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AN HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE ROLE BLACK PARENTS AND THE BLACK COMMUNITY PLAYED IN PROVIDING SCHOOLING FOR BLACK CHILDREN IN THE SOUTH, 1865-1954

A Dissertation Presented

by

JOSIE R. JOHNSON

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February 1986

School of Education

Josie R. Johnson

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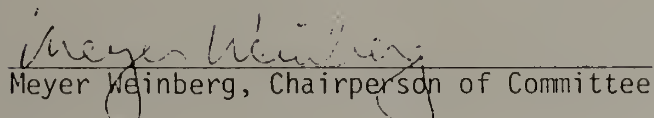
Approved as to style and content by:



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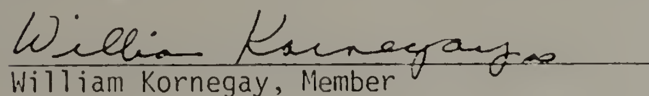

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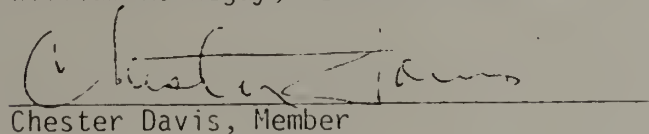

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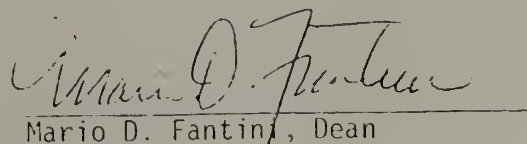

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Lastly, to my parents who demonstrated for us their commitment to education and their willingness to serve as an extended family to other Black children. I thank God for His love and protection during my tenure at the University of Massachusetts.

ABSTRACT

AN HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE ROLE BLACK PARENTS AND THE BLACK COMMUNITY PLAYED IN PROVIDING SCHOOLING FOR BLACK CHILDREN IN THE SOUTH, 1865-1954

February 1986

Josie R. Johnson, B.A., Fisk University
M.Ed., Ed.D., University of Massachusetts

Directed by: Professor Meyer Weinberg

The specific purposes of this study were to identify and highlight the many and varied contributions Black people made in providing schooling for their children in the South from 1865 to 1954, and thereby, make a significant contribution to the literature on this subject.

This study added weight to the historical importance Blacks have placed on the education of their children. Ignorance of this history affects how Black children are viewed, treated, taught, encouraged, or discouraged in the process of acquiring an education in this society.

Fifty-one autobiographies were used as the primary data source. They spanned three major periods--Reconstruction, Post-Reconstruction and the period after World War I to the Brown decision. They were selected on the following criteria: the life of individuals who lived in the Southern region of the United States; and, individuals whose own personal experiences related to formal schooling as students, parents, teachers or community activists.

This research, historical and largely descriptive, was designed to investigate the role Black parents and the Black community played in providing schooling for Black children in the South, from 1865 to 1954.

These authors, in their own words, reported that their parents and communities placed high value on education and made many sacrifices in order to have their children acquire an education.

It is clear from this study that the white authorities in control of the education of all children in America were primarily interested in the education of white children and this fact adversely affected the education of Black children. The research demonstrated that across the periods studied Black children did not have the same educational advantages that white school children had.

Further, this study suggests the need to re-examine the issues related to why Black children are not given an equal educational opportunity. To monitor this process, Black parents, as the first teachers, must become more involved in the education of Black children. However, in order to do that the schools must bring Black parents into the system.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> They rushed not to the grog-shop but to the schoolroom--they cried for the spelling book as bread, and pleased for teachers as a necessity of life.[1]

> To supply their children with once-forbidden education became a sweeping movement. 'The movement started with the Negroes themselves,' wrote Du Bois,'And they continued to form the dynamic force behind it.'[2]

> Especially notable were the freedmen's own efforts at self-help in education--establishing schools, hiring teachers, and erecting buildings.[3]

Black people have always been interested in education. This was true during slavery, true during Reconstruction, and is also true today. Although it is well known among scholars that Black people valued education highly during and after slavery, this fact is either unknown or unacknowledged by many educational practitioners and the public at large. In many instances, such ignorance can be attributed not only to errors of omission but also to errors of commission because of the way the issue has been presented in educational literature. For example, pro-slavery advocates who were writers laid the foundation for the misinformation and/or no information about Black people and their role in American history. These advocates were also instrumental in justifying the chattel slavery system which flourished in the Southern United States prior to 1865.

They even asserted that Black people were mentally and biologically inferior to white people. Many went so far as to attribute such differences to the will of God. They were quite successful in spreading their doctrine far and wide.[4] Despite the egregious arguments about Blacks being genetically inferior, Black parents and the Black community at large knew otherwise and fought to educate their children.

Because the history of Black people is often ignored or presented in an inadequate manner, the extent of the role Black parents and the Black community played in providing schooling for their children, during the slavery years and beyond, has not been available even to some scholars otherwise knowledgeable about Black interest in education. This study, therefore, reports in a historical format the role Black parents and the Black community played in providing schooling for their children. It will shed light on the extent of their struggle by reporting the experiences Black people -- parents and the community -- faced in their efforts in providing schooling for Black children. The fact that Black parents and the Black community were significant factors in the provision of schooling for their children needs additional documentation and dissemination.

An historical review of these issues is necessary because the struggle is on-going and the obstacles to racial justice, political equity, and equal educational outcomes continues to persist today for Black people. As Faustine Jones-Wilson reminds us:

> The dominant group still regards membership in the Black race as a badge of inferiority, for which individuals and the group continue to be penalized in subtle and not-so-subtle ways.[5]

Our legal system, for example, represented one of the most sophisticated forms of subtle and blatant oppression against Black people. The American judicial system was a very effective tool through which Black people and their children were denied the right to be educated. Even though slaveholders believed Blacks were mentally inferior to whites, they still resorted to laws to legitimate their fallacious beliefs. Such laws were intended to restrict the educational opportunities of Blacks. George Washington Williams observed that the slaveholder:

> asserted his belief in the mental inferiority of the Negro, and then advertised his lack of faith in his assertion by making laws to prevent the Negro intellect from receiving those truths which would render him valueless as a slave, but equal to the duties of a freeman.[6]

The legal resistance to Black education has a long history in this country and the rationale used during that period to gain broad acceptance of those laws is etched deeply in the American psyche.

The first compulsory ignorance law in America was passed in South Carolina in 1740:

> ...whereas the having of slaves taught to write, or suffering them to be employed in writing, may be attended with inconveniences. Be it enacted, that all and every person and persons whatsoever, who shall hereafter teach, or cause any slave or slaves to be taught, or shall use or employ any slave as a scribe in any manner of writing whatsoever, hereafter taught to write, every such person or persons shall for every such offense forfeit the sum of £100 current money.[7]

In 1770 Georgia also passed a law which was modeled after the earlier South Carolina law. However, it fixed the fine for teaching a slave to read or write at £20.

