of predestination embraced by the Puritans and replaced it with one that called for Christians to work not only for

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<sup>7</sup> Georgina Battiscombe, *Shaftesbury: A Biography of the Seventh Earl, 1801–1805* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1974); Anthony Ashley-Cooper, Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, as quoted in Parker, *George Peabody: A Biography*, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Curry, *A Brief Sketch of George Peabody*, 9–10 (quotes); Parker, *George Peabody: A Biography*, 104–08.

their own salvation but also for their society's imminent redemption.<sup>9</sup> This revivalist millennialism occasioned a shift in benevolent emphasis from efforts to relieve material suffering to the charitable aspect of saving souls. Doing good, from this perspective, meant securing for the impoverished a place in heaven in the afterlife, rather than improved conditions in the here and now. This shift helped give rise to the "benevolent empire" as represented in the 1840s by the well-funded and heavily bureaucratized American Tract Society and American Bible Society. As social dislocations accompanying the urban-industrial transformation swelled the ranks of the poor, philanthropic administrators tended to blame the victims, attributing to them characteristics of laziness, intemperance, and sexual recklessness. A nineteenth-century "cult of true womanhood" invested women with an essentialist moral authority, which many then parlayed into social activism through the auspices of benevolent reform. Abolition, temperance, and penal reform movements initiated a change in direction away from the interpersonal charitable act and toward the philanthropic project of eradicating the root causes of poverty and acute humanitarian need.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Robert A. Gross, "Giving in America: From Charity to Philanthropy," in Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie, eds., *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 33–37; E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), 122–49; Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Leicester, Eng.: Apollos, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Amanda Porterfield, "Protestant Missionaries: Pioneers of American Philanthropy," in Friedman and McGarvie, eds., *Charity Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, 49–69; Gross, "Giving in America: From Charity to Philanthropy," 37–69; Robert H. Bremner, *Giving: Charity and Philanthropy in History* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 57–69; Lori D. Ginzburg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990), 11–173; Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780–1920," *American Historical Review*, 89 (June 1984), 620–47; Kathleen D. McCarthy, "Women and Political Culture," in Friedman and McGarvie, eds., *Charity, Philanthropy and Civility in American History*, 179–215. In the South, slavery, the persistence of the household as a unit of production, and the continued dominance of an agricultural economy and agrarian worldview, caused benevolence there to retain the individualist and interpersonal character of patron-client relationships well into the post-bellum era. Gross, "Giving in America: From Charity to Philanthropy," 45–46; Elizabeth Fox-

Historian G. J. Barker-Benfield locates those later philanthropic impulses in the tradition of sympathetic benevolence that arose from Scottish Enlightenment philosophers' attention to civility and virtue as moral counterweights to the ethos of self-interested capitalism. Similarly, Charles R. Sullivan has explored the role of aesthetics and moral sense philosophy, associated with the Scots, in negotiating the contradictions of "a transactional universe" that gave rise to polite society while simultaneously eroding sympathy for one's fellow man. Increased wealth and consumption was perceived by Adam Smith, David Hume, and others to have enhanced civility by encouraging people to display their newfound refinement in discussions of art, politics, and philosophy in coffee houses and salons. However, they found a vulgar side to commercial society as well. It was frequently seen to accompany an incipient materialism and lack of concern for the general welfare in favor of enriching one's personal account. Selfishness and corruption seemed to ride as obnoxious stowaways on the ship of commercial wealth. Philanthropy promised to at least partially offset the human costs of commercialism by promoting civility in those places where it seemed likely to flourish and spread.<sup>11</sup> George Peabody united traditions of self-help, moral uplift, and individualist Protestantism with a vision of society materially and morally enhanced by the transmutation of private wealth into public virtue.

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Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 38–40; Anne Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

<sup>11</sup> G. J. Barker-Benfield, "The Origins of Anglo-American Sensibility" in Friedman and McGarvie, eds., *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, 71–89; Charles R. Sullivan, "Enacting the Scottish Enlightenment: Tobias Smollet's *Expedition of Humphry Clinker*," *Journal of the Historical Society*, 4 (no. 4, 2004), 415–45; Anand Chitnis, *The Scottish Enlightenment: A Social History* (London: Croom Helm, 1976); Istvan Hant and Michael Ignatief, eds., *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1983); John Dwyer, *The Age of the Passions: An Interpretation of Adam Smith and Scottish Enlightenment Culture* (East Lothian, Scotland: Tuckwell Press, 1998); V. M. Hope, *Virtue by Consensus: The Moral Philosophy of Hutcheson, Hume, and Adam Smith* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

Arguments for public education formulated during the revolutionary era had centered on similar themes. Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Rush, and Horace Mann emphasized the roles of morality, civic virtue, and (excepting Jefferson) Christian nationalism in advocating institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge among the American citizenry. Jefferson envisioned publicly funded primary schools that would teach reading, writing, and arithmetic, along with the rights and duties of citizenship, to the white youth of Virginia. These schools, he wrote, should be augmented by professional academies for scholars who appeared to be headed for leadership positions. It was Jefferson's desire to replace the traditional aristocracy of title with an "aristocracy of merit" made possible by cascading tiers of primary and secondary schools through which the most gifted students would rise through their own effort and intelligence. Jefferson, like Rush, also hoped public education would have a homogenizing effect on a growing immigrant population distrusted by revolutionary leaders who feared that foreigners were corrupting the republic. Rush added to Jefferson's vision the suggestion that Christianity should hold a central place in the curriculum accompanied by a moderate dose of manual labor. To their advocacy of education for a virtuous republic, Horace Mann brought the concept of public schooling as the final act of the American Revolution, an idea that made him education's most effective statesman of the nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

Beginning in 1837, as secretary of Massachusetts's newly created board of education, Horace Mann became a relentless advocate for free and universal public

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on Virginia," *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 20 vols., Albert Ellery Bergh, ed. (Washington D.C.: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association of the United States, 1907), 393; Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 107-18.

schools in that state. He used his position both as a sounding board for educational theory and as a pulpit for advancing the cause of public schools. Mann early embraced the necessity for a unified school system organized and supported by the state. Education, he thought, had the power to complete the revolution—which he believed had loosened traditional restraints and left men vulnerable to their passions—by enacting a revolution of character within each student. Mann sought to balance the needs for both respect and skepticism toward authority by emphasizing the roles of self-discipline and moral uplift within the context of a Christian republic.<sup>13</sup>

Mann's successor, Barnas Sears, brought a similar educational evangelism to the Peabody Education Fund, and it would be Sears who fundamentally shaped the policy of the fund. Born November 19, 1802, in Sandisfield, Massachusetts, Barnas Sears graduated from Brown University in 1825. He then attended the Newton Theological Seminary and later became pastor of the First Baptist Church in Hartford, Connecticut. He accepted a professorship at Madison University in 1829 and later traveled to Germany for post-graduate study in theology and literature. After returning to the U.S., he served as professor, then president, of his alma mater, Newton Theological Seminary. In 1848 Sears succeeded Horace Mann as secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, and in 1855 he followed Francis Wayland as president of Brown University. Several days prior to an initial organizational meeting of the Peabody board of trustees, Charles Winthrop invited Sears to dinner at the Wednesday Evening Club. There, Winthrop asked

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<sup>13</sup> Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783–1876* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 136–45.

Sears for his opinion as to how the board of trustees should proceed, and, a day or two later, Sears laid out his recommendations.<sup>14</sup>

Sears's recommendations to Winthrop constituted the basic framework of philanthropic goals for public education in the southern states. In offering these guidelines, Sears emphasized the lack of existing models for the fund's administration but noted that there were two possible approaches, one of which involved building and operating schools. He warned, however, that this approach would require a large bureaucracy that would likely conflict with state and local authorities. "Foreign" ownership of the schools, he added, might engender public indifference or hostility. Sears proposed instead that the fund concentrate on lending assistance to communities that would provide models of effective public education for others to emulate. He recommended that where local residents demonstrated a commitment to public schools, Peabody aid could help such schools "be made the *nuclei* for others and let them be established and controlled, as far as possible, by the people themselves, and they will in time grow into State systems." Sears also maintained that the fund could render "indirect" aid by supporting normal schools to prepare female teachers for primary education.<sup>15</sup> Sears's recommendation of female teachers over males reflected the widespread understanding that "republican motherhood" constituted the best means of reproducing virtuous citizens through women's influence on the moral development of children.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, he predicted that men would have ambitions of teaching "in the higher

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<sup>14</sup> Curry, *A Brief Sketch of George Peabody*, 30–33, 68–71.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 30–33; Report of the General Agent, January 1, 1868, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund I*, 38–44 (quote); William Preston Vaughn, *Schools for All: The Blacks and Public Education in the South, 1865–1877* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1974), 143–44.

<sup>16</sup> Linda Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment, an American Perspective," *American Literature* 70 (September 1998) 581–606; Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783–1876*, 146–47; Leloudis, *Schooling the New South*, 78.



schools for the benefit of the few” and would therefore use their primary school positions as stepping-stones to more remunerative careers. Low pay, brief school terms, and the political nature of school board appointments contributed much to male teacher turnover. Limited opportunities for female upward mobility, as well as social conventions regarding appropriate women’s employment, promised greater stability among female primary school teachers.<sup>17</sup>

At their March 1868 meeting, the trustees nominated Sears for the position of general agent, which he accepted March 30.<sup>18</sup> Ten months later, after an extended tour of the southern states, Sears reported to the board, meeting in Richmond, Virginia, on the general state of southern education and his plan for disbursing Peabody aid. He found that “the provision for primary education is very defective, and, in many places, cannot be said to exist at all.” He suggested, as the most effective approach to remedying such conditions, formulating “a comprehensive plan” for education reform rather than “doling out charitable aid to all who are in want of the means of education.” He further concluded that the most effective use of limited funds would be to train teachers rather than to fund primary schools. To this end, Sears indicated to state and county superintendents in the South that the Peabody Fund would provide \$1,000 in aid to state normal schools (teachers’ colleges) to any state that would establish them. Focusing on state normals, he argued, would keep the Peabody Fund out of squabbles between denominational schools and also prevent jealousy among those seeking Peabody aid. Sears preferred normal schools over teaching departments at universities because teaching departments were

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<sup>17</sup> Report of the General Agent, January 1, 1868, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund I*, 56–57; Leloudis, *Schooling the New South*, 78. Link, *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place*, 133–24. The problem of teacher turnover was not limited to male teachers. When female teachers married, they frequently quit their teaching jobs. *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Curry, *A Brief Sketch of George Peabody*, 33.

likely to be overshadowed by the existing academic departments. Classically trained academics, he believed, made poor primary teachers. Normal schools, on the other hand, made primary education the main focus. He suggested that the wisest course, rather than spreading Peabody funds thinly among inferior schools, was to concentrate upon a few normal schools that could serve as models for other teachers' colleges.<sup>19</sup> Sears's bias against a classical liberal arts curriculum became a lasting principle of educational philanthropy.

As Sears was presenting his findings to the Peabody trustees, Virginia's 1868 constitutional convention was simultaneously in session. After the trustees adjourned, Sears addressed the Virginia convention on the matter of public schools. There he outlined his case for a system of graded schools employing teachers trained in modern pedagogical techniques and supervised by a state-run bureaucracy. Over the next twelve years, Sears expanded and refined his presentation through other addresses and reports recorded in the philanthropic record. In presenting his case to southern leaders for free public schools, he drew on arguments for an informed and virtuous citizenry advanced by leaders during the revolutionary era. He adapted these fundamental principles to his own version of educational utilitarianism, which he presented to his audiences in the South and in his reports to the Peabody trustees.

"Seeking the greatest good of the greatest number, we therefore direct our attention to those elementary schools which are designed for all the people," Sears told the convention.<sup>20</sup> Implicit in that opening statement was the commitment to educating

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<sup>19</sup> Report of the General Agent, January 1, 1868, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, I, 38–57 (quote 1 on p. 39, quote 2 on p. 42).

<sup>20</sup> Sears, Address to the Constitutional Convention of Virginia, January 24, 1868, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, I, 61.

African Americans as well as whites. The significant contingent of black delegates at the convention, in addition to Peabody's directions that his largesse be distributed "among the entire population," mandated a bi-racial approach to public education.<sup>21</sup> This was, and would remain, the most contentious area of debate regarding public education in the South. Conservative white southerners had two primary reservations about black schooling. They worried that black education would lead to greater economic and political competition with whites, and they feared that racially integrated schools would lead to racially integrated bedrooms.<sup>22</sup> With few exceptions, bi-racial came to mean segregated schools for black and white students. In the South, the education question would almost always be discussed in terms of the Negro Question.

Free schools, of course, required the levying of taxes, which has never been an easy sell. Paying a property tax for education, Sears argued, was similar to paying taxes for internal improvements such as harbors, railroads, and turnpikes. He promised property owners and civic boosters that the presence of schools, like churches, would increase the value of land and make Virginia cities more attractive to investors. By focusing on primary education, he added, public schools would increase the number of scholars suitable for colleges and universities, building from the bottom up. Harkening to Jefferson's "aristocracy of merit," Sears suggested that greatness lay hidden among anonymous poor children, as well as those of more fortunate circumstances, and that rendering primary education to all children would allow hidden genius to reveal itself and

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<sup>21</sup> Richmond *Dispatch*, January 24, 1868, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Jane Elizabeth Dailey, *Before Jim Crow: The Politics of Race in Postemancipation Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

create leaders for the republic.<sup>23</sup> In the absence of schools, he warned, children would grow up to be a danger and a burden upon the state.

Echoing arguments made earlier by Jefferson, Rush, and Mann, Sears reminded his audiences that “if public money is not paid for schools, it must be paid for in an increased force of police, for criminal courts, for jails, penitentiaries, and alms-houses.” To this he added the warnings of criminal elements run amok. Ignorant and malicious boys would “apply the friction match to your barns [and] girdle your fruit-trees . . . beyond the reach of law. Your only safety is in the care and attention bestowed upon the education of the young.” Sears likened an uneducated public to garbage and waste on the streets that were cleaned up by health authorities. “If Virginia would do that she would not see in your cities . . . these haunts and dens of corruption, where filth and poverty and crime riot together, but moral purity, order, and sobriety.”<sup>24</sup> In advocating the cause of public schools, Sears blended familiar elements of the republican argument for an informed and virtuous public with appeals to the needs of society in the midst of an urban-industrial transformation.

Sears envisioned government shifting from its role as a guarantor of individual liberties to one that provided for the specialized needs of a complex, modern society. This viewpoint was consonant with an evolving ethos that emphasized industrial progress in towns over the seasonal rhythms and agricultural concerns of the countryside. These changes militated against the Lockean notion that education was a private matter and the concern solely of parents. He suggested that children belonged not just to their parents, but also to the community. Children became a part of society, he said, regardless of their

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<sup>23</sup> Sears, Address to the Constitutional Convention of Virginia, January 24, 1868, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, I, 63, 75.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 70–71.

parents, in a mutually dependent web of interpersonal relationships. “[The child] is entitled to the advantages of a civilized state by being born into it,” Sears explained, “and it is not for the father to say that the light of the nineteenth century shall be shut out from his view.”<sup>25</sup> To the concern that state authority, in the form of schools, was usurping the parental role, he replied that “teaching should be a business, a profession; and we are no more required to teach our own children than we are to make their shoes.” Furthermore, he added, the state was allowed to interpose itself into private life through the military draft and to enforce vaccinations against smallpox. He described, as a metaphor for antiquated individualism, a man who once carried his own lantern and bucket of water. “Now,” he explained, that man “finds it easier and cheaper to pay his tax for water and for gas-lights, and in many ways to employ others to do what he once performed with his own hands.” Sears deftly evaded public concerns that compulsory attendance laws would have the state dragging truant children out of their parents’ arms. He reassured his audience that he was not advocating compulsory education in the South, and in any case, such laws were only enforced against “the ignorant and the vicious.” The state, he reassured them, did not stand *in loco parentis* to its children. With disingenuous simplicity he explained, “The state stands in its own place and leaves the parent to his.”<sup>26</sup> In these and other ways Sears presented free public education as a hallmark of modern society and implied that in the absence of such reforms the state of Virginia would consign itself to backwardness.

Public education, Sears assured the convention, had the power to help stave off radical labor and political movements among the poor by inculcating among them values

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 69; Leloudis, *Schooling the New South*, 17–22.

<sup>26</sup> Sears, Ninth Report of the General Agent, October 1875, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, II, 22 (quote 2), 31–33 (quotes 1 and 3).

that stressed the mutual interests of labor and capital. Furthermore, he argued, primary and secondary schools could help bridge the gap between the college-educated and uneducated, thus unifying society and tempering the trend toward radicalism among workers.<sup>27</sup> Failure to educate the general populace, he warned, would result in “as plentiful a harvest of communists as France, and of Chartists as England has ever had.” “Indeed,” he continued, “these untutored, imported citizens, buried in our coal-mines as deeply as they are buried in ignorance, are foremost in all disturbances.” Sears’s language might have been better suited for an urban, northern audience than for the overwhelmingly rural South, but his larger point concerning alien labor forces could not have been missed. Language that described the dangers of immigrant labor in the North was easily adaptable to uneasy race relations in the South. “They are secluded from our society, and breathe not the atmosphere of our institutions,” he warned. “They suffer from want, and in their ignorance know not the cause, and blindly become the enemies of the property holder. . . . We have terrible convulsions in store for us, if we do not tame and humanize the fierce and ferocious elements of society.”<sup>28</sup> Sears tried to neutralize concerns among white leaders that education would spoil their field hands by pointing out the advantages of a schooled labor force, along with the disadvantages of an unschooled one. Such concerns blended smoothly with the southern imperative of facilitating the transition of African Americans from forced servitude to free labor and citizenship. “The system of slave labor being abolished, and that of free labor

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<sup>27</sup> Sears, Twelfth Report of the General Agent, October 1878, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, II, 156–57. This point is also made by William A. Watkins in *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865–1954* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001) and James D. Anderson in *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988) and elsewhere.

<sup>28</sup> Sears, “Public Schools and Normal Schools: Their Relations to Each Other,” *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, II, 180–81.

substituted,” he admonished, “it becomes necessary to qualify men for their new condition by giving them intelligence enough to be their own masters.”<sup>29</sup> Education for self-ownership brought to the post-emancipation South concerns similar to those of post-revolutionary America. Older bonds having been loosened, it was again seen as necessary to construct new ones based on individual self-restraint.

To enact universal public education, Sears instructed the delegates, Virginia’s constitution would need to enable a sufficient bureaucracy to manage the state’s public schools. A transformation would have to be wrought from the existing structure based on private schools, tutors, and “charity schools” to one that featured free, graded schools taught by well-trained, well-paid teachers overseen by state superintendents. Sears suggested that money spent on private schools was inefficiently spent on few students under teachers who were not qualified for the task. Furthermore, private schools opened and closed along with fluctuations in support from private sources. Additionally, non-graded schools housed children of all different levels in one room, which contributed to classroom inefficiency. Teachers’ salaries were sometimes determined by the number of pupils in daily attendance. This, he thought, was a recipe for classroom disturbances and attendance problems because pupils had the power to impact teachers’ incomes by staying out of school. Such problems were especially prevalent in rural districts where attendance, instruction, housing, support, and discipline were uncertain.<sup>30</sup>

Teacher training was of foremost concern to Sears. He argued that employing a classically trained academic to teach the rudiments of education was like using “a

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<sup>29</sup> Sears, Report of the General Agent, October 1875, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, II, 45.

<sup>30</sup> Sears, Address to the Virginia Constitutional Convention, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, I, 72–80; Leloudis, *Schooling the New South*, 12–17; Link, *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place*, 16–20, 34–36, 52–57.

sledgehammer . . . to drive a carpet tack” when “a well-trained female could teach far better at one-third the cost.”<sup>31</sup> Sears advanced a pedagogical approach that employed concrete objects, such as birds, rocks, and plants, as examples of abstract ideas found in mathematics, literature, and geography. Normal schools were essential to training teachers in the new pedagogy because otherwise they would “do little but teach the words and formulas of books.” However, a properly trained teacher had the ability to unite observation with knowledge and activity with underlying principles. Furthermore, “the pupil is made to see with his own eyes, and to rely on his own observations. Books are a mere syllabus, a skeleton, to be clothed with flesh by the teacher and pupil.” But, in the hands of a poorly trained teacher, “how often are the poor children wearied with the endless repetition of mere words, the dry and stale lumber of the books!” Possession of a literary education was not enough, thought Sears, to qualify a teacher. The teacher “must know how to enter into the hidden recesses of the youthful mind, and from that point work outward and upward. The pupil is like as treasure in the sea, and the teacher like a diver who goes to the bottom to bring it up. The beginnings of knowledge,” he intoned, “are obscure and mysterious.”<sup>32</sup> What Sears described for Virginia’s Constitutional Convention was the basic outline of the Pestalozzian method, which will be explored in greater detail in a later chapter. His goal was to create a professional class of educators with specialized training that fit the needs of an emerging industrialized state. This view might have seemed to many at odds with the persistently rural and agricultural character of the U.S. South. However, the Virginia convention adopted “a resolution of thanks to

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<sup>31</sup> Sears, Address to the Virginia Constitutional Convention, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, I, 78.

<sup>32</sup> Sears, Report of the General Agent, October 1875, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, II, 183–86 (quotes 1 and 2, p. 183; quote 3, p. 184; quotes 4 and 5, p. 186).



Dr. Sears, heartily endorsing the plan proposed by him, and ordering ten thousand copies to be printed for distribution.”<sup>33</sup>

By June 1868, five months after his address to Virginia’s Constitutional Convention, Sears had completed a tour of the eastern seaboard and Gulf South states, the results of which he presented to the Peabody trustees. Government instability had persistently undermined efforts to establish the funding mechanisms and supervisory bureaucracies necessary to state-run systems of public schools. In addition, school funds were frequently diverted to other purposes, such as paying interest on state railroad bonds. State legislatures nullified city school taxes, state courts overturned legislatures’ school laws, rival government agencies squabbled over authority, and teachers were sometimes paid in worthless script. Frequently, by the time state leaders wrote constitutions, got the constitutions ratified, enacted school laws, settled disputes, and collected taxes, new legislatures had scrapped the old school laws and amended or rewritten their constitutions, and the entire process started over.<sup>34</sup>

Such conditions prompted Sears to rethink his funding priorities. The earlier scheme of assisting states in establishing teachers’ colleges was simply unworkable while state politicians had such difficulty establishing government of any kind. Although assisting prominent normal schools remained the long-term goal, Sears was forced to improvise in order to accommodate the reality of Reconstruction-era political instability.

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<sup>33</sup> The *Richmond Dispatch*, January 24, 1868, p. 2. The pedagogical recommendations appearing in this paragraph are drawn from reports made after Sears’s address to the Virginia legislature. However, these recommendations do not differ in substance from statements regarding teacher training made to the convention; these selections are provided because they offer Sears’s vision with particular clarity.

<sup>34</sup> Sears, Report of the General Agent, June 9, 1868, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, I, 85–86; Robert Hiram White, *Development of the Tennessee State Educational Organization, 1796–1929* (Nashville, Tenn.: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1929), 85–87; Edgar W. Knight, *Public Education in the South* (Boston, Mass.: Ginn and Company, 1922), 341–45; Foner, *Reconstruction*, 319–20, 328.

He made temporary deals with municipalities, combining Peabody grants with city funds to create free primary schools at the local level. By January 1870 he had made provisional arrangements with several municipalities that were operating city schools with little or no state support or supervision. For instance, North Carolina had no state provision for public schools, but some cities operated free schools and received Peabody support. Sears pledged \$300 to the city of Newport, on condition that the city would offer free schooling to white students for a nine-month term. He promised Beaufort, South Carolina, \$600, provisional upon their offering classes to all the town's school-age children. Mobile, Alabama, offered a primary education to all its black children, and Sears promised to renew the previous year's grant of \$2,000 if Mobile would extend such provisions to the intermediate grades. Legal battles between the state and local authorities, however, prevented this last arrangement from being carried out. Sears constructed a rubric for dispensing funds on a sliding scale from \$1,000 to \$300 based on the number of school-aged white children in regular attendance. He used the same scale for disbursing funds to African American schools but restricted appropriations to two-thirds that of white schools because, he blithely explained, black schools were less expensive to operate.<sup>35</sup>

Two years later conditions had improved only little. In 1872 Virginia enacted a uniform public education law that created a relatively well-supervised, free primary education system. However, that same year North Carolina's Supreme Court overturned

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<sup>35</sup> Sears's reference to the "white students" of Newport probably indicates that northern missionary associations were already operating a school for African Americans. Sears, Report of the General Agent, February 15, 1879, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, II, 198–236. Schools for African Americans were cheaper to operate because black teachers were paid less than whites, the student-teacher ratio was greater, and facilities tended to be sub-par. William Preston Vaughn, *Schools for All: The Blacks and Public Education in the South, 1865-1877* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1974), 145.

its school law as unconstitutional. The city of Wilmington, North Carolina, established a city school system only to have its supporting city tax nullified by state lawmakers. Raleigh, North Carolina, had a similar experience. Although South Carolina's legislature appropriated \$300,000 for public education, the funds were never disbursed, and the public schools were therefore closed. Out of \$327,000 paid in school taxes in Georgia, \$242,000 was diverted toward other purposes. In Tennessee, a property tax of two mills, a 25-cent poll tax, and a railroad tax of one-fourth percent per mile went into the school fund but was then appropriated to service the state debt. Turf battles in Alabama between the board of education and the general assembly caused schools there to remain unfunded.<sup>36</sup>

Schools for African Americans, financed and operated by northern freedmen's aid societies in cooperation with the Freedmen's Bureau, were spared some of the instability that attended nascent state school systems. Sears's reports, corroborated by those of the Freedmen's Bureau, indicate that African American literacy was accelerating faster than that of whites and help explain white resentment at the presence of black schools where there were few or none for whites. Pine Bluff, Arkansas, where the African American population was about one-third that of the white population, had a school, but segregation sentiment kept whites out.<sup>37</sup> Public education was at a standstill in Alabama, but the New York Missionary Society had "erected a handsome brick building exclusively for the colored race, and the white citizens of the city have to endure this

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<sup>36</sup> Sears, Report of the General Agent, June 9, 1868, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, I, 104–05, 130–31, 264–68, 289–376; Knight, *Public Education in the South*, 337–82.

<sup>37</sup> Sears, Report of the General Agent, June 9, 1868, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, I, 126; Historical Census Browser, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, University of Virginia Library online, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/county.php>.

contrast.”<sup>38</sup> It seems doubtful that the missionary teachers would have refused entry to white students who wanted to attend these schools. It is more likely that pressure from white segregationists prevented white attendance at missionary schools.

Northern freedmen’s aid societies contributed much to black education in the Reconstruction South and, from the beginning, morality occupied a central place in their educational concerns. Northern missionaries had begun teaching southern freedmen in 1861 at Fortress Monroe near Hampton, Virginia, where thousands of self-liberated slaves came within the jurisdiction of Union general Benjamin F. Butler. Butler designated them “contrabands of war” and assigned their care and supervision to the abolitionist Edward L. Pierce. Later that same year, when white landowners abandoned Port Royal, South Carolina, in advance of Union warships, Pierce brought a group of white, northern missionary teachers to open schools for the African Americans who remained.<sup>39</sup> As the Confederacy collapsed, African American communities mobilized to establish schools in an effort to advance and confirm the relative freedom that emancipation brought.<sup>40</sup> In this endeavor, they were aided by former abolitionists who were adjusting their focus from emancipation to black citizenship. Concerned about freedmen’s readiness for civil society, northern missionaries made “black character

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<sup>38</sup> Report of the General Agent (delivered after Sears’s death by his daughter and assistant, Mrs. John Hampden Fritz, 1880, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, II, 352.

<sup>39</sup> Robert C. Morris, “General Introduction to the AMS Series,” in John V. Alvore, *First Semi-Annual Report on Schools and Finances of Freedmen, January 1, 1866*, Robert C. Morris, ed., (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1980. First published 1868–1870 in 9 vols. by U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Washington, D.C.) [i]; Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution*, 97; McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality*, 158; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 3–31.

<sup>40</sup> Henry Allen Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South from 1619 to the Present* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967); 15–21; Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935*, 4–32; McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality*, 154–77; W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction* (Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited, 1976, 1935), 638; Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 3–5; Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 54.

reform” a central feature of their educational programs. The primary purpose of missionary groups, shared by the Freedmen’s Bureau, was to further the transition from slave to free labor by instilling among freedmen the basic principles of the Protestant ethic. Believing African Americans lacked the fundamental impulse toward self control, the Freedmen’s Bureau and missionary groups envisioned education not only as a means toward full black citizenship, but also as an alternative to long-term African American dependence on charity.<sup>41</sup> Northern schoolteachers, black students, and local black teachers, as well as Freedmen’s Bureau agents, were frequently harassed, threatened, and assaulted by white vigilante groups opposed to the project of African American citizenship and education.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, by 1870, the Freedman’s Bureau, the American Missionary Association, and other freedmen’s aid societies had helped establish thousands of African American primary schools, along with several colleges and institutes for black higher education and teacher training.<sup>43</sup> Concerns about black morality and African Americans’ readiness to support themselves by entering into and fulfilling labor contracts were intertwined. Sanctity of the contract, the central feature of free labor ideology, figured prominently in Reconstruction-era education for citizenship and continued to do so after the 1870s overthrow of congressional Reconstruction.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Penguin, 2002; 1930); Jones, *Labor of Light and Love*, 18–26; Bullock, *A History of Black Education in the South*, 22–27; McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality*, 171, 181–84; Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997), 323.

<sup>42</sup> Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution*, 144–48; Smith, *Civic Ideals*, 321; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, “Black Schooling during Reconstruction,” in Donald G. Nieman, ed., *African Americans and Education in the South, 1865–1900* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), 426–45.

<sup>43</sup> McPherson, *Struggle for Equality*, 172; Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution*, 144–48; Smith, *Civic Ideals*, 321; Morris, “General Introduction to the AMS Series,” in Alvore, *First Semi-Annual Report on Schools and Finances of Freedmen, January 1, 1866*, [iii].

<sup>44</sup> Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

With few exceptions, education in the South was racially segregated from the beginning of Reconstruction. The most prominent effort to establish integrated schools took place in New Orleans. Louisiana's 1867 constitution forbade racial segregation in public schools, but the policy was vigorously opposed at the local level throughout the state. In New Orleans, however, a politically empowered black middle class, along with state school superintendent Thomas W. Conway, integrated New Orleans's schools with moderate success until the overthrow of Louisiana's Reconstruction government in 1877. Conway, an Irish-born Union Army chaplain, was appointed by occupying general Nathaniel P. Banks to oversee Louisiana's Bureau of Free Labor, which also operated black schools. Later, U.S. Freedmen's Bureau superintendent O. O. Howard put Conway in charge of Louisiana's Freedmen's Bureau. However, President Andrew Johnson forced Howard to remove him later that year because Conway's pro-black policies had angered white conservatives.<sup>45</sup>

After the Reconstruction Acts of 1867, Conway was appointed superintendent of Louisiana's schools, and he immediately began agitating for an integrated school law. The 1869 public education law ordered Louisiana schools opened to all students regardless of race, and the state wrested power from the New Orleans school board to assure conformity with the law. However, white leaders in the rural parishes kept local schools segregated by withdrawing attendance and support from public education. Likewise, the city government of New Orleans resisted integration by every possible device, including legal challenges in court. While the forces of segregation and integration wrangled over New Orleans's schools, the conservative press enflamed the

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<sup>45</sup> Vaughn, *Schools for All*, 78–102; Donald E. Devore and Joseph Logsdon, *Crescent City Schools: Public Education in New Orleans, 1841–1991* (New Orleans: Center for Louisiana Studies, 1991), 57–66.

public against integration. Also during this period, Robert M. Lusher, Conway's predecessor under Louisiana's conservative 1864 government, became the Peabody fund's special agent in that state. In 1870 Judge Henry C. Dibble of the Eighth District Court settled the lawsuits in favor of integration. At first, white parents refused to send their children to the integrated schools. However, the high quality of education offered at the public schools, along with the lack of viable alternatives, soon changed their minds, and a moderate process of school integration continued for the next seven years.<sup>46</sup>

Thomas Conway was succeeded in 1873 by William G. Brown, who did not push nearly as hard for school integration as had Conway, but who was nevertheless an able administrator. The following year, however, the White League, a violent anti-black vigilante group with origins in rural Louisiana, infiltrated New Orleans. When eleven black females attempted to enroll in Upper Girls High School, the White League orchestrated the beating of New Orleans's superintendent of schools, followed by four days of riots and the forcible expulsion of non-white students from city schools. The riots continued until city leaders convinced the White League to call off the mobs. In spite of such violence, soft-pedaled by the New Orleans *Bulletin* and *Picayune*,<sup>47</sup> integration proceeded apace until 1877. In other parts of Louisiana, murders of school officials, threats, and other forms of violent interference sometimes suspended all efforts toward maintaining schools. Following the withdrawal of federal troops from Louisiana, Robert M. Lusher reclaimed his place as state school superintendent. Lusher acted quickly to

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<sup>46</sup> Vaughn, *Schools for All*, 78–102; Louis R. Harlan, "Desegregation in New Orleans Public Schools during Reconstruction," *American Historical Review* 67 (April 1962), 663–75; Devore and Logsdon, *Crescent City Schools*, 57–66.

<sup>47</sup> New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, Dec. 18, 1874, p. 1; Dec. 19, 1874, p. 1.

resegregate those schools that had been integrated and to suspend nominal integration in the rural parishes.<sup>48</sup>

Throughout the integration experiment in New Orleans, Barnas Sears directed Peabody aid solely to private whites-only schools overseen by Lusher. Conway tried to prevail upon Sears to direct his funding through the state school board, arguing that Sears's scheme of running funds through Lusher was contrary to the principle of taxpayer-funded public schools. Sears replied, "We assume no control whatever over the arrangement of the schools to which assistance is accorded." If the state established separate schools for whites and blacks, Sears wrote, he would support those schools. If the state established integrated schools that were attended by blacks and whites, he would support those. However, if the state established an integrated school system, and only blacks attended school, "we should naturally aid, *not* the colored children who enjoy, exclusively, the benefit of the public school money, but *the white children who are left to grow up in ignorance.*"<sup>49</sup> Sears's clumsy efforts to straddle Louisiana's racial divide placed him clearly at odds with the stated aims of the Peabody Education Fund. Sears's own recommendations were for aid to be directed only toward public, taxpayer-supported schools, yet he sent funds exclusively to private schools in Louisiana. In doing so, he allied himself with the most reactionary elements of the state.<sup>50</sup>

By 1874 a civil rights bill written by Charles Sumner had brought the issue of school segregation to the national level. The Peabody trustees assigned a three-man "Committee on Mixed Schools" to consider the issue. The committee reported, "The

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<sup>48</sup> Devore and Logsdon, *Crescent City Schools*, 66–68; Vaughn, *Schools for All*, 89–102; Harlan, "Desegregation in New Orleans Public Schools during Reconstruction," 671–75.

<sup>49</sup> Curry, *A Brief Sketch of George Peabody*, 60–61; Vaughn, *Schools for All*, 148.

<sup>50</sup> Earl H. West, "The Peabody Education fund and Negro Education, 1867–1870," *History of Education Quarterly* 6 (Summer 1966), 3–21.



Public systems of education at the South will receive a serious, if not a fatal, blow from any legislation” that undermined school segregation. “While justice and public duty as well as the interests and feelings of the white and colored people of the South concur in demanding a system of public education which should give equal opportunities and equal advantages to the children of either color,” the report continued, “no such result would be promoted by the compulsory system of ‘mixed schools.’” Finally, the report concluded, “Step by step, the *natural* tendency in their communities towards free and equal education for *both classes*, by the method of equal but separate schools, has manifested itself to the observation of the Board, by every form of concurrent evidence.”<sup>51</sup> The Peabody trustees recommended “equal but separate” as the standard for federal legislation regarding public schools in the South.

Sears then lobbied President Grant, Benjamin Butler, George Hoar, and Harry L. Dawes against the “mixed schools” provision in the civil rights bill on the grounds that it would cause southern whites to oppose public education in general. In a letter to his friend J. L. M. Curry, Sears revealed private disdain for black politicians. Sears described his approach to “leading senators—not Sumner nor his trained Negroes, but Morton, Buckingham, and others, who will see that the objectionable clause is left out or changed, or that the Bill is defeated in the Senate.”<sup>52</sup> He argued that federal interference in the “mixed schools” question would cause whites to turn completely against black education, which he believed to be funded primarily through taxation of whites. The “mixed schools” clause of the 1874 civil rights bill was bitterly opposed by most southern

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<sup>51</sup> “Report of the Committee on Mixed Schools,” October 16, 1874, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, I, 438–39.

<sup>52</sup> Barnas Sears to J. L. M. Curry, January 8, 1874, as quoted in Curry, *A Brief Sketch of George Peabody*, 64–65.

congressmen and the white southern press. In the shadow of the pending legislation school construction lagged in the South, some superintendents resigned their positions, and educational progress in general slowed. The bill passed the Senate in May 1874 about two months after Sumner's death. Electoral setbacks for congressional Republicans, however, resulted in a lame-duck session the following November, and wrangling among the House leadership resulted in the "mixed schools" provision being stripped in conference.<sup>53</sup>

Sears's stance toward "mixed schools," according to one historian, reflects his long experience with the Massachusetts board of education first as a member of the executive committee, and later as secretary. There he learned hard lessons about the weight of public opinion on board policies. Sears thought Horace Mann had unnecessarily antagonized much of the population by moving in advance of public opinion, and he feared repeating that mistake in the South, where public opinion was extraordinarily virulent on the matter of "mixed schools."<sup>54</sup> The conservative southern response to the "mixed schools" debate indicates that Sears was justified in his concerns that southern acceptance of the idea of public education hung in the balance. The failure of the "mixed schools" clause ensured that segregated schools, by default, became policy at all levels of government from the local school district to the U.S. Congress. Moreover, it was one of many compromises that would consistently propel philanthropic foundations toward conservative positions on matters that concerned the "Negro question."

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<sup>53</sup> Curry, *A Brief Sketch of George Peabody*, 64–65; Vaughn, *Schools for All*, 119–59.

<sup>54</sup> Earl H. West, "The Peabody Education Fund and Negro Education, 1867–1880," 6.

By October 1875 Sears could be more sanguine than in years past about the progress of public education in the South. North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia led the way in establishing rudimentary public school systems. Tennessee was making progress, and plans were underway to establish a normal school in Nashville. Florida, Texas, and Arkansas made up the second tier, with Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana at the bottom of the pile. Lack of teachers, Sears argued, was the most serious problem, even worse than lack of money. Added to this were school terms that seldom exceeded two to four months, particularly in rural districts. The sharecropper system of commodity agriculture frequently required children to work alongside their parents in the fields. Additionally, many teachers derived their primary income from farming, which further limited the ability or willingness of rural counties to extend school terms. Even when school was in session, the requirements for child labor could cause attendance to be spotty, and poor roads made travel difficult during inclement weather. Persistent poverty, along with the retrenchment policies of “Bourbon” Democrats, kept state governments in dire financial straits. Minimal as state school funds were, legislatures continued to divert them to other purposes.<sup>55</sup>

A compromise settling the disputed 1876 presidential election between Democrat Samuel Tilden and Republican Rutherford B. Hayes conceded the presidency to Hayes in return for his promise to remove federal troops from the South. This event reflected a wider northern withdrawal from earlier commitments to expanded civil rights. As the federal government removed military protection, white southern Democrats “redeemed”

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<sup>55</sup> Sears, Report of the General Agent, October 1875, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, II, 10–15; Neil R. McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 72–108; Edgar K. Knight, *Public Education in the South* (Boston, Mass.: Ginn and Company, 1922), 337–82.

state governments largely through violence and fraud. Black political authority was restricted mainly to coalition tickets that awarded limited power to African American representatives from black-majority districts, along with federal appointments awarded as patronage by Republican presidents. Reactionary political leaders rewrote state constitutions, cut back educational expenditures, and imposed tight restrictions on the power of counties and school districts to raise funds for public education.<sup>56</sup>

In 1870 Congress discontinued funding for the Freedmen's Bureau. At about the same time, northern missionary groups shifted their strategy from supporting primary schools to concentrating aid on African American institutes for higher learning, such as Atlanta University, Fisk University, and Tougaloo College. Exacerbating this trend were Barnas Sears's policies of weighting Peabody assistance heavily in favor of white schooling. Such developments diverted philanthropic aid away from African American primary schools even as state governments were pulling back from educational commitments in general and black education in particular. Nevertheless, black political power at the state level persisted enough to prevent per-capita funding for black primary education from lagging too far behind spending for whites.<sup>57</sup>

The early shapers of foundation philanthropy, especially Winthrop and Sears, were conservative in temper. Winthrop was a cotton Whig who lost his senate seat to the abolitionist Charles Sumner. Sears was a Baptist who had taken a moderate position in intra-faith sectional disputes over slavery before the Civil War. Along with Rutherford B. Hayes and J. L. M. Curry, they were Protestants, holders of advanced degrees, well-

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<sup>56</sup> Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 23–50; Smith, *Civic Ideals*, 358–65; Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877*, 524–53.

<sup>57</sup> Louis R. Harlan, *Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States, 1901–1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), 8–9; Bullock, *History of Negro Education in the South*, 86.

traveled, and cosmopolitan in their outlooks.<sup>58</sup> These same characteristics that made them appealing as philanthropic trustees capable of cooperating with white southerners also ensured that they would not be inclined toward radical positions on the “Negro question.” It did ensure that they would be receptive toward ideas that stressed cooperation with the existing power structure to enact educational policies directed toward increased agricultural and industrial production, stable labor relations, and improved morality.

In their emphases on morality and social stability, foundation managers had much in common with northern missionary societies in the South and in the Caribbean. Northern missionaries presumed that freedmen required large doses of moral training, which, along with “habits of thrift and industry” was a key feature of black education during and immediately after the Civil War. The same was true of missionaries to Jamaica during the “apprenticeship” period between 1832 and 1838 when emancipated Jamaican slaves were expected to transition from slave labor to wage labor. Jamaican magistrates, along with missionary teachers and religious leaders, believed that the viability of the liberal state was contingent upon the operation of an internalized work ethic among its citizens.<sup>59</sup> In the post-emancipation South, as in the Caribbean, the moral requirements of the liberal state were intimately linked with the evangelical civilizing mission.

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<sup>58</sup> Stanfield, “Philanthropic Regional Consciousness and Institution-Building in the American South,” 119–24; Roy E. Finkenbine, “A Little Circle: White Philanthropists and Black Industrial Education in the Postbellum South” [Bowling Green State University, Ph.D. thesis, 1982].

<sup>59</sup> Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction*; Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832–1838* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Demetrius Lynn Eudell, *The Political Languages of Emancipation in the British Caribbean and the U.S. South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Catherine Hall, *Civilizing Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002), 115–39.

## Chapter 2

### The “Negro Problem”

From 1873 until his death in 1881, Barnas Sears waged a periodic campaign to recruit J. L. M. Curry as his successor. In letters to Curry and also to Robert Winthrop Sears made it clear that he considered Curry the sole candidate qualified to take his place as general agent of the Peabody Education Fund.<sup>1</sup> The son of a planter and country store owner, J. L. M. Curry was born June 25, 1825, in Lincoln County, Georgia. Before attending Franklin College in Athens, Georgia, Curry studied under the Reverend Moses Waddell, who had also taught a raft of leading southerners, including John C. Calhoun and James Petigru. After graduating from Franklin, Curry went to the Dane Law School at Harvard University where he became friends with future U.S. president Rutherford B. Hayes. In 1847 Curry married Ann Alexander Bowie and was also elected to the Alabama House of Representatives where he served on the education committee. In 1852 Curry became an agent for the Alabama and Tennessee Railroad Company and three years later joined its board of directors. In 1857 Curry was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he served until Alabama’s secession from the Union in January 1861. Curry served one term in the Confederate House of Representatives before being defeated by a war-weary constituency. Following that, he joined Joseph E. Johnston’s army as a cavalry officer. After the war, Curry accepted the presidency of Howard College (present-day Samford), an under-funded Baptist college located in Marion, Alabama. He was ordained a Baptist minister in 1866 and, within a year, had delivered

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<sup>1</sup> Barnas Sears to J. L. M. Curry, September 27, 1876; May 19, 1877; September 15, 1877, J. L. M. Curry Papers, Files, microfilm, reel 4, Alabama Department of Archives and History [Henceforth referred to as J. L. M. Curry Papers, ADAH].