A. Leon Higginbotham reported that in South Carolina and Georgia the penalty for teaching a slave to write was more severe than "for killing a runaway slave."[8] Some historians report that the whites' fear of Blacks learning to read and write was very strong and that by 1860 nearly every slave state had adopted a law forbidding such education. In states where no law existed, prejudice was so effective that it amounted to the same thing. The laws varied in severity and applied to anyone attempting to teach Blacks to read and write.[9]

In 1823, the state of Mississippi passed a law that prohibited more than five Blacks -- be they slaves or free persons -- from meeting together. It further stated that they could not meet, day or night, in private or public, for the purpose of learning to read or write. The penalty for violation was "a whipping 'not exceeding thirty-nine lashes'".[10] The fear was very strong among white people that if slaves could read and write they would want to be free. (Blacks knew the reverse was truer.) After the Nat Turner Revolt in 1831, Mississippi strengthened its 1823 Act. And, in 1831, the act made illegal preaching of the Bible by slaves, free Blacks, and mulattoes unlawful.

Slaves, free Blacks, and mulattoes could only preach the Bible if they had written permission from their master and if "six

respectable white men, overseers of slaves, were present -- the penalty was thirty-nine lashes on the naked back of the preacher."[11]

In 1829 the Georgia legislature enacted another law stated that:

> If any slave, negro, free person of color, or any white person shall teach any other slave, negro, or free person of color to read or write either written or printed characters, the said free person of color or slave shall be punished by fine and whipping, or fine or whipping at the discretion of the court; and if a white person so offend, he, she, or they shall be punished with a fine not exceeding $500, and imprisonment in the common jail at the discretion of the court.[12]

Louisiana passed its law against slave education in 1830. It moved to prevent free Blacks from entering the state as well as providing for imprisonment of one to twelve months for "all persons... who shall teach, or permit, or cause to be taught, any slave to read or write..."[13]

Two years later, Alabama passed a law which declared that:

> any person or persons who shall attempt to teach any free person of color or slave to spell, read, or write, shall, upon conviction...be fined in a sum of not less that $250, nor more than $500. Any severe...penalties, by flogging...[for] being in [the] company with any slave...[14]

An example of a condition that equaled a law was the situation in Texas. George Washington Williams described Texas as a state that:

> never put any legislation on her statute books withholding the blessings of the schools from the Negroes, for the reason, doubtless, that she banished all free persons of color, and worked her slaves so hard that they had no hunger for books when night came.[15]

Slave narratives and autobiographies by ex-slaves provide ample evidence that thousands of slaves nevertheless learned to read and

write. W.E.B. Du Bois reported in Black Reconstruction that in 1860 in the slave states "there were 3,561 colored children attending schools supported by the free Negroes."[16] And, there is evidence which attests to the fact that in spite of the laws, slaves were willing to take risks in order to learn to read and write in the Antebellum Soutyh.[17]

Janet Cornelius reported on interviews she conducted with Blacks who were slaves as children in South Carolina, Georgia, Texas and Mississippi. They acknowledged the risk that Blacks took in learning to read and write in the Antebellum South. These individuals indicated that a "common punishment was amputation."[18] An experience with this form of punishment was described as follows:

> The first time you was caught trying to read or write, you was whipped with a cow-hide, the next time with a cat-o-nine-tails and the third time they cut the first jint offen your forefinger.[19]

Cornelius asked the question of those interviewed why, in light of the type of punishment they received, did they want to learn to read and write? Some of the reasons, paraphrased were:

--there was an insatiable craving for knowledge that seems to be in the books;

--they believed that skills learned by means of the books could greatly expand their world;

--they were of the opinion that literacy was path to mobility and increased self-worth; and,

--they were proud that they could conquer opposition to their learning.[20]

The "very feeling of inferiority which slavery forced upon them fostered an intense desire to rise out of their conditions by means of education..."[21]

A few of the ways slaves learned to read and write were: from other slaves who could read and write; by attending school with their white masters and mistresses; from white people who disregarded the laws in order to use their slaves in businesses that required elementary education; from free Blacks; and through the work some slaves performed away from the plantation.

After emancipation and during Reconstruction, Black legislators pushed for color-blind education at public expense. In fact, the "first great mass movement for public education at the expense of the state, in the South came from Negroes."[22]

In South Carolina during 1868:

> The Negro delegates to the Constitutional Convention...were unanimous in their support of a section in the new constitution that declared: All public schools, colleges, and universities of the state, supported wholly or in part by public funds shall be free and open to all the children and youth of this State, without regard to race, color or previous condition. Closely related was a provision that after the schools were "thoroughly organized" all children between six and sixteen years of age should attend school for at least twenty-four months. Thus, the public schools were to be open to all children, and all children were to be required to enroll in some school, either public or private.[23]

Not only did the Black delegates support education at public expense; they supported compulsory attendance for all school-age children.

Even though the percentage of Black children in schools rose from 1.9% to 33% between 1865 and 1880, the great promise of

Reconstruction education was not fully realized by Black parents nor their children. The promise of the American dream -- mobility and opportunity through education -- was not and has yet to be realized.

Alfred Kelly, a white historian observed that Black people "believed in the American dream and that it could be made to work for black men too."[25] (Kelly was invited by Thurgood Marshall, the Chief NAACP Legal Defense lawyer, to work with the legal team as it prepared arguments for the Supreme Court.) Blacks have held on to the dream even "while the taxes of Negro families in some states went to boost white education"[26] and while Black families "were compelled to organize private self-help efforts to educate their own children."[27]

The quality and condition of education for Black children has always been of primary concern for Black parents and the Black community, because Black people connected knowledge with power. They believed that education was a stepping stone to wealth and respect and that wealth without education was crippling.

Historically, with few exceptions, the policies and administration of public schools for Blacks have been determined by whites who operated the "public schools as though they were private property."[28] Still, Black parents "sought to maximize educational opportunities within the system of segregation."[29] The determination by Black parents that education was the road to job opportunities, and a way out of a cycle of poverty forced them to continue the struggle and sacrifice for education of Black children.

Richard Kluger in Simple Justice gave accounts of the sacrifices Black parents and Black communities in the South made in successfully challenging the Plessy v. Ferguson court ruling of 1896. Kluger describes the range of suffering experienced by Black people. He cited the experience of Rev. DeLaine, one of the leaders in the Clarendon County, S.C. case. Rev. DeLaine was discharged from his job as a principal of a public school, fired upon by whites in his community, and threatened by the Ku Klux Klan. His wife and nieces lost their teaching jobs. And his church and home were burned to the ground.[30] Black parents and the Black community faced repeated acts of terrorism throughout the legal process that resulted in the Brown decision.

These historical events are important to know and discuss because the past helps us to determine the future. In the words of Carter G. Woodson: "...To know the possibilities of a race...an appraisal of its past is necessary." The role Black parents and the Black community have played as providers of education for Black children must be studied in one work so that Black children will be prepared to compete more successfully for the social benefits enjoyed by the dominant group.

I am convinced that Black parents and the Black community can have an influence on this process by knowing this history and adopting the enthusiasm and commitment to education demonstrated by the brave heroes of the past.

Purpose

> ...the measures which have been adopted for the development of white men's children have been denied to us and ours. The laws which have made white men great, have degraded us, because we were colored and because we were reduced to chattel slavery. But now that we are freemen, now that we have been lifted up by the providence of God to manhood, we have resolved to come forward, and, like MEN, speak and act for ourselves. We fully recognize the truth of the maxim that 'God helps those who help themselves.'[31]

The specific purpose of the study is to highlight the many and varied contributions Black people have made to the schooling of their children, and, thereby, make a significant contribution to the literature on this subject. It often happens that Black people -- adults and children -- are not aware of the sustained contributions Blacks have made in their own behalf. A greater awareness of this role will serve to enhance self-esteem among Blacks and will encourage future generations to continue their participation in the education of Black children. This study will add weight to the historical importance Blacks have placed on the education of their children. Teachers, administrators, and others involved in the education of Black children are largely ignorant of this history as well as this ignorance affects how Black children are viewed, treated, taught, encouraged, or discouraged in the process of acquiring an education in this society.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

> If the Negro public school system had been sustained, guided and supported, the American Negro today would equal Denmark in literacy.[32]

The rationale of the study is to fill a void in the knowledge base of education that will contribute to the literature. To my knowledge such a study has not been done. The question of whether Black children will be educated effectively is a matter of substantial importance to the nation generally and to the Black community particularly. It is one of the most important challenges facing the educational professions. A better appreciation of the role Black parents have played historically in the education of their children will help us respond to that challenge.

While it is generally agreed that parental participation in the education of their children is a key ingredient to academic success,[33] there has been an almost universally-held belief by educators, and in other circles as well, that Black parents and Black community leaders are less interested in the education of their children than other groups. I thoroughly reject this notion. The rejection is based in part on professional, personal, and research experiences.

As a professional consultant to public schools for seventeen years in several states since the Brown decision, I often heard white teachers and white administrators say that Black parents "don't care about their children's education." This accusation was often directed at poor Black parents or Black parents who did not visit their children's school. However, my conversation with Black parents and personal experiences with my own children led me to reject that accusation and draw different conclusions. As a professional working with these Black parents and Black children, I heard Black parents say

in a number of different ways that they wanted their children to be educated. They encouraged them to "work hard in school and to study hard." In most cases Black parents gave their children's teachers permission to "make my child learn." These parents believed that education was the vehicle for "getting a chance to be somebody." Some would say education was the way for their children to have a better life than they had. They saw education as a way of getting out of poverty.

In my personal life, the significance of education was reinforced on a daily basis I grew up in a family of college trained parents and grandparents who placed high value on education. They always stressed the importance of "an education." There was never any doubt that my brothers and I would go to college and succeed. I lived in a Black community that took great pride in its schools and the achievement of neighborhood children. Additionally, as parents, my husband and I demonstrated in behavior and attitude our belief and high regard for our children's education. Our three daughters completed college and professional school. Two are practicing lawyers and one is an electrical engineer. In my research of the people and communities involved in the Brown decision, I learned of the pain and suffering Black parents, the Black communities and Black children had to endure as a consequence of their strong belief in education. (See Appendix for Summary of Study).

This study is significant because it offers a vehicle for the re-examination and discussion of a premise upon which the academic success of Black children has been based. The premise is that, "Black parents don't care about the education of their children." An examination of this fallacious assumption will bring forth other reasons why Black children are not educated effectively in the American schools.

Assumptions

This study is based on the following assumptions:

--that Black parents and the Black community have a historical interest in the education of Black children;

--that historically Black people have placed high value on education because they believed education was a route to fitting into the mainstream of the American society and its opportunities;

--that there was researchable evidence to support these assumptions; and

--that Black parents and the Black community must be told of their historical relationship with education so that Black children can reclaim their proficiency in education.

The study is also based on the assumption that deep in the fabric of the white American society there exists a belief that Black people do not place high value on education and that this disbelief affects the extent to which teachers teach Black children effectively and Black children learn.

Definitions

In this study historical review refers to the reconstruction of the past and explanation of its causes and consequences.

Parents -- includes not only natural parents but extended family and other relatives and non-relatives who often play an important role in the care of children in the Black community.

Role of parents -- refers to the activities, expectations, and concrete support parents gave to the advancement of the education of their children.

Black community -- included both geographical and organized activities by and for Black people, such as churches, fraternal groups, sororities, service clubs, neighborhood associations, the Urban League, NAACP, Black press, and other voluntary associations so numerous in the Black community.

Schooling -- the actual enrollment of children in formal academic instruction.

Providing -- furnishing the means by which formal instruction could take place -- for example, supplying materials, land, money, building, teachers, petitions, and litigation.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the efforts of selected Black parents, Black communities, and Black organizations; it includes the involvement of non-Black organizations only insofar as those actions had a direct impact on the outcome of the efforts of the Black parents and the Black community. The study is limited to the South from 1865 to 1954, and to materials from primary eyewitness accounts, i.e., autobiographies, letters, articles, newspaper accounts, church, and other Black organization documents. This report utilized, to the fullest extent possible the direct quotes of the authors.

This year 1865 was selected as a beginning date because the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution abolishing slavery was ratified on December 6, 1865 freeing Black people to become involved in the schooling of their children. The study ended

with the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision of the Supreme Court declaring that separate-but-equal policies in education was unconstitutional. That decision ushered in a new era in providing education for Black children because it gave Black parents a vehicle to challenge inequities in the courts.

Design and Procedures of the Study

Earlier research conducted by this writer on communities involved in the Brown decision revealed the role Black parents, Black children and the Black community played in attempting to provide decent schooling for Black children. The role these plaintiffs played were revealed by means of autobiographies, diaries, newspaper accounts, legal briefs, periodicals, and journals.

The results of my earlier research suggested that comparable data, on the role Black parents and the Black community played in providing schooling for Black children in the South from 1865-1954, might be found in similar primary resources.

Historians have written extensively about the period covered by this study and there are many interpretations of the events which took place during this period. The interest in this dissertation is to learn what role Black parents themselves and the Black community played to provide schooling for Black children during this period of history.

Russell C. Brignano published a revised bibliography of 710 autobiographies entitled, Black Americans in Autobiographies in 1984. Based on the above observations this volume serves as an excellent data source.