119 sermons. After the Peabody fund was established in 1867, Curry wrote to Robert Winthrop requesting funds for Howard College. Later, he traveled to Richmond, Virginia in his quest for financial support and, in 1868, left Alabama permanently for a professorship at Richmond College. The next year, Sears introduced Curry to George Peabody at a popular retreat for the southern leadership class at White Sulphur Springs in Virginia. There, Curry gained entrée into educational philanthropy's nascent directorate.<sup>2</sup>

Curry continued policies set in motion earlier by Barnas Sears that concentrated Peabody aid in highly visible and well supported normal institutes, such as the Peabody Institute of Nashville, Tennessee; Winthrop Training School in Columbia, South Carolina; North Carolina's Normal and Industrial School in Greensboro; and a normal school for white girls in Farmville, Virginia. During his tenure as general agent, Curry addressed over thirty state legislatures, where he promoted education as the primary responsibility of the state, opposed local control of schools in favor of a centralized bureaucracy, defended black education and voting rights, and spoke out against lynching. He frequently warned against legislative proposals that advocated expenditures based on a pro-rata allocation of tax receipts by race. White Democrats advanced such measures in their efforts to limit black access to education and to funnel scarce state funds into white schools. Curry, acknowledging that white tax receipts paid for a great deal of black education, responded to pro-rata initiatives by praising the nobility of southern whites for their willingness to support black education and by reminding them of the dangers of pro-rata funding. Education, he maintained, was a public burden irrespective of race. Racial apportionment of school funds, he warned, would leave African Americans

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<sup>2</sup> Edwin Anderson Alderman and Armisted Churchill Gordon, *J. L. M. Curry: A Biography* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911), 9–249.

“unbefriended and unguided in [their] poverty and the necessarily slow emergence from the darkness and stupor of centuries of barbarism.”<sup>3</sup> Curry’s arguments for longer school terms, greater per capita spending, and teacher professionalization closely resembled those made earlier by Barnas Sears; the most appreciable difference was one of style. As a son of the South, Curry appealed to the mythology of southern antebellum glory in his effort to construct a more inviting future. Nevertheless, the South did not achieve the level of per capita public education spending established during Reconstruction until after the turn of the century, and southern school terms rarely exceeded 60 days.<sup>4</sup>

Among Curry’s most significant and controversial efforts was his campaign for federal support for public education in the South. In 1882 Curry petitioned the U.S. Congress to provide federal aid for the purpose of reducing illiteracy among black southerners. He argued that, because emancipation and the African American franchise were political acts of the national government, the national government was responsible for supporting black education. Quoting Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Horace Mann, Curry argued that representative government relied on an informed and virtuous citizenry. Therefore, the federal government, by enfranchising blacks, had created conditions that demanded federal redress. The genesis of emancipation and black civil rights at the federal level was but one of several reasons, Curry explained, that southern education was of national concern. State and local governments, impoverished and indebted by the Civil War, simply did not have the resources for the job even when aided by northern philanthropy. Those conditions, he explained, led to the repudiation and

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<sup>3</sup> Curry, “Report of the General Agent,” October 1883, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, III, 128–29 (quote); J. L. M. Curry to Robert C. Winthrop, July 23, 1883, Series 1, IV, J. L. M. Curry Papers, Library of Congress [henceforth J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC]; Curry, Address before the North Carolina legislature, January 21, 1891, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, IV, 330–31.

<sup>4</sup> Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 61–63.



“readjustment” of state bonds in response to the diversion of school funds to service state debts. Northern investors, Curry reminded congress, held most of those bonds. Furthermore, he warned, although African American populations were, at that time, concentrated in the South, westward migration was already underway, and it was entirely possible that a northern migration of black southerners might soon follow. The “Negro problem,” he argued with a good deal of foresight, was a national problem that demanded a national solution.<sup>5</sup>

The Blair Bill, introduced in the Senate in 1883, proposed to allocate federal funds for education in proportion to per capita illiteracy in each state. Curry’s vigorous support for the bill sometimes ran him afoul of southern conservatives and even brought discord within the ranks of the Peabody trustees. Conservative opposition in the South stemmed from the relationship between literacy and the franchise, as argued by the bill’s supporters. White southerners opposed to African American civil rights sought to avoid, at any cost, legal measures that might bolster black political power by means of expanded educational opportunities. Others opposed it on the grounds that the funds were earmarked from a surplus accrued from treasury receipts from a protective tariff vociferously opposed by southern agricultural interests. The final defeat of the Blair Bill in 1888 was a source of enduring bitterness on Curry’s part toward the federal government for saddling the South with the “Negro problem” and then refusing to assist in dealing with it.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Curry, Petition to Congress, Appendix to “Memorial of the Trustees of the Peabody Education Fund with The Report of Their Committee on the Subject of the Education of the Colored Population of the Southern States,” *Proceedings of the Trustees of the Peabody Education Fund*, III, 1–39; J. L. M. Curry to Robert C. Winthrop, September 1, 1886, Series 1, IV, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC.

<sup>6</sup> Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 63–64; Rayford W. Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877–1901* (New York: Dial Press, 1954), 57–61.

In 1890 Curry met with an opportunity to consolidate his leadership over educational philanthropy. The John Fox Slater Fund, modeled after the Peabody Education Fund, had been incorporated in 1882, a year after Curry assumed the general agency of the Peabody Fund. Established by a \$1 million endowment by its namesake, a textile mill operator and railroad investor, the Slater Fund's purpose was primarily African American teacher training. Such training included a focus on manual arts in addition to "mental and moral instruction" in an effort to insure "the safety of our common country, in which they have been invested with equal political rights."<sup>7</sup> Slater named former U.S. president Rutherford B. Hayes president of the trustees, and the president of Johns Hopkins University Daniel Coit Gilman secretary. Both of these men were trustees of the Peabody Fund, and Gilman would later become a central feature of educational philanthropy in association with the Carnegie Institute. These men, along with the founder, decided early that the Slater Fund would be devoted to education of the head, heart, and hand designed to assist African Americans in qualifying themselves for full citizenship rights. Curry, from the beginning, had wanted Slater to combine his funds with the Peabody trust in order to use them more efficiently. He had even hinted to Hayes that he [Curry] might take up the general agency of the Slater fund along with his Peabody duties.<sup>8</sup>

The Slater trustees, however, selected as their general agent Atticus G. Haygood, a Methodist minister and president of Emory College. Haygood was hired largely on the basis of his paternalist tract, *Our Brother in Black* (1881), wherein he argued that white

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<sup>7</sup> *Proceedings of the John Fox Slater Fund*, 1882, 4–7 (quote on p. 4).

<sup>8</sup> Louis D. Rubin, ed. *Teach the Freeman: The Correspondence of Rutherford B. Hayes and the Slater Fund for Negro Education, 1881–1887* 2 Vol. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1959), xix–xxxvii, 33–34.

southerners had an obligation to lift up black southerners through education. *Our Brother in Black* explored black community and family life in the Reconstruction South and found both to be morally lacking. Although slavery had removed Africans from “barbarism and slavery” and introduced them to Christianity and the virtue of labor, Haygood argued, African Americans retained the vestiges of their “savage” ancestry and required more attention to the principles of citizenship, family life, and regular work habits. Haygood, like Curry, saw improved education as the best way to go about Negro uplift, and he called for increased support of black colleges in order to accomplish it.<sup>9</sup>

Haygood’s tenure as general agent of the Slater fund was troubled by conflict between him and some of the trustees, especially the treasurer Morris K. Jesup. Although Haygood enjoyed Hayes’s confidence, other trustees complained that his approach was not sufficiently systematic, and they sought to prescribe limitations on Haygood’s independence. Haygood favored an approach to philanthropic aid that came to be known as a policy of “diffusion.” He spread Slater funds far and thin in an effort to provoke widespread sympathy for African American education among black and white constituencies and to supply “seed money” to struggling black colleges. His record keeping was less than meticulous, and trustees seemed frequently to be in the dark as to precisely how much aid was going where and to what purpose. Toward the end of the 1880s Haygood found himself increasingly at odds with the trustees who favored a policy of “concentration” that called for limiting Slater aid to a few large grants to institutions that demonstrated stability, homegrown financial support, and a thorough commitment to

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<sup>9</sup> Atticus G. Haygood, *Our Brother in Black: His Freedom and his Future*, (New York: Phillip and Hunt, 1881); John E. Fisher, *The John F. Slater Fund: A Nineteenth Century Affirmative Action for Negro Education* (Lanham, Mc.: University Press of America, 1986), 1–41; Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 88–93; Haygood, Report of the General Agent, *Proceedings of the John Fox Slater Fund*, 1892, 31–32.

the principles of industrial education. This approach was consonant with the evolving policy of the Peabody fund that, by this time, was limiting its support to normal schools that would serve as regional centers for teacher training and as models for others to emulate. In May 1890 Haygood was elevated to a bishopric within the Methodist Episcopal Church and resigned as general agent of the Slater Fund effective at the end of the 1890–1891 fiscal year. In October of that year, Curry was made a trustee of the Slater fund and chairman of the Education Committee. When Haygood’s tenure ended the following May, Curry took over his duties and began instituting the policy of “concentration.” Within two years, he had reduced the number of institutions receiving Slater funding from 36 to 15 with approximately one-third of the grants going to two institutions, Hampton and Tuskegee.<sup>10</sup>

Another change Curry brought to both the Slater and Peabody funds was an intensified focus on the so-called Negro problem. He believed it to be the defining issue of the day with implications far beyond the schoolroom that extended to his assumptions about the national character and the viability of representative government in the United States. Curry characterized addressing the “Negro Problem” as a national mandate in his 1889 query to the state legislature of Alabama, “What must be done to prevent emancipation from being a curse to the Negro race, from destroying our free institutions, from dragging down the white race to irretrievable ruin?” The question was not intended to be hyperbolic. Curry instructed his Alabama audience as to how the “Negro legacy of barbarism and slavery” had poorly prepared African Americans for their post-emancipation role as U.S. citizens. He argued that it was the duty of whites to educate

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<sup>10</sup> Fisher, *The John Fox Slater Fund*, 55–75, 80–84; Rubin Jr., ed., *Teach the Freeman*, I, xxix–xxxi, 49–52, 220–23.

blacks because “if the Negroes remain as co-occupants of the land and co-citizens of the States and *we* do not lift them up, they will drag us down to industrial bankruptcy, social degradation, and political corruption.”<sup>11</sup> During the years following the Civil War and Reconstruction, America’s white leadership class worked to consolidate a national identity in terms of Anglo-Saxon morality.<sup>12</sup> Yet this effort was severely complicated by a diverse population and citizenry that included significant non-white elements, especially African Americans. The “Negro question,” among other things, represented an effort to resolve the tension between the construction of an exclusively Anglo-Saxon national identity and the simultaneous inclusion—through the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments—of blacks within the American nation.

Curry, like most white political thinkers of his day, exalted what he considered Anglo-Saxon institutions of representative government. Moreover, he conflated these “Anglo-Saxon institutions” with Anglo-Saxon blood. He then used these assumptions, which were integral to the prevalent civilizationist discourse, to frame the Negro problem as a crisis of civilization. Curry believed that U.S. institutions represented the highest achievement of the Anglo-Saxon race. The “Negro race,” on the other hand, remained mired in the vestiges of “barbarism and savagery.” He presumed that their “degraded” moral condition was the consequence of racial evolution in the juvenile stage. Therefore, racial commingling, in Curry’s opinion, would necessarily degrade the Anglo-Saxon race by infusing it with savagery and barbarism. He concluded that the acceptance by whites

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<sup>11</sup> Curry, Address to the Alabama state legislature, February 1, 1889, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, IV, 151–52 [emphasis his].

<sup>12</sup> Wilfred M. McClay, *The Masterless: Self and Society in Modern America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Smith, *Civic Ideals*; Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*; David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2001).

of African American political power would lead to miscegenation and degeneration of the Anglo-Saxon race. If southern whites accepted black political power, Curry surmised, they would then be drawn into racial intermarriage. Such a development, he concluded, would degrade the Anglo-Saxon race and threaten American institutions of government. He described that possibility as “miscegenation, or toning down our civilization to meet the capacities of the Negro.” He offered as an example the fate of colonial Spaniards who had “absorbed the Indians, and . . . to the extent of the amalgamation, drags and will drag, for centuries the ‘ball and chain of hybridization.’” The lesson learned, he continued, was that “the fusion of African and American revolts pride and self-respect and . . . means not the elevation of the Negro but the lowering of the caucasian.” If, on the other hand, southern whites employed political skullduggery to curtail black political power, the very actions taken to preserve free institutions of government would themselves threaten those institutions every bit as much as he feared black political power would. The only available option then, other than deportation or relocation—both of which Curry recognized as material impossibilities—was Negro uplift through education.<sup>13</sup>

While Curry discussed the “Negro problem” in national terms, he made it clear that its implications went beyond the national to the prospects of civilization in general. According to his binary concept of Anglo-Saxon civilization and African barbarism, an equal sharing of the land by black and white southerners was a recipe for disaster. It portended interracial violence, cultural coarsening, and political corruption. “The dull,

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<sup>13</sup> Curry, “Popular Education in the South,” Jan 8, 1902, Series 1, XIV, item 3064, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC. For relationships between politics and marriage see Laura F. Edwards, “The Politics of Marriage and Households in North Carolina during Reconstruction,” in *Jumpin’ Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 7–27; Sarah Barringer Gordon, “‘The Liberty of Self-Degradation’: Polygamy, Woman Suffrage, and Consent in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Journal of American History* 38 (December 1996), 815–47. On the exaltation of Anglo-Saxon institutions and blood, see Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*.

crude, unlettered do not mingle with the lettered, able, refined,” he wrote. To make the contrast even more stark, he invited his readers to reflect on “A millennium of ignorance, superstition, subordination, slavery, savagery, over against centuries of civilization, science, freedom, a better religion.”<sup>14</sup> As Curry saw it, the differences between whites and blacks were much more than skin deep, and it was this difference that constituted “the most difficult question which our civilization has encountered.”<sup>15</sup> He explained “the *national* character of the problem” to his friend Robert Winthrop as “growing out of the inferiority of the Negro as a laborer . . . his unfitness for the duties of citizenship and the widespread evils of Negro suffrage, and the deplorable condition of the Negro morally.”<sup>16</sup> To examine the assumptions that underlay Curry’s conceptualization of the “Negro problem” is to examine the construction of Anglo-Saxon national identity in America’s Gilded Age against the foil of imagined Negro immorality.

Reconstruction provided an ideal environment for such attitudes toward African American capacity for citizenship to coalesce. In the process of resisting and overturning Republican Reconstruction governments in the decade or so following the U.S. Civil War, white southerners constructed the principle assumptions of Reconstruction mythology, which can be summarized as follows: newly liberated, ignorant, and degraded freedmen transferred their former dependence upon southern planters to corrupt carpetbag republicans and unscrupulous southern scalawags to form rapacious state governments that preyed upon the defeated South through excessive taxation, political

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<sup>14</sup> Curry, “Popular Education in the South,” Jan 8, 1902, Series 1, XIV, item 3064, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC. On the binary opposition of barbarism and civilization in the Victorian mind, see Daniel Joseph Singal, *The War Within: From Victorian to Modernist Thought in the South, 1919–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

<sup>15</sup> Curry, Address before the state legislature of Alabama, February 1, 1889, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, IV, 151.

<sup>16</sup> J. L. M. Curry to Robert Winthrop, February 1, 1890, Series 1, VII, item 1735, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC.

malfeasance, and “Negro domination.”<sup>17</sup> As Curry himself put it, “in a moment, without discipline or preparation, he [the Negro] was emancipated, citizenized, enfranchised.”<sup>18</sup> The entire constellation of racialized assumptions comprising the “Negro question” revolved around this belief that African Americans were unsuited for citizenship.

African Americans, this line of thinking implied, lacked the strong moral center presumed to be a requisite for U.S. citizenship. Instead of virtue, Curry warned the Alabama legislature, they tended to display “general intemperance, general dissipation, laxity of morals, low standard of character, [and] false views of religion.” In addition, he wrote elsewhere, “with a preponderant majority there is a low level of intelligence and morality, with rudimentary notions of comfort and under the grossest superstition.”<sup>19</sup> These views were widely shared among Curry’s peers. He and his fellow philanthropists conceded that blacks were probably equal to whites in their capacity to gain knowledge but were laggard in their ability to implement it. As the Unitarian cleric and educational reformer Amory Dwight Mayo explained, blacks had learned the “passive virtues” of work, language, and religion, “but unlike the European Races, he had not endured the awful schooling of ‘sword, pestilence, and famine,’ through centuries of upward struggle out of the hell which the lower side of European civilization remained for a thousand years. Thus,” he concluded, “he still greatly lacks the peculiar qualification of effective American citizenship; self-control and the habit of dealing with justice, firmness, and

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<sup>17</sup> Kenneth M. Stamp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865–1877* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965); Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution*.

<sup>18</sup> Curry, Address to the State Legislature of Alabama, February 1, 1889, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, IV, 151.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 152 (quote 1); Curry, Report of the Educational Committee, *Proceedings of the John Fox Slater Fund, 1899*, 8 (quote 2).



kindly tact with men.”<sup>20</sup> As Curry saw it, Anglo-Saxons through struggle had overcome this quagmire of barbarism, but African Americans were still mired in its consequences.

For those who sought it, evidence of African American moral failing seemed abundant in apparently ever-increasing black criminality after Reconstruction. In Georgia, for instance, the post-Emancipation prison population burgeoned, mostly as a result of the prosecution of petty crimes such as simple theft. By 1874 Georgia’s convict population exceeded six hundred, 85 percent of which was African American. By 1880 it was over a thousand, an increase owed primarily to long sentences imposed upon black defendants. Georgia’s keeper of the penitentiary suggested that this increase in criminality was due to a generation of blacks who had never known the restraint of slavery. Among such “new Negroes,” the only difference between convicts and free was that the latter had not yet been caught at a criminal act. The convict lease system arose in Georgia concurrently with the growing need for industrial labor and the dramatic rise in the number of black convicts. The “labor problem” of the South—the putative shortage of wageworkers for industry—was conflated with the “Negro Problem,” which supposed African Americans to be lazy, shiftless, and improvident. Not coincidentally, convict laborers were excluded from citizenship because of their presumed criminality—a criminality with obvious racial overtones.<sup>21</sup>

Educational reformers attributed to moral laxity a political economy and legal climate that forced black southerners into labor relationships that closely resembled the “dependent” status of slaves. Whether they worked as household servants, in industrial

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<sup>20</sup> Amory Dwight Mayo, *Southern Women in the Recent Educational Movement in the South*, Dan T. Carter and Amy Friedlander, eds., (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1978), 98–99.

<sup>21</sup> Alex Lichtenstein, *Twice the Work of Free Labor: The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South* (London: Verso, 1996), 20–80.

plants, or as sharecroppers, black laborers toiled within the private fiefdoms of white employers. For those who sought to acquire and maintain their own farms, such activity tended to pull them away from the available labor force, thus drawing the ire of whites who observed only the fact that those African Americans refused to work for them.<sup>22</sup> African American women, seeking to negotiate the terms of free labor in such a way that would allow them to effectively divide their time between paid labor in the field and unpaid labor in the household, sometimes ran afoul of Freedmen's Bureau agents during Reconstruction, and landowners at all times. This also exacerbated the impression, already held among whites, of an innate aversion to work that, after emancipation, replaced black morality.<sup>23</sup>

Whites likewise saw time management, laborsaving techniques, and the drive for self-improvement as lacking among African Americans. According to historian Mark M. Smith, time discipline was an essential feature of capitalism's ascendance in the nineteenth century. Most white southerners in the antebellum South owned watches, and the introduction of clock-time for the purpose of imposing work discipline upon slaves had the reciprocal effect of bringing masters to "race against the clock." White southerners, therefore, internalized clock discipline in antebellum times, but slaves did not own watches and, therefore, did not internalize time discipline until after emancipation. "Colored people's time," Smith adduces, represents an array of devices

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<sup>22</sup> As historian Amy Dru Stanley puts it, "The greatest obstacle to transplanting wage labor in the New South was freedpeople's pursuit of land ownership." Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Marriage and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 41.

<sup>23</sup> Laura F. Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 41–73, 147–67; Demetrious L. Eudell, *The Political Language of Emancipation in the British Caribbean and the U.S. South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Leslie A. Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We: A Transition from Slavery to Freedom in South Carolina* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

deployed by African Americans to resist time discipline, especially under slavery.<sup>24</sup> It is not difficult to imagine how white southerners perceived black labor practices that might have carried the appearance of “colored people’s time.” This perception that blacks lived outside of time added to the impression of black selfhood as pre-modern, undeveloped, and dependent.

Historian Gordon S. Wood argues persuasively that the social construction of American individualism resulted from the saturation into Americans’ everyday lives of the forces of the market. Long term relationships based on personal interdependence and mediated by social and economic status gave way to shorter-term relationships mediated by contracts that presumed essential equality between the contracting parties. Wood’s focus on free whites, however, leaves unexamined how this construction affected African Americans, particularly as “dependents” within the white antebellum household.<sup>25</sup> It is important to remember that individualism, in this sense, was less a personal attribute than a cultural ethos. The basis of modern selfhood was presumed lacking in African Americans by the very process that undergirded the construction of modern selfhood—self-direction derived from property ownership. Black slaves were not owners, but owned. However much slaves might have engaged in informal market activities, worked gardens and sold the surplus, negotiated business deals with whites, married and owned property, such activities lacked legitimacy within the ethos of the dominant culture. However individualistic black southerners might or might not have actually been in ante-bellum America, modern selfhood was constructed in such a way that defined it in opposition to enslaved African Americans. Some examples of a property-owning black

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<sup>24</sup> Mark M. Smith, *Mastered by the Clock: Time, Slavery, and Freedom in the American South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 3–15, 130.

<sup>25</sup> Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1992).

middle class notwithstanding, the vast majority of antebellum African Americans were themselves property, not property owners. Self-ownership was the foundation principle of property ownership, which served, in turn, as the basis for the exchange of goods within the free market.<sup>26</sup> If African American market activity was considered by the dominant culture to be overwhelmingly informal and illegitimate, so too was black selfhood informal and illegitimate at the dawn of postbellum America.

Radical individualism, the formalistic concept of the individual as entirely self-directed and bound only by the limitations of his own moral fortitude, was attributed in the Jacksonian Era almost exclusively to white males.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the gendered foundations of formal individualism made independence synonymous with manliness. As Carole Pateman argues, the social contract that was presumed to separate civil society from a state of nature implied the sexual contract that vested husbands with political agency and stripped it from women. Thus the rise of civil society coincided with the emergence of separate spheres ideology. The public sphere, occupied by male heads of households, was characterized by essential equality among its members. The private sphere, occupied by women and children, was characterized, on the other hand, by essential inequality based on gender and generational subordination. Likewise Dror Wahrman finds the construction of modern selfhood to be founded in large part on gender, as well as racial, differentiation.<sup>28</sup> For African Americans in the Gilded Age South, then, to be thought of as dependent was to be considered unmanly.

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<sup>26</sup> Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974); James Livingston, *Pragmatism and the Political Economy of the Cultural Revolution, 1850–1940* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press), 64; Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract*.

<sup>27</sup> Wilfred M. McClay, *The Masterless, Self and Society in Modern America*, 51–52.

<sup>28</sup> Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1988); Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004).

Educational philanthropists perceived their task as inculcating manliness among black southerners where it was presumed to be lacking. A significant component of such a transformation would necessarily include the “reform” not only of African American labor practices, but also of black religious life. Mayo and Curry, as well as most educational reformers, contended that black churches accentuated emotional religiosity while paying insufficient attention to moral discipline. This emotionalism, according to Curry, did not properly instill an ethical center based on the distinction between right and wrong. Religion, Mayo explained, was divided into two “hemispheres,” one dominated by spirituality, the other largely concerned with the “secular gospel” of moral conduct on earth. Evangelists who converted plantation blacks had achieved an emotional conversion that did not necessarily lead to more moral behavior, a predicate that was taken for granted among white Christians. The result of neglecting the “secular gospel” among blacks, he warned, was a halfway Christian conversion.<sup>29</sup> Evangelical Protestantism posited individual control of the rational, autonomous self as the fundamental necessity to democratic liberty.<sup>30</sup> Because they practiced what Mayo and Curry characterized as a “false religion,” black southerners appeared to lack the self-regulating morality required of representative government.

Many black leaders shared this criticism of the dominant form of black southern religion. W. E. B. DuBois, Henry McNeil Turner, Alexander Crummel, and Ida B. Wells all shared in their skepticism toward black Baptist and Methodist preachers in the rural South. “With few exceptions,” wrote Booker T. Washington in 1890, “the preaching of

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<sup>29</sup> J. L. M. Curry, Address before the Alabama state legislature, February 1, 1889, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, IV, 152; Mayo, *Southern Women in the Recent Educational Movement in the South*, 106.

<sup>30</sup> McClay, *The Masterless*, 47–48; Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740–1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

the colored ministry is emotional in the highest degree, and the minister considers himself successful in proportion as he is able to set the people in all parts of the congregation to groaning, uttering wild screams, and jumping, finally going into a trance.” The emotional side of African American religion, thought Washington, caused blacks to dwell too much on the rewards of the next world and not enough on how to live in this one.<sup>31</sup> Mayo was even less forgiving of the black ministry in his description of “the regulation scapegrace, Negro preacher, generally a liar, often a boor, a thief, and a caucus politician, the champion blatherskite.”<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the black holiness movement, deplored by Washington and W. E. B. DuBois alike, embodied an emotional religious experience that had great popular appeal among African Americans. Immediately after the Civil War, white denominations preferred to retain bi-racial churches that had been a mainstay of southern religion, black and white. However, they refused to allow blacks leadership positions and kept seating segregated. Therefore, blacks withdrew to establish their own churches fueling white impressions that African Americans practiced a profane Christianity that was overly emotional and demonstrative.<sup>33</sup>

White supremacy was a central element of conventional southern morality that, although founded in antebellum society, was reconstituted in the New South through Lost Cause mythology. As the mainstream Protestant denominations suffered sectional schisms over the slavery question, southern Protestantism underwent a transformation

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<sup>31</sup> David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois: Biography of a Race, 1868–1919* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993); 150–178; Ida B. Wells to BTW, Harlan ed., November 30, 1890, *Booker T. Washington Papers*, III, 108; Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 395–403.

Booker T. Washington, article in the *Christian Union*, August 14, 1890 as reprinted in L. R. Harlan and R. W. Smock, eds., *The Booker T. Washington Papers* 14 Vols., (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), III, 73 (quote); IV, 194–95.

<sup>32</sup> Mayo, *Southern Women in the Recent Educational Movement in the South*, 109.

<sup>33</sup> Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 395–403; Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in the Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865–1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 107–08; John B. Boles, *The Irony of Southern Religion*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 37–70.

from being concerned almost solely with individual salvation to addressing the corporate society. Southern clerics responded to northern aspersions against southern religious life with affirmations of southern exceptionalism rooted in a superior virtue. After the Civil War, southern ministers who had believed that God supported both slavery and the South, found new meaning in the discipline they later concluded God had imposed on the South through defeat. The New South entered a new covenant with God that, while renouncing slavery, maintained the white supremacist overtones of southern morality. “The special concern of Lost Cause ministers,” notes Charles Reagan Wilson, “was the obstacle that post-bellum blacks presented to the preservation of a virtuous civilization.”<sup>34</sup> However, as Mayo’s comments suggest, that concern was limited neither to southern clerics nor to southern regional identity; rather, it was a national concern shared by ministers on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line—and on both sides of the color line.

This perception of congenital African American immorality was rooted in slavery and extended at least as far back in time as sixteenth-century European explorations of Africa.<sup>35</sup> But it was also bound up in race evolution theory, which partially underwrote the mid-nineteenth century obsession with the “Manifest Destiny” of Anglo-Saxons to extend the reach of white, Christian nationalism in North America from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. A key component of the Victorian mind was the assumption that the Anglo-Saxon race had evolved over a period of two thousand years from a state of savage barbarism in Europe to a state of civilized refinement in Victorian-era England and America. According to this mythology, white Americans stood at the vanguard of the Christian empire. In these terms, the Anglo-Saxon march across the globe was the

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<sup>34</sup> Boles, *Irony of Southern Religion*, 73–101; Wilson, *Baptized in the Blood*, 107–08

<sup>35</sup> Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 3–43.

working out of God's will through the agency of his most favored people. To briefly recapitulate that march, as Victorians understood it: in northern India an Aryan-speaking people originated, the most advanced of whom migrated to central Europe and reinvigorated civilization after the decline of Rome. The most superior of these advanced people were the Saxons, the best and brightest of whom emigrated to North America where their domination of Native Americans and the success of the American Revolution proved that they were chosen by God to carry the torch of civilization to those who dwelt in darkness.<sup>36</sup> This construction of Christian Anglo-Saxonism kept non-whites in the unenviable position of playing catch-up with whites in the race for the fulfillment of civilization's divine destiny. Because the hallmarks of civilization were defined *a priori* as Anglo-Saxon characteristics, all other "races" were rhetorically locked out of the pole position.<sup>37</sup>

For two thousand years, the theory went, Anglo-Saxons had struggled to perfect Christian civilization while Africans squatted in the bush, practiced indiscriminate sex, and devoured each other. "We must recognize in all its relations," spoke Tulane University president Charles W. Dabney at a conference of educational philanthropists, "that momentous fact that the negro is a child-race, at least two thousand years behind the Anglo-Saxon in its development." Daniel Coit Gilman described, in images of light and darkness, whites passing to blacks the torch of liberty, learning, and Christianity.<sup>38</sup> "The

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<sup>36</sup> Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981); John S. Haller Jr., *Outcasts from Evolution: Scientific Attitudes of Racial Inferiority, 1859–1900* (Urbana and other cities, 1971); Paul A. Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880–1910," *Journal of American History* 88 (March 2002), 1320–28.

<sup>37</sup> Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*.

<sup>38</sup> Charles W. Dabney, "The Public School Problem in the South," *Proceedings of the Fourth Conference for Education in the South, 1901*, 62; Daniel Coit Gilman, "A Study in Black and White," *Launching of a University and other Papers: a Sheaf of Remembrances* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1906), 329.



negro race,” declared another educator, “now shares in our Anglo-Saxon civilization. He is coming into that stream of tendency, that current of civilizing and uplifting forces of Greek-Roman civilization that has lifted the Anglo-Saxon out of the bogs and into moral power and social supremacy among men.”<sup>39</sup> Constructed to justify slavery and colonization, race evolution theory also worked to construct a modern national identity in opposition to the Negro, the Indian, and immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, all assumed to be pre-modern. “As the biography of man cannot be properly understood without the biography of his childhood,” spoke Curry at a Centennial Exposition banquet, “so the history of our race cannot be properly understood until it is complemented with the history of the savage and barbaric races of America.”<sup>40</sup>

This civilizationist discourse was frequently deployed to parry attacks by white Democrats who were opposed to public funding for black education under any conditions. Supporters of public schooling for African Americans argued that, suggestions of black criminality and indolence notwithstanding, the “race” was progressing up the evolutionary scale of civilization and gaining in Christian morality. “The march upward and forward, however, was long and painful, through blood and tears, revolution and death. The Anglo-Saxon has triumphed,” spoke Wilbur Thirkield, white president of Gammon Theological seminary, a Methodist college for African American clerics. “Will the negro be stranded and swept under, or will he keep afloat and sweep on to larger life and power? The past answers, give him a man’s chance and he

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<sup>39</sup> Wilbur P. Thirkield, “How Far Shall the Higher Education be Attempted?” *Proceedings of the First Conference for Education in the South*, 1898, 19.

<sup>40</sup> Curry, Speech at the Centennial and Exposition Banquet, December 4, 1888, unnumbered page, clipping from the *Washington Post*, December 16, 1888, Series 1, VII, item 1506a, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC.

will not go under but *on*.”<sup>41</sup> J. L. M. Curry cleverly hitched the rhetoric of white supremacy to his plea for patience on the part of white southerners with regard to black education. “One of the proofs of Caucasian superiority is the readiness with which [white] men accustom themselves to social and legal changes, and conquer their surroundings. Let us not be impatient or over hopeful” he admonished the Louisiana general assembly in 1890. “It sometimes requires generations, or centuries, to breed high qualities of body, mind, or heart.” He cautioned that the twenty years since emancipation was a very short time in which to expect a great deal of progress on the part of the “Negro race” and reminded his readers that Anglo-Saxons had spent centuries in European feudalism without entirely overcoming it. African Americans, Curry taught, had been removed from a degraded and barbarous condition in Africa in 1620, after which they spent two-and-a-half centuries in slavery cut off from “school books, mechanical pursuits, [and] from the stimulus of acquiring property ownership, which is so important in developing an individual as a member of society.” Curry did note significant progress, however, in the acquisition of property and “respectability” in college-educated black southerners.<sup>42</sup> Railroad magnate and educational philanthropist Collis P. Huntington wrote to Booker T. Washington the familiar disclaimer, “A people who have been groping, as you say, for centuries can hardly be expected to come upon the highest plane in one generation.” However, Huntington saw admirable progress among black southerners and predicted that “if it will only continue for three-quarters of

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<sup>41</sup> Thirkield, “How Far Shall the Higher Education Be Attempted?” *Proceedings of the First Conference for Education in the South*, 1898, 19 [emphasis his].

<sup>42</sup> Curry, Address before the General Assembly of Louisiana, May 26, 1890, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, IV, 264 (quotes 1 and 2); Series1, V, item 1122, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC (quote 3).

a century more, I think the whole will be accomplished.”<sup>43</sup> Such statements served a triple purpose by assuring conservatives that white supremacy was secure, appealing to the evidence of some African American race progress, and projecting any significant change in race relations many years into the future. According to Huntington’s projection, the evolution of the “Negro race” should have born full fruit sometime around 1973.

The language of race evolution was extremely flexible in its ability to support a wide range of philosophical positions. Whenever one might point to a particular African American, such as Booker T. Washington, as an example of a fully civilized person in the Victorian mold, that example could always be offset with references to the “entire race,” of which Washington was thought a notable exception. Arguing against the presumed “failure” of Reconstruction education, Thirkield explained that as the fault not of African Americans, but of their Yankee teachers who had “made the mistake of confounding the *education of the individual with the evolution of the race.*” While the first proposition (individual education) was a distinct and measurable phenomenon, the second (race evolution) was entirely conceptual and, in addition, was conceived in such a way that Anglo-Saxons remained permanently in the vanguard despite any evidence to the contrary. “The truth taught by evolution is this,” Thirkield declared, “you may educate the individual in a few years, but the uplifting of a race is a question of generations.”<sup>44</sup> Walter Hines Page, a southern émigré who became a prominent publisher in New York, took the concept even further, dividing African Americans into three subsets. Those

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<sup>43</sup> Collis P. Huntington to Booker T. Washington, December 28, 1898, Harlan ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, IV, 553–54.

<sup>44</sup> Thirkield, “How Far Shall the Higher Education Be Attempted?” *Proceedings of the First Conference for Education in the South*, 1898[emphasis his].

subsets were 1) the “educated and ambitious”; 2) black residents of the Upper South states of Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee; and 3) “those in the lowland States, like Mississippi, who are but three generations removed from a savage ancestry, and are half savage themselves.” He attributed evolutionary differentials among black southerners to regional geography, declaring “The upland Negroes are as far superior to the Negroes of the lowlands or ‘black belt’ as we are to our barbarous Anglo-Saxon ancestors. Among the former the negro problem is solving itself.”<sup>45</sup> Page, much like Curry and others, manipulated the rhetoric of Anglo-Saxonism and race progress to simultaneously delimit the boundaries of African American civility and promise future advances among the race, while also advocating black education as the best means for furthering such advancement. As long as African Americans remained part of the national body politic, education remained a public mandate, for, as Curry never tired of reminding his audiences, “slavery, strengthened into habitudes by heredity and race characteristics, is incompetent to train men to personal and mental independence, to an apprehension of the distinction betwixt *meum* and *tuum*, and to the observance of the sanctities of home life.”<sup>46</sup> But while race progress among Anglo-Saxons was presumed to be headed ever onward and upward, most whites thought African American race progress to be contingent, inconsistent, and problematic.

The uneven progress of the “Negro race” was frequently attributed to a cultural phenomenon known as retrogression. Retrogression ideology held that African Americans, hauled out of barbarism and savagery by the Atlantic slave trade, tended to

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<sup>45</sup> Clipping from the Harvard *Daily Herald*, May 5, 1883, in the Walter Hines Page Collection, bms, Folder 1, 1090.3 (3), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

<sup>46</sup> Curry, Address before the Alabama state Legislature, February 1, 1889, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, IV, 152.

retrogress toward that condition once they were released from the social restraints of slavery. Slavery, the theory supposed, had acted as a restraining force upon the barbaric impulses of African Americans and also impressed upon them the civilizing force of work. After emancipation removed the restraints and civilizing force of slavery, the gifted minority rose into an educated and propertied class, but the majority sank into idleness and barbarism.<sup>47</sup> “During the past two hundred and seventy years,” wrote Mayo, these people have been transported from a condition of absolute barbarism and paganism on a dark continent 3,000 miles away, to the only country that had ever been in fit condition to attempt their emancipation and elevation to republican citizenship.” It is important to note that Mayo, like most educators of the 1880s and 1890s, viewed slavery, emancipation, and education, as necessary components of African American citizenship. While retrogression ideology was also relied upon to justify the worst encroachments upon African American human rights, philanthropists such as Mayo and Curry deployed it as an argument for investments in black education. They believed slavery had provided three gifts to the enslaved: “first, regular and systematic work; second, the language; and third, the religion of a civilized country.”<sup>48</sup> One philanthropist quoted the Spenserian John Fiske in characterizing slavery as “the greatest missionary enterprise of the century.”<sup>49</sup> As railroad magnate and educational philanthropist William Baldwin put it, “each plantation had its own wheelwright and blacksmith and carpenter and shoemaker,” giving the plantation the characteristics of a compulsory trade school. “But first, and most

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<sup>47</sup> Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 114–15; George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (New York: Harper and Row), 256–82.

<sup>48</sup> Mayo, *Southern Women in the Recent Educational Movement in the South*, 73 (quote 1), 75 (quote 2).

<sup>49</sup> Frissell, “A Survey of the Field,” *Proceedings of the First Capon Springs Conference, 1898*, 3.

important of all, the negro was taught to work and was made to work.” Describing emancipation, Baldwin compared African Americans to children released from parental restraint. “The taste was sweet; the license unbounded. He no longer worked beyond the needs of a bare living. He had no outside control; no guidance; no aim, except that of existence by any means.” The worst consequence of emancipation, Baldwin wrote, was the disappearance of black artisans. “The negro politician took his place,” he lamented, and “freedom to him meant freedom from work.”<sup>50</sup> Many of those who viewed slavery as a civilizing mission sought to complete the civilization of the Negro through education.

Educators and philanthropists frequently compared the civilized status of African Americans to that of Native Americans and Africans as evidence of American slavery’s civilizing effects. As Howard Frissell, chaplain of Hampton Industrial Institute, wrote, “When Indian and negro are placed side by side in school-room and workshop at Hampton, it is very clear that slavery was a much better training school for life alongside the white man than was the reservation.” While slavery, with all its deleterious effects, acculturated blacks to the work habits, language, and religion of whites, “the reservation shut the Indian away from his white brother, left him to his own language and his pagan religion and brought him up in idleness.”<sup>51</sup> The primary civilizing presence presumed to operate within the southern plantation was the white mistress. The southern plantation woman, according to Mayo, was the chief instrument of “negro uplift” during slavery, and he attributed wartime plantation loyalty among slaves to religious training received from the mistress. In addition, he averred, the mistress’s conduct and perseverance amid

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<sup>50</sup> William H. Baldwin, “The Present Problem of Negro Education: Industrial Education,” *Proceedings of the Second Capon Springs Conference, 1899*, 67 (quotes 1 and 2), 68 (quotes 3 and 4).

<sup>51</sup> Frissell, “A Survey of the Field,” *Proceedings of the First Capon Springs Conference, 1898*, 4.

wartime hardship constituted a lesson in faith, forbearance, and thrift.<sup>52</sup> In Mayo's view, southern planter women were true women capable of inculcating virtue among the members of their household. Black southerners, his position implied, required the civilizing presence of white women because black women were not true.

"True" women were considered the essence of a virtuous home. But like many other concepts couched in racially neutral terms, "true home life" was only true to the extent that it reflected the Anglo-Saxon ideal. The southern theologian and educational philanthropist Edgar Gardner Murphy firmly believed that "the only test of essential race progress lies in the capacity to create the home life." Moreover, he defined the proper home life "as the institution of the family as accepted and honored under the conditions of Western civilization." In other words, true home life equaled white home life. Murphy admitted that whites did not always live up to the Anglo-Saxon ideal, but such aberrations did not constitute evidence of an essential racial failing because the ideal was defined by its association with whiteness. Blacks, he argued, were inhibited from achieving the ideal by their heritage of slavery and barbarism. Even if African Americans appeared to conform to Victorian standards of family conduct, they remained suspect. "That its existence is, in many cases, but a naïve pretense," Murphy wrote, "that negro life often proceeds upon its way with a disregard—partly immoral, partly non-moral—of our accepted marital condition, is evident enough."<sup>53</sup> To Murphy, it was self-evident that African Americans *were* making progress toward the Anglo-Saxon ideal but that they still had a long way to go.

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<sup>52</sup> Mayo, *Southern Women in the Recent Educational Movement in the South*, 93–94.

<sup>53</sup> Murphy, "The South and the Negro," in *The Problems of the Present South: A Discussion of Certain of the Educational, Industrial and Political Issues in the Southern States* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1904), 166.

Belief in the superiority of white family life was essential to the Victorian worldview.<sup>54</sup> The Anglo-Saxon was defined by the integrity of his family life, and his family life was defined by his Anglo-Saxon status. Therefore, “Negro race progress” depended on homes that resembled, as closely as possible, an idealized middle-class white household. Moreover, a central premise of free labor was the assumption that wages would support bourgeois relationships of dependence among husbands, wives, and children.<sup>55</sup> The “Cult of True Womanhood,” described by Barbara Welter and since reified as a historical given, closely defined the roles of the middle-class Victorian home. Man sat as benign despot at the head of the table flanked by his dependent and subordinate wife, children, and servants. Changes in political economy occurring between 1840 and 1890 transformed the modern household from a unit of production to merely a residence. Having abandoned their domestic role as examples of virtue and piety in the household in favor of competitive gain in the competitive equality of public life, men left to women the tasks of keeping Christian morality in the home and instilling such virtues as honesty, piety, thrift, and obedience among their children. However much lived experience diverged from this model, particularly among the working class, its power as an ideal persisted through the turn of the century.<sup>56</sup>

That black wages were generally inadequate to support a household unassisted by female and child labor was seen not as an indictment of free labor or of low wages but of the moral tissue of African American households. “The Negroes have dwellings where

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<sup>54</sup> Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 17.

<sup>55</sup> Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract*, 140.