Additionally, the collection was indexed, identifying activities, experiences, occupations and professions of the authors. For example, there are roughly 145 authors listed in the category of education -- administrators and teachers; 75 are classified as politicians, and politics; 61 are in the field of civil rights activities; 51 were involved in community work; 26 are lawyers, and 10 are identified as scholars. This type of identification helped locate people and events which described the involvement of the authors with major issues of their time. Education and schooling for Black children were major issues during the life of these authors.

Fifty-one autobiographies were used as the primary data source for this study. They were selected on the following criteria:

--the life of individuals who grew up in the periods being covered in this study;

--individuals who lived in the Southern region of the United States and

--individuals whose own personal experiences related to formal schooling as students, parents, teacher or community activist.

Within the Five-College area of Amherst, 57 percent (405) of the Brignano references were in the libraries of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Amherst College, Mt. Holyoke College, and Smith College. The balance were available through the inter-library loan service. Supplementary data were the W.E.B. Du Bois and Horace Mann Bond Papers which are located at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst Library.

Procedure for Extracting Data From the Records

Initially, a pilot study was conducted in which five autobiographies were reviewed and a profile of each author was developed. The profiles included the following information:

--Name
--Date of birth
--Parents - slave or free
--Place of birth
--Schooling:
  Elementary
  Secondary
  Other
--Profession/occupation
--Material status
--Children
--Vignettes of interest
--Age at the time of writing

The readings were used to identify reported activities in order to develop a preliminary catalogue scheme. It was anticipated that activities would include but not limited to the following types:

--Raising funds to build buildings
--Paying tuition and fees for children to attend school
--Raising funds for teachers' salaries
--Appearing before school boards and other public authorities
--Petitioning courts

Each autobiography was read carefully for passages, sections, chapters, and sentences which described specific activities on the part of Black parents and other Black adults which were related directly or indirectly to any aspect of providing for the schooling of Black children. The following list of questions guided the search during the reading.

1. What type of activities did the parents, older siblings, relatives and/or other adults engage in to provide schooling for Black children?

2. What type of Black organization became involved in providing schooling for Black children?
3. What was the condition of the schools Black children attended?
4. How many months did Black children attend school?
5. Did the teachers have formal training?
6. How old were the authors when they started school?
7. Did the authors receive encouragement to go to school?
8. Was the author self motivated to attend school?
9. Did the family move in order to find better education for the children?
10. What was the socio-economic status of the family?
11. What was the family's attitude towards education?
12. What was the physical condition of the author as a child?
13. What vignettes did the author wish to share in his/her autobiography?

Pertinent passages were copied, placed in a file according to dates, events and other scheme suggested as a result of the pilot analysis. These materials were subjected to a content analysis. Only materials relevant to providing information on the role Black parents and the Black community played in providing schooling for Black children were used in this study.

This material was written in a narrative form with heavy relevance on verbatim quotes. The autobiographies were to be integrated meaningfully with the historical and educational syntheses.

Review of the Literature

> The race will free itself from exploiters just as soon as it decides to do so. No one else can accomplish this task for the race. It must plan and do for itself.[34]

In reviewing the historical literature on the education of Black people, I searched for references on the role Black parents and/or the Black community played in providing schooling for Black children in the South during the period 1865-1954. My search revealed that any topic that reports on a relationship between Black parents and their children's education is largely ignored by historians.

According to Meyer Weinberg, "white parents are absent from the historical accounts"[35] as well. But he states that "omission only slightly distorts the picture..."[36] because white parents usually identify with the white policy makers. Therefore, their concerns about education for white children are, as a rule, reflected in policies established by white dominated school authorities.

On the other hand, Black parents are without equal political clout and the issues that affect educational opportunities for Black children are not addressed by these bodies. Because of this neglect the Black community had to raise major concerns about the plight of their children in public schools with those policy makers and others in control of Black children's education. And, at times, the community was forced to develop substitute and/or supplemental educational alternatives to the existing systems for Black children.

Four major works treat the subject of education for Black people extensively. These sources provide a more comprehensive

framework for a better understanding of the history in a context related to the social, political, economic and psychological impact on Black people. In addition, these sources represent a basic foundation and analysis of Black education in America upon which other studies were developed. But even among these scholars there is only one work in which the reader can find answers to the questions raised earlier regarding the role of Black parents or the Black community in providing schooling for Black children.

A possible explanation for this omission might be found as one understands the purposes of those works and the period in which the research was conducted.

The pioneer in the history of Black education was Carter G. Woodson who wrote, The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861. He wrote this significant study in 1913 and was the "first historian of education to use primary sources derived from Negro people, especially correspondence and periodicals."[37]

Woodson developed several major themes in his book but those most relevant to this study are: the opposition Blacks experienced in their search for education; their willingness to share the burden of providing education for their children; the strong desire of Blacks to be educated; and that "...education is a dependent, interacting unit of the whole culture. Indeed it lies at the heart of the culture, and necessarily reflects the contending values which there prevails."[38]

In 1934, nineteen years after Woodson, Dr. Horace Mann Bond wrote, The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order. Bond saw the education of Black people from a political and sociological perspective. He was of the opinion that Black people are more deeply affected by economic and political changes in the American social order than other groups and that Blacks must become aware of these changes and therefore build into their education an understanding of the social structure of the society.

In the preface to the 1965 reprinting of his book, Horace Mann Bond put it this way:

> We are now a full century beyond that partial emancipation. The great-grandchildren, the grandchildren, and the children of the institution of slavery, even to the tenth and eleventh generations, are with us today; they have dragged their heavy burden of generations of enforced ignorance, and of wretched schools 'after freedom,' into the slum ghettoes of cities--South, North, and West; and great indeed, are the devilish miracles wrought by those who denied, systematically and without conscience, the acquisition of knowledge to children.

Dr. Bond laid the foundation for reviewing education of Black people by means of a systems approach and warns of the need to be aware of the importance of the social order in American society. He did not examine the role of the Black parents and/or the Black community in providing schooling for Black children. However, he acknowledged the lack of political power of poor Black families and he placed importance on the role of the family and its relationship to cultural continuity.

A third work on the history of Black education is, A History of Negro Education in the South From 1619 to the Present, by Henry Allen Bullock. This work includes a review of the laws and customs that

governed the formal and informal relationships between slaves and slave owners which allowed education to take place among a number of slaves. He shared his view that the plantation system and slavery were built on an economic model and that literacy for selected slaves contributed to the "business" of the plantation. Dr. Bullock's book is limited to the South and covers the period of this study.

The last and most contemporary work is that of Meyer Weinberg, A Chance to Learn: A History of Race and Education in the United States. This book, to my knowledge, is the first to go beyond the historical accounts of the education of Black people in America. It is the first to identify the role of Black parents in their effort to secure educational opportunities for their children. In A Chance to Learn, Weinberg uses documented primary historical sources wherever possible which allows the reader to draw a clear picture of the role of Black parents and their children in the struggle to overcome the institutionalized efforts towards "compulsory ignorance." In this book Weinberg suggests answers to some of the questions investigated in this study.

Additionally, for the purpose of this study the book examines the issues and events that lead up to the 1954 Supreme Court Brown decision, which places it in a contemporary context. Weinberg's book was first published in 1977 following the turbulent period of the 60's and early 70's. As a historian, scholar, and education critic, he appreciated the need to review the educational opportunities Black children were receiving in the public schools. He also reported the

need to work with Black parents and the Black community in order to effect changes in school policies. His book addresses specifically the relationship that has developed between the American social order and "the efforts of minority communities to achieve educational equality for their children."

In addition to the critical works previously cited, a major contributor to the understanding of Black people inclusive of all areas of Black life was W.E.B. Du Bois. For this study two important pieces were reviewed. "The Negro Common School" published in 1901 and "Funding the Public School", a chapter in his book Black Reconstruction first published in 1935.

"The Negro Common School" report resulted from an investigation of the financial contributions Blacks made for their own elementary education and to demonstrate "the meager school facilities afforded Negro children." It was also a part of the Atlanta University plan of social studies on the condition of Black people in America. The study concluded, in 1901, that Black people were making an "heroic effort" to educate their children through private, self-supported schools, and were making a greater contribution to the school taxes than they were receiving back for their Black schools.

In his chapter on "Funding the Public School," Dr. Du Bois traced the history of a newly-freed people's effort to make public supported education free and available to all -- Black and white. His research offered significant demonstration that data are available

to research the role Black parents and the Black community played in providing schooling for Black children.

Outline of Chapters

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I provides an introduction to the study including background information on the purpose of the study. It also defines words used in the study that may have other than a dictionary meaning. Chapter I also identifies the limitations of the study, reviews relevant literature and explains the design and procedures of the study. It is in Chapter I where the periodization of the study is explained, specific questions used in the research are listed, a description of the autobiographies as a data source is also in this chapter and the method for extracting the data from the autobiographies is given.

Chapter II, III, and IV cover the Reconstruction period -- 1865-1877; the Post-Reconstruction period -- 1880-1918, and the period after World War I to the Brown decision -- 1920-1954; respectively. Each chapter will briefly review the history of the periods with a focus on the attitude of the white South toward Black people and education. Each chapter will address the research questions, outlined earlier, and each chapter will be summarized.

Chapter V, the final chapter, will summarize the study and offer conclusions and direction for future work.

Footnotes

[1]James D. Anderson, "Ex-Slaves and the Rise of Universal Education in the New South, 1860-1880" in Ronald K. Goodenow and Arthur O. White (eds.) Education and the Rise of the New South (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1981), p. 2.

[2]Meyer Weinberg, A Chance to Learn: A History of Race and Education in the United States, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 41.

[3]August Meier, Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915, (Ann Arbur: The University of Michigan Press, 1964), p. 12.

[4]See Winthrop D. Jordan, The White Man's Burden, (Oxford: University Press, 1974), p. 174, Lloyd W. Warner, Robert J. Havighurse, and Marvin B. Loeb, Who Shall Be Educated? The Challenge of Unequal Opportunity, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1944), p. 121, and Chancellor Harper; Governor Hammond; Dr. Simms; and Professor Dew, Pro-Slavery Argument, As Maintained by the Most Distinguished Writers of the Southern States, (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Co., 1853), p. 3.

[5]Faustine C. Jones-Wilson, "Persistent and Emergent Legal Issues in Education: 1983 Yearbook," The Journal of Negro Education, 52 (Summer 1983), No. 3: 188.

[6]George W. Williams, History of the Negro Race in America From 1800-1880, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1883), p. 148.

[7]Weinberg, A Chance to Learn, p. 13.

[8]Williams, History of the Negro Race, p. 178.

[9]A. Leon Higginbotham, In the Matter of Color: Race and the American Legal Process--The Colonial Period, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 198.

[10]Williams, History of the Negro Race, p. 180.

[11]Ibid., p. 163.

[12]Ibid., p. 163.

[13]Ibid., p. 158.

[14]Ibid., p. 160.

[15]Ibid., p. 148.

[16]Ibid., p. 180.

[17]W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction, p. 637.

[18]See Janet Cornelius, "We Slipped and Learned to Read: Slave Accounts of the Literacy Process, 1830-1854." Phylon (September 1983). pp. 171-184; John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), p. 147; Kelly Miller, Radicals and Conservatives and Other Essays on the Negro in America, (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), p. 260; and Joel Williamson, After Slavery the Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction, 1861-1877, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965), p. 210.

[19]Cornelius, "We Slipped and Learned to Read...", p. 174.

[20]Ibid., p. 174.

[21]Ibid., p. 181.

[22]W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880, (New York: Atheneum, 1871), p. 638.

[23]Ibid., p. 638.

[24]Williamson, After Slavery, p. 219.

[25]Richard Kluger, Simple Justice, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), p. 638.

[26]Weinberg, A Chance to Learn, p. 41.

[27]Ibid., p. 41.

[28]Ibid., p. 61.

[29]Ibid., p. 64.

[30]Kluger, Simple Justice, pp. 301-2.

[31]Philip S. Foner and George E. Walker, Proceedings of the Black State Conventions 1840-1965, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), p. 299.

[32]Du Bois, p. 637.

[33]See Andrew Billingsley, "The Educational Needs of Black Children," Education Commission of the States. Working papers on meeting the educational needs of cultural minorities. Denver, Colorado, November, 1980, p. 23, Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, "Families as Educators: The Forgotten People of Brown" in Derrick Bell, Shades of Brown New Perspectives on School Desegregation, (New York: Teachers College Columbia University, 1980), p. 7, Ralph W. Tyler, "Parental Involvement in Curriculum Decision Making: A Review and Critique" in Robert L. Sinclar, ed., A Two-Way Street Home-School Cooperation in Curriculum Decision-Making, (Boston: The Institute for Responsive Education, 1981), p. 6. Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, Worlds Apart: Relationship Between Families and Schools, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1975), pp. 20-42, and "A New Kind of P.T.A.," Newsweek, November 15, 1966, p. 105.

[34]Carter G. Woodson, Mis-Education of the Negro, (Washington: D.C.: The Associated Publishers, Inc., 1969), p. 117.

[35]Weinberg, A Chance to Learn, p. 3.

[36]Ibid., p. 3.

[37]Ibid., p. 4.

[38]Doxey A. Wilkerson, unnumbered leaf in Carter G. Woodson, The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861, New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1968.