<sup>56</sup> Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860,” *American Quarterly* 18 (Summer 1966), 151–74; Nancy A. Hewitt, “Taking the True Woman Hostage,” *Journal of Women’s History* 14, no.1 (2002), 156–162; Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1884), 60–65; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).



the conditions of common decency are impossible,” J. L. M. Curry wrote in *The Christian Union*, “and that tend directly and inevitably to filth and disease and intemperance and crime.” Educational philanthropists tirelessly pointed out that morality was inextricably linked to the material conditions of the household. To Curry, these conditions amounted to “ignorant vicious parents bringing up like children.” Furthermore, “Atrocious crimes, provoking lynching come from depraved mothers and drunken fathers.” Republican citizens, he feared, were unlikely to issue from such homes. It was vital, Curry concluded, “to expel ignorance and indecency from the *home* life, and to ally inseparably religion and morals.”<sup>57</sup> Until black home life was “purified,” any endeavor put forth by African Americans was tainted by the scent of depravity wafting from households held in poverty by the New South’s political economy—and defined by their blackness against the luminescent Anglo-Saxon ideal.

While it was commonly understood among educational philanthropists that white women filled the moral center of the Anglo-Saxon household, it was equally understood that African American women did not.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, white assumptions regarding the moral inadequacy of black wives and mothers hinged upon sex. The slave quarters, in American memory, was presented as a dark pit of sexual license where the master often set the example of unlimited sexual access to female slaves. Slave narratives, such as those of Harriet Jacobs, Solomon Northrup, and Frederick Douglas, emphasized the lack of sanctuary for African American women and girls who attracted their masters’ sexual

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<sup>57</sup> Curry, “The New South,” in *The Christian Union*, XXXI, no. 6 (February 5, 1885), Series 1, XIV, 3197a, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC (quotes 1 and 2); Curry, outline of speech delivered before the southern Education Association in Columbia, South Carolina, Dec. 27, 1901, Series 1, XIII, 3013, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC (quotes 3 and 4); Curry, Address Delivered before the General Assembly of Louisiana, May 26, 1890, *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, IV, 264 (quote 5) [emphasis his].

<sup>58</sup> Giddings, *When and Where I Enter*; Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894–1994* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999).

interest.<sup>59</sup> Historian Deborah Gray White has captured attitudes toward black women in the mythical figure of “a person governed almost entirely by her libido, a Jezebel character.”<sup>60</sup> Representations of black women as beastly and oversexed date at least as far back as early travel accounts of Africa by European explorers. They described naked women working in the fields, sometimes with breasts so long that they flung them back over their shoulders. Such accounts also claim to recount village legends of African women carried off and raped by orangutans.<sup>61</sup> Educational philanthropists took for granted the precarious moral foundations of black women who faced constant threats to their chastity both from men—black and white—who presumed black women to be sexually available, and from black women’s own overweening sexual urges.

These perceptions were further enabled by the impoverished condition of most black southerners, the effects of field labor upon black women’s appearance, and the visibility of family quarrels and other domestic matters carried on outdoors because of the spatial limitations of impoverished households. Hidden from view in the middle-class home and discounted as aberrations in poor white households, every imperfection within the working-class African American household was magnified in public view as evidence of dysfunctional black family life, particularly when contrasted with the idealized middle-class Anglo-Saxon vision of domestic tranquility. Thus did J. L. M. Curry describe “crowded and filthy homes, with loose notions of personal chastity, with false ideas of

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<sup>59</sup> Harriet Jacobs, “Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,” Frederick Douglass, “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself,” in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay eds. (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1997), 215–24, 311; Solomon Northrop, *Twelve Years a Slave* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968, reprint of 1853 edition).

<sup>60</sup> Deborah Gray White, *Ar ‘n’t I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999, 1985), 28–29 [revised paperback edition].

<sup>61</sup> Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 3–43.

social respectability, with course, sensual, ignorant, untrained, slatternly, improvident, low-standard mothers, wives, sisters, [and] daughters.”<sup>62</sup> If, as cultural historian T. J. Jackson Lears concludes, the modern family represented man’s “ascent from barbarism,” then blacks southerners—from the predominant white point of view—had yet to make that ascent.<sup>63</sup>

It fell to the leading white women, therefore, to make black women true; to “pull her own sex out of the slough of unchastity.” Mrs. E. C. Hobson and Mrs. C. E. Hopkins toured Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama, visited twenty-four black schools and institutes, and “examined the life of the people in the one-roomed cabin of the plantation and roadside, in the hovels of the manufacturing towns, as well as the neat and attractive homes which are the result of industry and thrift aided by education.” These two women concluded that conditions among African Americans were similar to those of French peasants at the end of the eighteenth century. Unlike them, however, southern black women were subject to unusual sexual pressures, “and to meet such temptations the negro woman can offer the resistance of a low moral standard, an inheritance from the system of slavery, made still lower from a life-long residence in a one-roomed cabin.” To counter such conditions, Hobson and Hopkins proposed to dispatch “pious, intelligent women” of both races to hold mothers’ meetings among rural African Americans who could then “be taught the way to keep a decent home and to elevate the moral standards of her humble life.” An alternative was to “remove a girl early from such degrading environment,” send her to a training school, and then return

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<sup>62</sup> Curry, Report of the Educational Committee, *Proceedings of the John Fox Slater Fund, 1891*, 22–23.

<sup>63</sup> Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 17.

her “home to her people with the changed idea of personal decency.”<sup>64</sup> Once home, the transformed black woman would become a source of reform in her neighborhood. Or as Curry put it, “the inhabitants of such homes go away from indolence, filth, disorder, immorality and crime, and have an increasingly wholesome interest in the security of property and the well-being of society.”<sup>65</sup> By separating African American girls from their homes and families and placing them in a reform setting, education philanthropists believed they could address the problem of the degenerate black household.

The Negro problem, Curry and his fellow philanthropists believed, was the problem of black family life. And at the center of problematic black family life lay the unchaste black woman. From there proceeded the roster of personal inadequacies construed by Curry and others as the dangers of black citizenship: lack of independence and self-direction, insufficient respect for property rights, laziness, sexual promiscuity, dishonesty, unwillingness to provide for the future, and insufficient attention to hygiene. In brief, every characteristic that defined the ideal Victorian home was thought to be absent from the African American home. Every personal attribute that marked virtuous citizenship was perceived as lacking in African American character. The Reconstruction mythology of “Negro rule” and political malfeasance confirmed and sharpened concepts of African American morality concocted within a slave society by whites from the North and South who attempted to reconcile the republican ideal of American freedom with the reality of U.S. chattel slavery. Having failed at that task, it is not surprising that white Americans again found themselves perplexed at reconciling the fiction of congenital African American immorality with the fact of a black body politic after the Civil War.

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<sup>64</sup> E. C. Hobson, *A Report Concerning the Colored Women of the South*, 7–23 (quotes 1 and 2, pp. 22–23; quote 3, pp. 6–7; quotes 4 and 5, pp. 13–14; quotes 6 and 7, p. 14).

<sup>65</sup> Curry, Report of the Educational Committee, *Proceedings of the John Fox Slater Fund*, 1891, 24.

Their efforts in that regard produced the bizarre array of social theories that portrayed African American religiosity as over-emotional and under-ethical. Race evolution theory that placed white Anglo-Saxons at the head of mankind's procession from barbarism and savagery to the realization of divine will for a just society folded neatly into ante- and postbellum attitudes toward African Americans as morally underdeveloped and therefore unfit for full U.S. citizenship. Whatever progress up the evolutionary scale African Americans could claim was contingent and in continual danger of "retrogressing" or slipping from the true path toward civilization established under white guidance during slavery times. Considered in these terms, attitudes toward African American family life and morality were vital components of public policy at the national level, and a central question of public policy in this regard was: what form of education was appropriate for black southerners?

## Chapter 3

## The Tuskegee Idea and the Origins of Gradualism

For at least a century, industrial education has been central to debates among historians, sociologists, and educators concerning philanthropy and black education in the South. It has been described as an ideology, a pedagogical system, a forum for vocational training, and a device for solidifying and maintaining a permanent subordinate caste of African American laborers. Some historians have characterized industrial education as a compromise between those who were losing their stamina in the fight for African American civil rights but were still interested in promoting “racial uplift” through education and those in the South who resisted public education of blacks on the grounds that it would “spoil” African American field hands and lead to increased black political power.<sup>1</sup> Others have described the “irony” of black southerners such as Booker T. Washington and Yankee educators such as Samuel Chapman Armstrong, joining ranks to promote an inferior style of education among blacks.<sup>2</sup> Still others have relied on fine-grained analyses of industrial education that blend examples from each of the above points of view into case studies of black education, racial oppression, and industrialization in Alabama.<sup>3</sup> What these treatments have in common is a point of view that situates the Tuskegee Idea almost solely within the context of black civil rights in United States. Furthermore, they treat the nation-state as a stable category of analysis—one that does not change significantly over time—within which the Jim Crow

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<sup>1</sup> Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South*; Harlan, *Separate and Unequal*; Eric Anderson and Alfred A. Moss Jr., *Dangerous Donations* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 39–62.

<sup>2</sup> Spivey, *Schooling for the New Slavery*, 9; Anderson, *Black Education in the South*, 33.

<sup>3</sup> Bond, *Negro Education in Alabama*; Sherer, *Subordination or Liberation?*

South stands as an anomalous departure from the ideals of the liberal state. This chapter expands the angle of vision to include the intellectual origins of industrial education in Europe during the Napoleonic era and its long career in the United States. It argues that Tuskegee Institute became a site for the working out of racial and gendered boundaries that were essential to the construction of the U.S. as a modern nation-state.

This chapter begins with the late-eighteenth-century pedagogical theory of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, the Swiss national who helped revolutionize educational principles in the United States and elsewhere. It will then describe how those concepts were racialized in Hawaiian missionary schools in the mid-nineteenth century. Following that, it will narrate the opening, in 1863, of Hampton Institute, the first U.S. industrial institute for African Americans. Finally, it will analyze the program of industrial education pursued by Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute. By following the idea of industrial education from its inception as a race-neutral means of helping the Old World poor adjust to the changing political economy of the early industrial era to a race-specific means of “Negro uplift” in the mid-to-late-nineteenth century, this chapter describes how concerns over gender conventions were intertwined with concerns over racial boundaries in promoting social stability in the post-Reconstruction South. At Tuskegee modern racial and gender discourse was woven into theories of industrial education as part and parcel of a broader effort toward nation building in America’s Gilded Age. At the turn of the twentieth century, the conceptual categories of race, gender, and nation were in flux, and constructing a modern nation-state required stabilizing categories of race and gender, the foundations of which had been undermined during the Civil War and Reconstruction.

The concept of industrial education originated with the pedagogical theories of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and their reception in the United States. Pestalozzi was born in 1746 of poor but patrician heritage in the hinterland of Zurich, Switzerland. Pestalozzi's formal education had included training in experimental agriculture and, soon after marrying, he established his own farm with borrowed money, but the farm was unsuccessful. With his wife's help, he established a school for the poor on the former site of their experimental farm, but the school failed after five years due to mismanagement and unrelated financial reversals. In 1781 Pestalozzi published *Leonard and Gertrude*, a novel intended by Pestalozzi to be a "people's catechism."<sup>4</sup> The novel describes life in a small village as exemplified in Gertrude's living room, the local school, and relations with the local squire. The basic principles of the Pestalozzian approach to early education are displayed in Gertrude's living room through her training of her children. A local idealist, inspired by his observation of her living room lessons, then opens a school in which he applies Gertrude's method. Finally, the novel shows how Gertrude's living room embodies a template for reform that is applied to root out corruption in Leonard and Gertrude's village. Gertrude's husband Leonard, portrayed as an improvident but penitent drunkard, is also reformed.<sup>5</sup> Gertrude, the mother, embodies the gendered ideal of domestic virtue that later became the object of prescriptive literature supporting separate spheres ideology in the Victorian Age.

Gertrude and her children began their day with breakfast, followed by morning prayers and reading from the Bible. Children recited Scripture while they spun cloth, and an older girl quoted verse while she made beds and kept house. Older children taught the

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<sup>4</sup> Kate Silber, *Pestalozzi: The Man and his Work* (London: Routledge, 1960), 18–51.

<sup>5</sup> Pestalozzi's *Leonard and Gertrude*, trans. Eva Channing (Boston, D. C. Heath and Company, 1885), 129–31; Silber, *Pestalozzi: The Man and his Work*, 31–32.



alphabet to younger ones, and those who were too young for spinning cotton, carded it. Every activity was an object lesson. Children counted threads while spinning cotton, counted floor tiles while crossing the room, and learned manual dexterity through their work. The object lesson became the principle of learning. Concrete objects preceded abstractions, and book learning was held in suspicion for its superficiality. Pestalozzi believed that the strength of close relationships (family life) determined the strength of relationships radiating out from those (public and religious life). Later, through his friendship with Johann Gotlieb Fichte, Pestalozzi expanded that concept to include relationships between the personal and the national.<sup>6</sup> Here is seen a national order wherein the moral structure of family life, determined by the mother, represents the basic component of national identity.

In Pestalozzi's fictional school, the headmaster demonstrated the method to the pastor, emphasizing strict order, cleanliness, punctuality, hygiene, and erect posture. The Pastor was soon convinced that "all verbal instruction, in so far as it aims at true human wisdom, and at the highest goal of this wisdom, true religion, ought to be subordinated to a constant training in practical domestic labor." *Leonard and Gertrude*, as a manual for the new education, became famous along with its author.<sup>7</sup> The novel integrated a gendered model of domestic virtue as the basic building block of national identity, with a pedagogical approach that emphasized manual training, cleanliness, and deference to figures of authority.

Pestalozzi's overall project, which would later become the basis of the Tuskegee idea, was to halt and reverse the process of moral decline among poor country folk in the

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<sup>6</sup> Silber, *Pestalozzi: The Man and his Life*, 34–35, 129–31; Pestalozzi, *Leonard and Gertrude*, 129–32.

<sup>7</sup> Pestalozzi's *Leonard and Gertrude*, 154–156; Silber, *Pestalozzi: The Man and his Life*, 133.

early industrial era. He sought to remediate what he perceived as the deleterious effects of a political economy in transition. Rural peasants were increasingly supplementing agricultural pursuits by performing light industry, mostly spinning, at home. Such activity altered relationships between tenants and squires, making them less personal, and contributed to the decline of communal village life.<sup>8</sup> Pestalozzi believed that changing the way children thought, worked, and interacted with their communities could cure poverty and social unrest. He further believed that education could provide practical wisdom for satisfying students' "natural desires" in an effort to achieve inner peace. Pestalozzi asserted that children's physical development was disrupted both by sitting still in the classroom and by sitting at the loom. The result, he thought, was moral and physical decay. Physical education, in the Pestalozzian scheme, was part of a larger effort to counteract moral decline. Exercise worked to develop gender-specific manual skills and strength needed for industrial labor (for men, arm strength; for women, digital dexterity). Thus the drudgery of industrial labor was partially offset as the labor was transformed into an object lesson and simultaneously a gymnastic exercise. Pestalozzi focused his educational efforts on the children's interior, rather than having them remember sums and the alphabet. He concentrated on concrete objects, moral behavior, and working to meet students' own material needs. Sensory impressions, rather than words, were the primary means of education.<sup>9</sup> Unfolding against the backdrop of the French Revolution and incipient industrial transformation, Pestalozzi's method both reflected and promised to enable social and economic change among Europe's peasant

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<sup>8</sup> Gordon S. Wood describes a similar phenomenon in post-Revolutionary New England as short-term contracts supplanting long-term dependencies between small farmers and large landowners and merchants. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*.

<sup>9</sup> Silber, *Pestalozzi: The Man and his Life*, 33–34, 111–21, 135, 187–97.

class. It also established gender difference as a foundational characteristic of the new education.

Over the next several years, Pestalozzi established a handful of schools for the poor in Switzerland, where he worked to develop and refine his method. At these schools he eschewed rote memorization by sticking instead to simple concepts, such as consonant and vowel pairs, until he believed the children thoroughly understood the concept and then moved on. Students learned arithmetic with pebbles before writing it. Pestalozzi had students work in silence together as opposed to their previously cacophonous individual recitations. Later he teamed with another Swiss national, Phillip Emanuel von Fellenberg, to operate school for indigents in Hofwyl, near Bern, Switzerland, until a disagreement between them caused Pestalozzi to depart. Fellenberg ran Hofwyl as a manual training school for students who could afford tuition. He also ran a farm and trade school for those who needed help paying for their schooling. In the latter case, students were seen as improving their health while gaining an education they could not have otherwise afforded. That became the eventual model for industrial training in the United States.<sup>10</sup>

The first Pestalozzian school in the U.S. was opened in Philadelphia in 1809, followed by another at the New Harmony utopian community in 1825. Other examples included the Andover Theological Seminary, the Maine Wesleyan Academy, the Oneida Institute, and the Manual Labor Academy of Pennsylvania at Germantown near Philadelphia. In 1848 a Pestalozzian “ragged school” was opened in Oswego, New York, under the principalship of Edward A. Sheldon. Later, in 1861, Oswego was made a normal school and Margaret E. M. Jones, of the Pestalozzian Home and Colonial School

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<sup>10</sup> Charles Alpheus Bennett, *History of Manual and Industrial Education up to 1870* (Peoria, Ill.: Chas. A. Bennett Co., Inc., 1926), 182–83; Silber, *Pestalozzi: The Man and his Life*, 119–33.

Society in England, was hired to oversee teacher training. A committee visited Oswego in 1864 to report on the effectiveness of Pestalozzian training in general and of “object teaching” in particular. The committee, which included Barnas Sears, concluded that the system was successful.<sup>11</sup>

Manual training gained widespread and favorable recognition in the U.S. as the result of a meeting between Russian educator Victor Della Voss and Calvin M. Woodward of Washington University at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. Della Voss had adapted the manual shop to the manual teaching facility, which was much less expensive to operate. Rather than attempting to produce finished goods for sale, as manual trainers had previously done, Voss concentrated solely on teaching basic toolcraft. The result was a manual and industrial program that required neither a fully outfitted shop nor a master craftsman to run it. After adapting Voss’s approach to his own manual program, Woodward publicly argued that the purely liberal curriculum of the public schools was neglecting the aspect of education that would train the student for life—a practical education. U.S. Commissioner of education William T. Harris defended the liberal curriculum on the grounds that civilized thought and citizenship training were the proper tasks of the schools. Manual training, like religion, belonged outside the classroom. Public education, Harris believed, should be devoted to developing the higher faculties of the mind. Between 1876 and 1889, however, manual training gained acceptance in the North where it was seen as a series of steps guiding students from the most basic to more advanced stages of toolcraft in an effort to integrate formal and manual training into the education of “the whole boy.” Furthermore, manual training

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<sup>11</sup> Bennett, *History of Manual and Industrial Education up to 1870*, 183–204; Will S. Monroe, *History of the Pestalozzian Movement in the United States* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 177–79.

promised to replace the role of apprenticeship, in decline as a result of industrial deskilling, in connecting the mental to the manual.<sup>12</sup> Industrial education, in terms of mechanical arts, was considered appropriate for all “races” in nineteenth-century America.

The confluence of manual training and the so-called civilizing mission to Hawaii gave rise to the racialized version of industrial education later found at Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes. On November 26, 1831, Richard and Clarissa Armstrong set sail from New Bedford, Massachusetts, to bring the Gospel of Christ and Western civilization to Hawaii under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for foreign missions. Missionaries to Hawaii entered a society in which men frequently had more than one wife, women sometimes acquired chiefly status, and sexual expression was openly encouraged.<sup>13</sup> Missionaries saw this divergence from modern gender conventions as evidence of moral depravity among indigenous Hawaiians.

At Haiku, on the island of Maui, Richard Armstrong was made minister of public instruction and later president of the Board of Public Education. By this time, Hawaii’s indigenous population was in crisis, having plummeted from 300,000 in 1778 to 78,000 in 1838. This decline was largely due to the social, environmental, and epidemiological impact of white settlers, missionaries, and East Asian immigrant labor. In an effort to facilitate indigenous Hawaiians’ “adjustment” to a plantation society based on wage labor, Richard Armstrong made manual training schools a prominent feature of educational policy there. It is likely that Richard Armstrong’s educational program was

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<sup>12</sup> Cremin, *Transformation of the School*, 22–41.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Francis Engs, *Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited: Samuel Chapman Armstrong and Hampton Institute, 1839–1893* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 2–4; Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 32.

strongly influenced by Clarissa's experience as a teacher in a Pestalozzian primary school in Brooklyn. Samuel Chapman Armstrong, born in Haiku in 1839, later brought his parents' vision of manual training and the civilizing mission to the United States. After graduating from Williams College in 1862, Samuel Armstrong joined the Union Army, was captured at Harper's Ferry, and later became a lieutenant colonel in the Ninth Regiment of the U.S. Colored Troops. At the war's end, he was assigned to the Carolina Sea Islands at the rank of brigadier general where he directed a school for African Americans in a tobacco warehouse known as "the college."<sup>14</sup>

In 1866 Armstrong began a frustrating and short-lived tenure as assistant subcommissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau for the district that included Hampton Roads. The black population of Hampton Roads and its environs had increased about fourfold to nearly 40,000 since 1862. Of these, many male heads of household had been killed or wounded during the war. Others had lost their land when President Andrew Johnson countermanded a military order that had granted parcels of abandoned land to former slaves. Enforcement of the order restoring abandoned lands to their antebellum owners resulted in unrest and some militant resistance among Hampton Roads' African American population. Samuel Armstrong efficiently restored order after taking over the area from the previous superintendent, C. B. Wilder. In 1869, having persistently lobbied the AMA, Armstrong founded Hampton Institute with himself as president. Although

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<sup>14</sup> Engs, *Educating the Disfranchised and the Disinherited*, 7–10, 23–59; Ronald Takaki, *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii, 1835–1920* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 3–21; Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of A Black Leader, 1856–1901*, 58.

Hampton was established under the auspices of the AMA, Armstrong quickly maneuvered to gain independence from them.<sup>15</sup>

Hampton's curriculum offered the equivalent of a tenth-grade education without the traditional classical regimen. This departure from tradition reflected broad trends in pedagogical theory along with racialized ideas about the type of education needed by freedmen. Subjects included English, math, science, U.S. and British history, world history, civics, the Bible, pedagogy, music, and business. Military drill and religious service were essential aspects of student life. However, Hampton became best known for its innovative approach to industrial education. Armstrong believed that morality and religion, the chief ingredients of manliness, should also be the principle elements of industrial training. He further believed that blacks were destined to be farmers and that their educations should be designed accordingly. Book learning, therefore, came second to morality and industrial arts. Convinced that black home life was the locus of Negro immorality, Armstrong made a prominent aspect of Hampton its coeducational dormitories that served as surrogate homes where "true morality and religion" were taught. Armstrong proposed to transform his students at Hampton Institute into self-supporting, moral and Christian graduates through training of the head, heart, and hand. The tradition of manual and industrial education in the U.S. had heretofore incorporated two approaches: "industrial" schooling, which was generally applied to the poor and other marginal elements of society—and manual training, which was part of higher education offered to middling whites. Hampton's structure and curriculum blended these

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<sup>15</sup> Engs, *Education the Disfranchised and the Disinherited*, 58–69; Spivey, *Schooling for the New Slavery*, 3–12.

pre-existing forms with the civilizing mission of Richard Armstrong's manual labor schools in Hawaii.<sup>16</sup>

Samuel Armstrong laid out the basic principles of the Hampton philosophy in an article, "Lessons Learned from the Hawaiian Islands," written in 1884 for the *Journal of Christian Philosophy* and reprinted as a pamphlet at Hampton Institute. Central to the Hampton philosophy was the idea that manual labor was the primary means by which non-white peoples were to become more "civilized." The article began with a brief history of the island in which the author characterized Hawaii's exploration by Captain Cook as "its point of departure from isolation and barbarism."<sup>17</sup> The author criticized early missionary education for what he considered a wrong-headed approach. Although the missionaries did teach "industry and thrift," he invoked Pestalozzi in his criticism that they did not include enough "practical object-lessons." According to Samuel Armstrong, missionary teachers needed "to train and harden the soft Hawaiian hand, to establish industrious habits, and thus supply a stamina which the native character lacked." This lack was in part redeemed, he recalled, at manual labor schools overseen by his father.<sup>18</sup>

"The negro and the Polynesian have many striking similarities," Armstrong wrote. What they both lacked, in addition to literacy, was character, and "to build up character is the true objective point in education." Achieving this objective required not only book learning and moral training but "a routine of industrious habit, which is to character what the foundation is to the pyramid. . . . Morality and industry generally go together." Large doses of labor were especially needed among Hawaiians and Negroes because "in the

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<sup>16</sup> Engs, *Education the Disfranchised and the Disinherited*, 78–80, 102; Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, 33–78; Spivey, *Schooling for the New Slavery*, 16–38.

<sup>17</sup> Armstrong, "Lessons Learned from the Hawaiian Islands," 200.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 212–213.



weak tropical races, idleness, like ignorance, breeds vice.” Armstrong was perhaps as deeply prejudiced against immigrant morality as he was against African American morality. “The best sermon and schools amount to little,” he warned “when hearers and pupils are thriftless, live from hand to mouth, and are packed at night either in savage huts or dirty tenement houses.<sup>19</sup> The pedagogical and moral impulses of industrial and manual training were thus yoked to the civilizing mission and put forth in racial terms that placed African Americans and Polynesians together with European immigrants as savage races whose weak moral dispositions constituted the chief impediment to civilization and to progress. By 1872 Armstrong had added Native Americans to his roster of “backward races” and was positioning himself and Hampton to benefit from a federal program to acculturate reservation Indians to Anglo-American society.<sup>20</sup>

Armstrong ran into the same problems stemming from the costly and inefficient nature of student labor that had plagued other manual training schools. He addressed these problems in part by instituting a “night school” where students who could not pay tuition spent the majority of their first three years before taking the “manual course” during their fourth year. Students who could afford the tuition took only the “manual course.” Night school students, affectionately referred to as the “plucky class,” worked ten hours during the day and studied a remedial secondary program from seven until nine at night. The intrepid efforts of the “plucky class,” did not fully offset the cost imbalance of industrial education, but they did help inspire donations from Armstrong’s

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>20</sup> Engs, *Educating Disfranchised and Disinherited*, 114.

acquaintances among missionary circles and wealthy businessmen who underwrote the Hampton mission.<sup>21</sup>

In 1879 Armstrong's former student Booker T. Washington returned to Hampton from his teaching position in Malden, Virginia, to organize and teach the "plucky class." Washington had spent the first nine years of his life enslaved on a Virginia plantation. Shortly after the Civil War, Washington moved with his family to join his stepfather in West Virginia, where he sporadically attended school while working early mornings in salt and coal mines. Later, Washington spent about four years doing domestic labor for Mrs. Viola Ruffner, a white woman said to be extraordinarily meticulous and exacting when it came to cleanliness, order, honesty, and punctuality. As a young man, Washington traveled 500 miles by rail and foot from Malden, West Virginia, to Hampton, Virginia, where he later recalled that his entrance exam had consisted of sweeping a recitation room. At Hampton, he worked as a janitor while studying his lessons and thoroughly assimilating Armstrong's educational philosophy. Upon graduation, students at Hampton were expected to go into the countryside as teachers, Sunday-school leaders, and community activists to spread the Hampton philosophy of "hard work, frugality, temperance, and political abstinence." About ninety percent of Hampton's graduates did become teachers, and Washington followed that trend. At his first teaching job, back in Malden, Booker T. Washington insisted that each student have a clean face and hands and that their buttons were intact. He later reminisced, "In all my teaching I have watched

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<sup>21</sup> Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, I, 26; Engs, *Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited*, 102–06. Donald Spivey and James D. Anderson have persuasively demonstrated the inferior quality both of the book learning and the technical or manual instruction available at Hampton. Industrial education at Hampton took on much of the character of unredeemed drudgery. Spivey, *Schooling for the New Slavery*, 16–44; Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, 54–63. Anderson also points out early opposition to the Hampton model by African American leaders and missionary society leaders. *Ibid.*, 62–73.

carefully the influence of the tooth-brush, and I am convinced that there are few agencies of civilization that are more far-reaching.” While he taught Hampton’s night class, Washington was also placed in charge of the Native American students and lived with them in their dormitory. Later, he wrote of the Hampton Indians, “my daily experience with them convinced me that the main thing that any oppressed people needed was a chance of the right kind and they would cease to be savages.”<sup>22</sup> This Victorian optimism became the guiding light of the Tuskegee idea when, in 1881, Washington became principal of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

That year Booker T. Washington was asked by Alabama education authorities, upon recommendation by Samuel Chapman Armstrong, to be principle of Tuskegee Institute. Alabama’s legislature had authorized Tuskegee as part of a deal between a black political leader, Lewis Adams, and a white Democrat, Wilbur F. Foster. Washington arrived in the black belt town of Tuskegee to find neither buildings nor supplies. He was provided \$2,000 by the state legislature, with which he secured a Methodist church and a small shanty, both of which were in poor condition. He taught classes there beginning in July 1881 until he acquired a run-down plantation with a crumbling manor house about three months later. There, Washington held classes in the stable and the henhouse until, with philanthropic funding and mostly student labor, the institute was able to build instructional buildings and dormitories.<sup>23</sup> Booker Washington transplanted the Hampton philosophy to Alabama as the Tuskegee Idea.

Tuskegee Institute featured a four-year industrial and manual program of education that combined a typical ninth-grade curriculum with manual training that

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<sup>22</sup> Washington, *The Story of My Life and Work*, in Harlan ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, I, 27 (quote); Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Race Leader*, 92–108.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 109–33.

included farming, carpentry, blacksmithing, printing, and brick making. Female students did all the housekeeping, as well as washing, ironing, and mending male students' clothing. Tuskegee featured a program of work and study that put day school students in class four days a week and at work one day of the week, plus every other Saturday. Like Hampton, Tuskegee Institute featured a system of strict military order, beginning at five A.M. and lasting until nine-thirty at night. Washington had decided early on that all his students would be required to work. Some pupils brought notes from their parents stating that they wanted their children to be taught books—they already knew how to work—but the principal stuck to his rule. Washington believed that most students, although poor, arrived at Tuskegee thinking that manual labor was inconsistent with the status of lady or gentleman to which they aspired. “This feeling,” he said, “we wanted to change as fast as possible by teaching students the dignity, beauty, and civilizing power of intelligent labor.” Work at Tuskegee, he maintained, helped students pay their way, taught them practical skills, and demonstrated to them the dignity of labor. In 1884 Tuskegee developed a night school similar to the one at Hampton for students too poor to pay tuition and board. Night school students, for two years, worked ten hours a day in the brickyard or the laundry, while taking two hours of coursework each night.<sup>24</sup>

It was Washington's policy that as much campus construction as possible should be done by the students. Although he was well acquainted with the inefficiency of student labor, he believed this inefficiency was offset by the lesson of self-reliance carried by the project. In other words, he made a pedagogical virtue of material necessity. “From the first,” Washington wrote in an autobiography, “we have carried out a plan at Tuskegee of

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<sup>24</sup> Washington, *My Life and Work* in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, I, 31 (quote), 50; Idem, *Up from Slavery* in *Ibid.*, I, 319–59.

asking for help for nothing that we could do for ourselves. Nothing has been bought that the students can produce.”<sup>25</sup> Male students painted; made bricks; built tables, chairs, and desks; constructed a stable; and built a carpentry shop. Female students cooked, sewed, cleaned, and mended.<sup>26</sup> Within this strategy was imbedded a series of Pestalozzian object lessons. The buildings themselves stood as concrete examples, for blacks and whites to see, of what African American students could achieve. In theory, the construction process was freighted with countless opportunities for object lessons involving construction problems, toolcraft, and carpentry. It seems likely that the pedagogical possibilities of brick making and laundering—like the students who performed this labor—would have been rather quickly exhausted. The gender implications of boys’ construction labor juxtaposed against women’s housekeeping labor reinforced conventional expectations of household order. These principles of self-help, manual training, and “domestic order” took on foundational roles within the larger discourse of the Negro question.

Washington thought of his program as a laboratory for race progress, and from his perspective, a significant element of this progress meant obtaining the gendered divisions of labor common to the white middle class. The idea called for male students to work at building construction, brick making, or other manual labor at Tuskegee, thereby learning a trade, while also gaining teacher certification. Female students performed manual labor considered appropriate for their gender, such as sewing, laundering, and cooking, while likewise working toward teacher certification. Upon graduation, former students were expected to go into the “ignorant and squalid” communities, build schools, and teach the

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<sup>25</sup> Washington, *My Life and Work*, in *Booker T. Washington Papers*, I, 38–43 (quote on p. 43); James D. Anderson points out that Hampton, which operated a printing and bookbinding shop, did not offer that as an industrial course. He also points out the inadequacy of Hampton’s shoemaking and blacksmith shops. Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, 59–62.

<sup>26</sup> Washington, *My Life and Work*, in *Booker T. Washington Papers*, I, 43.

people how to farm better, pay off their mortgages, buy land, and lift themselves out of poverty.<sup>27</sup>

Washington urged his graduating students to make the school their “nucleus” upon entering a new community. From there, he instructed, they should work to get the cooperation of the local minister. This, said Washington, was how foreign missions operated in “Japan, Africa, and other heathen countries.” Next, the graduate should build a new schoolhouse that people could see as a tangible demonstration of their new teacher’s commitment and ability. Then the graduate should work to lengthen the school term (most ran two to four months of the year) and buy books. Such efforts were to be funded through subscription drives, bake sales, and profits accrued from growing cotton on school property. After building a new schoolhouse and lengthening the term, a teacher should be able to get his or her salary increased, which would then enable the graduate to build a four-room model home, followed by a model farm. After that, the local women should be organized into a home improvement society where the best results of farming, such as a prize pig, could be brought to meetings as object lessons. Finally, the men of the community were to be taught how to stop mortgaging their crops.<sup>28</sup>

Washington employed promises of community transformation in his fundraising efforts. In *Unity*, a national magazine devoted to spiritual matters, he appealed to readers for contributions of fifty dollars, which paid a year’s tuition at Tuskegee. He provided, as a sample case of what such scholarships could produce, a female student who, after graduating from Tuskegee, went to a small town of African Americans living in “debt

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<sup>27</sup> Washington, “A Speech Delivered before the Women’s New England Club,” January 27, 1889, in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, III, 31.

<sup>28</sup> Washington, “A Sunday Evening Talk,” April 28, 1895 in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, III, 549–53.

and squalor.” She called meetings in the town and, at the meetings, convinced the people to quit spending money on whiskey and snuff and to spend it instead on “a neat little school-house.” The townspeople then contributed material and labor for the school building. They saved enough money to pay off their mortgages, buy their own land, and build comfortable little cottages. Reminiscent of *Leonard and Gertrude*, the community was transformed under the guidance of a Gertrude-like Tuskegee graduate.<sup>29</sup>

Outreach efforts led by Booker T. Washington’s third wife Margaret Murray Washington exemplified this reform dynamic. Margaret Washington, president of the Alabama chapter of the Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs, organized a settlement house in 1898 at the Russell plantation several miles from Tuskegee. Ann Davis, a Tuskegee graduate, opened a school there that became the nucleus for other uplift efforts in the area. A land cooperative associated with Tuskegee’s annual Negro Conference assisted farmers in buying parcels of land. A model farm at the school demonstrated techniques for a combination of subsistence and commercial farming that would also guard against soil depletion and erosion. The Woman’s Club, also founded by Margaret Murray Washington, taught Sunday school, established a newspaper reading club, taught sewing, and organized a mothers’ club.<sup>30</sup> Elsewhere, other black women’s groups, such as the Black Women’s Baptist Clubs, practiced what Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham has called “The Politics of Respectability” in a dual effort to improve the material conditions

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<sup>29</sup> “Tuskegee Normal Insitute,” *Unity* 24 (November 16, 1889), 83 in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, III, 16–17; “A Speech before the New York Congregational Club,” January 16, 1893, *Ibid.*, III, 284–85.

<sup>30</sup> Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895–1925*, 132–38.

of African Americans while simultaneously undermining white claims to moral superiority.<sup>31</sup>

“The ideals of civilization come from our homes,” spoke educational evangelist and charter member of the Southern Education Board Charles McIver in 1901. “The wife and mother is the high priestess in humanity’s temple,” he continued, “and presides at the fountain head of civilization.”<sup>32</sup> Robert Lloyd Smith, president of the Farmers’ Improvement Society of Texas, explained to Washington, “We want to teach the common people [to] develop higher ideals of *home* and its functions.”<sup>33</sup> Tuskegee’s headmistress for female students, Mrs. J. L. Kain, remarked, “the students, as a whole, come from homes void of discipline and where the home life in a high sense is wholly unknown.”<sup>34</sup> Therefore, Washington saw it as necessary that Tuskegee provide dormitories where instructors could “get hold of them [students] in their home life, and teach them how to take care of their bodies in the matter of bathing, care of the teeth, and in general cleanliness.”<sup>35</sup> He worried that “our work would mean little unless we could get hold of the students in their home life.”<sup>36</sup> To that end, Washington appealed to Morris K. Jesup for a Slater Fund grant to help build a dormitory where instructors could teach “bathing, toothbrushing, cooking, table-setting, eating, dress, laundering, keeping a neat bedroom,

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<sup>31</sup> Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895–1925* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 132–38; Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994, Reprint, first published 1993), 185–229.

<sup>32</sup> Charles D. McIver, “Two Open Fields for Investment in the South,” *Proceedings of the Fourth Conference for Education in the South*, 1901, 34–35.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Lloyd Smith to BTW, January 2, 1899, in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, V, 3–4 [emphasis his].

<sup>34</sup> Alice J. Kaine to BTW, January 8, 1895, in *Ibid.*, III, 498.

<sup>35</sup> Washington, *My Life and Work*, in *Ibid.*, I, 31.

<sup>36</sup> Washington, *Up from Slavery*, in *Ibid.*, I, 289.



etc.”<sup>37</sup> Washington joined a broad consensus among educational philanthropists in believing that independence, ambition, and republican virtue were closely bound with erect bodies, healthy teeth, and clean, spacious homes.

The greatest burden, by far, of industrial education was its mandate to reconcile the fiction of congenital African American immorality with the fact of a black body politic. The champions of industrial education, such as H. B. Frissell of Hampton, found the solution to the “Negro problem” in the South’s black common schools, which he thought should be “not only centers of intellectual training, but of morality, thrift, agriculture, and home life also.” Railroad-magnate-turned-philanthropist William H. Baldwin presented industrial education as the complete solution to the Negro problem.<sup>38</sup> Arguments for enhanced African American morality were similarly useful to rebut popular indictments against black education by its opponents in the South. Washington told the National Education Association in 1884 that “a certain class of whites” opposed public education for blacks because “when he is educated he ceases to do manual labor.” Washington further allowed, “Much aid is withheld from Negro education in the South by the states on these grounds.” However, he countered, “The great mission of industrial education, coupled with the mental . . . kills two birds with one stone, viz., it secures the cooperation of the whites and does the best possible thing for the black man.”<sup>39</sup>

The proponents of industrial education considered labor a primary agent of civilization and worried that Negro attitudes toward labor obstructed that role. Slavery, Washington thought, had degraded the idea of labor in the minds of black and white

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<sup>37</sup> BTW to Morris K. Jesup, April 29, 1893, in *Ibid.*, III, 314.

<sup>38</sup> Frissell, “A Survey of the Field,” *Proceedings of the First Capon Springs Conference, 1898*, 3–5 (quote on p. 5); Baldwin, “The Present Problem of Negro Education: Industrial Education,” *Proceedings of the Second Capon Springs Conference, 1899*, 68–70.

<sup>39</sup> Washington, *My Life and Work*, in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, I, 46.

southerners alike.<sup>40</sup> Daniel Coit Gilman, Slater trustee and president of Johns Hopkins University, argued that black education required inculcating habits of order, diligence, industry, and obedience and coupling such habits with skill and its application to work. This, he wrote, had been done among white students for the past fifty years as part of the new education. “This ‘new education,’” he explained, “is largely the education of the hand.” Gilman was involved with the arts and crafts movement in Baltimore, which idealized manual labor in its role as an agent of Anglo-Saxon civilization. “The very history of the word ‘work,’” he wrote, “is an epitome of the history of civilization.” The concept of work, according to Gilman, was passed down through civilization from the Greeks to the Saxons to the English to the Americans to the Africans. Work, like civilization, he considered an Anglo-Saxon artifact. “‘Work, work, work,’ has distinguished every progressive and prosperous race,” he wrote. “‘Sloth, sloth, sloth,’ has been the characteristic of decadence and imbecility.”<sup>41</sup> Labor, as an element of Negro uplift or of progress in general, was laden with meaning far beyond the retirement of any particular task. Manly labor promoted civilization—unmanly labor held it back.

Central to discussions of African American labor were perhaps unspoken concerns about the decline of the independent producer in the political economy of the Gilded Age. Thomas Jefferson had based his vision of republican society on the independence and virtue of the yeoman farmer. The ethos of producerism embodied in that vision drew from the labor theory of value: the value of property should reflect the amount of labor required to produce it. By this reckoning, the virtuous man consumes only what he produces, and the extent of his virtue is roughly equivalent to his

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<sup>40</sup> Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, IV, 214–15.

<sup>41</sup> Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 66–83; Gilman, “A Study in Black and White,” 335 (quotes).

production. By the 1890s, however, the producer ethos was being seriously undermined by a political economy that privileged the managerial class and sharply limited upward mobility. Effacing the difference between producerism and the rise of the managerial class, Washington equated mental labor with physical labor in his project to help African Americans apply the “executive side” in their work. Simultaneously, by clinging to and glorifying a producer economy that was in decline, educational philanthropists delegated to blacks the obligation to uphold a vision of republican virtue others had laid aside. Implicitly, the producer model of yeoman independence was based on a gendered household structure wherein male patriarchs functioned as “masters of small worlds.”<sup>42</sup>

William H. Baldwin, trustee of both Hampton and Tuskegee, placed the question of black labor within a global context. Baldwin described African American labor as ballast for the U.S. labor market, and as a counterweight to foreign competition. He explained that the labor movement, which tended to exclude black workers, was driving wages beyond reason or sustainability. Once that point was reached, he predicted, unions would be forced to either accept lower wages or relinquish their jobs to black workers who would. As the U.S. was pushed to compete in the global market, Baldwin predicted, cheap black labor would tend to offset cheap foreign labor that might otherwise undercut U.S. competitiveness in the arena of international trade. Until that time should arrive, Baldwin continued, African Americans were well suited to the more menial forms of manual labor, which would “permit the Southern white laborer to perform the more

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<sup>42</sup> Washington, “An Address before the National Education Association,” July 11, 1900 in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, V, 579–80; Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F. D. R.* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 23–59; Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

expert labor, and to leave the fields, the mines, and the simpler trades to the Negro.”<sup>43</sup> In Baldwin’s view, the mudsill status of black labor was a temporary expedient until market forces enacted corrections he considered inevitable.

Washington differed somewhat from Baldwin on this point. Washington believed that industrial education would allow black workers into shops and trades from which they were then being excluded on racial grounds; or at least prevent such exclusionary policies from spreading south.<sup>44</sup> He suggested that white artisans were displacing blacks because whites put superior knowledge and skill into labor, which lent it greater dignity. For instance, the black barber gave way to the white tonsorial artist, the black painter to the white decorator, and the black grass-cutter to the white landscape artist. Progress, he warned, was leaving black labor behind. The black “mammy” had been replaced by “the tidy little white woman, with her neat white cap and apron, her knowledge of physiology, bandaging, principles of diseases and administration of medicine, who had dignified,

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<sup>43</sup> William H. Baldwin to Newcomb Frierson Thompson, April 15, 1900, Harlan ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, V, 482; Baldwin, “The Present Problem of Negro Education: Industrial Education,” *Proceedings of the Second Capon Springs Conference, 1899*, 72; See also David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness* (New York: Verso, 1999; first published by Verso in 1991). Historians of black education in the South have paid particular attention to William Baldwin’s ideas regarding the role of black labor in the New South Economy. Donald Spivey and William H. Watkins point to Baldwin’s interest in black labor, particularly in regard to southern railways in which he was said to have held a large interest. They argue that Baldwin’s interest in black education was geared primarily toward preparing a black labor force to offset white union demands and keep industrial wages low. Spivey, *Schooling for the New Slavery*, 93–94; Watson, *The White Architects of Black Education*, 154–59. Eric Anderson and Alfred A. Moss Jr., however, based on manuscript evidence gathered from a variety of archives (Baldwin’s papers were not preserved), conclude that Baldwin did not retain substantial holdings employing black labor during his philanthropic career; that he actually supported labor unions to the chagrin of his peers; and that Washington was the dominant member of their dyad. Anderson and Moss, “The Education of a Philanthropist: William H. Baldwin, Jr., 1898–1905” in *Dangerous Donations*, 63–84.