CHAPTER II

THE RECONSTRUCTION PERIOD 1865-1877

> Never in modern times has a large section of a nation so used its combined energies to the degradation of mankind. The hurt to the Negro in this era was not only his treatment in slavery; it was the wound dealt to his reputation as a human being. Nothing was left; nothing was sacred; and while the best and more cultivated and more humane of the planters did not themselves always repeat the calummy, they stood by, consenting by silence while blatherskites said things about Negroes too cruelly untrue to be the word of civilized men. Not only then in the forties and fifties did the word Negro lose its capital letter, but African history became the tale of degraded animals and sub-human savages, where no vestige of human culture found foothold.[1]

The above quotation captures the tone of the mood of white people in the South after the Civil War. It speaks to the environment in which the newly emancipated Black people found themselves. It is this environment--the ambience, the behavior of the Southern white community--that this chapter and Chapters Three and Four will address. An understanding of this moment in history is necessary in order for the reader to place in context the research findings that follows. In addition to the historical context, this research will also provide insight into what Black people had to accept in order to provide schooling for their children.

As Weinberg observed, in his Minority Students: A Research Appraisal:

> Problems of minority education are discussed without reference to the long-term oppression and exploitation inherent in slavery. Yet, it is the rootedness and not the agedness of history that is ignored...[2]

The oppression and exploitation of Black people were permitted because of the attitude and beliefs offered in the above quotation. Southern whites could abuse Black people or stand by and allow them to be abused because as Ronald E. Butchard, author of Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction, reminds us that by the middle of the nineteenth century, white Americans had almost universally accepted a series of racist hereditarian arguments that supported the racial inferiority of all colored peoples. These theories were developed by authorities in science and religion, who supported their scientific findings by constructing a racial hierarchy with the Black race at the bottom, the Anglo-Saxon at the top, and all others in between.[3]

Science and religion are a part of the rootedness in the attitude and environment Black people encountered after the Civil War and during the Reconstruction period.

Many historians have written about the Reconstruction period and reported on:

--the political gains made by Blacks during these brief twelve years;

--the role Black legislators played in obtaining free publically supported education for Black and white children of the South by levying larger taxes and creating additional sources of income;

--the success of the Freedmen's Bureau in establishing a greater centralization of authority and a closer supervision of certification and curriculum; and,

--the effort to place the education of Blacks on an equal basis with that provided for whites.

It is the position of this writer that an understanding of the climate of the times and the attitude of the white people will further clarify the issues covered in this dissertation.

<u>White Attitudes During the Reconstruction Period</u>

In this dissertation the Reconstruction period refers to the years following the Civil War during which the Southern states were readmitted to the Union (1865-1877). This readmission was under certain conditions and provisions laid down by the President of the United States and later by Congress. The end of this period is usually associated with the election of Rutherford B. Hayes and the return to power of conservative white Southerners as well as the withdrawal of the last Federal troops from the South.

The Reconstruction period was a period in which the white South went through great trauma, primarily because it had lost control of its government, its economy, its way of life, and its slaves. As a result of the effects of the war there was great hostility to Blacks exhibited by white Southerners. The extreme hostility against Blacks came primarily because whites viewed emancipation of the slaves as a major catastrophe.

Not only did emancipation represent a major disruption in the economy, it also altered the power relationship between Blacks and

whites. Among the majority of Southern whites this created attitudes of resentment, anger, and placement of blame for the condition in the South. Even though three-fourths of the white people in the South had not owned slaves or benefited from the slave system, they adopted the habits and thought patterns of the large plantation owners. In other words, most whites identifed strongly with the ex-slave owners by supporting oppression of Blacks.

The Reconstruction is a peculiar period and often difficult to understand because dichotamous events took place simultaneously. For example, while on the one hand the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution were ratified which abolished slavery; guaranteed all citizens due process of law; and forbade states from interference with the right to vote. On the other hand, there were persistent moves by the white Southern leadership to return the region to its antebellum status. Many states ignored measures granting freedom to Blacks. Policies which had granted land to the freedmen were overturned and the lands were seized and returned to the whites of the South. As Woodson observed, "native whites undertook to 'manage or control' the freedmen as they were handled when slaves"[4] and if Blacks objected to this old relationship they were sometimes beaten or killed. While laws were being written in Congress guaranteeing freedom to Blacks, Southern states were enacting black codes which not only denied Blacks freedom but were remarkably similar to the antebellum slaves codes.

The Black codes, another way of demeaning Black people and keeping them in their "place", were designed to return the newly freed Blacks back to a condition of slavery. The codes were written to "take advantage of every misfortune of the Negro."[5] For example: if a Black person was caught moving from one plantation to another in search of work this condition would be classified as vagrancy. The "vagrant" would be taken into custody, whipped, placed under heavy penalties and forced to work for white employers who had as much control over their lives as the slaveholders had. In the case of Black children who became separated from their families following emancipation, they, too, were subject to confinement in jail and forced to work for former slaveowners under slavery conditions. The codes prevented Blacks from testifying in court, except in cases involving other Blacks. Fines were placed on Blacks who gave speeches considered to be against white authority, or for gestures and acts classified as rebellious. These codes covered absence from work, violating curfew, and the possession of firearms.

White Southern Attitude Towards Education

Before the Civil War, education was not a central issue in the South. In fact Ashmore reports that the antebellum South had shown little interest in universal education. He further reports that at end of the Civil War the South had very few schools for Black children; in fact, as we saw above, teaching Blacks to read and write had been a crime. In the meantime, the children of well-born

Southern whites were instructed by tutors or attended private academies while poor white children remained unschooled.[6]

This process of education had produced an elite and politically powerful class of whites in the South. They were generally slave-holders who had social prestige and enhanced their political power by voting for themselves and their slaves. It was this dominant planter class, who did not want change after the Civil War, that caused much of the turmoil surrounding the enfranchisement and education of the newly freed Blacks.

Attempts at educating Blacks provoked the most intense and bitter acts of hostilities by white Southerners. Education of Blacks was seen as a means of ruining a profitable system. Black churches and schoolhouses in many places were destroyed by mobs. Black and white teachers were beaten, and in many communities, expelled for no other reason than the fact that they were teachers and because the whites had an intense hatred for the very idea of educating the freedmen.[7]

In 1867, an American Missionary Association teacher reported that after working in Lewisburg, Arkansas one week he received a threat from the Ku Klux Klan to quit teaching "niggers" and leave or be killed.[8] Harrassment of teachers was most common in the rural areas of the South, including Northeastern Texas and Louisiana, also remote rural regions of Georgia and Arkansas. The situation for teachers in these areas was so dangerous that the Assistant Freedmen's Bureau Commissioner in Texas advised against female

teachers being assigned to Texas. He warned that he could not assure their safety. A teacher in rural Georgia was hanged until near death, severely whipped and told to leave town in five days. Another teacher was killed in rural Alabama. Southern whites felt intimidated by the thought of education in the hands of Black people.

Du Bois reports that education of Blacks was seen as lost labor and would cause injury to the white working class. Attempts at educating Blacks provoked intense and bitter hostilities because education was seen as an effort to make Blacks equal to whites. Epithets were put on walls using the most pejorative language whites could imagine -- "Nigger teachers."[9] Additionally, most of the Southern states viewed Black education during the Reconstruction period as a function of the Federal Government and private philanthropy, not a local responsibility -- education of Blacks was felt by the South as another effort by the North to "ruin a nigger."

The efforts of the Reconstruction government, the Freedmen's Bureau, occupation troops, missionaries, political activities which were influenced by Black legislation from 1865 to 1877 -- roughly twelve years. When the last federal troops were withdrawn the high hopes of Blacks were dashed. The white Southern leadership was again in power and free to determine power relationships between Blacks and whites as they saw fit.

With such resistance and great oppression to education, it is small wonder that these newly emancipated people persisted in their belief that education was a means of moving into their new status as

freedmen. Since the South had successfully waited out the effort of the federal government to enforce changes in their way of life, and even though they regarded the public school system with contempt, most of the Southern states kept the system of free public education. However, they made the Black schools "just as bad as they dared...and every cent spent on them was taken from Negro rents and wages..."[10]

The remainder of this chapter will consist of four sections which examine aspects of the experiences Blacks had with education during the Reconstruction period. Section A will present a brief biographical sketch of the Reconstruction authors. Questions researched for the biographical sketch were: Who were the authors? Who were their parents? Did they grow up in the urban or rural South? The issues of education and the biographical data were addressed uniformly across the periods covered by this study. Section A will also summarize the descriptions the authors gave regarding their experiences with issues of education. "Issues of education" is a phrase used here to discuss the condition of the school buildings; quality of education; e.g., the instructional materials used; formal training of the teachers; number of months school is in session; and the school attendance of the authors.

Section B will summarize factors, beliefs, physical condition of authors and socio-economic status of individuals; Section C will summarize activities initiated by Black parents, the Black community, or Black organizations that resulted in schooling for Black children; and finally, Section D will summarize the chapter.

Section A -- Who Were the Authors?

They were men and women who were born between 1861 and 1871 and lived well into the Twentieth Century. The birth dates 1861-1871 were selected in order to establish uniformity of time and to have the authors' "school age" during the Reconstruction period. They were individuals who became educators, ministers, journalists and social workers in their adult years and who devoted their professional lives to the service of Black people. One of the women the Reconstruction authors was President of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in Louisiana; was the founder of an industrial home and school for homeless children in New Orlenas, and campaigned tirelessly for prison reform because, at that time, homeless Black children were sent to prison. As reported elsewhere in this work, during Reconstruction this category of children in the South was subject to a condition similar to that of slavery. Approximately fourteen years after the end of Reconstruction, Louisiana was still officially abusing Black children. The method used now was sending them to prison for homelessness. Another female author became a famous journalist and led a long crusade against lynching in the United States. The male authors were primarily teachers and founders of schools, became presidents of colleges, and leaders in their religious work.

As children these authors knew both of their parents and as a rule lived with both parents.* In those cases where one or both

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*In some cases parents were owned by different slaveowners but lived close by or had visiting privileges. Children usually stayed with Mother. Parents knew children could be sold away at any time.

parents could not take care of them, the grandparents became caretakers. In discussing their grandparents one author described his paternal grandfather as a local preacher who could read "quite well" and travelled eight to ten miles weekly to preach. He reported both Blacks and whites gathered to hear him preach. After the death of his mother this author was raised by his paternal grandparents. These authors as children worked very hard at an early age and knew nothing of day-to-day recreation. In the words of one ten-year-old boy,

> During these trying post-bellum days a boy's childhood ended whenever his parents, or those who through economic pressure dominated his parents, decided it was time for him to go to work. My boyhood abruptly ended when I was ten years old. There were now eight members of our family and I was needed to help care for them. I was first set at hauling wood with an old solid-wheeled cart drawn by oxen named Lion and Lamb. Loading and unloading wood was a heavy task for so young a boy. I used to get very tired. I also had to work in the fields and helped an old man to make bricks.[11]

Who Were Their Parents?

With the exception of one author of the Reconstruction period the parents were slaves or former slaves, work worked on the plantation performing a variety of duties -- most of the women worked in the Big House; cooked for the master's family and the field hands. The duties of the fathers had the title "head man." There were skilled craftsmen, blacksmiths, and field hands. With few exceptions the parents could neither read nor write. The parents usually came from large families and as a rule had large families themselves. The economics of the plantation encouraged families of seven or more children.

Where Did They Grow Up?

These authors grew up in the rural counties of Mississippi, Virginia, Alabama, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Florida. One author reported that he was born on a plantation in Virginia near the spot where Cornwallis surrended to Washington. His parents elected to remain on the plantation after the Civil War because it served as a place for all the family members to unite after emancipation.

Issues of Education

The Condition of the School Building

In most Black areas of the rural South any standing structure could be used as a school, church, or community meeting place. Thomas O. Fuller, born in 1867 and reared in rural North Carolina, described his school as a log hut that was used for public school purposes as well as a place for worship. Henry H. Proctor said it this way: "It was also here that I heard my first sermon; for the same building was used for the church as well as the school."[12] He described his first schoolhouse as a "log cabin...well ventilated, one could throw a cat between the logs, and never touch a hair. It was admirably suited for the study of astronomy; for one could look up through the roof and see the glory of God reflected in the heavens. The benches were made of rails...the benches were backless and there were no desks."[13] He suggested the conditions did not encourage young

people to study. "The passing of a rumbling wagon would attract the attention of the whole school."[14] The backless benches seemed to be a common feature for the schools. Frances Joseph Gaudet described her school as a place where "twenty children (were) seated on four long, rough, backless benches."[15] Nevertheless Black children were eager to go to school and their parents sent them to any facility or any location called a school. One author identified "the open air, out under the big trees admist the shrubbery"[16] as his school.

In describing his school in Texas -- a state in which George Washington Williams said Blacks were worked so hard and had such long hours that "they had no hunger for books when night came."[17] J.E. Perry, who became a physician, remembered that every foot of space was taken by children on seats, stools, or anything that could be found to sit on. Dr. Perry grew up in Red River County, Texas where children had to go to school during the summer months "when the crops were laid by." He reported that the heat was "one hundred ten degrees in the shade" and unbearable in his long-hut school. He described his experience this way:

> Not only did we suffer from the heat but, around the dirt chimney rodents had found a hiding place, and occassionally a large one would run across the floor beneath our feet...
>
> In Texas there was a reptile, called a scorpion...we frequently saw one about ten feet above our heads...one big fellow fell... there was only one exit and all tried to emerge at once...many children falling and tumbling over others.[18]

One author who became a teacher towards the end of the Reconstruction period at age fifteen or sixteen wrote that the appearance of the

land was generally depressing and that the "only schools for Black children were in broken down church buildings."[19] As he described his school experience he reported that the enrollment in his small school grew so fast "the little schoolhouse simply could not accommodate the students any longer."[20] They then moved into a church building that "was no place for a school -- dark, cold, and dilapidated."[21] He reported that he took a proposal for a new school building to the white superintendent who told him "with finality that there was no money for such a purpose."[22]