<sup>44</sup> Washington, “An Address before the National Education Association, July 10, 1896, in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, IV, 191–92; “Industrial Training for the Negro,” *Independent*, (February 3, 1898) in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, IV, 370–71. In fact, Alabama coal miners in the mineral district had a history of interracial unions dating from the Greenback-Labor party of the 1870s to the United Mine Workers in the 1890s. Interracial labor activism in Alabama was violently halted by the militant activities of Democratic partisans, not by racist sentiment among white miners. Daniel Letwin, *The Challenge of Interracial Unionism: Alabama Coal Miners, 1878–1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

beautified and glorified the art of nursing and had turned it into a profession.” The same process, he claimed, had replaced black cooks with white chefs.<sup>45</sup> New techniques were more efficient, he said, and customers were no longer satisfied with “haphazard” Negro work.<sup>46</sup>

Washington’s concerns about progress and the status of black labor fit snugly into broader conversations about the nature of progress and its implications for Negro citizenship. Commemorating the opening of the Armstrong-Slater building at Hampton Institute, Daniel Coit Gilman rhetorically asked what did the bi-racial assembly gathered there represent? “On the one hand,” he responded, “those who stand for the best that the white race has produced, the fruit of many generations, developed under the sunshine of freedom, religion and education.” Referring to African Americans he continued, “and on the other hand, those who represent the capacity, the hopes, and the prospects of races but lately emerging from bondage or barbarism, error and illiteracy.”<sup>47</sup> The building, named after John Fox Slater and William Chapman Armstrong, did indeed represent Gilman’s vision of two races, one at the vanguard of civilization, the other running behind and struggling to catch up. Such rhetoric helped justify the movement to make public schooling available to black southerners while simultaneously dampening their potential for upward mobility.

It was from this civilizationist discourse that Washington derived the meaning of gradualism. “Only one generation has elapsed since the slaves were freed.” It would take generations, not years, he said, for African American culture and morality to achieve par

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<sup>45</sup> Washington, *Life and Work*, in Harlan ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, I, 63.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 63, 139–40. In 1892, Tuskegee initiated a much needed nursing program that later became affiliated with a teaching hospital. Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American Women of the South*, 37–38.

<sup>47</sup> Gilman, “A Study in Black and White,” 329.

with Anglo-Saxons. Washington believed that the black southerner would eventually gain “all the merits entitled to him as a man and as a citizen.” However, “such recognition will come through no process of artificial forcing, but through the natural law of evolution.”<sup>48</sup> While some social Darwinists attempted to portray the principle of evolutionary biology in an effort to write African Americans out of the book of progress, Washington placed evolution in a visible and central role in contests over the meaning of Negro citizenship within a context that could co-exist with the racial order of the Jim Crow South.<sup>49</sup> By reminding African Americans that they would have to work to earn the benefits of civilization and citizenship, Washington signaled to southern conservatives that black pressure against white rule would not grow too uncomfortable too fast. Each “individual or race,” he told the National Education Association in Charleston, South Carolina, “has got to pay the price—starting at the bottom, and gradually, earnestly, thru a series of years, working up to the highest civilization.”<sup>50</sup> Asked why he prescribed industrial education for blacks and not for whites, Washington replied “the white man is three thousand years ahead of us,” and “either in Europe or America, he has gone through every stage of development that I now advocate for our race.”<sup>51</sup> Along those lines, Washington represented the establishment in New England of farms and mills as a long form of industrial education. He proposed to accelerate the progress of the Negro race through industrial education by using it as a surrogate for the materiality of Anglo-Saxon

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<sup>48</sup> Washington, “A Statistical Sketch of the Negroes in the United States,” Slater Trustees Occasional Papers, No. 9 (1896), 28; Washington, “An Address at the Metropolitan AME Church,” Washington, D. C., May 22, 1900, Harlan ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, V, 530.

<sup>49</sup> Haller, *Outcasts from Evolution*; Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education*, 34–39; Robert J. Norrell argues that Washington deployed a discourse of black progress to counter the prevailing white supremacy discourse that described blacks descending into barbarism or extinction. Norrell, “Another Look at the Age of Booker T. Washington” in Brundage, ed., *Booker T. Washington and Black Progress*, 73–74.

<sup>50</sup> Washington, “An Address before the National Education Association, July 11, 1900, in Harlan ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, V, 578–79.

<sup>51</sup> Washington, “An Address at the Metropolitan AME Church,” May 22, 1900, *Ibid.*, V, 532.

civilization.<sup>52</sup> Washington employed the rhetoric of race progress not only as justification for his gradualist approach to black civil rights but also to place African Americans firmly in second place behind Anglo-Saxons, declaring that “in the race to come abreast with the white man, history shows there is no other ahead of the black man.”<sup>53</sup> In addition, he deployed the civilizationist rhetoric as moral suasion to encourage white support for Tuskegee Institute. In lumping the white South into the whole of Anglo-Saxon brotherhood, Washington reminded white northern audiences that they were implicated in the pernicious deeds of their southern counterparts. By contributing to Tuskegee, his appeals suggested, donors were lifting up the white as well as the black race and perhaps exonerating their own complicity in racial injustice.<sup>54</sup> “No member of your race, in any part of this country, can harm the weakest or meanest member of my race without the proudest and best blood in the Anglo-Saxon race being degraded” he told the National Education Association in Buffalo, New York, in 1896. “When the South is poor you are poor. When the South is ignorant you are ignorant. When the South commits a crime, you commit a crime.”<sup>55</sup> The civilizing discourse worked to circumscribe the boundaries of black oppression as well as black citizenship rights—or at least Washington tried to make it so.

The ethos of ongoing and limitless progress was closely intertwined with the politics of accommodationism. As historian Peter Novick has written, “the spokesmen of

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<sup>52</sup> Washington, “A Speech at the Institute of Arts and Sciences,” September 30, 1896, *Ibid.*, IV, 215.

<sup>53</sup> Unidentified newspaper clipping describing BTW’s tribute to George Washington in Columbus, Ohio, May 25, 1900, *Ibid.*, V, 542.

<sup>54</sup> Washington, Address before the National Education Association, Buffalo, N.Y., July 10, 1896, *Ibid.*, IV, 169.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

an accommodationist ideology see the 'is' as moving ever closer to the 'ought.'"<sup>56</sup> Or, as Booker T. Washington phrased it, "progress, progress is the law of nature, under God it shall be our eternal guiding star."<sup>57</sup> According to one philanthropist, "the generations of men are but relays in civilization's march on its journey from savagery to the millennium," and the purpose of education was to facilitate that march.<sup>58</sup> The gospel of progress implied that the world was growing ever more civilized and just according to God's law. Justice, therefore, would come to black southerners in proportion to the development of their collective race character. Such progress was intimately joined with ideas about the market, which Washington and his fellow philanthropists presumed to register the pace of Negro moral uplift.

"The foundation of citizenship," Washington told the Metropolitan AME Church in Washington, D.C., "rests upon the intrinsic worth of each individual or group of individuals." This relationship between "intrinsic worth" and civil rights he considered immutable. "No law can push the individual forward when he is worthless, no law can hold him back when he is worthy." If only black southerners would make themselves "worthy," this position implied, a higher law would bestow civil rights upon them. It was more important, Washington argued, that a race be prepared to exercise its constitutional rights than to have those rights enforced by law because "the mere fiat of law could not make a dependent man an independent man; could not make an ignorant father an

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<sup>56</sup> Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1988), quote on p. 62.

<sup>57</sup> *Chicago Times Herald*, December 12, 1895, reprinted in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, IV, 93.

<sup>58</sup> McIver, "Two Open Fields for Investment in the South," *Proceedings of the Fourth Conference for Education in the South*, 1901, 34–35.



intelligent father; could not make one race respect another.”<sup>59</sup> Taking the gradualist approach that hinged on the transcendental relationship between the Negro’s “intrinsic worth” and his constitutional rights, Washington insisted, would result in a race settlement that would be acceptable “to the southern white man, the northern white man, and the negro himself.”<sup>60</sup> The market, thought Washington, was the true arbiter of social justice and would reward moral gains among African Americans in ways the law could not. As black southerners demonstrated competence in matters of business, he taught, so would they be permitted a voice in public policy.

Washington believed in the moral infallibility of the market, and the ultimate success of Tuskegee as an element for social change revolved around that belief. According to the Tuskegee idea, a man who could repair buggies, make bricks, build houses, and farm “intelligently” offered something of value to his community.<sup>61</sup> That whites might fail to reward such value represented an indictment not only of the Tuskegee idea but also of the Victorian ethos. Both were predicated on what we now understand as the false proposition that the market operated on a level field where contracting parties exchanged goods and services in the absence of coercion. Washington, like his fellow Victorians, mistakenly conflated Adam Smith’s ideal market with the actual market of Gilded Age America, which was heavily manipulated through power and violence.<sup>62</sup> This quasi-religious view of the market undergirded Washington’s

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<sup>59</sup> Washington, “An Address before the National Educational Association,” July 10, 1896, in Harlan ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, IV, 197–98.

<sup>60</sup> Washington, “An Address at the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church,” May 22, 1900, Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, V, 529 (quote 5), 530 (quotes 1–3); Washington, “An Address before the National Educational Association,” July 10, 1896, *Ibid.*, IV, 197–98 (quote 4).

<sup>61</sup> Washington, *My Life and Work*, in *Ibid.*, I, 64; Idem, *Up from Slavery* in *Ibid.*, I, 297.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 153. Thorstein Veblen had only just begun his critique of formalist economic theory that attempted to isolate man’s economic interests from political, social and cultural interests, as though economic decisions and actions were undertaken within a political vacuum. Morton White, *Social Thought*

efforts to bind together black and white business interests in such a way that whites would find their own self-interests reflected in African American prosperity and citizenship.<sup>63</sup> The interdependence of business interests between Tuskegee Institute and the town's white business class, Washington believed, fostered favorable race relations in the Tuskegee area. According to Washington, local whites, who had afforded him little respect when first arrived at Tuskegee, came to him later for bricks after the institute established a brickyard. The same held true, he said, for buggies, wagons, and printing. As black southerners gained possession "of something the white man *wants* or *respects*," Washington argued, "human nature" required that white southerners would respect black civil rights. Washington offered as an example a hypothetical Negro who advanced his financial status to the point where he held the mortgage on a white man's house. That white man, Washington concluded, would then be reluctant to turn the Negro away from the polls or to send him to the back of the train.<sup>64</sup> Unfortunately, such a scenario was the very situation white southerners were unwilling to tolerate and tended to be the underlying cause of race riots, lynching, white-capping and other violent aspects of white supremacy—whites were in fact often infuriated by the presence of economically successful blacks.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, Washington and his sponsors persisted in assigning moral agency to the market in their homilies to the gospel of progress.

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*in America: The Revolt Against Formalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., First published 1949), 32–37.

<sup>63</sup> Washington, "An Abraham Lincoln Memorial Address in Philadelphia," February 14, 1899, in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, V, 34.

<sup>64</sup> Washington, "An Address at a Mass Meeting in Washington, D.C.," November 20, 1891, in *Ibid.*, III, 184–87 (quote on p. 185).

<sup>65</sup> Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 108–13; Patricia A. Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880–1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 75–79; McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 192–94.

“A man cannot have moral character,” Washington said, “unless he has something to wear and something to eat.” Through such aphorisms, he explained the confluence of morality and materialism.<sup>66</sup> “To own property is to own character,” remarked an attendee at Tuskegee’s annual Negro Conference. This speaker thought “it makes a man more truthful when he owns land,” at least partially because, “when he gives his word he cannot run away.” Black Tuskegeegans, through land cooperatives and other extension efforts associated with the Negro Conferences, were buying their own land, and “the moral atmosphere of the community has been cleansed.” The world demanded visible evidence of African American moral development, Washington admonished, before black southerners would be given a voice in political affairs.<sup>67</sup> To him and his fellow Victorians, material worth signified intrinsic worth.

By 1890 Washington had concluded that most black ministers in the South were “unfit . . . to preach the Gospel.” That year he preceded his fund-raising campaign for a theological building at Tuskegee with a scathing attack on African American preachers and the resulting desultory state of black religious life. He delivered before the New England Club a parable about an African American at work in a mid-July cotton field “who suddenly stopped, looked up to heaven, and said ‘Lord, de work is so hard, de cotton is so grassy, and de sun am so hot, dat I believe dis darky am called to preach.’”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Washington, “A Sunday Evening Talk,” February 10, 1895, in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers* III, 515; Historian Peter Coclanis has described how education, bathing, neatness in dress and manners, habits of punctuality and time management represent investments in human capital and frequently accompany efforts toward economic development in the “third world.” Coclanis, “What Made Booker T. Wash(ington)?: The Wizard of Tuskegee in Economic Context,” in Brundage, ed., *Booker T. Washington and Black Progress*, 81–106.

<sup>67</sup> Washington, *My Life and Work*, in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, I, 140 (quote 2), 141 (quote 1); Article in the *Tuskegee Student*, November 9, 1901, *Ibid.*, VI, 299.

<sup>68</sup> Washington, “The Colored Ministry: Its Defects and Needs,” August 14, 1890, in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, III, 72–73 (quote 1); “A Speech Delivered before the Women’s New England Club,” January 27, 1890, *Ibid.*, III, 27 (quote 2).

Francis J. Grimké sent a letter to Washington supporting him in his position on the colored ministry, stating “The condition of the colored Ministry in the Baptist and Methodist Churches in the South is unquestionably a deplorable one.” Ida B. Wells, a black female anti-lynching activist, likewise sent him a letter of support.<sup>69</sup> Washington argued that unfit Negro preachers misled their flocks into spiritual error equivalent to paganism. He claimed that black southerners were “just as ignorant of true Christianity, as taught by Christ, as any people in Africa or Japan, and just as much in need of missionary efforts as those in foreign lands.” Washington skillfully portrayed the Alabama Black Belt as a foreign mission and Tuskegee Institute as the agent of civilization there. “A large number of my people,” he continued, “are Christian heathen and demand as much missionary’s effort as the heathen of foreign fields.” Washington concluded with a pitch for a nonsectarian Bible Training School that promised, at a modest expense, to produce “qualified ministers.”<sup>70</sup> It required little to persuade northern Congregationalists that black southern Baptist and Methodist laypeople were virtual heathen in need of the missionary touch. Washington’s shrewd appeal to redirect missionary funding from “foreign fields” to the Alabama Black Belt allowed him to address the perceived problem of Negro spirituality while simultaneously acquiring the funds to erect a theological building at Tuskegee. Unfortunately, it also played to a sense, growing in the white American imagination, that black southerners represented a foreign people—an alien race—within U.S. borders.

<sup>69</sup> Francis J. Grimké to BTW, December 12, 1890, *Ibid.*, III, 113; Ida B. Wells to BTW, November 30, 1890, *Ibid.*, III, 108. Within a decade both Grimké and Wells would align themselves with the “anti-Bookerites” out of frustration with Washington’s failure to speak out strongly against lynching, segregation, and disfranchisement. David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois: Biography of a Race, 1868–1919*.

<sup>70</sup> Washington, A Speech Delivered before the Women’s New England Club, Boston, Massachusetts, January 27, 1890, Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, III, 27 (quote 2); Washington, “The Colored Ministry: Its Defects and Needs,” *Ibid.*, 73–75 (quote 1, p. 73).

Washington's public stature was greatly enhanced by the national reception of his speech at the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition in 1895. His fund-raising efforts on behalf of Tuskegee had caused him to be invited to join a delegation of Atlantans lobbying congress for a federal appropriation to fund the exposition, which was to contain an exhibit on Negro progress. The delegation, impressed by Washington's presentation, subsequently invited him to speak at the opening session of the exhibition. Washington was introduced by former governor of Georgia Rufus B. Bullock as "the representative of Negro enterprise and Negro civilization."<sup>71</sup> In the address, Washington summed up his position on race relations, drawing on a large body of rhetoric he had assembled while stumping for the Tuskegee idea. He advised African Americans to stay in the South, engage in gainful employment and commerce, and avoid politics. He suggested to white and black southerners alike that they "cast down their bucket" where they were: blacks to the employment opportunities of the South, whites to the willing and affordable labor that black southerners could supply. He explained by way of a captivating visual gesture that, in social relations, blacks and whites could be separate as the fingers of an outstretched hand. When it came to business and progress, however, they should be as united as a closed fist. In this way, Washington fashioned his famous "Atlanta compromise," one that many viewed as having compromised far too much. On the other hand, he surrendered nothing that had not already been lost in the Deep South.<sup>72</sup>

The speech garnered a flood of favorable commentary by such leading whites as the editor of the Atlanta *Constitution* Howell Raines and by African Americans such as

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<sup>71</sup> Washington, *My Life and Work*, in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, I, 73.

<sup>72</sup> See Sheldon Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism in Alabama*; and Horace Mann Bond, *Negro Education in Alabama*. David W. Blight characterizes the speech as "Washington's long effort to merge sectional and racial peace into a single cause of black progress." Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 325.

W. E. B. DuBois.<sup>73</sup> Newspaper reporters described the event as a religious transformation, with Washington gently guiding his black flock along the path of race progress and civil-rights gradualism. A dubious item in the New York *World* described “A ragged ebony giant squatted on the floor in one of the aisles, watching the orator with burning eyes and tremulous face until the supreme burst of applause came and then the tears ran down his face.” In terms that suggested they had rededicated their lives from sin to grace, the report continued, “Most of the Negroes in the audience were crying, perhaps without knowing just why.”<sup>74</sup> To readers of the *World*, this suggested that southern blacks had transcended the Reconstruction-era goals of equality in favor of Jim Crow gradualism with Washington cast as their “Moses” leading them to salvation. It was no casual flair of rhetoric when Washington (as had Samuel Armstrong before him) frequently implored black southerners to “seek out their own salvation in the South.” The gospel of progress held as an article of faith the proposition that civil rights would come “naturally,” along with black moral progress.

Washington groused loudly and frequently about the teaching of Latin and Greek in black colleges. He was sufficiently concerned in 1894 about a rumor to the effect that Tuskegee Institute was teaching Latin that he wrote a letter to Hollis Frissell of Hampton Institute and the Peabody Education Fund laying the rumor to rest. Washington himself was highly skeptical of the utility of Latin and Greek, and he frequently spoke against including it in black curricula. A passage in *Up from Slavery* describes a young black

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<sup>73</sup> Dubois’s endorsement was muted, “A word fitly spoken.” However, it was the Atlanta riot of 1906 not the Atlanta compromise of 1895 that cast the permanent wedge between DuBois and Washington. Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, IV, 3–50. Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois: Biography of a Race, 1868–1919*, 334.

<sup>74</sup> Untitled article in the New York *World*, September 18, 1895 in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, IV, 9–10.

man “in a one-room cabin, with grease on his clothing, filth all around him, and weeds in the yard and garden, engaged in studying a French grammar.” Washington claimed to have observed, in the aftermath of emancipation, black southerners attempting to learn Latin and Greek because they had no “proper conception of what an education meant.” He maintained that black attitudes toward ancient languages indicated a “supernatural” reverence for the trappings of learning and a desire to use such learning as an exemption from labor.<sup>75</sup> William Baldwin described how black southerners and their teachers had started at the “wrong end.” Yankee teachers, he wrote, attempted to educate the freedman “out of his natural environment” rather than for “the opportunities which lay immediately about him.” He described a second invasion of Yankees following the Civil War as “an army of white teachers armed with the spelling book and the Bible.” This “new army” had done more harm than good, Baldwin wrote, because they taught black southerners that they might, “like the white man, learn to live from the fruits of a literary education.” J. L. M. Curry characterized Yankee schoolteachers of the Reconstruction Era as “fanatical men and women, ignorant of negro peculiarities . . . and possessed of a fatal facility of rubbing the fur the wrong way.”<sup>76</sup> Many disagreed, arguing that educating the “whole man” required some attention to “higher learning” and that such training was necessary to constructing a competent black political and professional class.<sup>77</sup> Washington countered this reasoning with his materialistic view that leisure and “cultivation of the higher arts” relied on the wealth created by industrial development.

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<sup>75</sup> BTW to Hollis Fressell, March 30, 1894, Harlan ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, III, 394–95; Washington, *Up from Slavery* in *Ibid.*, I, 256 (quote 2), 280 (quote 1).

<sup>76</sup> Baldwin, “The Present Problem of Negro Education: Industrial Education,” *Proceedings of the Second Capon Springs Conference*, 1899, 68; Curry, “Education in the Southern United States,” *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>77</sup> Thirkield, “How Far Shall the Higher Education Be Attempted?” *Proceedings of the First Capon Springs Conference*, 1898, 17–18; James D. Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, 68–78.

Therefore, he argued, industrial education should come first, followed by professional and literary training only after a solid industrial foundation had been laid. Because the vast majority of black southerners would not have access to higher learning in any case, Washington contended, Tuskegee's purpose was to train a cadre of teachers that would go into the countryside and bring primary education, industrial training, and racial uplift to African Americans living there.<sup>78</sup>

Washington's own purpose, relentlessly pursued, was raising money for Tuskegee—primarily from northern whites. He positioned Tuskegee as an academic outpost in the midst of a missionary field that both needed and deserved funding from northern missionary societies. Born himself into slavery and rural poverty, his own scrubbed face and neat attire constituted an object lesson on the possibilities of industrial education. Tuskegee Institute itself reflected the ability of black southerners to build with their own hands and to lift themselves out of ignorance and poverty. Washington's homilies painted the Alabama countryside as a den of ignorance and heathenism that could be nevertheless full of industrial and Christian potential if the right sort of missionary work were done there. On the one hand, Washington showed his audience aching need; on the other, the promise of industrial education embodied in his own person and his "life and work," Tuskegee Institute. In both cases, Washington reflected to his northern benefactors their own prejudices toward African American morality in the rural South.

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<sup>78</sup> Washington, "An Address at the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church," May 22, 1900, in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, V, 532–33. It was less this disagreement over whether to emphasize industrial training or higher education that led to the split between the "Bookerites" and the "anti-Bookerites" than the demeaning terms with which Washington dismissed the value of a classic liberal arts curriculum for African Americans, his constant retreat before the onslaught of Jim Crow, and his undermining the efforts of those like DuBois and Wells who tried to speak out for black civil rights.



While this approach was effective at raising funds, it was not effective against the rise of Jim Crow in the Alabama Black Belt and elsewhere. African Americans were excluded from most trade unions along with the best-paying jobs in the North and South. They suffered a continuous erosion of civil and human rights and were discouraged from seeking professional life. Even in Tuskegee, racial violence was much more prominent than Booker Washington would admit. One incident involved Thomas Harris, a prominent black lawyer who was shot in the leg by a white lynch mob for housing a white cleric reported to have preached social equality. Harris fled to Tuskegee Institute where he asked for sanctuary. Washington spirited Harris away and arranged medical care for his gunshot wound. In public, he denounced Harris as a “worthless and very foolish” Negro and pretended to refuse him succor.<sup>79</sup> A more personal incident involved Washington’s daughter, Portia, who was being escorted by train from Atlanta to Framingham, Massachusetts, by Robert Wesley Taylor. During the trip, a conductor punched Taylor in the mouth with brass knuckles, permanently disfiguring Taylor’s face. William E. Benson, a friend of Washington’s who embodied the Tuskegee principle of self-help, found his store in Kowagila, Alabama, burned to the ground by jealous whites.<sup>80</sup> These incidents personally affected Washington’s life and joined with widespread racial violence in the South to undermine his assertions of—and his efforts toward—improved racial harmony in the New South.

Much has been made, and justifiably so, of the tension between Washington’s broad-based approach to education and W. E. B. Dubois’s “talented tenth.” The former

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<sup>79</sup> Tuskegee *News*, June 13, 1895, Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, III, 558–61; Thomas A. Harris to BTW, September 29, 1895, *Ibid.*, IV, 44; BTW to Francis J. Grimké, November 27, 1895, *Ibid.*, IV, 85–86; Francis J. Grimké to BTW, November 7, 1895, *Ibid.*, IV, 74–75.

<sup>80</sup> Robert Wesley Taylor to William Baldwin, Jr., September 23, 1895, *Ibid.*, IV, 22–23; William E. Benson to BTW, December 6, 1896, *Ibid.*, IV, 243–44.

emphasized rudimentary academic training for the purpose of producing teachers qualified to teach primary education in rural black schools, while the latter stressed the need to provide a quality liberal arts education to gifted potential black leaders. However, overemphasizing this disagreement ignores the broad overlap among those two approaches as well as Washington's and DuBois's history of cooperation until their philosophical differences were later transformed into outright enmity by Washington's failure to take a stand against racism, his sarcastic tone toward the topic of higher education for blacks, and his heavy-handed efforts to dominate African American public affairs. DuBois, for his own part, did not suffer Washington gladly.<sup>81</sup>

Historians point to Booker Washington's exhortations toward blacks to avoid politics, along with his emphasis on labor, religion, and military drill, as evidence that he worked to implement industrial education as a surrogate for slavery in controlling black southerners and cheaply harnessing their labor. To be sure, the parallel tracks of industrial education, Jim Crow, and the urban-industrial transformation strongly suggest that these three developments were closely intertwined. Robert G. Sherer characterizes industrial education as a "web of subordination" spun by white racial conservatives to keep black autonomy in check. Horace Mann Bond puts forth two rather indisputable propositions: 1) Schools were elements of social control; and 2) The emancipatory aims of missionary teachers were opposed to the conservative aims of white southerners who sought to gain control over black education in Alabama. Bond qualifies this position with the following observation regarding Washington's alignment with Alabama's most

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<sup>81</sup> Washington and DuBois cooperated in founding the National Negro Business League; Washington offered DuBois a position in 1900; in 1907 they coauthored a book, *The Negro in the South: His Economic Progress in Relation to His Moral and Religious Development*; in 1900, Washington tried to assist DuBois in settling a discrimination case against the Southern Railway. Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois: Biography of a Race*, 229, 245-46, 240, 365.

conservative politicians: “It is entirely possible, of course, that no other strategy was feasible.”<sup>82</sup>

Industrial education could be considered a negotiation between the emancipatory aims of black southerners and missionary educators against the conservative agenda of white southerners in the working out of race relations in the post-emancipation South. From this perspective, the common ground shared by Booker Washington, Samuel Armstrong, and Jabez Curry appears less “ironic” than pragmatic. The rhetoric of race progress was common to Reconstruction-era missionary teachers as well as industrial educators, such as Armstrong, Washington, and their philanthropic sponsors. Similarly, Washington’s belief that the market would cause white southerners to better respect black southerners is also reflected in Lydia Maria Child’s *Freedmen’s Book*, a popular primer among abolitionists *cum* missionary teachers. The market, in the Victorian imagination, rewarded the able and punished the weak, thereby allowing the strongest to flourish and advance the progress of civilization. When we recall that civilization, in Victorian terms, was put forth as an Anglo-Saxon project, the significance of industrial education comes into new perspective. Industrial education worked to stabilize racial and sexual categories within the formal boundaries of Victorian thought. In the process, it also enabled black leaders to pursue social agendas that otherwise would have drawn white hostility and to dispute exclusive claims to moral rectitude on the part of white southerners.

The gendered concept of social order displayed in *Leonard and Gertrude* constituted a founding principle of the Tuskegee idea, and the process of working out racial boundaries cannot be considered separately from efforts to maintain gender boundaries. The two are mutually constitutive and, furthermore, were crucial to the late-

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<sup>82</sup> Horace Mann Bond, *Negro Education in Alabama*, 119–217 [quote on p. 210].

nineteenth century construction of the modern nation state. The U.S. had recently fought a Civil War followed by a divisive period of Reconstruction that was terminated by a violent insurgency. What then ensued was a period of intense nation-building marked by heated contests over the meaning of U.S. citizenship and national identity. The following chapter will examine that process as it played out through discussions of philanthropy, education, and the Anglo-Saxon character of the liberal state.

## Chapter 4

### The Interlocking Directorate

In the early part of the twentieth century an “education crusade” was launched across the South beginning in North Carolina and spreading through every state of the former Confederacy. This movement was coordinated by an interlocking directorate of philanthropic funds, trustees, and boards who sent agents into rural towns spreading the gospel of expanded education in a manner that reminded many of religious revivals. Leaders of this movement included Edwin A. Alderman, Charles B. McIver, Charles W. Dabney, and Charles B. Aycock. McIver was a leader of the education movement in North Carolina; Aycock was governor of that state; Alderman and Dabney were both university presidents and officers of the Southern Education Board, which spearheaded the movement for universal education in the South. A central figure of the movement was Robert C. Ogden, the businessman-turned-philanthropist who replaced J. L. M. Curry as the “nestor” of the southern education movement after Curry’s declining health and eventual death prevented him from continuing in that role. The movement grew out of a series of conferences on education in the South beginning in 1898 and continuing for sixteen years. Also growing out of these conferences was the General Education Board (GEB) backed by John D. Rockefeller who eventually contributed over 100 million dollars toward education in the South through the auspices of the GEB.<sup>1</sup> This chapter focuses on the aims and methods of the more prominent leaders of the first few

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<sup>1</sup> Leloudis, *Schooling the New South*, 145–62; Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South from 1619 to the Present*, 89–107; Harlan, *Separate and Unequal*, 75–87; Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935*, 79–86.

conferences as they organized the movement and determined its bedrock principles and policies. It argues that the education crusade became a nationalist enterprise predicated on white supremacy. Furthermore, the establishment of an interlocking directorate of the various philanthropic agencies concerned with southern education was in keeping with the greater American movement toward consolidation and rationalization of national resources and policies at the turn of the century. The southern education movement was an integral part of the construction of the modern American state and, as such, reflects the broader character of what became known to many as the “new nationalism” of the early twentieth century.

The first Conference for Education in the South grew out of the earlier Mohonk conferences on Indian Affairs and International Arbitration held at Lake Mohonk, New York. Like the Mohonk conferences, the southern education conferences were all-white events.<sup>2</sup> The first southern education conference was held in Capon Springs, West Virginia, in 1898. Edward Abbot, brother of the famous theologian Lyman Abbot, had attended the Mohonk conferences, and he proposed to Confederate Captain William H. Sale, proprietor of a Virginia hotel, that Sale host a conference on southern education modeled after the Mohonk conferences. The purpose of the conference was to bring together leaders of Christian education to discuss matters of schooling as they pertained

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<sup>2</sup> George Washington Cable, the New Orleans writer and reformer, had refused to attend the Mohonk conference because of its policy of excluding prominent blacks from meetings. Booker T. Washington communicated his own displeasure at being invited to neither the Mohonk nor the southern education conferences although he later became a paid agent of the latter. Timothy Thomas Fortune to BTW, July 23, 1890, Harlan ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, III, 70, n. 1; William Henry Baldwin to BTW, September 11, 1903, *Ibid.*, VII, 282–83; Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black and White*, 25; Washington, responding to a letter from Cable, told him that neither he nor any other black educator that he knew of had been invited to the Mohonk Conference. “The action of the movers of that conference I confess I can not understand and can not see but that the exclusion of colored men will in a large degree cripple the influence of any deliverance the Conference may make.” BTW to George Washington Cable, April 7, 1890, Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, III, 45.

to white and black southerners. Conference leaders quickly organized a committee for permanent organization of which Hollis Frissell, chaplain of Hampton Institute, became president and J. L. M. Curry vice-president.<sup>3</sup> Such steering committees would eventually contain a tight nucleus of educational philanthropists working in close collaboration within a variety of boards, funds, and agencies that directed the finances and policies of educational philanthropy in the South.

The first conference, reflecting ongoing trends in philanthropic emphasis, focused on the education of black southerners. In his opening address Hollis Frissell began with his articulation of the Negro question in familiar terms: how blacks and whites “differing in color, traditions, [and] intelligence, can live together in peace and mutual helpfulness.” He also remarked that the half million Africans who survived the middle passage had given rise to eight million African Americans “who have absorbed our blood and ideas,” achieved “equal rights,” but were “badly handicapped by their own weak natures.”<sup>4</sup> Frissell’s estimation was joined by that of Charles F. Meserve, the white president of all-black Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, who remarked that southern blacks lacked the values represented “by that old Icelandic word, ‘thrift.’”<sup>5</sup> Predictably, the solution proposed for the challenge was industrial education.

Yet discussions of industrial education were not limited to the context of black education. Thomas Lawrence, principal of the Asheville Normal and Collegiate Institute, a teacher training school for white girls, advocated manual training for blacks and whites, males and females. The Normal and Collegiate Institute, founded in 1892 under the leadership of Thomas Lawrence, adopted a motto of “service” similar to that of Tuskegee

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<sup>3</sup> Dabney, *Universal Education in the South*, II, 3.

<sup>4</sup> H. B. Frissell, “A Survey of the Field,” *Proceedings of the First Capon Springs Conference, 1898*, 3–4.

<sup>5</sup> Charles F. Meserve, “Differences of Methods, if any, in Work among Whites and Blacks,” *Ibid.*, 21.

Institute. Its graduates promoted the YMCA and the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions in the Appalachian countryside.<sup>6</sup> Lawrence advocated training in basic tool craft to offset the “often fatal effects of overactivity,” a reference to the phenomenon of nervous prostration thought to be caused by too much mental work. He also evinced concerns about white education that mirrored some doubts voiced previously about black education: that good masons and carpenters could be “spoiled” by the wrong kind of education and made into poor or indifferent lawyers and ministers. Additionally, he worried that “foreign workmen” were beginning to displace native whites within the ranks of skilled labor.<sup>7</sup>

Lawrence argued furthermore that manual training could ease tensions between capital and labor by elevating the status of manual labor. Having future employees and employers studying the same lessons side by side, he thought, could bring labor and capital into greater harmony. The 1890s had been marked by widespread violent conflicts exemplified by the Homestead Strike of 1892 and the Pullman Strike of 1894, followed by the radical Populist movement that divided the national Democratic Party and was thwarted in the South only by fraud, race-baiting, and violence.<sup>8</sup> Such developments heightened fears that “an ignorant and vicious generation would be better suited to

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas Lawrence, “Industrial Education,” *Proceedings of the First Capon Springs Conference, 1898*, 8. “The Normal and Collegiate Institute, Asheville, North Carolina,” Women in Western North Carolina, Ramsey Library, [http://dd1.library.appstate.edu/Women/normal\\_and\\_collegiate\\_institute.htm](http://dd1.library.appstate.edu/Women/normal_and_collegiate_institute.htm).

<sup>7</sup> Lawrence, “Industrial Education,” *Proceedings of the First Capon Springs Conference, 1898*, 8. On the phenomenon of nervous prostration, or neurasthenia, see T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 49–57. Booker T. Washington once asked sardonically, “Did it ever occur to you that the Mississippi bottoms has not yet advanced to that delightful stage of civilization where he is troubled very much with nervous prostration? Now do not understand me to say that in the future we are not going to be just like you with nervous prostration and everything else. . . . but fortunately or unfortunately we haven’t gotten there yet.” Washington, “Address before the National Education Association,” Buffalo, New York, July 10, 1896, Harlan, ed. *Booker T. Washington Papers*, IV, 190.

<sup>8</sup> Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877–1919* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1987), 110–40; C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 235–90; Sean Dennis Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age: From the Death of Lincoln to the Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: New York University Press, 1993, first published 1984), 318–37.



despotism than republican government,” along with hopes that “cultivation of the head, hand and heart through a Christian education”<sup>9</sup> would offset that danger. By 1900 industrial education for white and black southerners had become conventional wisdom at the education conferences. That year the resolutions committee, in a slight departure from Lawrence’s “harmony of interests” approach, issued a statement that black southerners and “the poorer class of Southern whites” should receive “a primary and industrial education.”<sup>10</sup> Concerns about class and race overlapped in the philanthropic vision for industrial education.

Prominent educational philanthropists such as J. L. M. Curry and Daniel Coit Gilman shared this point of view. Curry had argued since at least as early as 1883 that education, if it were to be offered to “the masses,” should reflect the needs of the common class. Therefore, in addition to instructing them in the principles of citizenship, education should also help “the masses,” white and black, to “earn their daily bread by manual labor, by the sweat of their brow.” Curry repeated this maxim in his 1892 address to the Virginia Assembly, adding the warning that a classical education unfitted students for manual labor and left them, after graduation, without the means to earn a living. This position was fully in keeping with the mid-century view of manual training as an adjunct to liberal arts and an integral part of a practical education. Manual training, in Curry’s view, involved the technique of incorporating hand-eye action and basic tool craft into learning in accord with modern pedagogical theory. Drawing, he believed, was the most fundamental manual skill and constituted the bedrock of “bread studies” offered at

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<sup>9</sup> Lawrence, “Industrial Education,” *Proceedings of the First Capon Springs Conference, 1898*, 10–11.

<sup>10</sup> Committee on Resolutions, *Proceedings of the Third Capon Springs Conference, 1900*, 5.

English trade schools.<sup>11</sup> Curry found much in common between the educational needs of the white working class and those of African Americans in general.

Daniel Coit Gilman concurred that whites were in need of the “new education,” which he characterized in ranking order as follows: manual training for all ages followed by the development of fundamental vocational skills such as woodwork, metallurgy, and brick-making. Following that, he advocated technical training for a specific occupation such as mechanic, farmer, or builder. Scientific training, including advanced knowledge and research in medicine and engineering, he believed, should be offered in polytechnic institutes, agricultural and mechanical colleges, and research universities such as Johns Hopkins where he was president. In this way, theories of industrial education occupied a significant place in conversations about education policy for blacks and whites nationwide leading up to the southern education conferences.<sup>12</sup>

Arguments for white industrial education appealed to a shared sense of values perceived to have been eroded by the ongoing urban-industrial transformation. Reverend G. S. Dickerman, agent of the Southern Education Board, reported that American life had changed dramatically in the five years between 1895 and 1900. Urban migration, along with industrialization, had wrenched children out of the formative experiences previous generations had gained working alongside their parents. His concerns echoed those expressed two years earlier by Charles F. Meserve, who described industrial education as a substitute for the formative experiences of pastoral family life. There on the farm, Meserve explained, children shared with their parents “long hours of hard honest toil” in

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<sup>11</sup> Curry, “Report of the General Agent,” *Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund*, III, 125 (first quote); “Address of the Hon. J. L. M. Curry before the General Assembly of Virginia, February 4, 1892, *ibid.*, IV, 389–99; “Report of Hon. J. L. M. Curry, October 1892, *ibid.*, IV, 350–52 (second quote on p. 351).

<sup>12</sup> Gilman, “A Study in Black and White,” in *The Launching of a University*, 332–37.

addition to some formal schooling that had “aided largely in bringing the individual into his proper relations.”<sup>13</sup> The “proper relations” referred to were relationships of authority between children and parents, workers and employers, and, increasingly, citizens and the state.

Examples of industrial education considered by the Southern Education Board to be appropriate for white southerners could be found at the Miller School in Albemarle County, Virginia, and the Primary Industrial School at Columbus, Georgia. The Committee on Resolutions issued at the second conference in 1899 a statement supporting “industrial training now afforded the negro at Hampton, Tuskegee, and similar institutions, and given to whites at the Miller School.”<sup>14</sup> The Miller School, with a student body of thirty-three orphans and impoverished whites, was founded in 1878 with an endowment of \$1,250,000 from the estate of Samuel Miller. The school was focused around a workshop, where students sewed as an object lesson and also to demonstrate the value of manual labor. Its motto was, “Mind, Hands, Heart,” and its curriculum included classical studies along with industrial subjects.<sup>15</sup> The Primary Industrial School, located in Columbus, Georgia, taught only industrial subjects, such as housekeeping, cooking, and manual training. Each school day featured three classes, and the school was open all year long. Children ranged in age from six to twelve when they began work, most likely

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<sup>13</sup> G. S. Dickerman, “Agent’s Report: Changing conditions: Changed Methods,” *Proceedings of the Third Capon Springs Conference, 1900*, 9–23; Meserve, “Differences of Method, if any, in Work among Whites and Blacks,” *Ibid.*, 1898, 20. John M. Heffron argues that the southern emphasis on agriculture and manual training helped the nation reconcile the urban-industrial transformation with the traditional agrarian values of an earlier time. Heffron, “Nation-Building for a Venerable South: Moral and Practical Uplift in the New Education, 1900–1920,” in Wayne J. Urban, ed., *Essays in Twentieth-Century Southern Education: Exception and its Limits* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1999), 43–76, esp. 46–47.

<sup>14</sup> Committee on Resolutions, *Proceedings of the Third Capon Springs Conference, 1899*, 5.

<sup>15</sup> Dabney, *Universal Education in the South*, 167–70. Samuel Miller was born into Poverty in the neighborhood of what is now Charlottesville, North Carolina. He became a successful merchant and investor in Lynchburg, Virginia, and bequeathed the majority of his fortune to institute the Miller School. Miller School website, “About Us,” <http://www.millerschool.org/page.cfm?p=4>.

at the local Thomaston Cotton Mills. The school used no textbooks, but according to Carlton P. Gibson, superintendent of Columbus's city schools, children learned to read from the blackboard and also incorporated math problems into industrial subjects. Gibson, in language remarkably similar to that used to describe rural African Americans, characterized incoming Primary Industrial School students as "the most uncivilized barbarians I ever saw." He described boys who smoked cigarettes and barefoot girls with but one dress, "and that hardly fastened. They were a slovenly lot, and did not know what it was to be prompt or to carry out commands properly." He also questioned the students' home life, remarking "The teacher lives in the school-house, where the children can see something of a real home life, better and more uplifting than their own home life." There were two important differences between philanthropic attitudes toward the morality of poor whites and toward African Americans. First, the immorality of poor whites was presumed to result from environmental causes and could therefore be overcome with proper training, while African American immorality was presumed to be congenital and would require more than one generation of uplift to efface. Second, philanthropists did not suggest that the moral limitations of poor whites made them unqualified for citizenship or full civil rights.<sup>16</sup>

This subtle difference between attitudes toward manual training for black and white students grew, by 1901, into a point of view that equated African American childhood in general, with juvenile delinquency among whites. John Graham Brooks, a prominent sociologist and Unitarian minister, drew parallels between the success of the Elmira juvenile reformatory in New York and the success of industrial education at

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<sup>16</sup> Carlton P. Gibson, *Proceedings of the Conference for Education in the South*, 1902, 68–71 (first quote on p. 70, second quote on pp. 69–70).

Hampton and Tuskegee. Referring both to white juvenile delinquents and African American industrial students, he remarked, “The feeble will and lack of self-control, the easy yielding to the play of every impulse, the hatred of persistent and consecutive activity, are the common weaknesses of this class.”<sup>17</sup> Brooks perceived a common element of criminality within the white juvenile delinquent and the bulk of the African American population. As Brooks’s position demonstrates, concerns about the moral limitations of poor whites and African Americans overlapped, but only to a certain degree. The markers of class distinctions among whites could be effaced with sufficient training and effort. The markers of race—primarily skin color—were more indelible and, furthermore, connoted latent criminality among the entire African American population. Such attitudes suffused the thinking of educational philanthropists as they laid the groundwork for the upcoming “educational crusade.”

The second southern education conference at Capon Springs brought forth a resolution calling for an agency that would act as a philanthropic clearinghouse to “guard against the haphazard, and in some cases harmful, use of money contributed at the North for Negro education.”<sup>18</sup> This resolution was primarily the work of William H. Baldwin, a trustee for both Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes. He alerted the conference that wealthy donors were growing skeptical of claims made by representatives of southern Negro colleges seeking financial support. Baldwin recommended that a board be established to offer its imprimatur to worthy institutions. He suggested a “general education board” that

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<sup>17</sup> John Graham Brooks, “A Common Need to North and South,” *Proceedings of the Fourth Conference for Education in the South*, 1901, 94–95. Brooks was the first president of the National Consumers’ League, serving in that position from 1899–1915. He was also president of the American Social Science Association, 1904–1905. *American National Biography*, III, 616–17.

<sup>18</sup> Committee on Resolutions, “Resolutions of the Second Capon Springs Conference, *Proceedings of the Second Capon Springs Conference*, 1899, 8.

would determine which schools deserved philanthropic grants, thereby assuring donors that their funds would be well spent. Baldwin's concern was twofold: first, he wanted to ensure that recipient institutions were "under good business management" and, second, "that effective industrial training be given." According to Baldwin, schools were billing themselves as industrial institutes, but such billing frequently amounted to no more than "the mere advertisement of themes." An added benefit, thought Baldwin, was that such a board would eliminate "the need for representatives of southern schools at the North."<sup>19</sup> Baldwin's proposal was in keeping with broader trends toward rationalizing and systematizing the institutional supports of American life and was based on real concerns about misleading appeals for philanthropic support. But as historians of educational philanthropy have previously argued, it also represented a bid for control over northern funding for southern schools with the understanding that industrial institutes would be the recipients of such funding. Because the American Missionary Association continued to provide the lion's share of educational philanthropy, however, the leaders of the conference were never able to claim hegemony over educational philanthropy nor were they ever to make industrial education the single model for black schooling in the South.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, the efforts of conference leaders to establish themselves as the arbiters of philanthropic giving did have widespread effects, especially at Tuskegee Institute, where the role of corporate philanthropy was growing in visibility. In the 1880s and early 1890s, most of the funding for Tuskegee Institute had come from networks of missionaries and former abolitionists associated with William Lloyd Garrison, Elizabeth

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<sup>19</sup> Baldwin, "The Present Problem of Negro Education—Industrial Education," *Proceedings of the Second Capon Springs Conference, 1899*, 75.

<sup>20</sup> McPherson, *Abolitionist Legacy*.

Cady Stanton, Frederick Douglas, and the American Missionary Association. According to Booker T. Washington, who spent a great deal of his time raising money in the North, Tuskegee funding came mostly from small donors, such as ministers, Christian Endeavor Societies, and Tuskegee graduates. Animal rights activists, suffragists, and Boston “bluestockings” also contributed to Tuskegee.<sup>21</sup> For example, an unusually large donation of seven thousand dollars came in 1885 from Ellen Francis and Ida Means Mason, two wealthy heiresses with a family history of “interest in Negro welfare” that dated back to their grandfather Jeremiah Mason.<sup>22</sup> By the late-1890s, however, the more organized corporate philanthropies had assumed a dominant role in Tuskegee funding and began making demands. Under pressure from J. L. M. Curry, Washington got permission from Mary Elizabeth Preston Stearns to change the name of a building at Tuskegee Institute from “George and Mary Stearns Hall” to the Armstrong-Slater Agricultural Building. Mary Stearns was the niece of the famous anti-slavery writer Lydia Maria Francis Child and was the widow of George Luther Stearns, one of the “secret six” who had financed John Brown’s 1859 anti-slavery raid into Virginia.<sup>23</sup> This embarrassing episode marked the beginning of a change in the tone and timbre of educational giving from networks of small donors associated with former abolitionists and missionaries to fewer but larger contributions from incorporated industrial philanthropies whose policies were debated and formalized at the turn-of-the-century southern education conferences.

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<sup>21</sup> Washington, *Up from Slavery* in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, I, 317. “Bluestockings” referred to single, independent women who tended to support progressive causes, such as black education and women’s suffrage.

<sup>22</sup> BTW to Samuel Chapman Armstrong, November 26, 1885, *Ibid.*, II, 283, 283 n.1.

<sup>23</sup> J. L. M. Curry to BTW, December 14, 1897, *ibid.*, IV, 350; BTW to Mary Elizabeth Preston Stearns, January 8, 1898, *ibid.*, IV, 360–61; Mary Elizabeth Preston Stearns to BTW, January 10, 1898, *ibid.*, IV, 363; on Stearns’s abolitionist background, see *ibid.*, II 339 n.1.

By 1902 buildings named after Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and Collis P. Huntington had, in the words of Booker T. Washington's foremost biographer, "symbolized the shift in philanthropic support of Tuskegee from the church-and-abolitionist oriented philanthropy of New England to the business philanthropy of New York and later Chicago."<sup>24</sup> Washington claimed to have cultivated a relationship with steel magnate Andrew Carnegie for ten years before getting him interested in Tuskegee. Then, in 1900, Carnegie contributed \$20,000 toward a new library. By that time Tuskegee was receiving \$10,000 annually from Carnegie.<sup>25</sup> In 1899 Washington wrote to his assistant Warren Logan alerting him that Frederick T. Gates, John D. Rockefeller's agent and plenipotentiary, might arrive unannounced at Tuskegee to evaluate the institute as a possible recipient of Rockefeller philanthropy. The inspection must have gone satisfactorily because, in 1900, Rockefeller contributed \$5,000 to reduce Tuskegee's debt and another \$5,000 toward operating expenses for that year.<sup>26</sup> In 1898 railroad millionaire Collis P. Huntington had indicated to Washington that Huntington's wife was interested in contributing \$10,000 toward construction of a female dormitory. Huntington Hall opened November 12, 1900. Washington displayed a client-paternalist relationship with these men in his remarks concerning Huntington published in Washington's 1901 autobiography *Up from Slavery*: "He not only gave money to us, but took the time in which to advise me, as a father would a son, about the general conduct of the school."<sup>27</sup> These relationships paralleled Washington's growing reliance on the Peabody and Slater

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<sup>24</sup> Harlan, "Introduction," Harlan, ed., *Ibid.*, VI, xxiii.

<sup>25</sup> Washington, "Up from Slavery" in *ibid.*, I, 216-17; BTW to Hollis Frissell, March 31, 1902, *ibid.*, VI, 429.

<sup>26</sup> BTW to Warren Logan, April 22, 1899, *ibid.*, V, 89; Frederick Taylor Gates to BTW, December 15, 1899, *ibid.*, V, 291.

<sup>27</sup> Collis Potter Huntington to BTW, November 14, 1898, *ibid.*, IV, 511, 511 ns. 1-2; Washington, *Up from Slavery*, in *ibid.*, I, 315.



funds, whose boards of trustees overlapped and also constituted the core directorate of the southern education conferences. Tuskegee had received its first donation of \$500 from the Peabody Education Fund in 1883. By 1900 Tuskegee was receiving \$1,200 to \$1,500 annually from the Peabody Fund and \$11,000 annually from the Slater Fund, both of which were managed by J. L. M. Curry, president of the Second Capon Springs Conference. Did this shift in Tuskegee's funding sources represent an effort on the part of corporate philanthropists to assert hegemony over black education or did it indicate Washington's success at capturing a share of corporate profits for the education of black southerners? Both and neither. The interrelationship between Tuskegee and corporate philanthropy's interlocking directorate was a synecdoche of the turn-of-the-century impulse toward rationalization and consolidation characterized by one historian as America's "search for order."<sup>28</sup> Educational philanthropists were deeply concerned about the character of the nation they were helping to construct, and their concerns were born out in their prescriptions for industrial education and moral uplift.

Baldwin's resolution calling for a philanthropic clearinghouse was written simultaneously with one put forth by J. L. M. Curry that marked a significant change in direction from concentrating on the education of black southerners to focusing on the education of white southerners. The resolution declared "That the education of the white race in the South is the pressing and imperative need."<sup>29</sup> Curry's resolution also claimed for the white-only universities of the South a "generous share of that stream of private wealth in the United States that is enriching and revitalizing the higher education of the

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<sup>28</sup> Washington, *Life and Work* in *ibid.*, I, 42, 48–49 [confirm through Peabody and Slater Proceedings]; Dabney, *Universal Education in the South* II, 8; Robert Weibe, *The Search for Order*.

<sup>29</sup> "Resolutions of the Second Capon Springs Conference," *Proceedings of the Second Capon Springs Conference, 1899*, 7.

North and The West.” This resolution echoed complaints Curry was making elsewhere that northern, western, and African American institutions of higher learning had received generous endowments while white southern institutions went begging.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, southern white universities were severely under-funded, with state universities receiving annual appropriations that ranged from \$15,000 to nothing at all. “Endowments,” according to historian C. Vann Woodward, “were pitifully inadequate or totally lacking.” Likewise, southern primary and secondary schools were inadequate at every level for the task of providing universal public education. White educational leaders came to believe that southern white academic institutions were not receiving their fair share of northern philanthropic funds.<sup>31</sup>

“History demonstrates that the Caucasian will rule,” J. L. M. Curry told the second conference for education in South. “He ought to rule,” he continued. “He made our constitution; he achieved our independence.” All “true progress” and “high civilization” were white legacies and, along with those went the legacy of Negro race progress led by whites “as far and as fast as their good and their possibilities will justify.” Curry did not intend this bid for white supremacy as a retreat from the cause of black education or Negro uplift; he meant quite the opposite. It was Curry’s position that the education of black southerners had relied almost entirely on the liberality of white southerners whose taxes provided the main support for black education in the South. Whites, he argued, would determine the nature of race relations in the South and,

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<sup>30</sup> J. L. M. Curry, “What the South has Done for the South” date in dispute [The LOC dates this address in 1899, whereas Louis R. Harlan places the date in 1900 or 1901. Regardless of the date of delivery, these remarks are consistent with those made at the Second Capon Springs Conference in 1899 and also at the Southern Educational Association, December 28, 1899, wherein he cited statistics compiled at Johns Hopkins University to argue the case for relieving the poverty of white colleges and universities in the South. Curry, “Address to the Southern Educational Association,” Series I, v. 13, item 2856, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC.], Series I, v. 10, item 2309, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC.

<sup>31</sup> C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 398, 437 (quote).

therefore, the interests of Negro uplift were best served by expanded educational opportunities for white southerners.<sup>32</sup> In addition, those whites who opposed black education tended themselves to be among the least educated. Likewise, he said, those most committed to Jim Crow, segregation, and the Ku Klux Klan, tended to be those whites who lacked an effective education. Therefore, “The welfare of the negro is contingent upon the general and higher education of the white man.”<sup>33</sup>

From Curry’s point of view, Negro uplift was entirely in the hands of white southerners. “They must lift him up, and from white colleges and universities must come the highest types of character and leadership.”<sup>34</sup> Calling for greater philanthropic interest in white southern colleges, Curry employed an argument ironically similar to that used by W. E. B. DuBois, Horace Bumstead, and others in defense of black liberal arts colleges. Curry argued that, in addition to primary education, white southerners needed a leadership class to produce “its own literature, thought, leadership.” In this way, Curry complicated the discourse of racial uplift by making Negro uplift contingent upon “the mental and moral uplift of the Caucasian.”<sup>35</sup> Having determined that opposition to black education stemmed from class differences among southern whites, Curry determined that the Negro question must wait in abeyance until those differences were addressed.

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<sup>32</sup> J. L. M. Curry, “Education in the Southern United States” *Proceedings of the Second Capon Springs Conference*, 1899, 28.

<sup>33</sup> J. L. M. Curry, Address to the Pennsylvania Society of New York, October 31, 1899, Series I, v. 13, item 2844, 2855 (quote in item 2855), J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC.

<sup>34</sup> J. L. M. Curry, Untitled, December 27, 1901, Series I, v. 13, item 3009, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC.

<sup>35</sup> Curry, Address to the Pennsylvania Society of New York, October 31, 1899, Series I, v. 13, item 2844. Robert C. Ogden, in his 1901 conference address told his audience, “while we were originally interested in the South through negro education, our impulses have risen from negro education to the question of the entire burden of educational responsibility that you have throughout this whole section of the country.” Ogden, “Address of the Conference President,” *Proceedings of the Fourth Conference for Education in the South*, 1901, 6.

Accompanying the promise of mutual racial uplift was the threat of interracial violence. If white southern colleges and universities did not find the support needed to produce wise and virtuous leaders, he warned, “no seer can foretell the woes to the inferior race, to all the people, to the whole country.” It must be remembered that Curry, by this time, had all but despaired of an educational solution to the “Negro problem.”<sup>36</sup> Whites, he feared, did not have the patience to wait for the process of Negro uplift to become sufficiently evident to relieve their collective misgivings toward sharing power. Furthermore, Curry feared that political equality would result in miscegenation and degradation of the white race and those institutions that he associated with white racial integrity. On the other hand, white-led ballot stuffing, violence at the polls, and racial demagoguery themselves posed a danger to the republic no less than did the prospect of racial commingling. By 1899 Curry had concluded that the concentrated presence of African Americans in the South represented an insoluble problem, the only possible solution being the shortest path toward Negro uplift to the point that African Americans became moral enough to no longer pose a threat to republican virtue. After more than two decades of pursuing Negro uplift through black education in the South, the “Negro problem” appeared bleaker than ever.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, the tide of white supremacy was rising whether Curry went along with it or not. He was in his mid-seventies and, as conference president, at the pinnacle of his philanthropic career. A younger generation of leaders would soon replace Curry and his paternalist outlook with a more aggressive vision of white supremacy. Given this

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<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Curry, “What the South Has Done for the South,” Series I, v. 10, item 2309, J. L. M. Curry Collection, LOC; J. L. M. Curry to Robert C. Winthrop, February 1, 1890, Series I, v. 7, items 1735–36, J. L. M. Curry Collection, LOC.

situation and the choices he was presented with, it is not surprising that he pursued the course of expanded white education and accepted the implication that such a turn would mean diverting the philanthropic emphasis from the education of black southerners to the education of whites. To that effect, he quoted Edwin A. Alderman in stating that “The education of one white man . . . is worth more to the black man himself than the education of ten of his own race.”<sup>38</sup> From Curry’s point of view, it was in the interests of black southerners to see whites become better educated and hence less prejudiced toward blacks.

Having decided that an overtly white supremacist educational agenda would advance the overall interests of white and black southerners, Curry set about making his public argument. Addressing the second conference for education at Capon Springs, he lamented that white scholars were turned away from colleges for lack of funds. “Some single colored schools,” he continued, “have a larger annual income and expend more for running expenses than any university except Johns Hopkins, and as much as the combined outlay of four or five white colleges.”<sup>39</sup> Ironically, Curry had played no small role in the rise of Tuskegee Institute and its impressive financial backing, which was likely the target of his comparison. With the exception of the Vanderbilt endowment of its namesake university, and a large gift from Daniel B. Fayerweather to the University of Virginia, he complained, “The white institutions of the South have had no help from the generosity of the North.”<sup>40</sup> The education of black southerners, Curry explained, “has crippled what might have been done for the education of white youth in public schools,

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<sup>38</sup> Curry “What the South has Done for the South,” Series I, v. 10, item 2309, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC.

<sup>39</sup> Curry, “Education in the Southern United States,” *Proceedings of the Second Capon Springs Conference*, 1899, 27–28.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

colleges, and universities.”<sup>41</sup> This point of view was shared by the prominent North Carolina white supremacist Josephus Daniels, who later argued that the education of black southerners was the chief impediment to the education of whites in the South. Many whites resented paying for black education and, therefore, opposed public education as a whole. Furthermore, he reasoned, white southerners tended to consider early Reconstruction education led by northern missionaries a misguided effort that produced “vicious negroes” who mingled as “social equals” with white female teachers. Daniels maintained that whites perceived this as an effort to place “the bottom rail on top” and saw contemporary public education policy in the same light.<sup>42</sup> This is the context within which Walter Hines Page made his oft-quoted remark for a southern newspaper: “You will find when the wood pile is turned over not a nigger, but an uneducated white boy . . . it is [him] we want to reach.”<sup>43</sup>

The resolutions of 1899 initiated two simultaneous policy directives. Curry’s resolution called for a shift in emphasis from black to white education, while Baldwin’s called for the establishment of a “general education board” to act as a philanthropic clearinghouse. Although it was clear that Baldwin intended for industrial institutes to be the exclusive recipients of philanthropic support, that position remained to be debated within the conferences. This debate took place in June 1899 at the second Capon Springs Conference. Representing the cause for higher education of black southerners was Horace

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<sup>41</sup> Curry, Draft of address to the Pennsylvania Society of New York, October 31, 1899, Series I, v. 13, item 2837, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC.

<sup>42</sup> Josephus Daniels, “The Progress of Southern Education,” *Proceedings of the Conference for Education in the South*, 1903, 143–45.

<sup>43</sup> Columbia State, April 24, 1903, as quoted in Louis R. Harlan, *Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States, 1901–1915*, 97. Booker T. Washington implored upon Hollis Frissell to not abandon African Americans in the late turn toward the education of white southerners. BTW to Hollis Burke Frissell, November 1, 1901, Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, VII, 283–84.

Bumstead, the white president of Atlanta University, a liberal arts college for African Americans supported primarily by the American Missionary Association. Bumstead began his case by arguing that slavery and African barbarism had not taught blacks properly to think. Slavery had taught blacks to work but had discouraged use of the intellect. Once slavery was abolished, however, “responsibility for one’s life and work is transferred from an outward authority to the individual himself, the power of rational and consecutive thinking becomes an absolute necessity.” Responding to the argument for industrial education, Bumstead countered that the material ambitions for a better home, property, and a bank account were insufficient to motivate blacks to improve their conditions. Alongside material prosperity, African Americans needed an appreciation for truth and beauty that comes from a higher education. Bumstead defined higher education as “such education as an average white boy gets when he ‘goes to college.’” Furthermore, “I mean a curriculum in which the humanities are prominent, and in which intercourse with books and personal contact with highly educated teachers constitute the chief sources of power.” In addition to supplying doctors and lawyers for African American communities, Bumstead continued, Negro colleges filled a much-needed source of well-educated teachers and preachers, as well as leaders of summer teaching institutes and members of boards of education. Moreover, the presence of a “college-bred negro” had an overall uplifting effect among black communities.<sup>44</sup>

Bumstead’s case for higher education spoke directly to the modes and means of racial uplift, an end upon which all conference participants agreed. In African American communities “the negro teachers, ministers, doctors, lawyers, editors” were responsible

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<sup>44</sup> Horace Bumstead, “The Practical Value of the Higher Education of the Negro,” *Proceedings of the Third Capon Springs Conference*, 1899, 40–44 (quote 1, p. 41; quotes 2 and 3, p. 40).

for leading local efforts toward “temperance, purity, the improvement of home life, the training of children, the provision of wholesome amusements, the organizing of reading clubs, debating societies, and lecture courses,” in other words, those very pursuits most closely associated with “uplift.” Bumstead proposed that black southerners do for themselves, through higher education, what Curry would have whites do for them: lead the way to “a higher life.”<sup>45</sup>

Bumstead rebutted assertions that the black masses were not ready for higher education with the claim that such an argument did not constitute sufficient reason to deny higher education to talented individuals. He advocated, “To every negro youth, as to every white youth, an education opportunity commensurate with his ability as an individual.” African Americans should not be treated as an undifferentiated mass, he argued; rather they were constituted of different classes with varying needs and capabilities. “The [race] problem is too manifold, too complex, too intricate to admit of solution by a single panacea.” Bumstead concluded his arguments with an appeal “for a larger faith in the exceptional negro—a larger faith in his capacity as an individual and a larger faith in his power as a regenerator of the masses of his race, on whom we should seek more and more to shift the ‘white man’s burden.’” While Curry argued for expanded white education so that whites would better care for their African American “wards,” Bumstead sought a different status for black southerners not as a burden to be shouldered, but as masters of their own destiny.<sup>46</sup>

Responding to Bumstead’s thoughtful argument was Mrs. George Barnum, who offered a racist screed containing the usual elements of ridicule, sarcasm, and a familiar

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 44–45.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 40–46 (quote 1, p. 40; quote 2, p. 39; quote 3, p. 46).



array of arguments linking higher education for blacks with increased crime, labor shortages, and racial unrest. White southerners, particularly women, she believed, knew what was best for black southerners and how best to shape lessons to Negro modes of thought. According to Barnum's narrative, misguided black education was a result of the Civil War, and only such a cataclysm could have resulted in the well-meant atrocity of Reconstruction-era education of black southerners as attempted by northern missionaries after the war. Barnum, like Josephus Daniels and most white southerners, associated Reconstruction-era black education with "Negro rule" and "social equality." These two phrases joined to create an image of African American men gaining political power that they then used to force their way into the boudoirs of white southern women and girls. Such an approach to education, "forced upon the South after more than a hundred years' knowledge of the race . . . remains a political imbecility, the prolific source of pauperism, vice, and criminality in every southern community." Furthermore, "No education can properly deserve the name that does not fit the persons to whom it is being given for the lives they are to lead." The education of black southerners should serve "the general well being of the communities of which they form a part." In other words, their education should assist in maintaining the racial status quo.<sup>47</sup>

By threatening social stability in the communities in which it was offered, Barnum argued, higher education for black southerners constituted a "crime against the State" and "a menace to our civilization." She cited Virginia governor James Hoge Tyler as reporting "a large increase of crime among the educated negroes of his state." Southern industry, she continued, suffered a dearth of available labor because blacks aspired to

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<sup>47</sup> Mrs. George Barnum, "On the Industrial Up building of Southern Cities and Communities," *Proceedings of the Third Capon Springs Conference*, 1900, 60.

unrealistic goals. “Carefully trained by many successive generations of intelligent and conscientious masters and mistresses (may they rest in peace, for they earned it, and have never got any credit for their labors), the negroes of ’65 gave proof to their last that they had been trained by patient industrious, Christian folk who had metamorphosed African cannibals into useful men and women.” While Barnum’s racist harangue may have been short on evidence and reason, it was long on the sort of mythology that appealed to a conservative, white audience. She carefully blended archetypes of the selfless plantation mistress, the faithful retainer, and the college-bred degenerate with the discourse of race infamy into a stark image of education run amok. “But they [the ‘negroes of ‘65’] were succeeded by a generation which in all sorts of schools, public and private, were set to learn ‘Shakespeare and the musical glasses.’” In addition to “the three R’s, which no one begrudged them,” black southerners during the Reconstruction era were also taught “the sciences, music, decalcomanic, freehand drawing, integral calculus, Greek, the harp, lacework, waxwork, and God knows what.”<sup>48</sup> Barnum’s almost hysterical racist rant displayed a point of view far removed from the conservative paternalism that directed the thinking of J. L. M. Curry and William H. Baldwin. However, it was a point of view that was widely shared across the white South and was gaining influence within the directorate of educational philanthropy.

It was a foregone conclusion that the conference would decide against higher education for black southerners. The significance of the debate lies in its timing and in the prominence of those who were determining the worth of higher education for black southerners. As the conference considered establishing a “general education board,” to consolidate policy-making control over corporate philanthropy, it was also gearing up to

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 60–63 (quote 1, 63, quotes 2, 3, and 4, 60–61).

launch the “education crusade” that is largely credited with making the cause of universal education respectable in the South. Thus, the policies endorsed by the conference became the platform of the “education crusade” and, by extension, a major tenet of public education in the South. Not just the policies but also the assumptions that drove them—the doctrine of race infancy; the associations of black higher education with increased crime, vagrancy, and indigence; and the presumed threat that black higher education posed to social stability—were woven into the structure and content of public education in the turn-of-the-century South. The goals and methods of public education both reflected and informed larger patterns of thought concerning race relations in the South, the nation, and beyond. In addition to preparing young southerners to staff the farms, factories, and bureaucracies of the New South, public education was intended to produce a generation of citizens and families who would share the core beliefs and values of the generation that launched this “education crusade.” While conservatives, such as Curry, Baldwin, and Frissell, continued to exert a moderating influence, the direction of public education in the South was becoming more radical.

The years 1900–1901 were transformative for the Southern Education Conference. During that time the conference changed from an academic meeting of educators in a mountain resort to a combined advocacy and fund-raising machine devoted to the principles and policies established in the earlier meetings. In 1900 Robert C. Ogden replaced J. L. M. Curry as president of the conference and remained in that post for thirteen years. Ogden relocated the fourth conference meeting from Capon Springs, West Virginia, to Winston-Salem, North Carolina. At Ogden’s New York office above the Wanamaker store, the flagship property of a chain over which he presided, he met with

Francis George Peabody, Walter Hines Page, Albert Shaw, and Charles W. Dabney to design an advocacy board to advance the cause of universal education in the South. These men determined to establish the Southern Education Board, whose initial mandate was to act as a philanthropic clearinghouse; to inform the public about the benefits of universal, taxpayer-financed public education; and to investigate the specific educational and philanthropic needs of particular areas within the South.

At their first meeting, they determined to separate these functions, the first going to a different executive committee that would soon become the General Education Board. The GEB would take responsibility for funding while the SEB handled public relations. William Baldwin became the first chairman of the General Education Board, joining a finance committee that included Ogden, Page, Shaw, and Peabody. Frederick T. Gates was quickly brought into the project as the representative of John D. Rockefeller. J. L. M. Curry was a charter member of the SEB and the GEB, as well as general agent for the Peabody and Slater Funds. Robert C. Ogden was on the GEB and the SEB and was also on the boards of trustees for Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes. William H. Baldwin was on the GEB, the SEB, and was likewise on the boards of trustees for Hampton and Tuskegee. George F. Peabody was on the SEB, the GEB and was a trustee of the Peabody Fund. As Ogden himself put it, "Seven gentlemen are members of both boards. Perfect cooperation is thus secured. In addition the Boards of the Peabody and Slater Funds are represented in both the newly-formed Boards, and the outcome of the whole matter is a community of interest that secures harmony and economy and prevents duplication."<sup>49</sup> Here was the interlocking directorate of corporate educational philanthropy.

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<sup>49</sup> Ogden, "Presidential Address," *Proceedings of the Fifth Conference for Education in the South*, 1902, 14–16.

In addition to founding the Southern and General Education Boards, Ogden organized “excursions” as a way to improve public relations with respect to the mission of universal education in the South. At his own expense, Ogden invited carefully chosen guests to accompany him on Pullman railcars to survey public education’s needs and prospects in the areas surrounding the various conference venues. These “excursions” insured that the conferences received much and favorable publicity. They also allowed an intimate and congenial venue for discussing philanthropic goals and methods. It was on one of these trips that Rockefeller decided to commit millions to the General Education Board rather than to philanthropy devoted strictly to African American education as he had previously planned.<sup>50</sup>

While Ogden and his colleagues were raising the executive framework for the universal education movement, conference leaders were laying the foundation of education policy along the lines of Anglo-Saxon nationalism. In a series of papers, state leaders such as North Carolina’s “education governor” Charles B. Aycock and governor Hoke Smith of Georgia voiced changes in conventional attitudes toward poor whites, (especially those from rural Appalachia), African Americans, and the national character. Their sentiments reflect those espoused by Walter Hines Page in his 1897 speech “The Forgotten Man,” which sought to transform the popular image of the rural southern farmer from a “hick” and “hayseed” into a latent national treasure. The Populist revolt of the 1890s, though a political failure, had forced the aspirations of rural farmers into the consciousness of regional reformers, and they became the centerpiece of discussions at the 1902 conference for education in the South.

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<sup>50</sup> Dabney, *Universal Education in the South*, II, 29–31; Anderson and Moss, *Dangerous Donations*, 42–43.

Amory Dwight Mayo, as early as 1895, had explained that the South was particularly well suited for education reform because its stock remained Anglo-Saxon, untainted by “immigrant hordes.” In addition, he believed it to be free of the vast trusts that threatened what Mayo considered a “new aristocracy” in the North. Finally, the South’s working class, black and white, was positioned to enjoy steady evolution up the scale of civilization under the tutelage of the “better class” of southern whites.<sup>51</sup> G. S. Dickerman, an agent of the Southern Education Board, in his 1901 conference report further elaborated on this sentiment. Dickerman noted that most northern children, whose educations were well provided for, were of immigrant stock. White southerners, on the other hand, were descended from “colonial pioneers,” many of them from New England “merchant princes.”<sup>52</sup> Such language served to elevate the status of rural southerners while also justifying the recent shift in philanthropic emphasis from black to white education.

Arguments for expanded educational opportunity for white southerners contrasts sharply with rhetoric advocating the education for blacks in the South. Advocacy for the education of black southerners had focused on the purported lack of a strong moral center among blacks that amounted to an inadequate foundation for citizenship. But as North Carolina governor Charles B. Aycock told the conference in 1902, “These people [rural whites] have in them the same blood that flows in your veins and the same Revolutionary ancestry, the same blood that was left by the bleeding feet of their ancestors at Valley

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<sup>51</sup> Mayo, *Women in the Recent Education Movement in the South*, 22.

<sup>52</sup> Dickerman, “Report of the General Agent,” *Proceedings of the Fourth Conference for Education in the South*, 1901, 27–28.

Forge, the blood of men who followed Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee.”<sup>53</sup> John Massey, at the same conference meeting, commented on advances in black education and then compared that to the need for white education. Massey felt personally connected to the plight of unschooled rural whites because, “They are of our own blood and race and are proving generally honest and generally virtuous.” However, he cautioned, poor white southerners were not without their failings. “They are religious, but it is a religion that does not eliminate prejudice and hate. They are susceptible to the intensest [*sic*] degree of patriotism, but their patriotism is narrow, hardly patriotic in the sense of state patriotism, certainly it does not reach to a national patriotism.”<sup>54</sup> Massey, like Curry, sought to overcome “prejudice and hate” among illiterate whites through expanded access to education. Nevertheless, the SEB’s strategy implicitly called for white supremacy in the effort to inculcate nationalist sentiment among rural white southerners.

Reasons for promoting universal education in the South included expanding industrial and agricultural productivity, improving racial relations, and developing a new leadership cadre among white and black southerners. Unifying these different concerns was the integration of the New South into the modern nation-state, and rural whites were assigned a prominent role in this endeavor. Comparing the responsibility for providing schools for black southerners to that of providing schools for whites, future Georgia governor Hoke Smith gushed “But oh, my fellow-citizens, the sense of duty is not necessary to warm the heart to the white children; they are blood of our blood and bone of our bone.” Smith, like other speakers, pointed out that the patriotic heritage of white

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<sup>53</sup> Charles B. Aycock, “Education and the Voluntary Tax,” *Proceedings of the Conference for Education in the South*, 1902, 53.

<sup>54</sup> John Massey, “The South’s Three Classes,” *Proceedings of the Conference for Education in the South*, 1902, 90.

rural and mountain southerners descended from “the most genuinely American stock in the American union. What a people to build a citizenship on!” Smith exclaimed. “What grander characteristics could be required as the basic foundation of a people to be led forth into mental strength and moral force!”<sup>55</sup> Hoke Smith and his fellow delegates imagined a New South embodying a new nationalism that would be brought forth through the education and empowerment of the rural white South.

The theme of the new nationalism was evident in conference *Proceedings* from the first meeting in 1898. Ernst Dreher, city school superintendent in Columbia, South Carolina, had concluded in his conference presentation that history should be taught in public schools as God directing the United States toward its national destiny. “With this idea in view, he intoned, “all history becomes a unit and all social, political, and religious problems are seen to be working in parallel lines, under the direction of God in history, for that far-off divine event toward which the whole creation moves.”<sup>56</sup> The national destiny was thus married to the progressive creed as defined by such men as A. B. Hunter, a central figure in the early conference leadership. “The same gracious Power is at work in our civilization,” he explained, “who has been at work during the last nineteen hundred years, in changing barbarism to civilization [and] in changing vicious men into virtuous.” John M. Heffron calls southern education in this period “the crucible of the new nationalism.” Instructional materials, according to Leon Litwack, “made a virtual gospel of the superiority of Anglo-Saxon institutions.” Black pupils took in history lessons that highlighted Pilgrims and northern Europeans while ignoring the African

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<sup>55</sup> Hoke Smith, “Popular Education as the Primary Policy of the South,” *Proceedings of the Fourth Conference for Education in the South*, 1902, 49; Emory Speer, “The Men of the Mountains,” *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>56</sup> Ernst Dreher, “The Study of American History,” *Proceedings of the First Capon Springs Conference*, 1898, 28 (first and second quotes); A. B. Hunter, “Co-operation among Schools,” *Ibid.*, 37.



American experience. If black Americans were represented at all, it was as contented slaves who later passively received their liberty from President Lincoln and misused it in the Reconstruction era.<sup>57</sup>

The process of defining American national destiny as an expression of Anglo-Saxon culture elevated nationalism, as an ideal, to a new plain that demanded a greater unity of purpose among the constituents of that nation. Therefore, it was seen as necessary to inspire the white common class to greater nationalist sympathy and to educate them for their role in the national destiny. Edwin A. Alderman, SEB secretary and president of Tulane University, and later the University of Virginia, described the transformation of the nation state from a protector of basic rights to the embodiment of the national will. "I can remember myself," he told the conference in 1902, "when the State was looked upon as a sort of machine for the protection of life and property, and its highest and holiest duties were symbolized by justice and the penal laws, by the hangman's rope or the policeman's club." Educational philanthropists and business leaders, however, recognized an ongoing transformation. "To-day [*sic*]," he continued, "the State is the collective will of the people expressing itself in laws and institutions." Alderman went on to describe this emerging state as an anthropomorphic entity that "has a brain, a heart, a conscience, and a will. No false or crude individualism stays its mighty hand."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 71; Heffron, "Nation-Building for a Venerable South," 43. According to Daniel Coit Gilman, Congress had dispensed citizenship to African Americans, white churches had given them the Gospel, and philanthropists were presenting them with education. "Thus we may say that, in this country, the black man is receiving or has received through the white man three great benefits—political freedom, the Christian religion, and the opportunity to acquire knowledge." Gilman, "A Study in Black and White," *Launching of a University*, 331.

<sup>58</sup> E. A. Alderman, "The Child and the State," *Proceedings of the Conference for Education in the South*, 1902, 62.

Alderman drew an explicit connection between the new American nationalism and early nineteenth-century German nationalism. He invited his fellow educators and philanthropists “to set the cap-stone” to previous efforts by establishing a system of universal education in the South. “There has been no such clear call to duty and to bravery,” he added, “to courage and to strength,” since “Stein and Fichte called the sons of Germany to rally around the Fatherland, and to lead her, radiant and prosperous, into the family of nations.”<sup>59</sup> Given the indispensable role of the family—in the view of educational philanthropists—as the national foundation, their Anglo-Saxonist views of American family life came sharply into play at this point. As Amory Dwight Mayo had earlier asserted, “the Family, the church and the state are not separate institutions, but the same people, acting as parents, churchmen, and citizens for the complete education of the new generation of young Americans.”<sup>60</sup> Most leaders of the education movement considered African American family life to be congenitally immoral and incapable of producing virtuous citizens. Additionally, the strategy of promoting improved racial relations through improved white education—along with the focus on industrial education that underscored the presumed moral inadequacy of African Americans—joined with ongoing disfranchisement efforts in southern states, accompanied by lynching and race riots, to exclude African Americans from national life.

This view of Anglo-Saxon nationality and family life blended smoothly with Alderman’s view of history that emphasized race evolution theory with its connotations of race infancy among non-white peoples. Alderman argued that it was “the constitution of human society” into which he was born that bred him into a civilized and gentle man,

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>60</sup> A. D. Mayo, “The new education—The Christian Education,” *Proceedings of the First Capon Springs Conference*, 1898, 15.

and it was precisely this overlapping role of the “constitution” as the foundation for both national character and national law with which education philanthropists were concerned. At one level, “constitution” referred to the intestinal fortitude of an individual. At another, it referred to the moral character of society. Finally, it referred also to the national document, the Constitution of the United States of America. They insisted that it should be a pure, virtuous, white constitution. “Otherwise,” Alderman told his fellow reformers, “my share of the good things in life would be a stone cave and a flint axe, and I would be a naked savage dancing in the moonlight.”<sup>61</sup> White supremacy, in this sense, was not so much the outgrowth of racial hatred; rather it was the outgrowth of patriotism—Anglo-Saxon purity as the national foundation.

Robert C. Ogden stood at the pivot linking education philanthropy to big business and “the national life.” To Ogden, however, this nationalism was not created but revealed as “an advent to the world and an Epiphany to our County.” He explained the concentration of capital and productive forces into a “community of interests” that congealed shared values into material form. “And so, while the new century creates nothing, it lifts the veil and reveals a gigantic life—a life that growing silently in wide diffusion was not known, understood, nor appreciated until the laws of finance and commerce breathed into it the breath of larger organized life.” Historians have long understood the turn of the century as a watershed of national organization. Whether explained as the rise of a bureaucratic middle class, the reform and rationalization of the Army and Civil Service, or the joining of “island communities” by railroad and telegraph

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

into a national system, this “advent” described by Robert C. Ogden redefined the mode in which the nation imagined itself.<sup>62</sup>

To fully appreciate the significance of this new racially defined nationalism, one should consider it within the context of African American disfranchisement in the South. In 1895 Mississippi disfranchised its black population through a constitutional convention. Louisiana followed in 1898, and in 1900 North Carolina eliminated the black vote through constitutional amendment. Alabama and Virginia enacted disfranchisement amendments in 1901–1902, followed by Georgia in 1908. The remaining southern states accomplished the same end through poll taxes and other means.<sup>63</sup> Edwin A. Alderman stated the position of the Southern Education Board on African American civil rights succinctly: “To emphasize his political rights is to put the emphasis in the wrong place, for, as a race, he is now unfit for political power.” Alderman did not stop at disfranchisement but insisted that African Americans must also be excluded from white society. “This is not race prejudice,” he assured the conference. “It is simply race

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<sup>62</sup> Ogden, “Annual Address of the President,” *Proceedings of the Conference for Education in the South, 1902*, 12; Weibe, *Search for Order*; Stephen Skroneck, *Building a New American State*.

<sup>63</sup> Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 321. Benedict Anderson argues that the rise of print culture enabled society to think in terms of “homogenous empty time” through which people and historical events moved simultaneously. This way of thinking joined with the peregrinations of Creole functionaries whose administrative traveling helped define national territory as distinct both from the metropole and adjoining colonial territories to give rise to eighteenth-century nationalism. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2000, revised ed., first published Verso, 1983), 22–36, 47–65. If one accepts this argument, one must also accept the implied premise that, to some extent, consciousness is linked to material culture. What Ogden says above can be explained by applying Anderson’s theoretical model to the Gilded Age. Just as the peregrinations of Creole functionaries defined national boundaries in the early nationalist period, so did the railroads intensify the peregrinations of the managerial class that made up the ranks of philanthropic boards in the Gilded Age. In this light, the telegraph can be thought of as enabling instant and virtual peregrinations that, together with rail travel and the urban-industrial transformation, gave rise to a heightened and intensified sense of nationalism at the turn of the century. Ogden concludes, “this new nationalism is material,” drawing an explicit connection between the urban-industrial transformation of material culture and the rise of the new nationalism as a mode of thought. Ogden, “Annual Address of the President,” *Proceedings of the Conference for Education in the South, 1902*, 12.

consciousness, and his [the Negro's] growth can proceed on no other hypothesis."<sup>64</sup> This "race consciousness," the commitment to Anglo-Saxon purity, was a fundamental element of the new nationalism.

The new nationalism and its corollary of race consciousness fit neatly with theories of citizenship based on the doctrine of race infancy. Alderman reprised conventional understanding with his declaration, "The negro race is a child race, backward in its training and inferior in type to the race which surrounds it. The problem," he continued, "is to apply to this backward child race, slowly reaching up after the essentials of modern civilization, the agencies which will enable it to achieve real freedom and real usefulness." Alderman then defined freedom as self-sacrificing, the willingness to delay self-gratification, and a sound understanding of citizenship. "The negro must grow into this freedom," he cautioned, "for he is an American citizen."<sup>65</sup> Jim Crow, in this sense, implemented a point of view that recognized African Americans as citizens who had not yet "grown into [their] freedom." Through such convoluted reasoning, the Southern Education Board recognized African Americans as citizens whose rights were largely limited to the theoretical and the potential, realizable at some unspecified future date.

Such rhetoric illustrates the common goals of the civilizing mission and the liberal state. The liberal state, it was widely believed, could only exist if its citizens were directed by an internalized moral code based on an individual work ethic and respect for private property. In other words, self-government requires governing the self. Therefore, liberal-minded educators such as the white president of historically black Tougaloo

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<sup>64</sup> Alderman, "The Child and the State," 60–61.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

University, F. G. Woodworth, suggested teaching “such as will conduce to a truer citizenship—a right conception of the duties and of the rights of the citizen.” Woodworth recognized disfranchisement as a temporary expedient, but temporary only in the sense of the long view. “Though having little political power at present *and probably not to have any large degree of it for many decades* [emphasis added], the negro will become a more prominent factor in civic life as he increases in property and develops in character.” Woodworth predicted that because of “the suffrage restrictions requiring education and tax-paying, the younger generation will come into the suffrage in a gradual way.”<sup>66</sup> Under the conditions of the New South, consolidating white power was a significant ingredient in the recipe for a modern, liberal nation-state.

Paying homage to white supremacy also served to inoculate educational philanthropists, to some extent, from charges that they were undermining the racial order of the New South. Some argued that removing African Americans from politics would allow education reform to proceed apace, uninhibited by the Negro question. Edwin A. Alderman argued that fear, among white leaders, of “negro domination” had impeded education reform in the South. Charles W. Dabney attributed the South’s broad political neglect of public infrastructure to the memory of Reconstruction-era corruption and venality. Hamilton W. Marble, editor of *Outlook*, said of the education movement “This is the beginning of the real reconstruction.” This “real reconstruction” was led by white

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<sup>66</sup> F. G. Woodworth, “Some Suggestions as to the Kind of Education Needed for the Negro Race,” *Proceedings of the Third Capon Springs Conference, 1900*, 37.

southerners and concerned itself with education rather than African American civil rights.<sup>67</sup> The “real reconstruction” was Jim Crow.

But excluding black southerners from political power meant that black education enjoyed less actual representation in the marketplace of ideas. African Americans were left with virtual representation by white paternalists who were themselves on the wane in southern politics. A new generation of white southerners whose outlook was more white supremacist than paternalist was taking up the reins. Among the most radical of these was James K. Vardaman, the new governor of Mississippi. Booker T. Washington expressed grave concern over the election of Vardaman as an opponent of black education. “But one conclusion, it seems to me, can be drawn” he wrote to Oswald Garrison Villard. “The majority of white people in Mississippi oppose Negro education of any character.” Washington and Francis Jackson Garrison both saw an explicit connection between disfranchisement and Vardaman’s election on an anti-black education platform. Washington wrote members of the Southern Education Board asking them to take a stand against Vardaman’s position, but the board’s own ranks were swelling with the new breed of white supremacists. The moderate positions of Curry, Baldwin, and Frissell were giving way to more radical ones. George T. Winston, a speaker at the 1901 conference, had introduced the radical strain into conference proceedings, saying, “The most undeveloped race on the globe, the most childlike and helpless, cannot exist in hostile competition with the most highly developed, the most masterful, the all-conquering

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<sup>67</sup> Alderman, “The Child and the State,” *Proceedings of the Conference for Education in the South, 1902*, 37; Dabney, “The Public School Problem in the South,” *Ibid.*, 1901, 28; Hamilton W. Marble, “Cooperation in Educational Effort,” *Ibid.*, 1902, 64–65.

Anglo-Saxon race.”<sup>68</sup> It is little wonder, given the explicit role of education in qualifying black southerners for future voting rights, that race radicals would attack black education in their desire to prevent African Americans from acquiring the franchise. Furthermore, the political environment that favored such a hostile stance also caused those who held moderate positions to either hold their tongues or to couch their own goals in racist rhetoric.

From the philanthropists’ point of view, the education movement was a success. Between 1903 and 1909 total annual expenditures for public education in southern states, white and black, increased dramatically. Average school terms were lengthened by a month or more, and per capita expenditures, on average, improved by a factor of three. During this same period, however, these resources were increasingly allocated on the basis of racial discrimination. Per capita spending favored whites by a ratio of about six-to-one. White teacher salaries were approximately two-and-half times greater than African American teacher salaries, and teacher-student ratios were about twice as high in black classrooms as in white classrooms. Secondary education was reserved almost entirely for white students, especially in rural areas, and state support for Negro colleges displayed extreme racial discrimination.<sup>69</sup>

The discourse of Negro uplift had been intimately linked with the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, which was itself part and parcel of the Anglo-Saxon myth. In the

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<sup>68</sup> BTW to Oswald Garrison Villard, August 31, 1903, in Harlan ed., *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, VII, 273; BTW to Francis Garrison Jackson, September 1, 1903, *Ibid.*, 274–275, 274 n.3; George T. Winston, “Industrial Training in Relation to the Negro Problem,” *Proceedings of the Fourth Conference for Education in the South*, 1901, 106. On the schism between pre-1900 paternalists and post-1900 white supremacists—sometimes referred to as “race radicals,” see Glenda Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 63–64; Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 285–86. For James K. Vardaman’s opposition to black education, see Albert D. Kirwan, *Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi Politics, 1876–1925* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1951), 144–61.

<sup>69</sup> Harlan, *Separate and Unequal*, 248–58.



Victorian mind, Anglo-Saxons, since the beginning of Christendom, had been ordained by God to spearhead the advance of civilization over the globe. For two thousand years, the “Anglo-Saxon race” had been evolving from its Germanic origins into the most advanced and civilized “race” on the globe. Furthermore, from the Victorian perspective, Anglo-Saxon blood and republican institutions lived in mutual symbiosis. If one became corrupted, the other was sure to fail and, with it, the hope of achieving God’s divine will for mankind.

In keeping with this line of thought, Emancipation, together with Reconstruction-era black voting rights, had made the education of black southerners a moral imperative. The purpose of black education in the South, from 1867 to about 1898, had been to pull African Americans up the evolutionary ladder as rapidly as possible in an effort to offset the corrupting influence of “Negro immorality” upon Anglo-Saxon blood and institutions. However, the implications of congenital African American immorality imbedded within the discourse of Negro uplift also helped propel the logic of the white supremacy movement that led to disfranchisement, lynching, and race riots. The effect of this movement, among other things, was to exclude blacks from the formal exercise of political power.

The white supremacy movement was carried out concurrently with a virulent surge of nationalism that carried with it the central tenet of Anglo-Saxon purity. The “purification” of politics through disfranchisement, the hardening of *de jure* segregation, and the intense consolidation of capital, markets, and production, constituted the main pillars of the new nationalism. Vast changes in the material landscape occasioned a shift in modes of consciousness that made it possible to imagine the nation as a unified body

and government as the expression of the national will. In the minds of the new nationalists, the national “constitution,” which represented both the body politic and the organic basis of law, was—and at all costs must remain—Anglo-Saxon.

The interlocking directorate of corporate education philanthropy conceived of the movement for universal education in the South as a nationalist project. And at this time, nationalism and white supremacy were two sides of the same coin. The leadership of corporate educational philanthropy was consolidated largely under the direction of the Southern Education Board, for which the Alabama clergyman Edgar Gardner Murphy was general secretary. Few men spoke with such clarity and insight as Murphy about the constitution of the new nationalism, and it is to that the following chapter will be devoted.

## Chapter 5

## The Last Refuge of Gradualism

Where are the fifteen thousand Negroes imported into Great Britain before the “trade” was abolished? Gone! Where are those taken to Portugal and Spain by pious (?) Prince Henry “in order that they might be made Christians”? Gone! Not a trace. Where are the thousands which Carthage, before the Punic Wars, furnished Rome? An occasional suspicious excess in the richness of Neapolitan tint is seemingly the sole remainder. Paul B. Barringer

In early January of 1900<sup>1</sup> Edgar Gardner Murphy, at Booker T. Washington’s invitation, attended the dedication of the Armstrong-Slater Building at Tuskegee Institute. While there, again at Washington’s prompting, Murphy delivered an extemporaneous speech on his plans to convene the Southern Society for Consideration of the Race Problems in Relationship to the South. The purpose of the society was to allow a frank discussion of the Negro question by enlightened men, mainly southerners, outside of formal politics. Murphy planned to hold a conference in May, which he intended to be the first of many on the topic. Present at the address were J. L. M. Curry, Hollis Burke Frissell, William H. Baldwin, and Robert C. Ogden, who were so impressed with Murphy that they invited him to discuss his project in a midnight meeting they had previously scheduled. Participants in the midnight meeting at Tuskegee agreed that Washington, perhaps along with a few other prominent blacks, would appear on the conference program. However, after meeting later with conservatives in Montgomery, Murphy determined that the program would be all white.<sup>2</sup>

On January 9 Murphy had written to Washington soliciting his support for the conference. He invited the Tuskegean to confer with the executive committee but not to

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<sup>1</sup> Most likely either the tenth or eleventh.

<sup>2</sup> Hugh C. Bailey, *Edgar Gardner Murphy: Gentle Progressive* (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami, 1968), 30–33; Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader*, 293; Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black and White*, 145–46.

appear on the program because “We must secure the interest, confidence and support of the white people in the South, or the conference will be unrepresentative and valueless.” This, he continued, should not be a problem because “it is impossible for us to deal with this question as though the interests of the whites and the blacks were in conflict.”<sup>3</sup> It would not have been lost on Washington that an all-white program represented the conference organizers’ idealized vision for Alabama’s social order: white men debating policy on the stage while women sat in the audience, and blacks were relegated to the Jim Crow gallery.

Nevertheless, Washington remained optimistic about the conference’s prospects. He offered to Francis Jackson Garrison, son of abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, the explanation that had been offered to him: in order to be effective, the conference would first have to win over conservative whites. By that time Washington had met with other conference leaders and was convinced that their motives were well placed. “Almost nothing in the last dozen years has served to give me so much hope and encouragement as this movement,” he wrote in early February. Two days later he urged his old friend and patron Hollis B. Frissell to address the conference, telling him, “I do not believe any movement that has been started in the South is so pregnant of good as this one.” Washington allowed to Frissell that the first meeting would be “conservative” in tone, but he credited to the conservative members the likelihood of the conference’s success.<sup>4</sup>

Garrison was much less sanguine about the conference’s prospects. He believed the “conservative tone” of the deliberations would thwart their efforts to “do good” and predicted that the “fire-breathing element” would gain control of the proceedings. He

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<sup>3</sup> Murphy to BTW, January 9, 1900, Harlan ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, V, 406–407, 407 n.1.

<sup>4</sup> BTW to Francis Jackson Garrison, February 3, 1900, *ibid.*, 428–29; BTW to Hollis B. Frissell, February 5, 1900, *ibid.*, 430–31.

further suggested that the organizing ministers, all linked to wealthy conservative congregations, would be unwilling to undertake bold leadership on black civil rights. By late March it was becoming clear that Garrison had been correct. Murphy had recently given a speech in Philadelphia in which he advocated modifying the Fifteenth Amendment to restrict Afro-southern voting. Washington reacted to the speech with consternation, and Murphy was obliged to mollify him by insisting that the views he espoused in Philadelphia were not those of the conference and by inviting Washington to publicly disagree with him on the matter. Henry C. Davis, a former abolitionist who had attended the midnight meeting at Tuskegee, assisted Murphy in bringing Washington back around, urging him not to oppose the conference and to remain in the Southern Society's "kitchen cabinet."<sup>5</sup>

Washington grew increasingly pessimistic about the conference, remarking to Garrison in late April, "I hope it will accomplish some good but I confess my faith has been shaken in it somewhat recently." Yet Murphy skillfully manipulated Washington into pressuring white moderates to participate in the program. Murphy wrote to Washington that the race liberal Walter Hines Page had declined to attend the conference because he did not want to share a platform with disfranchisement speakers. Page was then replaced by the radical Paul B. Barringer, who opposed any education for blacks. If Washington did not convince his white friends (Curry and Frissell) to attend, Murphy warned, they would be replaced by anti-Negro race radicals. Washington ruefully

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<sup>5</sup> Francis Jackson Garrison to BTW, February 8, 1900, *ibid.*, 433–34; Edgar Gardner Murphy to BTW, March 28, 1900, *ibid.*, 475–78; Henry C. Davis to BTW, *ibid.*, 478–80. Edgar Gardner Murphy, "The White Man and the Negro at the South," An Address before the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, The American Society for the Extension of University Teaching, and the Civic Club of Philadelphia, Holy Trinity Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 8, 1900, Series 2, Scrapbooks, fr. 25, Edgar Gardner Murphy Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Microfilm, [henceforth referred to as EGM Papers].

confided to his long-time confederate T. Thomas Fortune, “We shall have to be prepared for some very radical and I think unwise things in connection with the race conference at Montgomery.”<sup>6</sup>

As far as those who attended the Montgomery Race Conference were concerned, the terms of debate over black education had been reduced to the choice of industrial education or none at all. Higher education for Afro-southerners was unequivocally associated with Negro criminality, interracial (black male-white female) sex, and corrupt politics. Also by 1900 the aims of black education had been scaled back in keeping with the white supremacy movement that, since 1898, had spread like wildfire across the South. The idea that industrial education would make the franchise safe in the hands of black southerners was muted to the point of being inaudible. The justification for educating Afro-southerners had shrunk to making their existence in the South a tolerable risk for white southerners and the social order. Whatever the motives for organizing the conference might have been for Murphy and others on the steering committee, the race conference became a forum for repeal or modification of the Fifteenth Amendment and a dress rehearsal for constitutional disfranchisement of blacks in Alabama. In addition it offered the white South’s perspective on vast changes in the culture and political economy of turn-of-the-century America. The “new nationalism,”<sup>7</sup> discussed in the previous chapter, referred to the transformation of United States national identity from a rights-based, individualist paradigm to a regulative, corporate paradigm. Simultaneously, the emancipatory aims of abolitionists and women’s suffragists had segued into the more

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<sup>6</sup> BTW to Francis Jackson Garrison, April 30, 1900, Harlan, *Booker T. Washington Papers*, VI, 490; Edgar Gardner Murphy to BTW, *ibid.*, 448–49; BTW to T. Thomas Fortune, May 5, 1900, *ibid.*, 497.

<sup>7</sup> The “new nationalism” as a concept, should not be confused with the motif of Theodore Roosevelt’s later presidential campaign, which he called the “New Nationalism”.

ameliorative aims of the social gospel and the settlement house.<sup>8</sup> Within this transformation, industrial education—no longer the vanguard in cutting-edge pedagogy and Negro uplift—became the last refuge of civil rights gradualism.

Edgar Gardner Murphy, founder of the Southern Society, is perhaps the best-known proponent of the social gospel in the South. Born August 31, 1869, in Fort Smith, Arkansas, Murphy was reared by his resourceful mother in San Antonio, Texas, after his father abandoned the family. Under the guidance of the local Episcopal rector, Murphy began his own studies for the priesthood in 1885 with a scholarship at the University of the South at Sewanee. There he fell under the powerful influence of the prominent Old South apologist William Porcher Dubose. Afterward Murphy attended the General Theological Seminary in New York and supplemented his lessons there with lectures by Nicholas Murray Butler at Columbia University. Murphy's first appointment as minister-in-charge was at Christ Church in the Texas border town of Laredo where he ministered to an impoverished and ethnically diverse laity. There he authored and pushed through a controversial resolution that condemned the burning of a black man accused of raping a white woman. Murphy argued that, while the man should have died for his crime, the lynching constituted "an orgy of torture and a festival of agony." He warned that such acts elicited sympathy for the lynching victim rather than for the rape victim. His heavily

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<sup>8</sup> According to Ralph E. Luker, "Hampton and the Sea Islands became the setting for the final act of antislavery's crusade and the first act of the social gospel's redemptive enterprise. In the crucible of that experiment, the immediacy of abolition's demand was transmuted into the evolutionary vision of the social gospels kingdom-building." Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black and White*, 10.

nuanced position on this episode—taken at some risk for a young minister on his first assignment—underscores Murphy’s complicated understanding of race and social order.<sup>9</sup>

For three years, beginning in 1893, Murphy served as rector of St. Paul’s in Chillicothe, Ohio, where he challenged the city government to enforce local liquor ordinances. There he also helped establish a black Episcopal church and preached at their first service on February 22, 1897. The following year Murphy became Rector of St. John’s Parish in Montgomery, Alabama. Soon after he established Neighborhood House, a settlement home in a section of western Montgomery heavily populated by white mill workers, that featured a Sunday school along with instruction in hygiene and self-help. In keeping with what Ralph E. Luker has described as Murphy’s “conservative separatism,” he extended a paternalistic ministry to black parishioners who had previously been ignored by the church. Later, he helped establish the Church of the Good Shepherd for Montgomery’s black Episcopalians. Following the 1900 Montgomery Race Conference, Murphy sought and received from Andrew Carnegie \$50,000 for constructing a library there. In 1901, with the discreet assistance of Booker T. Washington, Murphy gained a position as secretary of the Southern Education Board with a yearly salary of \$3,000.<sup>10</sup> In that position he became a full-fledged member of the interlocking directorate of corporate education philanthropy.

Murphy brought to education philanthropy and to the racialized politics of Alabama a blend of social gospel and political thought that he formally expressed in two

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<sup>9</sup> Bailey, *Edgar Gardner Murphy: Gentle Progressive*, 1–10; Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black and White*, 282; Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 415–16. Edgar Gardner Murphy, “Resolution on ‘Paris Lynching,’” Series 1, frs. 2–3, EGM Papers.

<sup>10</sup> Bailey, *Edgar Gardner Murphy: Gentle Progressive*, 11–147; Luker, *Social Gospel in Black and White*, 282; Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 416–17; BTW to William Henry Baldwin, September 11, 1903, Harlan ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, VI, 282.



volumes of essays, *The Problems of the Present South* (1904) and *The Basis of Ascendancy* (1911), along with speeches and letters collected in his own papers and those of Booker T. Washington.<sup>11</sup> Murphy devised a complex theory of racial politics based on his conception of the historical relationship between the Old South and the New. The Old South he divided into participants (slaveholders) and non-participants (slaves and common-class whites). But the democratic impulse, he explained, constantly presses mankind toward progress, and this impulse broke up the southern aristocracy by means of slave emancipation. Because of Reconstruction-era antipathy between former slaves and former slave owners, planters were unable to ally themselves with their former bondmen and looked instead to common-class whites. This “political and industrial reorganization of the South” Murphy called the “new democracy.” But, he lamented, the “new democracy” lacked the sensitivity toward black southerners Murphy imagined within the social order of the Old South.<sup>12</sup>

This “new democracy,” as Murphy described it, called for the unification of elite and common-class whites, along with the exclusion of black southerners, in what

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<sup>11</sup> The chronological placement of the first volume suggests that the ideas contained in it should correspond closely with those Murphy held in 1900 at the time of the Montgomery Race Conference. For that reason, *The Problems of the Present South* constitutes much of the basis for the following analysis.

<sup>12</sup> Edgar Gardner Murphy, “The Old in the New,” in *Problems of the Present South: A Discussion of Certain of the Educational, Industrial and Political Issues in the Southern States*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1904), 13–16; Murphy, “The South and the Negro,” *ibid.*, 167–70 (quote, p. 169). Murphy’s division of Old South social classes does not allow for the sort of fine distinctions among planters, yeomen, and common-class whites found in recent works of history such as Lacey K. Ford, *The Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds*; Charles C. Bolton, *Poor Whites of the Antebellum South: Tenants and Laborers in Central North Carolina and Northeast Mississippi* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994); and Stephen A. West, “Minutemen, Yeomen, and the Mobilization for Secession in the South Carolina Upcountry,” *Journal of Southern History* 71 (February 2005), 75–104. Nor did Murphy take into account the complex and mutually supportive relationships between planters, smallholders, and landless laborers described in J. William Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry in a Slave Society: White Liberty and Black Slavery in Augusta’s Hinterlands* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1985).

historian Joel Williamson has called Volksgeistian conservatism.<sup>13</sup> What Murphy meant by the “new democracy” was the subsuming of former class divisions under “the conscious unity of race.” With this idea, Murphy displayed a sophisticated understanding of the process of identity formation and the necessity of an opposing other against which cultural, racial, and national identities are constructed. “The alienation of the negro and the menace of negro power not only eliminated the negro from the attempted reorganization of the government,” Murphy wrote, “but operated also as a constraining force to draw together the separate classes of the stronger race, and fuse them—men of ignorance with men of culture—into a racial unity far more powerful, far more effective, than the South had known before.” The “new democracy” entailed a surge of common-class political power Murphy regarded as “ruthless,” referring no doubt to lynching and other forms of political terrorism. However, he concluded, such violence was incidental to—not constitutive of—“the solidarity that has been the broader ground of the ‘new democracy’, and which has sought a larger social unity upon the basis of unity of race.”<sup>14</sup> Murphy saw no relationship between racial violence, which he abhorred, and the exclusionary foundations of the “new democracy.”

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<sup>13</sup> Volksgeistian conservatism presumes a spirit of the folk, infused by God into the people and forming the cultural basis for nationalism. In order for the *volksgeist* to function as a channel for God’s will working through the nation, the “folk” must maintain racial and cultural purity. Williamson finds in Murphy’s historicism the working out of a Hegelian dialectic: the thesis of the Old South meets the antithesis of Reconstruction and yields the synthesis of the “new democracy”. Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 414–21. Volksgeistian conservatism, as described by Williamson, has much in common with the “conservative separatism” described by Ralph E. Luker. Luker finds in Murphy’s historicism “an anti-individualistic organicism” rooted in the human striving toward the realization of divine will: the theological foundation of the social gospel. The Causcasian and Negro “races,” in order to fulfill the particular divine destiny set aside for each “race,” must pursue their destinies separately. Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black and White*, 282–89.

<sup>14</sup>Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 1–2; Murphy, “The Old in the New,” *Problems of the Present South*, 16–17 (quotes 1, 3 and 4: p. 17; quote 2: p. 16).

Murphy explained organized white-on-black racial violence as the bastard offspring of Reconstruction. Disfranchisement of Confederate leaders, in his view, had denuded the South of its best leadership and left the region in the less capable hands of their sons. “It was from their ranks,” he wrote, “that the more violent measures of the Ku Klux Klan too often gained support.”<sup>15</sup> Slaveholders, representing the best of the Old South, had maintained close and affectionate ties with “the old-time negro” who represented “the negro at his best.” Racial tension in the present, Murphy surmised, stemmed from “the fact that a white world which was not at its best is looking at the negro at his worst.” The burden of the white South, as Murphy saw it, was to recapture through improved white leadership the reciprocal paternalism and deference of the Old South as portrayed in the nostalgia of novelists such as Thomas Nelson Page and theologians such as William Porcher Dubose.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 9–10

<sup>16</sup> Murphy, “The South and the Negro,” *ibid.*, 171. Thomas Nelson Page’s enormously popular stories and novels presented the Old South as a veritable Camelot peopled by chivalrous white knights and loyal black retainers. His characters lived in the New South, however, where the former knights struggled to maintain *noblesse oblige*, and modern-day retainers remembered the days before the Civil War as the best they had ever known. Kimball King, Introduction to Thomas Nelson Page, *In Ole Virginia or Marse Chan and Other Stories* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969; first collected in 1887), ix–xxxvi. W. A. Guerry, Chaplain of the University of the South at Sewanee where Murphy had previously studied, spoke at the Montgomery Race Conference and specifically commended Page for his accurate depiction of African American character. At the race conference he also remarked, “These strong personal ties between master and slave that survive to the present, and which nothing but death can sever or destroy, grew up not so much out of the institution of slavery as they did out of the superiority of the white race, joined to that kindness and consideration which has always characterized the southern people.” Guerry, “The Negro in Relation to Religion,” in *Race Problems of the South: Report of the Annual Conference Held Under the Auspices of The Southern Society for the Promotion of the Study of Race Conditions and Problems in the South* (Richmond, Vir.: B. F. Johnson Publishing Company, 1900), 128 [henceforth referred to as *The Southern Society, Race Problems in the South*]. Edgar Gardner Murphy’s mentor at Sewanee, William Porcher Dubose, was a Confederate veteran who identified strongly with the Old South’s slaveholding class. Ralph E. Luker says of Dubose, “when the War destroyed the Confederacy, the Church became the institutional framework of meaning through which he would channel his loyalty to the South and give expression to the values of the disestablished plantation elite.” Luker, *A Southern Tradition in Theology and Social Criticism, 1830–1930: The Religious Liberalism and Social Conservatism of James Warley Miles, William Porcher Dubose and Edgar Gardner Murphy* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1984), 213–15 (quote, 215). For Dubose’s nostalgia toward his childhood on the plantation of a prominent South Carolina family and his Civil War service see Jon Alexander, ed., *William Porcher Dubose: Selected*

The genesis of that burden, according to Murphy, lay in black southerners' combined need and capacity for improvement, along with the innate superiority of white southern society. Because of their superiority, white southerners were bound by the terms of *noblesse oblige* to lead black southerners along the path of true progress. "There is a distinct assumption of the Negro's inferiority," Murphy wrote, "but there is also a distinct assumption of the negro's improvability. It is upon the basis of this double assumption that the South finds its obligation." Murphy took exception to the charge that the slaveholding class, following emancipation, had abdicated responsibility for their former bondmen. They were meeting their responsibilities, he countered, under the terms of New South *noblesse oblige*.<sup>17</sup>

Murphy found in public schools the essential expression of the "new democracy" and the burden of the South. "Democracy in its essence has arrived when the rich man and the poor man, the man of the professions and the man of trade, the privileged and the unprivileged, unite to build the common school for the children of the state." Educating common-class whites was necessary to the "democratization of the South," a process that unified white southerners across class lines and excluded blacks. Murphy explained that it was necessary to exclude blacks from the democratizing process of public schools because "the point of helpful contact must not be placed upon the masses of the young, and the leverage of interracial cooperation must not seek its fulcrum upon the tender

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*Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 5–8. On the use of nostalgic recollections of the Old South to solidify racial boundaries in the New South—especially as portrayed through the fiction of Thomas Nelson Page and Joel Chandler Harris—see Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890–1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 43–67.

<sup>17</sup> Murphy, "The Old in the New," *Problems of the Present South*, 3–8 (quote, p. 7).

receptivities and the unguarded immaturities of childhood.” In other words, the shoulders of white southern schoolchildren were simply too small to bear the white man’s burden.<sup>18</sup>

Maintaining the uncorrupted (and unburdened) status of white southern youth, Murphy argued, was a fundamental obligation of southern leaders. “The necessities must precede the charities,” he wrote. “The primary necessity of life in its every stratum of development is the preservation of its own genius and its own gains.” This rationale allowed Murphy to focus on the need for educating white southerners while simultaneously distinguishing their illiterate status from the presumed moral degeneracy of unschooled blacks. White southerners displayed “the illiteracy not of the degenerate, but simply the untutored. Our unlettered white people are native American in stock, virile in faculty and capacity, free in spirit, unbroken, uncorrupted, fitted to learn and worthy of the best that their country and their century may bring them.”<sup>19</sup> To risk compromising the moral (racial) purity of unschooled white southerners was as repugnant to Murphy as neglecting their educations altogether.

Murphy echoed resentment displayed by J. L. M. Curry and other educational leaders toward the philanthropic largesse devoted to black education. Like Curry and Frissell, Murphy equated the educational philanthropy of northern missionary societies with the subjugation of white southerners. He found it “to be inspired more largely by hatred of the [southern] white man than by love of the black man.” Notwithstanding his estimation of unschooled white southerners as franchise-worthy, Murphy alerted his readers that thousands of illiterate and barely literate whites were already voting. For those and for the rising generation of whites, however, there was no equivalent of Booker

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 16–18 (quote 1, p. 18; quote 2, p. 16); Murphy “The Schools of the People,” *ibid.*, 35–36.

<sup>19</sup> Murphy, “The Schools of the People,” *The Present South*, 45–46.

T. Washington to teach them how to read and work. Murphy perceived that this situation caused interracial conflict and white opposition to black education. For that reason, he agreed with Curry and the Southern Education Board that the emphasis of philanthropy should be shifted in favor of white education to offset the advantages “outside aid” had provided to blacks. “I can well understand how within the heart of the mother of a poor white boy of the South there might arise a question as she looks upon the marvelous education facilities of a Tuskegee: How can I gain such things for my son?—Must he become a Negro?” This question lay at the heart of the “new democracy”: what was to become of impoverished, rural, white southerners whose economic status had come to resemble more and more closely that of rural impoverished black southerners—must they become Negroes?<sup>20</sup>

Like Edwin A. Alderman, Murphy perceived a changed role for government in light of the “new democracy” and the “new nationalism.” Furthermore, he envisioned a reciprocal responsibility connecting the school to the state in mutual symbiosis: “The State-supported school must give the state support.” This relationship he understood to be

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<sup>20</sup>Edgar Gardner Murphy, “The Freeman’s Progress in the South” *The Outlook* (July 1901), Series 2, fr. 723, EGM Papers; Murphy, “The White Man and the Negro at the South,” An Address before the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, The American Society for the Extension of University Teaching, and the Civic Club of Philadelphia, Holy Trinity Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 8, 1900, Series 2, Scrapbook, frs. 25–25, EGM Papers. On the declining status of white southerners during this time see Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 176–88. Barbara J. Fields, reflecting on Woodward’s treatment of “the Negro question” in *Origins* writes that Woodward “recognizes that the essence of the situation was power and the contest over it: not just the contest (grotesquely unequal as it was) between white and Afro-American people but also that among white people themselves.” Fields, “Origins of the New South and the Negro Question,” in John B. Boles and Bethany L. Johnson, eds., *Origins of the New South Fifty Years Later: The Continuing Influence of a Historical Classic* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 263–64. Although it might appear at first blush that Woodward’s point—the disfranchisement movement in Mississippi was carried out in an attempt to equalize power between white-majority counties and black-majority counties where planters commanded much of the black vote—might seem to militate against Murphy’s conception of a “new democracy”, Woodward’s extended analysis also includes racial delineation as a lubricant for sharp inequities among white southerners: for the poor white, at least he wasn’t a Negro.

reflective of a larger dialectic between politics and the people. Murphy described politics as an expression of the national will that, once expressed, then seeps back into the collective national spirit or character in the form of a national consciousness. It was this mutually sustaining reciprocity that allowed him to conclude, “The stars in their courses seem to fight for those who believe that the function of government is not merely the function of a national police, is not merely negative, corrective, regulative, but positive and affirmative.”<sup>21</sup> The “new democracy” in the South was but a piece, though a large and important one, of the “new nationalism.”

Murphy’s vision for southern nationalism shared with that of Alderman and others the necessity for strict maintenance of Anglo-Saxon purity within the body politic. He appended to his collection of essays in *The Present South* one written by James Bryce, a British scholar of America’s Negro question who would later become England’s ambassador to the United States. Bryce began with an assertion that “Advanced and Backward” races tend to intermix to produce national unity. However, while races similar “in physical aspect and structure” produce a “mixture equal or superior to either of the progenitor,” he notes that “the mixture of races very dissimilar . . . especially . . . European whites and blacks, tends rather to lower than to improve the resultant stock.”<sup>22</sup> Murphy concurred with Bryce and added, “Whatever the supreme interest of the Negro race, it is obvious that the supreme interest of the white race is the interest of racial purity necessarily inconsistent with the slightest compromise in the direction of racial fusion.” Furthermore, Murphy wrote, “the racial integrity of the Caucasian is threatened, most

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<sup>21</sup> Murphy, “The Schools of the People,” in *The Present South*, 48; Murphy, “Culture and Democracy,” *ibid.*, 263; *ibid.*, 246.

<sup>22</sup> James Bryce, “On the Relations of Advanced and Backward Races,” Appendix C, in Murphy, *The Present South*, 330–31 (quote 1); Murphy, “Culture and Democracy,” *ibid.*, 271 (quote 2), 273 (quote 3).

seriously and insidiously, not by the Negro but by the degraded white man.” By “degraded white man” he did not mean the bulk of rural and impoverished white southerners who he believed to be merely “untutored” and not “degraded.” Presumably he defined degenerate whites as those who engaged in sexual congress with African Americans.

Just as Murphy saw the “new democracy” as the southern aspect of the “new nationalism,” so did he view the South as the geographical locus of the Negro Question, which he viewed as a national problem. The problem, according to Murphy, began with emancipation, and then “From being a problem that received a wrong solution [Reconstruction] in one quarter of our country, it has become a problem for all the quarters of our country that has yet received no ultimate solution whatever.” It was national, he wrote, because it affected the national character and the well being of the nation as a whole. “The national welfare is the larger context of every local problem; and while the negro problem finds its locality in the South, it must find its ultimate adjustment—if it ever receives adjustment—in the conscience, the wisdom, the knowledge, the patience, the courage of the nation.”<sup>23</sup> It was a national problem and required a national solution. White southerners, however, would determine what this solution was to be.

Murphy displayed in public a deep pessimism toward the “Negro question” that J. L. M. Curry had expressed only in private. “I have not hesitated to speak,” he wrote, “of the presence of the negro in American life as a problem.” Like Curry, Murphy saw the physical presence of black southerners as the challenge. He also shared with Curry an

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<sup>23</sup> Edgar Gardner Murphy, “Mr. Murphy’s Address at Tuskegee,” n.d. [Jan. 1900], Series 2, fr. 689, EGM Papers, (quote 1); Murphy, “The South and the Negro,” in *The Present South*, 160 (quote 2); Murphy, “Culture and Democracy,” *ibid.*, 261.



essentialist view “of the two races between whom the difference in color is perhaps the most superficial of the distinctions which divide them.” Finally, like Curry, Murphy appealed to gendered symbols of social order to illustrate these differences and show why white southerners were fit for suffrage while black southerners were not. “Manhood, in a democracy, is the essential basis of participation.” Unlike whiteness, manhood could be achieved through industrial education, and Murphy considered manhood the primary qualification for the franchise. He concluded that, although black voting rights were a casualty of the “new democracy,” their demise need not be permanent or universal. Some blacks, such as Booker T. Washington, were allowed to vote on the basis that they had achieved sufficient manhood.<sup>24</sup>

These were the views Edgar Gardner Murphy brought to the Southern Society and the Montgomery Race Conference. The Southern Society’s stated purpose was to bring together varied and conflicting views concerning the Negro Question and to disseminate such views to the reading public broadly construed. “The object of this publication,” stated the formal report that resulted from the conference, “is to create, within the South itself, a popular literature on the subject—a literature representative of the soil and the people, a literature that will interpret the South both to the world and to itself.” The conference, intended to meet in Montgomery once a year, was designed to enable leading southerners (with some northern representation) to constitute a deliberative, extra-political body for the purpose of debating the Negro Question. Considering the role of popular literature in establishing manners and morals, and in fostering a shared identity,

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<sup>24</sup> Murphy, “The Old in the New,” *ibid.*, 19 (quote 3); Murphy, “The South and the Negro,” *ibid.*, 153 (quote 2), 161 (quote 1).

the aim of the Southern Society was nothing less than remaking the image of the South for both internal and external consumption.<sup>25</sup>

The conference opened on the evening of May 8, 1900, in a newly completed auditorium in downtown Montgomery, Alabama. Newspaper coverage reported that the conference was well attended. Press coverage was generally favorable, and the event had been well heralded. The program called for papers on the Negro Question in relation to the franchise, education, religion, and “the social order.” The welcoming session included an address from the mayor of Montgomery and the governor of Alabama.<sup>26</sup> The roster of speakers represented what would have been considered the “best” white men of the South, and some from the North. Their utterances reflect a cross-section of conservative white thought considering the Negro Question and the role of industrial education in resolving it.

D. Clay Lilly, Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Colored Evangelization, reprised conventional wisdom concerning African American selfhood. Lilly, like J. L. M. Curry, Horace B. Frissell, and William H. Baldwin, found “in the constitution of the Negro a moral deficiency as compared with other races.” As seen in the previous chapter, “constitution” was a term that worked on multiple levels to represent the intestinal

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<sup>25</sup> The Southern Society, *Race Problems of the South*, 5–7 (quote, p. 5). The Southern Society’s project, however miserably it might have failed, prefigured the work of William Faulkner, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and others of that loose confederation of writers known as the authors of the southern renaissance who accomplished precisely what the Southern Society set out to do: “interpret the South both to the world and to itself.” The same could be said of African American authors W. E. B. DuBois and Charles W. Chestnut. The conference and society constituted a late-modern example of the public sphere, which Jurgen Habermas describes as early-modern forums such as salons and coffee-houses where discussions of political economy could take place without fear of being interpreted as threatening to crown sovereignty. The Southern Society, by removing the deliberations from a formal political setting, hoped to foster an atmosphere of frank and practical discussion. Additionally, the racist and gendered makeup of the Society mirrors the organizers’ vision of how the public sphere should look: white and male. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).

<sup>26</sup> New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, Thursday, May 10, 1900, Second Part, p. 1. (quote); Southern Society, *Race Problems of the South*, 14–17.

fortitude of individual persons, the shared body politic of the nation, and the legal document considered the organic basis of national law. The Negro constitution, in Lilly's opinion, was wanting at all levels, social, religious, and educational. "In social life there are no standards. No line is drawn between the pure and the impure. Men and women whose lives are openly and shamefully sinful are not denied recognition in their social world. There does not seem to be light enough with them to recognize this, or if so, not strength enough to cast out the offender." Lilly, in a few short sentences, indicted the moral fabric of African American social life in a way that showed ominous portents for their political future. As with earlier prognoses delivered by educational philanthropists, the central failure of African American morality was found in household arrangements and sexuality. Lilly implied that black men and women cohabited and engaged in sexual relations outside of the institutional sanctions recognized by white observers. Whether or not such arrangements were commonplace within some black communities, the widely recognized correlation between the well-ordered family and the well-ordered state gave to Lilly's observations the power to undermine the credibility of the black franchise.<sup>27</sup>

Echoing Booker T. Washington's denunciation of most Protestant Afro-southern ministers, Lilly said of black "religious life, while they have many evidences of progress, such as considerable church property and much visible organization, it can not be denied that true religion is given a very much perverted expression by them." Although black southerners attended church probably as much as whites, Lilly found that "moral disorders among their membership are grave and abundant." What role could immoral

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<sup>27</sup> D. Clay Lilly, "The Negro in Relation to Religion," *The Southern Society, Race Problems of the South*, 118–19 (quote). On Gilded Age understandings of family and state see Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion*; Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question*; Foster, *Moral Reconstruction*, 47–71; Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis," *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 28–50.

practitioners of a “perverted” religious life play in a Christian nation? The remedy of education was limited in its efficacy, he concluded. White and African American children performed equally well in school while their minds were in the “acquisitive stage.” In later years, however, black students tended to lag. “When demands are made upon his powers of reflection, judgment, mental projection and invention, the higher and more valuable mental gifts, he is seen to be deficient.”<sup>28</sup> Lilly was convinced that while African Americans excelled at acquiring knowledge, wisdom was beyond their reach. If education could not impart to black southerners the moral discernment required of a sound “constitution,” black political power represented a clear and present danger to the “constitution” of both the national life and the law.

Attitudes such as those articulated by Lilly were made even more toxic by the growing popularity of scientific racism. Nineteenth-century social Darwinism had emphasized competition between individuals and “survival of the fittest,” but turn-of-the-century scientific racism emphasized competition between the “races” and placed biological limits upon the potential for Negro uplift. Proponents of scientific racism employed the nascent science of statistics, along with crude anthropological theories, to demonstrate that the “inferior Negro race” was fast losing ground in the competition for survival and would soon follow the American Indian and the Australian aborigine onto the trash heap of history.<sup>29</sup>

Walter F. Wilcox, Chief Statistician of the United States, represented this point of view to the race conference in Montgomery. The various races, Wilcox instructed his audience in the Montgomery auditorium, had developed their defining characteristics

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<sup>28</sup> Lilly, “The Negro in Relation to Religion,” 118 (quotes 3 and 4), 119 (quotes 1 and 2).

<sup>29</sup> Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 198–255; Haller Jr., *Outcasts from Evolution*; Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education*, 24–35; The Southern Society, *Race Problems of the South*, 152.

prior to 1500 C.E. Furthermore, the Negro race had developed its own characteristics in sub-Saharan Africa isolated from competition. In the absence of competition, Negroes did not evolve as had the Caucasians, who had developed amid fierce competition in Europe. After European explorers ended Negro isolation in Africa around 1500, African Americans were further spared competition with Caucasians by the institution of slavery. During Reconstruction, Negroes were again protected from competition by federal law, which had stacked the deck in their favor. Therefore, the Negro race had truly been competing with the Caucasian race for only a single generation. According to Wilcox's statistical analysis, the Negro population had gone into steep demographic decline during the preceding twenty years and would soon disappear altogether as a result of the unequal competition between the inferior Negro and superior Caucasian races.<sup>30</sup>

Paul B. Barringer, Professor of Medicine and Chairman of the Faculty at the University of Virginia, shared Wilcox's pessimism but expressed it in more alarming tones. Barringer agreed with Wilcox that the "Negro race" was an inferior one. In America, however, Negroes had been bred by white slaveholders into a more virile and moral type. Once freed from slavery, they rapidly reverted to their original savage and inferior type. Barringer's statistical models showed, among Negroes born into freedom, increased criminality, especially black-on-white rape. In addition to increased criminality, Negroes experienced higher death rates, lower birth rates, and an increased prevalence of disease. The chief epidemiological threat to Negroes, along with typhoid and tuberculosis, was the alarming spread of syphilis, which Barringer explained as the result of "squaw men" and sexual intercourse between blacks and "whites of a criminal class."

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<sup>30</sup> W. F. Wilcox, in *The Southern Society, Race Problems of the South*, 152–56.

In an act of poetic justice, nature was accomplishing what education could not: solving the Negro problem by shrugging off the very presence of the Negroes themselves.<sup>31</sup>

All the millions spent by philanthropists and southern governments on education and moral uplift for black southerners were wasted, Barringer concluded. Worse than wasted, efforts by whites to lift blacks up interfered with Negroes' own racial growth. It is in response to competition and stress that races develop, Barringer argued, not through the gift of educational self-help offered through philanthropic largesse. Black southerners were incapable of learning to respect the law because they had not fought and struggled for the rule of law. They could not be taught economics because conditions of life in Africa, and the slave experience as well, had not allowed for consideration of tomorrow's needs. For Barringer the "burden of the South" was not Negro uplift; rather, it was "the burden that had held her down—an animate, living, growing burden, the Negro" himself. Education, Barringer argued, could not lift the Negro up. It was the product of misguided altruism and the desperate, though needless, effort of white southerners to make the best of a bad situation.<sup>32</sup>

Emancipation, Barringer found, was not the sole cause of Negro reversion and morbidity. After the Civil War, "the Negro was duly crowned with the ballot and given control of the South. That settled it. Enmity was deliberately put between the son of the master, the only man who ever really loved the slave, and the son of the slave. The only sincerely friendly hand the Negro ever knew was perforce turned against him, and

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<sup>31</sup> Paul B. Barringer, "The Negro and the Social Order," in *The Southern Society*, "Race Problems of the South," 178–92. Barringer obtained most of his data from the Prudential Insurance Company of America's chief actuary Frederick L. Hoffman. The American Economic Association published Hoffman's "Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro" in August 1896. Therein Hoffman argued that efforts toward Negro uplift, including education, were a waste of public resources and doomed to failure because the biological destiny of the American Negro was extinction. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 249–51; Haller, Jr., *Outcasts from Evolution*, 60–68.

<sup>32</sup> Barringer, "The Negro and the Social Order," in *The Southern Society*, *Race Problems of the South*.

without it he is falling.” In a chilling turn of rhetoric that laid bare the logic of scientific racism, Barringer summed up: “There is much use this day and generation of the term ‘survival of the fittest,’ but few who use it ever stop to think of the complementary axiom, ‘the death of the unfit.’”<sup>33</sup> This grim prognosis a leading professor of medicine offered the segregated audience of the Montgomery Auditorium.

Although J. L. M. Curry and Horace B. Frissell spoke in advance of Wilcox and Barringer, it is clear that their remarks were intended as a preemptive rebuttal to coming presentations. Twice Frissell referred directly to a paper by Barringer, “The American Negro: His Past and Future,” and both Curry and Frissell were obviously familiar with the arguments of Barringer and Wilcox. Most alarming to the old paternalists were the statisticians’ conclusions that education was ineffectual in the task of Negro uplift. Both having dedicated much of their professional lives to education as a solution to the Negro Question, neither was inclined to cede the field uncontested. However, whereas Curry and Frissell in the 1880s had advanced the cause of Negro education to justify the black franchise, by 1900 there was little African American franchise remaining to justify. Their tactical retreat—from advancing black education as the answer to the Negro question, and then to advancing white education in order to more effectively propagate black education—had left them defending black education for its own sake. The means had become the end, and industrial education was no longer seen as an enabler of black voting rights but rather as an alternative to black voting rights.

Frissell initially directed his comments toward the need for greater attention to education in general. He called for the launching of an education crusade in Alabama equal to that currently underway in North Carolina. But as principal of Hampton Institute,

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 185 (quote 1), 193 (quote 2).

he soon focused his comments on the effectiveness of industrial education. Frissell recounted the history of industrial education for black southerners beginning with Samuel Chapman Armstrong's childhood in Hawaii, Chapman's vision of industrial education as a civilizing mission, and the success at Hampton in carrying that mission out. Comparing the race progress of Negroes and Indians, Frissell explained how Negroes progressed more rapidly up the ladder of civilization because of their long-term association with whites. Indians, shunted onto reservations, were not acclimating to civilization nearly as rapidly as were black southerners. Producing studies on the effects of industrial education carried out by leading white southerners, Frissell countered the claims of Negro regression with evidence of Negro progress. Literacy, he added—not race—should be the qualification for voting.<sup>34</sup>

J. L. M. Curry began his speech by establishing his bona fides as a true son of the South. He asserted that he was one of two surviving founders of the Confederacy, had fought in the Civil War, and was a proud specimen of the Anglo-Saxon race. Warming to his theme, he restated his familiar lament decrying slavery, Reconstruction, and universal male suffrage. Within Curry's formalistic viewpoint, black southerners were invested with full and equal rights of citizenship, regardless of the extent to which those formal rights had been disallowed in lived experience. However theoretical and ill-considered African American voting rights might have been, though, Curry had consistently opposed overt restriction of those rights since 1881 when he assumed his portfolio as public education's foremost advocate in the South. His was the complex and frequently self-

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<sup>34</sup> Frissell, "Popular Education in the South," in *The Southern Society, Race Problems of the South*, 83–97.



contradicting position of the southern paternalist, and Curry's advanced age and declining health mirrored the status of the paternalist creed.<sup>35</sup>

Perhaps because Curry had been invited to speak on "Popular Education in the South," he did not defend the black franchise as he had two years earlier at Louisiana's constitutional convention.<sup>36</sup> Nor did he remind his listeners, as he had in previous orations, that black voting rights, however ill-advised, were ineradicable. He did suggest that literacy should be the chief requirement for the franchise, irrespective of race, but more as an afterthought than as an argument. It is worth remembering that any and all utterances concerning black voting rights—even those from men of Curry's stature—had to be put circumspectly. Many white southerners kept themselves at hair-trigger alert for racial transgressions, and an unguarded moment could lead quickly to disaster. But if he equivocated in defense of black voting rights, he did not in his defense of black education. "I have very little respect," he sneered, "for the intelligence or the patriotism of the man who doubts the capacity of the Negro for improvement or usefulness." Like Frissell, he appealed to the records of Hampton and Tuskegee as evidence of Negro uplift. He invited nonbelievers to visit "the school of one of the most distinguished and worthiest men of this State, Mr. Booker T. Washington, and then come out and say you doubt or question the capacity of the Negro to be instructed." If crime was associated with educated Negroes, it was because they had received the wrong education. It made no

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<sup>35</sup> Curry, "Popular Education in the South," in *The Southern Society, Race Problems of the South*, 105–13.

<sup>36</sup> There Curry had urged that delegates made the franchise, "a boon, a reward for intelligence and industry; affix to it any conditions you please which the public weal my demand, but do not make it impossible to attain unto the privilege." Later in the same speech, he admonished the delegates, "It is said that 'negroes vote wrong.' Well, so do others. The argument, pushed to its logical results, will divide white people into classes, taxpayers and non-taxpayers, and you will cease to educate poor whites." These remarks must, of course, be taken alongside Curry's many claims that black southerners were not qualified for the franchise. Curry, "Address Made by the Honorable J.L.M. Curry, L.L.D., before the Constitutional Convention of Louisiana, February 14, 1898," *Proceeding of the Peabody Education Fund*, IV, 358, 361.

sense, Curry argued, to blame black southerners for the corrosive schooling they had received from northern missionaries. False education breeds vice, he allowed, but why proper education “developing the true manhood and womanhood, should have a different ethical effect upon a man with a black skin than upon one with a white, the pessimists have not condescended to explain.” Curry, like Frissell, stoutly defended the cause of universal public education in the South. However, the original intent of this education—universal male suffrage—had already been made into a canard.<sup>37</sup>

The formal status of black voting rights became the central issue of the conference, and the conference offered a preview of Alabama’s constitutional convention that would take place the following year. There were three positions represented on the program: repeal of the Fifteenth Amendment; modification of the Fifteenth Amendment; and a fairly administered property and education requirement, along with a repudiation of the informal disfranchisement that had been the sinecure of southern politics since the overthrow of Reconstruction. This last position was given voice by former governor of West Virginia William A. MacCorkle, Murphy’s choice to replace Walter Hines Page.<sup>38</sup>

MacCorkle was the sole southern speaker who did not believe that the South acting alone was capable of solving the Negro question. Repeal of the Fifteenth Amendment, he warned, would isolate the South from northern assistance and make a bad situation worse. Additionally, he argued, when the interests of the North and South were not in harmony, the South would need every possible vote to insure full representation of southern interests in Congress. Repeal of the Fifteenth Amendment

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<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, 108 (quote 1), 109–10 (quotes 2 and 3).

<sup>38</sup> Washington had suggested African Americans H. H. Proctor, William J. Gaines, Henry McNeil Turner, and white Republican Chauncey M. Depew as alternatives to Walter Hines Page. BTW to Edgar Gardner Murphy, February 3, 1900, Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, VI, 430; Edgar Gardner Murphy to BTW, February 7, 1900, *ibid.*, 432.

would almost surely cause representation to be scaled back in proportion to the black voting population expunged. Furthermore, the principles of republican government demanded that black voting rights be respected. “If we are an honest and constitution-loving people,” he admonished, “we will give him [the African American] his constitutional right. His privilege of franchise is as sacred as ours.” Voting rights should be based on “an honest and inflexible educational and property basis administered fairly for black and white.” Such a restriction, he continued, would not only ensure the intelligence of and moral worth of the electorate, it would also guarantee white supremacy because of the educational and property advantages white southerners enjoyed. On the other hand, a “grandfather clause” that awarded voting rights to illiterate whites would tend to discourage white education while spurring black education. A literacy requirement that was applied only to black southerners would require only black southerners to seek greater literacy.<sup>39</sup>

As evidence that black southerners were, by and large, fit for voting rights, MacCorkle offered a comparison between them and freed Russian serfs. “Careful investigation” led him to conclude “that the Negro has infinitely out-progressed the freed white serf in every element of an enlightened citizenship.” McCorkle’s comparative research placed black political rights within an international context of emancipation and commodity agriculture in the nineteenth century. His conclusions suggest that the political integration of freed peoples transcended the “Negro question,” yet—like Curry and Washington—he was unable to discuss black citizenship outside the civilizationist discourse of “Negro uplift.” Therefore, MacCorkle’s position was limited to the argument

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<sup>39</sup> William A. McCorkle, “The Franchise in the South,” in *The Southern Society*, *Race Problems of the South*, 63–75 (quote 1, p. 63; quote 2, p. 66).

that American Negroes were “on the ascending steps of good citizenship” and that their “progress has been substantial and on the right line.” For that reason, he concluded, the black southern franchise deserved protection from ballot stealing and other instruments of repression.<sup>40</sup>

This sanguine prognosis for Negro race progress—and the implication for expanded citizenship rights among black southerners—put forth by Frissell, Curry, and MacCorkle was vulnerable to the same charge that had been leveled against African Americans during Reconstruction: political equality equals social equality. John Temple Graves, the negrophobic editor of the Atlanta *Constitution*, argued frankly for repeal of the Fifteenth Amendment. It was the nature of mankind, white or black, to seek full equality, he asserted. “Do you tell me that social and political equality are not the natural resultants of civil rights, and the laudable aspiration of the Negro?” he asked rhetorically. “Then I tell you that you do not know liberty, and you do not know the Negro. From the center to the circumference of every intelligent Negro’s heart there is the pervading and consuming desire to be equal in all things to the white man above him.” Graves brushed aside the question of uplift and assumed a universalist attitude toward moral selfhood and the quest for liberty, while maintaining the essential difference of race. He did not pretend to be concerned with African American morality. “When will we learn that this is, from first to last, a race question . . . a thing of skin and not of achievement or ‘condition?’” Speaking of Booker T. Washington as an example of a moral and manly Negro, Graves asked again “What man of you would install this great and blameless Negro in your guest chamber tonight? If he were unmarried, what man of you would

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<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, 72–75 (quotes, p. 72). On the fungibility of white status at the turn of the century, see Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

receive his addresses to your daughter or your ward? What man of you would vote for this proven statesman for governor of Alabama?"<sup>41</sup> In calling the bluff of Negro uplift, Graves highlighted the inconsistency of the gradualists' position and exposed accommodation as a two-way street. If black southerners were accommodating white supremacy, then white southerners were also accommodating the aspirations of black southerners for equality and all that it implied. Graves was frank in his advocacy of repression, and the consistency of his position lent it persuasiveness in the auditorium.

Graves's rhetoric concerning Booker T. Washington was brought into bold relief for the nation the following year when Washington dined at the White House with President Theodore Roosevelt. The response of the white southern press was furious. A description of the dinner in the *Atlanta Constitution* emphasized that Washington dined with Roosevelt and the president's family (wife and two children), along with the observation that Washington was the only guest.<sup>42</sup> A 1903 lithograph shows Washington and Roosevelt in formal dress at a small table. The table is set, but no food rests upon it, and Roosevelt's family is absent. The word "EQUALITY" is stenciled boldly across the drop of the tablecloth. Edgar Gardner Murphy deplored Washington's dining with the president and admonished Washington in a letter, "The average man in the street can see nothing but a deliberate attempt on the part of the president and yourself to force the issue of inter-marriage and amalgamation!!!" Walter Hines Page thought the uproar was due mostly to the disfranchisement campaign then underway in Alabama and elsewhere. The

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<sup>41</sup> John Temple Graves, "The Franchise in the South," *The Southern Society, Race Problems of the South*, 48–57 (quotes 1 and 3, p. 53; quote 2, p. 52); John David Smith, "No Negro is Upon the Program: Blacks and the Montgomery Race Conference of 1900," in Smith, ed., *A Mythic Land Apart: Reassessing Southerners and their History* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997), 134–35; Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 214.

<sup>42</sup> According to Louis R. Harlan, Philip Bathell Stewart, a friend of the president, was also at the dinner. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader, 1856–1901*, 311.

newspapers, Page wrote, needed to magnify the incident in order to justify eliminating the black vote. J. L. M. Curry dismissed the entire affair as “a nine days wonder.” But in the popular southern mind, as John Temple Graves well knew, the slope between the ballot box and the bedroom was a slippery one. And as feminist historians have long pointed out, hard distinctions between political, social, and family order tend to blur under scrutiny.<sup>43</sup>

The chief spokesmen for repeal of the Fifteenth Amendment were Bourke Cockran, an Irish-born New Yorker, and Alfred Moore Waddell, former mayor of Wilmington, North Carolina, and leader of the 1898 Wilmington pogrom. Waddell’s object, plainly stated, was “to eliminate the ignorant Negro vote, and assure the supremacy of the white.” Waddell’s position, like Graves’s, was predicated on the essential inequality of the races. Therefore, what black southerners needed was not political power but the paternal direction of white southerners. Indeed, Waddell said in keeping with prevalent theories of retrogression, black southerners would perish without the care and protection of whites. As long as African Americans were politically active, however, such care and protection would be denied them. At issue, according to Waddell, was “the capacity of the American people for the preservation and perpetuation of self-government.” It would be wrong, for instance, to disfranchise all illiterate voters, white and black, because illiterate whites were accustomed to discussing politics intelligently and besides, were inherently superior to blacks. The black vote, however, tended to be

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<sup>43</sup> News item in the *Atlanta Constitution*, October 16, 1901, in Harlan ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers* VI, 248; Lithograph by C. H. Thomas and P. H. Lucy, 1903, Smithsonian Institute, in *ibid.*, plate between 258 and 259; Edgar Gardner Murphy to BTW, October 19, 1901, *ibid.*, VI, 256; Edgar Gardner Murphy to BTW, October 24, *ibid.*, VI, 271–72; Walter Hines Page to BTW, October 19, 1902, *ibid.*, VI, 254–55. On Curry’s response, see *idem*, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader, 1859–1901*, 314. On the analytical continuum connecting the family, society, and politics, see Gordon, *The Mormon Question*; Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis.”

deployed *en bloc* against the interests of whites and of good government. This practice prevented differences of opinion from being discussed among whites because they were forced into false unity against the black voting bloc. An alliance of blacks and unscrupulous whites, he claimed, had created a threat to the very premise of representative democracy in Wilmington. "Eastern North Carolina became a Negro paradise, and immigration to it began from all quarters. Idle and drunken Negroes infested the streets of Wilmington day and night, and grew more and more insolent and aggressive. Ladies were frequently and grossly insulted and citizens assaulted and robbed in broad daylight." In November 1898, Waddell helped instigate a white-on-black race riot that resulted in the exodus of much of the town's property-owning blacks and the overthrow of recently elected Republican officials. Black suffrage, said Waddell, had been thrust upon the South in recrimination by the merciless northern victors of the Civil War. In Waddell's version of history, black southerners had not asked for the vote, and, in addition, were unprepared and unqualified for it. Education had not made them more fit for citizenship; rather, it had made them a greater "menace to civilization and good government." Repeal of the Fifteenth Amendment, he concluded, would make legal what was already being practiced illegally: disfranchisement of virtually all black southerners.<sup>44</sup>

Bourke Cockran's reputation as a public speaker caused him to become the subject of much speculation in advance of the conference as journalists wondered aloud

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<sup>44</sup> Alfred Moore Waddell, "The Franchise in the South," in The Southern Society, *Race Problems in the South*, 39–48 (quote 1, p. 45; quote 2, p. 39; quote 3 and 4, pp. 42–43).

whether or not he would advocate repeal.<sup>45</sup> At the conference, Cockran argued that the Fifteenth Amendment was a “dead-letter” and therefore should be done away with. White southerners simply would not count the votes of black southerners. Cockran proposed to bring the legal status of the African American vote into conformity with the reality of southern elections by abolishing the Fifteenth Amendment. It was his opinion that the question of the black franchise should be left to the states. Yet Cockran, like Curry and Frissell, was a gradualist inasmuch as he predicted that voting rights would accrue to black southerners in keeping with the evolution of the race. But rather than assist the Negro in growing into his citizenship, Cockran would shrink the citizenship of black southerners to fit their present capacity and then expand it as their capacity increased. At the end of Cockran’s oratory, Booker T. Washington descended to the stage and shook Cockran’s hand, a gesture for which he was roundly criticized in some of the black press.<sup>46</sup> But through this action, Washington made two subtle points: first, he claimed his right to share public space with a white man; second, he reminded those in the auditorium that he was still part of the conversation. Furthermore, there was a great deal of shared ground between Cockran’s position and the Tuskegee Idea. Cockran, like Washington, advised black southerners to avoid politics in favor of industrial development. “When that is accomplished,” Cockran said, “all else will follow.” It was not such a far cry from the Atlanta compromise to Cockran’s call for repeal of the Fifteenth Amendment. Few, including Cockran, believed repeal held much potential for political enactment. And

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<sup>45</sup> “An Interesting Rumor,” in *The Richmond Times* May 6, 1900, Hampton University Newspaper Clipping File, Microfiche [henceforth referred to as HUNCF], item 407, fr. 24; *Washington Evening Star*, May 7, 1900, HUNCF, item 407, fr. 26.

<sup>46</sup> Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Race Leader*, 295.



irrespective of the Fifteenth Amendment, the federal government had long before abdicated any responsibility for the African American franchise.<sup>47</sup>

The above speakers all deployed slightly different versions of history to bolster their respective positions. All agreed that Africans had been wrested from a condition of barbarism, savagery, and moral depravity on their home continent and bred into a hardier and more moral “type” by slave owners in the United States. Just as strains of livestock are perfected by husbandmen, so was the American Negro carefully groomed into a superior breed by his Caucasian masters. Then came the Civil War and emancipation, followed by a second invasion of missionary teachers and carpetbaggers who incited the sons of the loyal and docile freedman to political and social aspirations beyond their capacity. Here the narratives diverged. On the one hand, Wilcox and Barringer described a relentless and precipitous decline among the generations born into freedom and thus denied the husbandry of their former masters. Education was incapable of arresting their “retrogression” toward the original African type. Thrust into competition with their former masters, to whom they were inferior, the American Negro was following the trajectory of the American Indian into extinction. On the other hand, Curry and Frissell delivered a narrative within which the Hampton model of industrial education offered an alternative to retrogression that would not only save the American Negro from extinction but would also, in the fullness of time, make him fit for full citizenship. Graves and Waddell agreed with Curry and Frissell on all but the last proposition, the eventual fitness of black southerners for the franchise. In their version of history, industrial education guaranteed to black southerners the one right no one wanted to revoke: the right to work.

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<sup>47</sup> W. Bourke Cockran, “The Negro and the Social Order,” *The Southern Society, Race Problems in the South*, 194–218 (quote p. 216).

The Montgomery Race Conference was chronicled in newspapers across the United States, including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. Coverage was overwhelmingly favorable in mainstream newspapers throughout the South, qualified in major northern newspapers, and unfavorable in black-oriented newspapers. The *Montgomery Advertiser* and the *Atlanta Constitution* printed transcripts of many speeches in their entirety, while the *New Orleans Daily News* published transcripts of the opposing orations of Alfred M. Waddell and William A. MacCorkle.<sup>48</sup> Bourke Cockran enjoyed the most extensive coverage, and his position was widely recognized as an augury of Alabama's political future. As James A. Hollomon wrote in the *Atlanta Journal*, "the sentiment in Alabama as displayed at Montgomery during the sessions of this conference is overwhelmingly in favor of the disfranchisement of the negro. The state will in all probability hold a constitutional convention next year and for the one specific purpose of bringing about this result." The black editor of *New York Age* drew the same conclusion, but framed it differently. The position of white southerners, he found, was "that the only way to solve the race problem was to lynch black alleged criminals, to rob black men of their franchise and to degrade them in their civil rights by a system of laws as odious, unjust, and infamous as the old Slave Code." In light of the conference, the author concluded darkly, "We now know what the Southern white man wants. He can't have it."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *New Orleans Daily News*, May 10, 1900, Second Part, p. 1; *Atlanta Constitution*, May 9, 1900; *New York Times*, May 10, 1900, p. 7, May 11, 1900, p. 1; *Washington Post*, May 11, 1900, HUNCF, item 407, fr. 78; *New York Age*, May 17, 1900, HUNCF, item 407, item 107; *ibid.* May 21, 1900. The *New Orleans Times Democrat* responded to an item in the *New York Mail and Express* that had criticized the conference for not including blacks on the program. *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, May 24, 1900, HUNCF, item 407, fr. 115.

<sup>49</sup> *Atlanta Journal*, May 12, 1900, HUNCF, item 407, fr. 85; *New York Age*, May 17, 1900, HUNCF, item 407, frs. 105–06.

But he did have it. Throughout the summer of 1901 Booker T. Washington was busy lobbying against two possible provisions of Alabama's constitutional convention then underway: a "grandfather clause" and racial division of the state school fund. Emmet J. Scott and Wilfred J. Smith, Washington's surrogates fighting on the dual fronts of pro-rata education funding and disfranchisement, went by the code names "Ajax" and "Filipino" in their correspondence with Washington. Scott, having recently met with Edgar Gardner Murphy, reported to Washington that education funding and disfranchisement were a zero-sum equation. If disfranchisement went through, a favorable education report would also pass; however, if disfranchisement failed, the education fund would likely be divided by race.<sup>50</sup> In reality there was little question as to whether disfranchisement would be enacted; it was just a matter of by what means. The failure of the Populist Party in Alabama had left a political climate highly favorable to the disfranchisement movement that had been sweeping the South since 1890 and simmering in Alabama for at least as long. What Edgar Gardner Murphy had idealistically dubbed the "new democracy" was succinctly described by historian and educator Horace Mann Bond as the co-opting of former supporters of the Populist Party "into an insurgent Democratic faction founded on racial, not economic radicalism." That summer Washington convened a meeting in Montgomery of leading black Alabamians who petitioned the convention and lobbied leading white Alabamians to mitigate, as much as possible, the damage to the black franchise and education. At Washington's urging, Edgar Gardner Murphy and J. L. M. Curry both issued public statements against the "grandfather clause" under consideration. Nevertheless, the "grandfather clause" passed,

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<sup>50</sup> Washington, "A Press Release" [unpublished], New York, June 17, 1901, in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers* VI, 155–56; BTW to Charles Eliot Norton, July 6, 1901, *ibid.* 166; Emmet J. Scott to BTW, July 9, 1901, *ibid.*, 172–73.

and in 1906 only 2 percent of adult, male, black Alabamians were registered to vote, while 83 percent of adult, male, white Alabamians remained on the rolls.<sup>51</sup>

The debate over education funding was also more complex than indicated by “Ajax’s” missive. As in Mississippi, Alabama’s system for apportionment of education funds favored white schools in black-majority counties. Funds were distributed from the state treasury to county school boards on a per-capita basis, irrespective of race. At the county and district level, however, they were then apportioned to schools on the basis of racial prejudice. Because state funds were thus diverted from black schools to white schools in black-majority counties, the white students there benefited disproportionately from state education expenditures. In Alabama, convention delegates from white-majority counties attempted to offset this advantage by shifting the source of education funding from the state treasury to local taxation. To make this proposition more palatable to delegates from black-majority districts, white-majority delegates proposed a pro-rata apportionment scheme that would relieve black-belt planters from the burden of underwriting black education through property taxes. However, the Education Committee was stacked with Black-belt delegates, and the local tax failed along with the pro-rata apportionment scheme.<sup>52</sup>

After the race conference Emily Howland, president of the Cayuga County Political Equality Club (auxiliary to the New York State Woman Suffrage Association), had drawn an explicit connection between the voting rights of women and those of black

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<sup>51</sup> Hackney, *Populism to Progressivism in Alabama* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), 147–79, 195–96, 206; Horace Mann Bond, *Negro Education in Alabama: A Study in Cotton and Steel* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1994, first published 1969), 165 (quote), 169; Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader, 1856–1901*, 299–300; Edgar Gardner Murphy, “A Jeffersonian” *Montgomery Advertiser*, July 12, 1900.

<sup>52</sup> The Education Committee passed a fig-leaf resolution that allowed a one-percent local tax option that was offset by a one-percent deduction of the state tax. Bond, *Negro Education in Alabama*, 180–91; Robert B. Fulton, *Proceedings of the Conference for Education in the South, 1903*, 90–91.

southerners. “The colored race and the women are on trial now,” she wrote in a letter to Washington, and “the parallel between the talk about the defects and limitations of both is striking.” Howland was not the only one drawing this connection. Edgar Gardner Murphy, in his Philadelphia speech that had nearly alienated Washington during the run-up to the race conference, had asked rhetorically, “If Wyoming can vote upon the feasibility of according the suffrage to women, may not Alabama vote upon the question of the franchise in relation to the Negro?” Washington tried to console Howland with his optimistic assessment that “The world is going forward not backward. People cannot much longer resist the forward movement of civilization.” Washington was not alone among black Alabamians in this point of view. Addison Wimbs, a prominent black Republican from Greensboro, Alabama, and a member of Washington’s petitioning committee, believed that the franchise provision, bad as it was, could be an improvement over the previous system. Wimbs predicted that the new constitution would allow approximately 60,000 black Alabamians to register for the vote. Once registered, blacks could then ally with white pure government progressives to insure that black votes were counted. These voters could then form coalitions with liberal whites to influence public policy. But only 3,654 black Alabamians were registered in 1906. Murphy later admitted in a book that was never finished that Alabama demagogues, after the black franchise was restricted, then called for an end to black education and a range of other avenues for black advancement. In the final analysis, Washington had little solace to offer Howland other than a small symbol of respect—at the Montgomery Race Conference he had heard Negroes, for the first time, addressed as “Mister.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Howland contributed \$1,000 to Tuskegee that year. Emily Howland to BTW, May 24, 1900, Harlan, ed. *Booker T. Washington Papers*, V, 545; BTW to Emily Howland, June 19, 1900, *ibid.*, 562; Addison Wimbs

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to BTW, July 6, 1901, *ibid.*, 166–68; Edgar Gardner Murphy, “The white Man and the Negro at the South,” An Address before the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences. . .” Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 8, 1900, Series 2: 34, EGM Papers; Edgar Gardner Murphy, “Issues Southern and National,” Murphy’s unfinished book, Series 3, EGM Papers.

## Chapter 6

## The Empire/Negro Problem: Industrial Education in a Global Context

On June 28, 1899, Governor Joseph Johnston of Alabama sent an anxious letter to Booker T. Washington. The governor had been told that Washington's agent in Cuba had sent five "white boys" to Tuskegee Institute in violation of Alabama's 1897 school segregation law. Writing in early July, Washington assured the governor that "our agent has returned from Cuba accompanied by five Cuban boys and one girl. There is not one in the party who under any circumstances could be mistaken for a white, and I am sure that a very great mistake has been made in advising you differently." Washington's claims that the students were not white were corroborated by Cuban sources, and Governor Johnston's fears were assuaged.<sup>1</sup>

The incident that caused Governor Johnston such concern resulted from efforts by Washington and others to extend the Tuskegee idea to the U.S.'s newly acquired territories. These efforts highlight the role that the Negro Question played not only in U.S. debates over whether or not to grant independence to the newly acquired territories, but also in the construction of the U.S. imperial state once that decision had been made. The incident also situates Tuskegee within the broader context of global imperialism wherein industrial institutes proposed to enact moral uplift among indigenous populations in such a way that bolstered racial boundaries essential to distinguishing between colonizers and the colonized. Moreover, U.S. imperialism presented African Americans with an opportunity to improve their own standing within hierarchies of race and

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Forney Johnston to BTW, June 28, 1899, June 30, 1899; BTW to Joseph Forney Johnston, July 5, 1899, Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, V, 140–41, 148.

civilization as opposed to “less advanced” Negroes and natives elsewhere. African American soldiers in Cuba and the Philippines, as well as Tuskegee graduates who led industrial institutes in U.S. and European colonies, brought with them Anglo-centric ideas of grooming, labor rhythms, and sexual conduct. Presenting these ideas as the hallmarks of progress, they, along with white colonial administrators, sought to modernize indigenous folkways in much the same way that educational philanthropists had sought to reform the Alabama Black Belt. Because ideas of progress, modernity, and morality were commonly represented as Anglo-Saxon artifacts, promoting them among indigenous populations in colonial settings cast African Americans bearing the “Black Man’s Burden” in roles that were similar in many ways to those of white colonial office-holders.

Beginning April 25, 1898, the United States fought a four-month-long war with Spain. The Treaty of Paris that formally ended the war ceded to the United States the former Spanish colonies of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines and guaranteed nominal independence for Cuba. President William McKinley’s administration quickly determined that Puerto Rico would be held as a U.S. territory with the promise of neither eventual statehood nor independence. This decision required the construction of a colonial administration in Puerto Rico along with the Bureau of Insular Affairs, a division of the Department of War in Washington, D.C. It also mandated legislation to create a civil government on the island, to legalize Puerto Rico’s colonial status, and to define the civil standing of Puerto Ricans. Puerto Rico, from the time of U.S. military occupation in



July 1898, became a trial run with an eye to colonizing the Philippines and to economic and military domination of the Caribbean and Latin America.<sup>2</sup>

Americans who favored the long-term colonization of Puerto Rico and the Philippines also tended to support the Progressive movement that was transforming the U.S. from a rights-based state composed of individuals and competitive proprietorships to a regulatory state composed of corporations and interest groups. These Progressive types enthusiastically sought the regulation of trusts, mandatory school attendance, and temperance reform carried out by an impersonal bureaucracy capable of invading the realms of private enterprise and individual behavior in the interest of the greater social good. However, such a government could only be trusted to embody the national will to the extent that it retained its presumptive Anglo-Saxon character.<sup>3</sup> Protecting the American body politic from infusions of inferior blood—whether from African Americans or from Puerto Ricans and Filipinos—most Progressives considered a fundamental aspect of nation-building at the turn of the century.

Walter Hines Page, a southern-born publishing mogul in New York, a moderate on the Negro question, and a prominent educational philanthropist, was such a Progressive. He endorsed the imperialist project while displaying profound ambivalence toward the southern solution to the Negro Question. According to Page, impersonal notions regarding equality before the law had caused the enfranchisement of African Americans. “Now,” however, “race instinct, greater than logic, has disfranchised him.” This instinct, Page wrote was “the instinct to set up law and order.” In keeping with the

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<sup>2</sup> Frank Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism*, Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 9–41; Pedro Cabán, “Subjects and Immigrants During the Progressive Era,” *Discourse* 23 (Fall 2001), 31–39.

<sup>3</sup> William E. Leuchtenburg, “Progressivism and Imperialism: The Progressive Movement and Foreign Policy, 1898–1916,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 39 (December 1952), 483–504.

theme of Manifest Destiny, Page described how Anglo-Saxons were inherently well suited to republican forms of government. “He [the Anglo-American] had the genius of the ruler, at home to govern himself, in strange lands to govern other people.” Page attributed to this “race instinct” the need to create a greater Anglo-Saxon dominion. He argued the necessity of the “English speaking race to control the tropics; that it is necessary for the products of this region to be brought to the utility and advantages of civilization.” Russia, Japan, Germany, France, and other European nations were rapidly colonizing Africa, Asia, and the South Pacific, and Page saw the challenge to the United States as either taking its place among the great nations of the world or losing its vitality. Page viewed American empire as both exceptional and superior. “The rapid growth of the United States westward has been nothing but colonization,” he boasted. “And it has been the most wonderful colonization in history.” The historical force of race instinct, embodied in the United States expansionist project, had led inevitably to the Spanish American War and to possession of the former Spanish territories. “We hold in our hands as we believe, the arc of the covenant of the future of the human race in our democratic form of government,” he wrote.<sup>4</sup> But keeping that future safe meant curtailing carefully the limits within which Filipinos, Puerto Ricans, and African Americans were allowed self-government.

United States interest in foreign territories had preceded the Spanish-American war by at least three decades. In 1869 the Grant administration concluded a treaty of

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<sup>4</sup> Walter Hines Page, “Expansion of a Duty” *New York Commercial Advertiser* in bms, Am, 1030.3 (3), folder 2, Walter Hines Page Papers, (quotes 1, 2, 5 and 6); Page, “The Greater Republic,” a lecture delivered at Gerrard Hall, March 15, 1899 and reprinted in an unmarked clipping, bms Am 1090 .3 (3) folder 2, Walter Hines Page Papers, (quotes 3 and 4). Paul A. Kramer, “Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and U.S. Empires, 1880–1910,” *Journal of American History* 88 (March 2002), 1315–53; E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987).

annexation with Santo Domingo, but it was rejected by the Senate in 1870. The Harrison administration tried unsuccessfully to annex Hawaii in 1892–1893. The Cleveland administration involved itself with a territorial dispute between Great Britain and Venezuela in 1895–1896. The Cuban war for independence threatened to involve the United States at least as early as 1895. By the time of Spanish naval defeats in Manila and Santiago, the United States had constructed a record of imperialist dabbling and a vocal opposition to it as well.<sup>5</sup>

Republican Mugwumps, southern Democrats, and others opposed imperialism on the grounds that it was contrary to historical American values and traditions, that it would embroil the U.S. in debilitating international difficulties, and that it would corrupt the American body politic with the infusion of barbarous peoples. These anti-imperialists were critical of mass industrialization, the commercialization of American society, and the loss of Victorian values to pecuniary interests. They warned against the trend toward centralization of government power because, among other evils, it led to greater influence of trusts and corporations over the needs of the people. They were equally troubled by labor strife and the challenge presented to the Anglo-Saxon character of American cities by European immigration. American attitudes toward imperialism, in many ways, represented a generational divide. J. L. M. Curry, like the anti-imperialists mentioned above, clung to a rights-based paradigm of republican government and viewed efforts to truncate the political rights of colonials or African Americans as a threat to the universal rights of man.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1961).

<sup>6</sup> Robert L. Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-imperialists, 1898–1900* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1968), 10–27; Christopher Lasch, “The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man,”

Imperialism, Curry believed, was fraught in terms of the Negro Question. “Some people get up a great furor about Cuba, and are disposed to annex it and take it under the flag,” he told the Alabama state assembly in 1896. “Cuba has about as many free Negroes as Alabama has, each about 700,000. What are you going to do with your own 700,000, and why do you want to add another great influx of illiterate paupers to the population of this country?” He lamented that the United States government was lending aid to education in “Alaska, Hawaii, Porto Rico, and the Philippines, but in the Southern States the white man’s burden has to be borne unaided.” Such action, to Curry, represented misplaced priorities. “Clearly the white man’s burden,” he wrote, “is not in the Philippines or in Hawaii, but within our own borders, especially in the ‘black belt,’ where the Negroes outnumber the whites in the ratio of 6 to 4.” It was in the Black Belt, not in the colonies, where Curry found the “wards of the nation.”<sup>7</sup>

The abandonment of gradual civil rights for African Americans at the Montgomery Race Conference had much to do with the overlapping question of self-government for the new colonies. If the colonial acquisitions granted in the Treaty of Paris “threaten us with the government of inferior races in all quarters of the globe,” Governor Joseph Johnston said in his opening address, “then more comprehensive measures involving our organic law must be considered.” James Bryce, British author of the highly regarded *The American Commonwealth* (1888), advocated for an Anglo-American policy of racial separation because of “the tremendous problem presented by

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*Journal of Southern History* 24 (August 1958), 319–31; Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism*, 46; Eric T. L. Love, *Race over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Curry, Address before the General Assembly of Alabama, December 2, 1896, Series II, book G, p. 11, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC (quotes 1 and 2); Curry, “What the South has Done for the South,” unidentified clipping [1900 or 1901], Series I, v. 10, item 2308, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC (quote 3); Curry, unidentified newspaper clipping, Series II, book G., p. 121, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC (quote 4); Curry, Norwich Address, October 30, 1899, Series I, v. 12, item 2825, J. L. M. Curry Papers, LOC (quote 5).

the Southern States of America, and the likelihood that similar problems will have to be solved elsewhere, as, for instance, in South Africa and the Philippine Isles.” Alfred Moore Waddell, who advocated repeal of the Fifteenth Amendment, believed “that the mind of the country North and South, especially since the acquisition of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines is in a more favorable condition to consider such a proposition than ever before.”<sup>8</sup> When Alabama did enact its disfranchising constitution in 1901, delegates to the constitutional convention were emboldened by the 1898 report of the Commission on Hawaiian government that proposed property and literacy tests for the franchise there. That, along with the United States Supreme Court’s upholding of Mississippi’s disfranchisement plan, signaled to Alabama delegates that the federal government would not interfere with the disfranchisement of colored voters.<sup>9</sup> Colonial expansion, like Jim Crow, was predicated on the principle of withholding the right to self-government from colored peoples, and, in both cases, it was done to protect the Anglo-Saxon purity of the national “constitution.”

The Montgomery Conference demonstrated to the nation’s reading public that the program of industrial education was a safe vehicle for black civil rights because it postponed the enactment of those rights into the distant future. It restricted Negro uplift to the realm of improved living conditions, literary empowerment, and economic cooperation with the white-supremacist power structure of the South while maintaining the fig leaf of civil rights gradualism. As such, it was a well-refined educational and rhetorical product ripe for export to the new colonies, and Booker T. Washington was

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph F. Johnston, Welcoming Address, *Race Problems of the South*, 21; James Bryce, “On the Relations of Advanced and Backward Races,” Appendix C, *The Present South*, 334; Alfred Moore Waddell, “The Franchise in the South,” *Race Problems of the South*, 44.

<sup>9</sup> Hackney, *From Populism to Progressivism in Alabama*, 159–60.

quick to market it that way. This is not to say that Washington embarked upon a new career of Anglo-American imperialism. However, his program of racial uplift, designed to accommodate Jim Crow at home, was thought to be equally accommodating of colonialism abroad. While the Spanish-American war was still in progress, he wrote the editor of *Century Magazine* that he would like to rewrite an article already submitted so that it would deal with education of Cubans and Puerto Ricans. In December 1899 George Carpenter of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* began his interview of Washington by discussing the possibility of applying the Tuskegee method to Puerto Rico and the Philippines. Washington allowed in that interview that he already had Puerto Rican and Cuban students at Tuskegee. Later, alluding to the global potential of the Tuskegee idea, he pointed out the high costs of such staples as ham, lard, and flour in Liberia, Haiti, and San Domingo. The reason, he explained, was because Negro farmers in these places had not received adequate industrial training in their educations and consequently did not manage their agriculture intelligently.<sup>10</sup> Washington's anti-poverty efforts in the Alabama Black Belt had yielded some success stories, particularly in the case of land cooperatives associated with the Tuskegee Negro Conferences. Therefore, the potential for achieving similar gains in the Caribbean should not be overlooked. The multi-faceted appeal of the Tuskegee Idea promised the advantages of literacy, economic progress, and scientific agricultural techniques to colonized students. Yet, at the same time, it promised social stability, labor discipline, and political quiescence to colonial administrators.

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<sup>10</sup> BTW to the editor of *Century Magazine* July 27, 1898 in Harlan ed. *Booker T. Washington Papers*, IV, 452; Interview in *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, December 2, 1899, *ibid.*, V, 276–77; BTW, A Sunday Evening Talk, October 2, 1898, *ibid.*, IV, 480–84.

Washington highlighted African American soldiering in the Spanish-American War as evidence that blacks had earned the right to full citizenship and unfettered opportunity in the United States.<sup>11</sup> In addition, Caribbean military service offered opportunities for black southerners to engage in their own civilizing mission. A chief tenet of the Tuskegee idea was the belief that African Americans represented the leading edge of black civilization. Black and white defenders of the Tuskegee idea frequently pointed to the advanced stage of civilization among black Americans as compared to Africans, Afro-Caribbeans, and European peasants.<sup>12</sup> Allen Alexander Wesley, a Fisk graduate serving as a surgeon in the Eighth Illinois Infantry in Cuba, described the civilizing effect African American soldiers were having among Afro-Cubans with whom they came into contact. “It is a common custom here for the babies to be carried around nude,” he wrote to Washington. But “since our arrival I think I see an attempt to put some kind of covering over the children.”<sup>13</sup> The essence of the Tuskegee idea was spreading the gospel of progress and self-help throughout the Alabama countryside. The war over Cuba offered possibilities to carry that mission much further.

The Tuskegee idea, however, was an educational not a military model. Shortly after the close of the war, Washington later reflected in *The Story of my Life and Work*, ten students from Cuba and Puerto Rico were brought to Tuskegee for industrial training. Upon graduation they were expected to “return to their island homes and give their people the benefit of their education.” A month after receiving Allen Alexander Wesley’s report on the civilizing effects of African American troops among colored Cubans,

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<sup>11</sup> Washington, *My Life and Work*, in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, I, 120–21.

<sup>12</sup> Willard B. Gatewood Jr., *Black Americans and the White Man’s Burden, 1898–1903* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975).

<sup>13</sup> Washington, *My Life and Work*, in Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, I, 120–21; Allen Alexander Wesley to BTW, October 5, 1898, *ibid.*, IV, 486–87.

Washington replied to Wesley that he wanted a total of eight students from Cuba and Puerto Rico. Washington's plan was well received, and William Baldwin quickly got aboard, writing to Tuskegee that an agent was being sent to "take up the industrial side of the natives of Cuba and Puerto Rico." Washington issued an appeal in the *Christian Register* for \$150 scholarships to bring students from Cuba and Puerto Rico for industrial education at Tuskegee for the purpose of applying the principles of self help and uplift after they returned home. Washington believed about half the population of Cuba and Puerto Rico to be Negroes or mulattoes, and "It [industrial education] will do for them what it is doing for our own people in the South."<sup>14</sup>

His campaign met with some success. William J. Barnett notified Tuskegee from San Luis, Cuba, that he had a boy and girl, both aged 14, whose parents had agreed to let them be enrolled in Tuskegee Institute as soon as transportation could be arranged. Their tuition was paid by Olivia Egleston Phelps Stokes, and the United States Navy provided their passage. Efforts to recruit Cuban exiles from Tampa, Florida, were less rewarding because, as a recruiting agent reported, most of the potential students were eager to return to Cuba after the cessation of hostilities there. The following January Washington wrote to Cuba's military general, Leonard Wood, asking for two or three more students "of the Negro race" aged fifteen to twenty to be trained at Tuskegee.<sup>15</sup> Puerto Rico, in 1900 sent forty-five students to the United States for teacher training, twenty of whom went to Tuskegee. Many more Caribbean students attended traditional liberal arts colleges,

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<sup>14</sup> William Henry Baldwin Jr. to BTW, August 4, 1898, *ibid.*, IV, 454–55; BTW to the editor of the *Christian Register*, August 18, 1898, *ibid.*, IV, 455–56.

<sup>15</sup> William J. Barnett to BTW, October 18, 1898, *ibid.*, IV, 493; Thomas Austin to BTW, November 1, 1898, *ibid.*, IV, 501; BTW to Leonard Wood, January 16, 1900, *ibid.*, V, 415–16.



including Harvard, but the Tuskegee idea holds particular significance because of its racialized mission of moral uplift in the age of empire.<sup>16</sup>

Washington's description of an incident at Tuskegee involving a Puerto Rican student closely resembles the paternalist narrative constructed around the U.S. colonization of the Caribbean and Latin America.<sup>17</sup> "We have one Puerto Rican who was quite savage when he first came to Tuskegee," Washington told the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*. "He carried a knife with him, and he had a way of becoming very angry, raging about and flourishing his knife." Washington's depiction of the hot-blooded Puerto Rican constitutes a replica in miniature of Caribbean society from the colonialist perspective. "He attempted to vent his rage upon one of our boys whereupon the young American took the knife and gave him a good thrashing." The "young American," having achieved manly virtue through the auspices of Tuskegee, gave the Puerto Rican "savage" the equivalent of a spanking, and "From that time on the Porto Rican changed his methods. He learned to control himself and is now one of the quietest boys in the school."<sup>18</sup> In the presence of the Puerto Rican "savage," the "young American" at Tuskegee assumed the stature of civilized manhood. In chastising the Puerto Rican and bringing him to heel, the black Tuskegeean established his own place at an advanced niche in the presumed hierarchy of modern civilization.

While the Caribbean was coming to Tuskegee, Tuskegee was going abroad. As early as 1896, English Quaker and abolitionist Francis William Fox asked Washington to

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<sup>16</sup> Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism*, 99–100; Pedro A. Cabán, *Constructing a Colonial People: Puerto Rico and the United States, 1898–1932* (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1999), 134.

<sup>17</sup> For explication of this narrative, see Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915–1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> BTW, Interview in *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, December 2, 1899, Harlan ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers* V, 276–71.

recommend a superintendent for an industrial and agricultural mission in Zanzibar or Pemba. Fox expected about 87,000 Pemban slaves to be emancipated soon, and the Quakers wanted a man to run a “Christian Industrial Mission” that would operate on the Hampton principle. In May 1899 Joseph Sturge, the son of an Abolitionist Quaker with “large interests in the island,” informed Washington that Montserrat’s school principal had departed, leaving a vacancy that Sturge would like to fill with a Tuskegee graduate. Sturge thought it wise to employ a Tuskegee man rather than a West Indian because of Tuskegee’s emphasis on manual labor. Upon Washington and Francis Garrison’s recommendation, Tuskegee alumnus Wesley Warren Jefferson assumed command of an industrial institute at Montserrat.<sup>19</sup> In 1901 Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba wrote to Washington from the Cape Colony expressing his desire to institute the Tuskegee method among South African blacks. Mzimba, leader of a church with thirty-three congregations and over 13,000 members, advocated the Tuskegee approach to racial relations in South Africa. Tuskegee’s 1903–1904 graduating class included four South Africans. John Langalibalele Dubé, who visited Hampton and Tuskegee in 1897 before opening the Zulu Christian Industrial School in Natal in 1901, became known as the “Booker T. Washington of South Africa.” Heli Chatelain, a Swiss immigrant to the United States and West Indian missionary, asked Washington to serve on the board of directors of the Philafrican Liberators’ League, and anti-slavery group working in Africa. Chatelain recommended that Tuskegee and Hampton establish branches in Africa and everywhere

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<sup>19</sup> Joseph Sturge to BTW, May 24, 1899, Harlan ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, V, 120–21; Margaret James Murray Washington to Francis Jackson Garrison, August 7, 1899, *ibid.*, V, 170; Francis Jackson Garrison to BTW, July 27, 1898, IV, 450, 450 ns. 1 and 2; Wesley Warren Jefferson to BTW, December 6, 1899, *ibid.*, V, 286–88.

the color line existed.<sup>20</sup> By the early twentieth century, industrial education had become a global enterprise.

The influence of Tuskegee, however, went beyond its role in educating colonial subjects on the mainland and providing leadership for peripheral industrial institutes. Washington's hugely popular autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, became a foundational text for industrial training throughout the world. Grace W. Mimms offered to translate *Up from Slavery* into Spanish "for the purpose of introducing it to Cuba." Mimms, who had done orphan and charities work in Cuba, believed "the condition of the colored population there is not very unlike that of our own colored people after the war" and moreover, "the soil in Cuba is ready for the seeds from Tuskegee and Hampton to be planted." Later, Mimms suggested that Spanish versions of *Up from Slavery* be made available in Mexico, South America, and the Philippines. She completed her translation in 1902 and later wrote to Washington that 1,000 copies had been sent to Cuba.<sup>21</sup> Michael Ernest Sadler, professor of history and economics at Victoria University in British Columbia, wrote Washington, "In a forthcoming volume of Special Reports dealing with Industrial Education, one chapter will be devoted to the work at Tuskegee and Hampton, and I am doing all in my power to bring under the notice of educational administrators in different parts of our Empire the valuable guidance which they would gain from the study of your methods." Sadler had "already written to educational friends in India, the West Indies and South Africa on the subject." Robert Elliott Speer, secretary of the

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<sup>20</sup> Francis William Fox to BTW, July 6, 1896, *ibid.*, IV, 187; Henry Stanley Newman to BTW, August 3, 1896, *ibid.*, IV, 204–05; Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba to BTW, March 23, 1901, *ibid.*, 63–64, 64, n.1; John Langalibalele Dubé, to BTW, March 7, 1897, *ibid.*, IV, 262–63, n.1; Heli Chatelain to BTW, October 5, 1896, *ibid.*, IV, 223–25. See also James T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), esp. 295–327.

<sup>21</sup> Grace W. Mimms to BTW, May 24, 1901, in *ibid.*, VI, 123–25, 25, n.1.

Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, wrote to Washington “how your influence is extending even to the foreign mission field.” According to a colleague of Speer’s, the Tuskegee method was appropriate for the Chinese working class, and another colleague in Kobe, Japan had his students reading aloud from “the autobiography of Booker T. Washington.”<sup>22</sup> Whether or not Tuskegee was the primary model for industrial training in the global mission field, its ideas touched colonial educators throughout the imperial world.

To better understand how the Tuskegee idea fit within this context, it will be useful to examine the career of industrial education in Puerto Rico and then, more briefly, in the Philippines. From October 1898, when the Spanish flag was lowered, until the February 1900 passage of the Foraker Act, Puerto Rico was under U.S. military rule. During that time Puerto Rico’s government was headed by a succession of military governors-general who reported to the Bureau of Insular Affairs Under Secretary of War Elihu Root. These governors general were charged with the task of dismantling the Spanish colonial infrastructure and “Americanizing” the island. Guy V. Henry, governor-general from December 13, 1898 to May 8, 1899, described native Puerto Ricans as “an alien people, of a race diametrically opposed to the Anglo-Saxon in very many respects.” Although Puerto Ricans expected increased liberty under the American regime, Henry wrote, “the idea of liberty was misunderstood by many of them. They often confound it with license.” Reminiscent of gradualist ideas toward African American civil rights, Henry believed that “American citizenship” should be preceded by a “sufficient period of

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<sup>22</sup> Michael Ernest Sadler to BTW, October 28, 1902, *ibid.*, VI, 560–61; Robert Eliot Speer to BTW, September 19, 1902, *ibid.*, VI, 524–25.

probation,” He assigned a prominent place for education in the Americanization that was to be carried out during the probationary period.<sup>23</sup>

The Americans inherited a system of Catholic parochial schools wherein Spanish was the language of instruction and the catechism a significant element. Governor Henry chose Major John Eaton, a former U.S. commissioner of education who had been a supervisor of freedmen’s affairs under General Grant, to head Puerto Rico’s Bureau of Education.<sup>24</sup> Eaton redesigned Puerto Rico’s public education system with an eye to its role in the Americanizing process, primarily through teaching the English language and through patriotic exercises. On July 1, 1899, Governor Henry enacted the “Laws Governing Public Instruction,” based on the recommendations of John Eaton. The new laws abolished the existing fee system, made public education and textbooks free, established grades, determined teacher qualifications, and laid the administrative groundwork for high schools, normal schools, and a university. Complicating these positive reforms, however, was the determination to replace Spanish with English as the language of instruction. Eaton and Henry appointed sixteen language supervisors to oversee the transition from Spanish to English as the language of instruction. Furthermore, they insisted that all Puerto Rican teachers learn English and that all new hires demonstrate English proficiency as a requirement of teacher certification. Henry promoted an abrupt and comprehensive shift from Spanish to American institutions and expected the island’s residents to embrace these changes without delay.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Cabán, *Constructing a Colonial People*, 41–80; Guy V. Henry, “Americanizing Puerto Rico,” *Independent* 51 (June 1, 1899), 1475.

<sup>24</sup> Cabán, *Constructing a Colonial People*, 29–54; Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism*, 54; Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution*, 357.

<sup>25</sup> Juan José Osuna, *A History of Education in Puerto Rico*, (Rio Piedras, P.R.: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1949) 129–36; Cabán, *Constructing a Colonial People*, 54–55.

Eaton's reforms, however, were mostly, limited to paper. In 1899 public education in Puerto Rico consisted of 551 primary and secondary schools, 2 normal schools, and 1 collegiate institute. The curricula of the primary schools were similar to those of the common schools in the United States. Secondary schools taught a modern, liberal arts course meant to prepare elites for a university in the U.S., Spain, or France. Lessons took place in rented buildings, which were far too scarce to serve the population. Even had facilities been available, there were not nearly enough qualified teachers to fulfill Eaton's ambitious reforms. Additionally, the poverty of the people, especially in the countryside, frequently prevented parents from sending their children to school. There was no universal grading system, appointments were based on patronage, and local school boards had neither the means nor the will to enact reforms. The normal schools and the collegiate institute taught Greek and Latin, and there were no industrial institutes except one "where there is some technical teaching, but it amounts to very little."<sup>26</sup>

Dim educational prospects, along with concern over Puerto Rican morality, led many to conclude that the Tuskegee method was needed there. Special U.S. commissioner Henry K. Carroll had been told that children sometimes attended class naked, which prompted him to suggest that hygiene should be taught in the normal schools. The commissioner reported that moral education was needed for "people who are now living isolated in the mountains following the immoralities induced by their uncivilized condition of living and the vices of vagabondage, gambling, etc." In addition, "The principles of domestic economy and of moral public and private life should be taught." Moral instruction, one teacher recommended, should be supplemented by

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<sup>26</sup> Henry K. Carroll, *Report of the Carroll Commission* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1899), 615–49 (quote is from the testimony of Pedro Carlos Timthée, p. 624); Osuna, *A History of Education in Puerto Rico*, 125–36.

instruction in “elements of agriculture—how to cultivate tobacco, giving them [students] a knowledge which will be useful to them in the struggle for existence later on.”<sup>27</sup> A school supervisor testified, “They obtain a superficial knowledge of everything, but not a sufficient knowledge of anything to earn a living.” As a result, “They take to politics and writing as a means of earning a livelihood and become a nuisance to the country.”

Echoing Booker T. Washington’s humorous put-down of the colored literary and political class, the supervisor remarked, “Therefore we have a small army of politicians here whom we would be pleased to lend to any country that wants them. I would take measures to stop the further creation of these dainty literateurs,” he assured Carroll, “and turn education in the direction of useful arts.” Commissioner Carroll agreed and pointed out that the United States had a similar problem, which was being corrected in industrial schools.<sup>28</sup>

Governor George W. Davis, who succeeded Henry, concurred. His opinion of rural Puerto Ricans, who made up about 78 percent of the island’s population of just under one million, was reminiscent of conservative appraisals of black southerners in the Reconstruction South. Labor among Puerto Ricans, he thought, was “hateful to the freedmen, for it recalled the former compulsory labor that they had to supply” before emancipation in 1873. Adding to this, “the home and family circle does not exist.” Davis quoted a Spanish governor-general from the mid-nineteenth century who described a people “without religious instruction or moral restraint.” Their “family unions are formed without the sanction of the sacrament or of the laws, and are of a more or less temporary character.” As a result, “the family, in our sense of the word, does not exist.” To insure

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 627, 643 (quotes 1 and 2 are from the testimony of P. Santisleban Y Chavirarri, p. 643; quote 3 is from the testimony of Eduardo Newman, p. 641).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 623, 627–28 (quote 1, 623; quote 2, p. 628).

that his point was fully taken, Davis added, “The conditions so clearly described have not changed for the better since this was written.”<sup>29</sup>

Perceptions of Puerto Ricans and rural black southerners differed in at least one crucial respect: the moral failings seen within the Puerto Rican peons were not attributed to race. In fact, Davis notes, “Between the two races there is no perceptible difference, except in color.” Davis believed whites made up the majority of the population. However, they were spread among Negroes and “mixed whites,” and “their habitations are duplicates of those the Negroes of Central Africa are to-day occupying.” In Davis’s opinion, “neither the whites nor the Negroes have apparently made any social or industrial progress during their residence here.” Moreover, “Their only desire is apparently to have their physical wants supplied,” and “they are without true ambition.” Undifferentiated among racial lines, two-thirds of rural Puerto Ricans, in Davis’s opinion, lacked a self-regulating moral center.<sup>30</sup>

Not only were rural Puerto Ricans perceived as lacking an internalized morality, but they—in common with black southerners—were thought to believe “that the possession of a knowledge gained at school would somehow spare the need of manual labor.” Having failed to avoid labor with the gaining of superficial intellectual skills, Davis adduced, they grew disillusioned and abandoned all educational effort. Qualified teachers were scarce and, “if the teacher be efficient [and] order and system, cleanliness and decency enforced,” such conditions “involving restraint and unaccustomed effort, are obnoxious” to the pupils. Even where such classrooms existed, they had little effect on

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<sup>29</sup> U.S. Senate, 56<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Document No. 363, War Department, Letter from Brig. Gen. George W. Davis, February 26, 1900, 4–5. The demographic figure comes from Osuna, *A History of Education in Puerto Rico*, 208.

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Senate, 56<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Document No. 363, War Department, Letter from Brig. Gen. George W. Davis, February 26, 1900, 5.



the students because “for six or more hours each day they would be under the control of the instructors, and then they would return to their homes of squalor and filth, indecency and vice, their parents indifferent or unable to satisfy the natural cravings of hunger, and what the children had learned would but make them unhappy and discontented.” To alleviate these conditions, Davis suggested that schools be built in urban centers where they could gain public approval, and then their “standards and models would be established and copied throughout the island in the rural districts.”<sup>31</sup> What followed was an abortive effort to integrate the Tuskegee model into Puerto Rico’s nascent public school system.

In 1900 Puerto Rico had one industrial institute that operated out of the same building in which an orphan school and insane asylum were housed. There, 312 male students were taught an array of vocational skills along with tobacco agriculture.<sup>32</sup> The conditions of Puerto Rico’s two normal schools and one collegiate institute were deplorable, and education commissioner Victor S. Clark was certain that “a purely book education is not wanted here.” Eventually, in all educational facilities, “manual training should be given and school gardens should be established under competent special instructors.” The task of education in the Puerto Rican countryside, irrespective of race, was to transcend “apathy and ignorance” and inculcate “industry, thrift, and self-control, and respect for the dignity of labor and the worth of character.” To accomplish this, insular authorities established nineteen agricultural schools and five industrial schools.<sup>33</sup>

By 1905 there were eleven agricultural schools remaining, and these were “only an indifferent success.” The agricultural school was basically a rural primary school

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Report of Victor S. Clark, President—Insular Board of Education, in *ibid.*, 24–58 (quote, p. 58).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 59–60.

wherein a teacher was expected to maintain a garden on an acre of adjoining land. Students theoretically spent two hours each day working in the garden under the supervision of the teacher, who explained the science underlying the horticultural processes. In reality, the overwhelming need for primary instruction tended to crowd out garden time, and teachers ignored the agricultural portion of the curriculum in order to focus on reading, writing, and arithmetic. Furthermore, popular interest in the agricultural schools was not “sufficient to retain in school any considerable number of pupils.”<sup>34</sup> Understandably, parents wanted for their children academics rather than agriculture.

The nearest example of a successful version of Tuskegee in Puerto Rico was the institute at Rio Piedras. There the trustees of the University of Puerto Rico established in 1905 a boarding school “for practical agriculture.” Twenty-eight male students were selected from around the island, based on their completion of the third grade. In addition, “a robust physique is essential, as the work is hard.” Tuition and board were provided in exchange for five hours’ farm labor. The hundred-acre farm, twenty acres of which were under cultivation, was devoted primarily to growing pineapples, and also food for consumption at the school. Students assisted in the construction of farm buildings, and “in a general way the methods of the Tuskegee Institute are followed in the work of the school.” The workday began at 7:00 A.M., followed by lunch, a short rest, afternoon class, “and military drill alternated with physical exercises.” The purpose of the school was to prepare students for careers as “foremen in the agricultural industry.” To that end, courses included the basic elements of mechanized agriculture along with farm construction and bookkeeping. In addition, “the home life of the pupils is of the highest

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<sup>34</sup> Department of the Interior, Education Department, Porto Rico, Report of the Commissioner of Education for Porto Rico, 1906, 492–94 (quote, p. 494).

importance.” In all respects, including a sharp-eyed matron who watched over the students’ “health, manners, and deportment,” the school was an imitation of Tuskegee Institute.<sup>35</sup> Because Juan José Osuna’s comprehensive *History of Education in Puerto Rico* (1946) does not mention the agricultural institute at Rio Piedras, it is likely that this modest establishment was eventually either discontinued or subsumed into the local university’s agricultural program.

If the institute at Rio Piedras was a model of success, the five industrial schools were models of failure. Beginning in 1903, the industrial schools “were designed to meet a real need for a thorough technical training of an elementary sort.” Opposition to the schools emanated from the popular perception that these schools were impractical. It might seem paradoxical that students and parents opposed as impractical an educational approach designed to promote practical skills. However, opponents of the school drew a clear distinction between manual training and vocational education. Manual training was intended to promote basic toolcraft and fundamental skills by such exercises as sewing dolls’ dresses and building toy furniture. Vocational training, on the other hand, required actual shops and building material and was therefore more expensive to maintain. A compromise in 1905 limited the industrial schools to three in San Juan, Ponce, and Mayaguez and promised to “give the schools a practical character.” To that end, “so far as possible . . . children were taught to make definite things, actual dresses rather than dolls’ dresses and real furniture instead of toy chairs and tables.” The following year, the House of Delegates abolished industrial schools and instructed that they be converted into trade schools.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 494–95.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 496–97; Osuna, *A History of Education in Puerto Rico*, 225.

In 1911 Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson commissioned a study of Puerto Rico's "Social, Educational, and Industrial Problems," undertaken by Meyer Bloomfield, Boston's Director of the Vocational Bureau. Bloomfield found that Puerto Rico's schools were producing "good citizens" but failed to "carry [their] influence directly into the home." Purely academic training, he concluded, had been overstressed to the detriment of vocational, agricultural, and domestic training. Therefore, Bloomfield recommended that students spend less time with books and more in gardens. Teachers, rather than boarding out or staying in hotels, should construct model homes to serve as object lessons to students and parents in the countryside. Likewise, closer attention to hygiene at school, especially the toilet, could inspire greater sanitary efforts among rural Puerto Ricans. Like Booker T. Washington, Bloomfield believed poverty could be alleviated if island dwellers would cultivate gardens and can their vegetables, making themselves less reliant on the "tienda trust" that kept them mired in a cycle of poverty. Such efforts, along with the teaching of business methods, Bloomfield predicted, would stem the tide of urban migration and inspire a "rising and progressive working class" to mediate between the extremes of wealth and poverty predominant on the island. Bloomfield called for an insular department of labor to settle disputes and for more philanthropic interest in the welfare of the working class.<sup>37</sup> His report is as significant for its lack of examples of industrial education as for its advocacy of the Tuskegee idea. Industrial education, twelve years into the U.S. administration, had not gained a solid foothold in Puerto Rico.

By 1912 the agenda for industrial education based on the Tuskegee model was a dead letter. That year E. M. Bainter, a specialist in vocational and manual training, took

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<sup>37</sup> Meyer Bloomfield, *A Study of Certain Social, Educational, and Industrial Problems in Porto Rico* (No press listed; Commission Report of the U.S. War Department: 1912), first and second quotes: p. 11; second quote, p. 25; third quote, p. 23.

over as Puerto Rico's commissioner of education. Bainter integrated vocational training into the curriculum in the form of three to five fifty-minute shop classes each week. Classes revolved around building furniture and making repairs to school property. This approach to industrial education closely resembles that of the trade school movement that grew popular in the U.S. and elsewhere during the same time period. This movement had much to do with job training and little or nothing to do with moral development. Although Puerto Rican parents, teachers, and local school boards were interested in vocational training, they were not supportive of those elements of the Tuskegee idea devoted to instilling "proper home life" and "respect for the dignity of labor."<sup>38</sup>

There are three likely explanations for the tepid reception the Tuskegee idea received in Puerto Rico. The first is financial. Hampton and Tuskegee both relied on large infusions of working capital from foundations, such as the GEB, along with individual contributions from networks of wealthy capitalists and middling well-wishers. There was no parallel network for philanthropic support in Puerto Rico or for the other colonies.<sup>39</sup> The second is a matter of timing. By the time the insular authorities could erect the rudimentary infrastructure of a public educational system, industrial education was waning in its appeal. The vogue of industrial education—as embodied within the Tuskegee idea—coincided roughly with the career of Booker T. Washington. With the election of Woodrow Wilson as president in 1912, Washington's influence at the White House was reduced to practically nil. Also by that time, the National Association for the

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<sup>38</sup> Osuna, *A History of Education in Puerto Rico*, 226–27.

<sup>39</sup> M. K. Bacchus argues that the Tuskegee model never achieved widespread use in the Caribbean because of the expense of building and maintaining facilities in the absence of enabling philanthropy. Bacchus, *Education as and for Legitimacy: Developments in West Indian Education between 1846 and 1895* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1994). Carl C. Campbell notes that agricultural education throughout the British Caribbean generally consisted of maintaining a few ragged gardens. Campbell, *The Young Colonials: A Social History of Education in Trinidad and Tobago, 1834–1939* (Barbados: The Press University of the West Indies, 1996).

Advancement of Colored People had become the leading voice in the African American struggle for civil rights. Mainstream African American leaders had come to view the 1895 Atlanta Compromise from the perspective of the 1906 Atlanta race riot. In addition, former white allies, such as Oswald Garrison Villard, had joined ranks with Dubois in support of a more oppositional approach to Jim Crow. White conservatives simply were not compromising, and gradualism had come to represent the gradual erosion, not accrual, of civil rights. Furthermore, Washington died in 1916, and his successor, Robert Russa Moton, later began steering Tuskegee toward a traditional liberal arts curriculum.<sup>40</sup> Finally, in Puerto Rico—unlike the U.S. South—education was not dominated by the “Negro question.”

This last point requires some elaboration. Historian Michael Rudolph West argues persuasively that the Atlanta compromise transformed discussions of African American civil rights in the post-emancipation South from the problem of democracy to the problem of race relations. By encapsulating public debate concerning equality before the law within the so-called Negro question, Washington and other conservatives—black and white—bracketed the problem of equal rights away from fundamental principles of democracy. As a result, the challenges of poverty, land tenure, and fair political representation went unaddressed for all southerners, white and black. Once a political problem took the guise of race relations, it tumbled into a vast conundrum where it was considered impervious to traditional political remedies. With his Atlanta compromise speech, Booker T. Washington decreed (and this decree was resoundingly applauded) that the franchise of black southerners—along with equal access to transportation, education, and hospital emergency rooms—would be regarded not as a problem of

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<sup>40</sup> Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois: Biography of a Race, 1868–1919*; Harlan, *The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1910–1915*.

democracy but of race relations.<sup>41</sup> But however much insular administrators initially viewed Puerto Rico through a similar lens, that vision did not prevail there.

Whereas in the U.S. South, state governments demanded the burden of maintaining dual school systems—one white and one black—Puerto Rican schools were not segregated. Moreover, the color line, as such, did not dominate Puerto Rican society.<sup>42</sup> In the early twentieth century, few people seemed sure where to draw the boundary between black and white. Governor Davis, whether or not he believed himself capable of determining white from black in Puerto Rico, perceived no distinguishing features of race beyond pigmentation. Furthermore, there seemed to be little agreement as to what Puerto Rico's racial demographics actually were. General Davis's reference to "mixed-race whites" leaves in doubt whether he considered them Negroes, as he certainly would have considered anyone of "mixed race" in the U.S. Furthermore, whites, Negroes, and mulattoes were socially integrated, leaving pigmentation as the sole distinguishing racial feature. Historian Mark M. Smith describes how white southerners relied on non-visual sensory perception, such as sound and smell, to distinguish Caucasians and Negroes in the Jim Crow South when sight alone did not suffice. White southerners claimed (and still claim) so somehow "know," whether by sense or by intuition, within which racial category others belonged, even in the absence of racially delimiting physical features. Claims of intuitive certainty in recognizing racial identity were necessary, Smith concludes, for reconciling the contradictions inherent in the Jim Crow South where the social order was predicated on the biological essence of racial categories we now

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<sup>41</sup> Michael Rudolph West, *The Education of Booker T. Washington: American Democracy and the Idea of Race Relations* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2006).

<sup>42</sup> *Report of the Carroll Commission*, 619.

recognize as socially constructed.<sup>43</sup> Puerto Rico's social order, however, did not require such fast racial boundaries, and racial identity remained ambiguous—and to some extent—irrelevant.

Because Puerto Rico was not a site for the working out of race relations, it did not require a Tuskegee-style laboratory for that purpose. Yet education in Puerto Rico was intimately linked with ideas of progress, particularly race progress, in the United States. As Ann Laura Stoler argues, establishing and maintaining racial categories was an essential ingredient in the imperial recipe. Just as Tuskegee was intended to bring progress to “backward” black southerners in the U.S., industrial institutes elsewhere were intended to bring progress to “backward” peoples throughout the colonized world. The purpose of such institutes, Stoler argues, was to engender sentiment—patriotic feeling toward the colonizing nation, bourgeois conjugal relations, and conventional European religious beliefs—that supported the colonial paradigm. Colonizing regimes represented these sentiments as the hallmarks of modernity, and colonized peoples who accepted them as such acquiesced in placing themselves at the receiving end of civilization. Therefore, industrial institutes signified the handoff of civilization from a modern nation-state to a pre-modern colony.<sup>44</sup>

Of course, race progress was only one among industrial institutes' many functions. As Stoler also notes, the regulation of sexuality was a key aspect of colonial control. The power of imperial forces to reach into the most intimate aspects of human

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<sup>43</sup> Mark M. Smith, *How Race is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

<sup>44</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies,” *Journal of American History* 88 (December 2001), 829–71; Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, translated by Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1982, 1967); Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, translated by Howard Greenfeld (New York: Orion, 1965).



relations speaks as much about nation-building at the metropole as it does about the regulatory presence of the imperial state in the province. Gaines Foster describes the implementation of the U.S. Comstock laws outlawing the sale and shipping of pornography as a substantial brick in the construction of the regulatory state. Foster and Sarah Barringer Gordon draw similar conclusions regarding the outlawing of bigamy in Utah as a key development in solidifying the power of the nation-state to regulate marriage and sexuality. Moreover, the Tuskegee idea was designed, in part at least, to curb the imagined sexual precociousness of black women and girls in the U.S. South. While it might be a stretch to represent the Alabama black belt as an “internal colony” of the United States, it is not a stretch to suggest that techniques for fostering the affective aspects of colonial control were refined at Tuskegee and became a component of industrial education in other areas.<sup>45</sup>

Sexuality in Puerto Rico was a foremost concern of insular authorities there. The Carroll commission noted in 1899 that almost half the children born in Puerto Rico in 1897 were “illegitimate.” This condition, Carroll concluded, was not evidence of immorality; rather it reflected the obstacles to marriage set up by legal and ecclesiastical institutions. Puerto Rico’s population was overwhelmingly Catholic, and marriage within the Catholic Church required “consent of the parents, advice of grandparents, certificates of age, proclamation of the bans, etc.,” in addition to fees. These obstacles were exacerbated by the difficulty in getting ecclesiastical dispensation to marry within the extensive kin networks that dominated rural life. About half of Catholic couples therefore dispensed with formalities and simply lived together as husband and wife by mutual consent. Although Carroll did not impugn the morality of unwed Puerto Rican parents, he

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<sup>45</sup> Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties, 829–71; Foster, *Moral Reconstruction*; Gordon, *The Mormon Question*.

did consider the situation a “social evil.” Other insular authorities, such as Governor Davis, noted that these irregular conjugal arrangements abnegated the role of the family in constructing moral character among children.<sup>46</sup>

Nothing is more central to the civilizing mission than bringing sexuality and family relations into conformity with the gendered norms of bourgeois individualism. This means containing sexual relations within the nuclear family defined by a married man and woman sharing a home with their immediate offspring. The prominence of conjugal conformity within the Tuskegee idea speaks to the importance vested in black family life by the architects and financial backers of industrial education. Bringing African Americans into the national family—the putative goal of educational philanthropy—meant shaping African American family life to national standards. The same was true of imperial efforts to regulate sexuality in Puerto Rico. It was the hope of insular authorities that Puerto Rican families would take advantage of the new laws to bring their family relationships under state sanction. The result, they hoped, would be more stable and long-lasting domestic unions that would instill among their children an effective self-regulating morality. In addition, the measure served as an example of colonial authorities bequeathing modernity to Puerto Rico’s rural population.<sup>47</sup> In the continuum of civilizing time—which featured dark-skinned Africans at one end and the

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<sup>46</sup> *Report of the Carroll Commission*, 35 (quote); U.S. Senate, 56<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Document No. 363, War Department, Letter from Brig. Gen. George W. Davis, February 26, 1900, 5.

<sup>47</sup> Eileen Finley, “Love in the Tropics: Marriage, Divorce, and the Construction of Benevolent Colonialism in Puerto Rico, 1898–1910,” Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine C. LeGrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore, eds., *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), 139–72. Finley argues that remaking Puerto Rican marriage law assisted colonial agents in constructing a discourse that placed Puerto Rico in the role of a de-masculinized child under the guardianship of U.S. patriarchy. The prevalence of out-of-wedlock birth represented the failure of Puerto Rican men to control women and assume the paternal role. Ironically, Puerto Rican women responded less enthusiastically to the liberalized marriage laws of 1899 than they did the 1902 legalization of divorce.

Anglo-Saxon middle class at the other—Puerto Rico was invited to move up a notch, a movement that not only signified the island’s advance but also acknowledged the Anglo-American position at the pinnacle.

Comparisons between the Tuskegee idea and Caribbean colonization can only go so far. George Fredrickson overstated the case against the philanthropists when he concluded that “Their program of moral uplift, industrial training, and racial integrity really meant, therefore, that they regarded the American black population not as an incorrigible menace to white civilization, but as a useful and quiescent internal colony.”<sup>48</sup> It is true that industrial philanthropists saw black southerners in the mid-1890s as a potentially stabilizing force in a society that was buffeted by violent labor clashes, the rise of socialism, and heavy immigration from unfamiliar places in eastern and southern Europe. Nevertheless, it is equally true that industrial philanthropists *did* perceive these same black southerners “as an incorrigible menace to white civilization.” They regarded Puerto Ricans as equally incorrigible, but much less of a menace because there was little danger that they would corrupt the “constitution” of the American national family. The acquisition of Puerto Rico as an unincorporated territory meant that it was a candidate neither for statehood nor for independence. The U.S. South’s African American population might have been colonized in the metaphorical sense, but Puerto Rico was colonized by statute.

The essential difference between Puerto Rico’s territorial status and that of former U.S. acquisitions, such as Arizona and New Mexico, was that Puerto Rico was made an *unincorporated* territory. Formerly acquired territories, such as the above mentioned, had been *incorporated* meaning they were qualified for eventual statehood under the terms of

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<sup>48</sup> Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 311.

the Northwest Ordinances. As an unincorporated territory, Puerto Rico could not petition for statehood; neither could the island hope for independence in the near term. Puerto Rico's Organic Act of 1900 (the Foraker Act) established civil government in Puerto Rico similar to the European colonial model. A governor, appointed by the U.S. president, served as chief executive. This governor was assisted by an 11-member cabinet that also served as the upper house of a bi-cameral legislature. Three cabinet members—the attorney general, auditor, and commissioner of education—were appointed by the president of the United States, and the remainder were appointed by the governor. A 35-member lower house was popularly elected. The governor had the power to veto legislation, but the veto could be overruled by a two-thirds majority of both houses. The president of the United States held an absolute veto power, and the U.S. congress could annul any legislation to which it objected. Under the terms of the Foraker Act, Puerto Rico had less autonomy than in its last year of Spanish rule.<sup>49</sup>

The Foraker Act did not confer U.S. citizenship upon Puerto Ricans; rather they became U.S. “nationals.” They were governed not by consent but by the power of U.S. sovereignty. These distinctions—an unincorporated rather than incorporated territory, and U.S. nationals rather than U.S. citizens—created a theoretical barrier between the U.S. body politic and that of Puerto Rico. Puerto Ricans were in the nation but not of the nation. This prevented the acquisition of Puerto Rico from corrupting the Anglo-Saxon purity of the U.S. nation and also blunted anti-imperialist objections regarding the Foraker Act's deviations from constitutional principles of self-rule. In the words of a U.S.

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<sup>49</sup> Cabán, *Constructing A Colonial People*, 114–16.

Supreme Court ruling affirming the constitutionality of the Foraker Act and subsequent tariffs, Puerto Ricans were “foreign to the United States in a domestic sense.”<sup>50</sup>

If Puerto Ricans were “foreign in a domestic sense,” African Americans were domestic in a foreign sense. In the paternalistic mindset of Jim Crow, blacks were considered “wards of the nation.” Caught in a permanent state of racial adolescence, African Americans—as citizens—were viewed as living anomalies within the nation’s republican tradition. The national family’s African American members represented at once an indictment of the failure of the United States to live up to its most highly revered values and a reminder of why those values must sometimes be sacrificed to the principle of racial purity. This particular awkwardness was avoided in the case of Puerto Ricans by denying them citizenship until 1917 when World War I and Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points lent a pragmatic impetus to granting it.<sup>51</sup> In the meantime, because of their status as unincorporated non-citizens, Puerto Ricans needed not be seen as individual wards at the national doorstep.

The Philippines, the United States’ other major acquisition, shared a similar relationship with the new American empire, but with significant differences. Like Puerto Rico, the Philippines was governed by the War Department until the Organic Act of 1902 organized it into an unincorporated territory without conferring citizenship upon its native residents. However, the Philippines had a population nearly ten times that of Puerto Rico, a much larger economy, and hosted a bitter four-year insurgency against the

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<sup>50</sup> Efrén Rivera Ramos, “Deconstructing Colonialism: The ‘Unincorporated Territory’ as a Category of Domination,” in Christina Duffy Burnett and Burke Marshall, eds. *Foreign in a Domestic Sense: Puerto Rico, American Expansion, and the Constitution* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 104–15; Christina Duffy Burnett and Burke Marshall, “Between the Foreign and the Domestic: The Doctrine of ‘Territorial Incorporation,’ Invented and Reinvented,” in *ibid.*, 1.

<sup>51</sup> The upper house was also made elective in 1917. Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism*, 124.

colonial administration. Given these conditions, there was little likelihood that insular authorities would engineer a transformative civilizing mission even had they earnestly committed themselves to doing so, which they did not. Nevertheless, William Howard Taft, the Philippines' first civil governor, set out to Americanize the Filipinos in much the same way as did Puerto Rico's governors: through education conducted in the English language. Inheriting a less than rudimentary infrastructure from the ecclesiastical education system of the Roman Catholic Church, U.S. insular authorities were faced with an overwhelming lack of buildings, teachers, and instructional material. To help fill the breach, hundreds of English-speaking teachers traveled from the U.S. mainland, and they constituted the bulk of the Philippine teaching force for about ten years.<sup>52</sup>

Colonial authorities in the Philippines found many similarities between African Americans and colored Filipinos and were largely convinced of the need for industrial education as a means of vocational training and moral uplift. As in Puerto Rico, however, the overwhelming need for primary instruction overshadowed the possibilities for industrial education, and local school boards pushed for book learning in contravention of orders from central authorities. Furthermore, the utter lack of plows, suitable draft animals, and shop equipment doomed the project of industrial education to abject failure. In the absence of substantial philanthropic funding, the overwhelming need for basic instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic made industrial education a luxury the colonies could ill afford.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 48–72.

<sup>53</sup> E. J. Albertson, "The Influence of the American Teacher on the Filipino Home," *The Philippine Teacher* 3 (January 1906), 23–25; William s. Lyon, "On the Selection of School Farm or Garden Sites," *The Philippine Teacher* 1 (January 1904), 22.

Nevertheless, the *idea* of industrial education retained its place in the colonialist imagination. As with African American and Puerto Rican women, educators in the Philippines hoped to transform “the little mother,” and predicted that, “Through her we shall reach the real household and hope to make a complete revolution in Filipino homes.”<sup>54</sup> Insular authorities held self rule on the islands to be contingent upon the purification of native homes. Through the grace of a mother, herself having transcended the congenital immorality of her racialized identity, the family life of colored people could be transformed into one capable of instilling a self-regulating internalized morality based on the Protestant work ethic. Although women tended to be the locus of purification, men were also seen as needing to be diverted from the potentially seditious effects of book learning toward the more practical pursuit of “earning a living.” In this way the pecuniary needs of landowners and manufacturers were never far from the moral requirements of the liberal state. And in their efforts to achieve the intertwining objectives of moral uplift, vocational training, and primary instruction, colonial authorities looked for inspiration to the example of Tuskegee Institute in the Alabama Black Belt.

From the time of the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, education had been a site for the working out of race relations in the United States. By the turn of the century, Tuskegee Institute had become the premier laboratory for race relations, and Booker T. Washington the foremost authority. This was made possible by the massive financial assistance lent to Tuskegee by an interlocking directorate of educational philanthropy that wholeheartedly supported the Tuskegee approach. The Tuskegee idea called for African

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<sup>54</sup> Alice M. Magoon, “Suggestion for the Industrial Work for Girls in the Intermediate Course,” *The Philippine Teacher* 1 (December 1904), 22.

Americans to avoid politics, eschew agitating for “social equality,” and to seek empowerment through literacy, moral discipline, and economic self-help. The refined content of the Tuskegee idea, Washington’s fundraising success, and his influence in Washington, D.C., made him an effective spokesperson for the Tuskegee idea at home and abroad.

Although Tuskegee’s physical plant and actual method were not replicated in colonial settings, the idea itself was extremely useful to imperial ventures across the globe. This is not to say that all examples of industrial education were modeled after Tuskegee. However, anyone in the business of colonial education would have known of Washington, the success of Tuskegee, and the adaptability of the Tuskegee idea. Moral discipline—including the strict maintenance of racial and sexual boundaries—was an essential bulwark of imperial order, and a specialty of Tuskegee Institute.

Racial boundaries varied widely across different imperial realms, but whether they relied on the “one drop rule” or acknowledged mestizos and half-castes, they maintained an essential duality that separated the colonizers from the colonized on racial terms. It was this duality that made the Tuskegee idea so adaptable. A Puerto Rican could become white by moving from the U.S. mainland to the Caribbean, but he could not become an Anglo-Saxon, and the same was true of colonial relations worldwide. Of course Tuskegee Institute did much more than maintain the racial boundaries and gendered models of family order on which imperial power relied. It produced a leadership cadre of teachers, preachers, and social activists, along with hope for an improved future. This aspect of Tuskegee Institute, however, required the philanthropic support that underwrote the construction of the physical plant and the hiring of teachers.



In the absence of that support, what was exported to the colonies was the idea. And in the age of empire, that idea was indispensable.

## Conclusion

Whether or not Booker T. Washington intended it as such, Tuskegee Institute became a laboratory for the working out of race relations in the South. Washington, like his foundation sponsors, entered the experiment with tremendous optimism, and to a great extent that optimism was justified. Tuskegee flourished, and even conservative whites acknowledged that the institute produced “properly educated Negroes.” However, Washington’s greater project—like that of the foundation managers—was improved civil discourse between black and white southerners. They wanted to halt disfranchisement, lynching, and segregation yet do so on terms that would maintain the supposed Anglo-Saxon character of the nation. Considering the intensity and violence of white supremacy campaigns that continued well into the twentieth century, that project clearly failed. Nevertheless, one must, at a minimum, give credit to Tuskegee for extending the empowering benefits of a secondary education to thousands of black Alabamians who otherwise would most likely not have had that opportunity.

Washington and J. L. M. Curry’s ideas regarding progress and the “evolution of the race” have much in common with what, in the present day, is sometimes called “development theory”: the idea that the development of capital, institutions, and civic life occurs in stages over a period of time that frequently exceeds one generation. And did not Washington advocate just such a model—of beginning with small-scale land ownership, accumulating capital over time, and then building fine universities and museums? And what about civil rights; did not the right to vote and to share public facilities with whites accrue to black southerners over time, just as he said would happen? Here, also, one must

give the “Wizard of Tuskegee” his due. Yet, Washington and Curry both insisted that black southerners lacked not just the resources but the capacity for what was referred to in their day as “the higher life.” And civil rights came not because black southerners grew into them, but because African Americans, along with their white allies, ceased to accommodate segregation and disfranchisement. The changed terms with which we now discuss such matters reflect progress of sort: development (implying material infrastructure) rather than evolution (implying biological capacity); and civil rights rather than “Negro rule.”

In present-day discussions, historical concepts such as “civilization” and “empire” are commonly used as pejoratives. They are treated as historical forces that inveigh against more warmly received concepts, such as “liberalism” and “democracy.”<sup>1</sup> This dichotomy facilitates the idea of history as progressive and the liberal nation-state as history’s most effective agent. Yet this approach is of limited utility when dealing with a phenomenon such as the Tuskegee idea that joined together the civilizing mission with the moral requirements of the liberal state in the curriculum of industrial education. Making historical sense of the Tuskegee Idea requires a different framework.

Recent trends stress the place of historical phenomena within global or comparative contexts. Global and comparative approaches promise to rescue the study of United States history from the perceived dangers of exceptionalism and constrained interpretive contexts that have opened the field to charges of theoretical impoverishment and self-referential analysis. The response of U.S. historians has been a general movement toward de-centering the nation-state as a category of analysis and treating it

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<sup>1</sup> Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico*. Berkely: University of California Press, 2002.

instead as a site of social, cultural, and economic exchange.<sup>2</sup> Studies of empire, the new diplomatic history, and a newly formulated hemispheric conceptualization of American studies have been particularly useful in integrating U.S. history with the current methodologies of literary criticism, post-colonial studies, and non-U.S. history.<sup>3</sup> Southern history has likewise expanded its conceptual horizon by embracing comparative histories of the U.S. South, the Caribbean, and South Africa, along with studies that place Jim Crow and the civil rights movement within a global and imperial context.<sup>4</sup>

A central problem of global history in general, and of empire in particular, is the problem of modernity. Moreover, public access to education is almost universally recognized as a primary vehicle of modernity as well as a foundational feature of the modern liberal state. Viewing education this way does not mean reproducing the dichotomies of modern and pre-modern implicit within the imperial project itself. Nor does acknowledging the civilizing mission of some types of education mean disregarding the empowering effects of literacy, numeracy, personal grooming, clock-discipline, and self-respect engendered by the pedagogical style commonly referred to as industrial education. Examining public education, especially industrial education, as a vehicle of modernity does present an opportunity to re-imagine its role in the knitting together of the

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas Bender, *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Catherine Hall, *Civilizing Subjects*; Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons"; Beckert, "From Tuskegee to Togo"; Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties"; Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine, "Introduction: Hemispheric American Literary History," *American Literary History* 18 (Fall, 2006), 397–405; Edward P. Crapol, "Coming to Terms with Empire: The Historiography of Late Nineteenth-Century American Foreign Relations" in Michael J. Hogan, ed., *Paths to Power: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations to 1941* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 79–116.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Kolchin, *A Sphinx on the American Land: The Nineteenth-Century South in Comparative Perspective* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003); Douglas Sullivan-González and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds. *The South and the Caribbean* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001); Campbell, *Songs of Zion*; Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001); Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

U.S. South into the national family, the U.S. into the family of nations, and the study of industrial education in the South into the study of global history.

From the beginning, educational philanthropy had deep connections beyond the United States. The intellectual origins of industrial education grew out of concerns among the landed gentry about domestic order in the European countryside in the late eighteenth century. Heinrich Pestalozzi's pedagogical theories, on which industrial education was based, had its origins in efforts to institute new regimes of social order as revolution and industrialism spread across Europe. Gender order, as the fountainhead of social order, became an organizing principle of this "new education." Friedrich Froebel initiated the kindergarten movement in Germany based on Pestalozzi's pedagogical theories of domestic order and object lessons. He envisioned the kindergarten as a laboratory for instilling personal virtue and nationalist sentiment among the young of Germany. Disciples of Pestalozzi and Froebel spread these concepts throughout Europe and England and brought them to the United States. In the mid-1800s manual training gained widespread acceptance as a pedagogical technique and became a central feature, along with greater emphasis on science and mechanics, of emerging models of education that were intended to prepare students for the complex requirements of an emerging industrial economy. When the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions opened schools in Hawaii as part of their civilizing mission there, manual training was made the defining feature of missionary education. Large doses of manual labor was perceived as necessary to inculcating within Hawaiian natives the internalized work ethic thought to be essential to individual morality. In 1867 Samuel Chapman Armstrong, the son of Hawaiian missionaries, opened Hampton Industrial Institute where a harsh regime of manual labor,

military drill, religious service, and close supervision of personal conduct accompanied instruction in the rudiments of mathematics, science, and literacy. The basic philosophy that would later become the Hampton/Tuskegee idea was born.

By 1900 the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial institute had become the premier example of industrial education and Booker T. Washington its emblem. Also at that time the United States claimed its place as a great power by joining in the global quest for formal empire. The Tuskegee idea—a complex of theories regarding racial differentialization, progress, and the gradual accrual of citizenship rights for African Americans—played a prominent role in the regional unification of the North and South into a modern nation-state, the exclusion of African Americans from the national family, and an entry point for the U.S. into the family of nations. Shortly after 1900, Tuskegee graduates held administrative posts at industrial institutes in U.S. colonies, students from the periphery matriculated at Tuskegee for the purpose of propagating its philosophy among their home territories, and Washington's autobiography *Up from Slavery* became a foundational text for industrial education worldwide.

The career of industrial education was coterminous with the career of universal education in the South. Moreover, while universal education was embarked upon as part of an effort to ease the “backward” southern region into coequal status with the emerging modern nation-state, industrial education was intended to transform a “backward” people (black southerners) into a modern condition within the southern region. Through industrial education, black southerners claimed progress and a right to eventual full membership within the nation. Furthermore, in carrying the “black man's burden” to

Negroes in foreign parts, African Americans attempted to consummate their own claim to modernity by virtue of dispensing it to pre-modern others.

However, the racialized status of African Americans proved an insuperable barrier to having this claim recognized, and the age of empire coincided with the nadir of race relations in the United States and elsewhere. The explanation for this lies in the foundational principles of the Tuskegee idea, principles that shared in the construction of the modern American nation-state among a heterogeneous but normatively Anglo-Saxon population. The project of nation building in the years between the Civil War and *fin de siècle* empire required the stabilization of social and political boundaries of race and gender that were thrown into flux simultaneously by the war itself, the policies of radical Reconstruction, and the urban-industrial transformation of the Gilded Age. Industrial education, with its genesis in manual training, domestic science, and the civilizing mission, was designed specifically to reinforce these categories.

Industrial education also carried with it the liberal mission of gradually accrued civil rights, but to refer to its liberal aspect uncritically is to overlook the ambiguities of liberalism itself. Liberalism, from the perspective of Thomas Jefferson, Horace Mann, and J. L. M. Curry, was envisioned as a principle of social organization that required a moral and intellectual foundation among its participants. They expected the masses to accommodate to liberalism through a transcendent process brought about by public education. Thomas Holt, in his studies of post-emancipation Jamaica, describes this process as the development of an internalized labor discipline without which black Jamaicans were perceived as unassimilable to the liberal ethic.<sup>5</sup> In general, the modern liberal state, featuring representative government, individual property rights, and

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*.

capitalist modes of economic exchange, is predicated on the assumption of a self-regulating morality among its citizens as the basis of consent—the social contract. This model of social organization presumes an expanding series of contractual relationships beginning with the marriage contract and the presumption that it leads to a stable family arrangement that maintains the boundaries of gender order. The well-ordered family was seen as a necessary condition of the well-ordered state. Regarding individual morality as the basis of social order, liberalism and the civilizing mission are two sides of the same coin.

What I have tried to describe is a slice of what could be considered the process of making the modern Negro and a closely related process, the making of the modern, liberal nation-state. As educational philanthropists met in conference to design a program for universal education in the South, they first found it necessary to describe the role of education in the modern liberal state, their conception of this state, and their construction of the modern American Negro. The philanthropists concluded that history courses in public schools should represent American history as the process of the United States drawing ever closer to its divine destiny as the realization of God's vision of perfect justice for mankind. This exceptionalist version of American history contained within it the assumption that at the core of this exceptionalism was the Anglo-Saxon character of the American nation. The philanthropists were describing the transformation of American government from a mechanism for protecting men in their persons and property to an embodiment of the national will—the progressive, regulatory state. Simultaneously they, along with Booker T. Washington, were elaborating the Tuskegee idea and its role in constructing the modern American Negro, a category of citizenship that could exist



alongside a modern iteration of the nation-state that discursively excluded blacks from its “constitution.” Thus the construction of the modern Negro took place in tandem with the construction of the modern, liberal nation-state both at home and abroad.

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