This author was describing his experience in Virginia, a state in which twenty-five Black men attended and participated in the Constitutional Convention of 1867-1868. These Black men were eager to educate all the children of Virginia and to write into the new State Constitution language that would finance a public school system. In a coalition between these Black men and white liberals the Constitution provided for a uniform system of public schools to be established not later than 1876.[23]

T.C. Walker, born in 1862 and teaching in rural Virginia around 1877, gave his account of the "uniform system of public schools":

While we always had the sympathy and encouragement of the better element of the white people in the county, they did not make any financial contribution to help Negroes and there was great discrimination between the races when it came to allotment of public funds. However, the old church we were using was in such a run down condition that the

county superintendent finally put in a one-room building, into which we moved. But it was so small that it was overcrowded and we had to go back again to Old Poplars Church."[24]

Instructional Materials

Instructional material for Blacks was considered a luxury by white school officials. In the words of one of the authors:

> Not only was this building unsafe and unsuited for school use but there was no equipment available for use. My pupils had to bring pennies until we got a sufficient number to buy even a piece of blackboard. We had no desks or other suitable school furniture nor were slates, pencils, or paper furnished, let alone books.[25]

The most commonly referred to materials -- when there were materials -- were the Webster's Spelling Book identified as the Blue Back Speller and the McGuffey's Readers. One author described the assignment from the teacher as "the first requirement was a knowledge of the letters of the alphabet beginning at A and continuing to XYZ."[26] And the only equipment for satisfying that assignment was the Blue Back Speller.

When students advanced to the McGuffey Reader there was a real feeling of achievement. In discussing his school attendance and his sense of scholastic achievement, Henry D. Davidson wrote: "This school lasted only twelve weeks, but at the end of five weeks I would read every lesson and spell every word in the McGuffey First Reader. The teacher, Miss Butler, now sent word to my auntie to get me a second reader, with the statement that 'it is remarkable how fast Henry learns'".[27]

Learning was regarded by the former slaves as having miraculous powers that would open doors to social and political equality with whites. Vaughn wrote that grown men and young children took their Blue Back Speller with them to work and would study when not working. He also reported that in 1865, a Freedmen's Bureau teacher reported to the Superintendent that the Blacks had a "greed for letters" and how they "loved books."[28]

The belief that knowledge was power and that there was a distinction made between those Blacks who were educated and those who were not, created a sense of mystery and value with the symbols of learning. One author reported that a book might be studied the entire four-month school term because the teacher demanded that each letter in the speller be called distinctly, and students could not move on until knowledge of each word was perfect.

With few exceptions the authors of the Reconstruction period grew up in the rural South, and the educational conditions discussed above were rather universal. The city schools were reported to be better than the country schools. One author had an opportunity to compare the two systems. His comparison was made in 1879 at the end of the Reconstruction period (1877) and the beginning of the Post Reconstruction (1880). His experience is described in the following report:

> ...my Uncle Marshall moved to Selma, Alabama, to stay with and work for Solicitor J.N. Suttle, and took me down to live with him and to go to school there. I had never before seen so many children at school and so highly advanced in their studies. Boys and girls of my age and grade would go to the blackboard and write, draw, and make figures so fast that I was not only

> astonished but mystified at the ease and facility with which they would do this. I soon discovered what a handicap it was to live in the backwoods where you did not even have an opportunity to attend what schools they did have, though they were both short and shabby. I attended school in Selma for only one session. When I returned to Centerville the next year with my ball and bat and satchelful of bright new books, drawing cards, etc., I was a real curiosity to the other children, for they had been accustomed to seeing only a McGuffey Reader, a slate, and Webster's Blue-back Speller, which completed a boy's list of books.[29]

Formal Training of the Teachers

In describing their childhood experiences with their teachers, the authors often reported on what the teachers did, or methods used to get their attention. In general, their teachers were not formally trained. Formal training was not possible for Southern Black individuals until after the development of normal schools such as Fisk University in 1865; Howard, Morehouse and Talladega in 1867; Hampton Institute in 1868; and Tuskegee in 1881.

One author wrote:

> My teachers were faithful, while their scholarship and methods could not be compared with the present-day schools.[30]

It was not often possible from the autobiographers to determine whether their teachers were Black or white, but the fact that the schools were generally supported by Black church denominations and Black parents suggested that they were maintained largely by Black faculties.[31] By 1869 and '70 nearly one-half to three-fourths of the teachers of the freedmen were Black.[32]

One of the authors who was trained at Tuskegee Institute and was the founder and first principal of a normal and industrial institute in Mississippi described his school this way:

> Almost as soon as the Negro pupils got as far as "baker," and certainly when they got as far as "abasement," in the old blue-back speller they were made assistant teachers, and in a short while relieving the white teachers, they became the only teacher we had. When I was seven years old there was not a white teacher in our community. The colored teachers were doing good work, but the best of them had advanced only about as far as the fourth grade.[33]

In general, until the pool of trained teachers was established, teachers were individuals who had had more exposure to books or to educated people than those being taught. One author reported that his community requested the service of one of the ex-slaves who had worked as a butler in the big house and who had learned to read the paper, to come and teach the children. "Trained teachers were scarce and to hire one for a country school was very difficult"[34] reported one of the authors. However, an overall impression was that the teachers who were kind, considerate, caring and interested in the children performed miracles and the children learned despite the lack of training of the teachers. The following quote contains common elements of many reports by the Reconstruction authors:

> Rev. A.A. Godwin, one of the best elementary teachers, taught me common fractions and decimals in arithmetic, also physiology and physical geography. While the elementary schools taught many subjects now used in the high school, they never got any further than the 'fifth' reader grade. When a child got to this grade, he just stayed in it year after year, because many of the teachers of that period were not able to teach beyond that grade.[35]

To illustrate this point further, in 1870 a Freedman's Bureau superintendent for the state of Georgia reported that he was surprised to learn that many freedmen preferred to attend private schools conducted by less qualified teachers and pay tuition than go to a bureau school with more competent teachers and less tuition. The students reported that the teachers in the private school were "kind."[36]

An author who was born in 1870 and began school at age five described one of his female teachers in a very poetic way:

> She organized her school and with an expression of sympathy began her work. With feminine hands the little crowded congested building assumed a different appearance. A small table was provided, which she used as her desk. Every day it was covered with flowers, furnished by the students. From her countenance there radiated beams of tolerance, peace, and good will.
>
> It is said that one rotten apple placed in a barrel of sound ones will pollute the entire portion. Sometimes a genteel disposition and a pleasing attitude have a salutary effect upon those contacted. Our teacher was a dynamic force for public good and community betterment. "Actions occasionally speak louder than words." If that axiom is accepted, then one can truthfully say that deep in her heart, she sorrowed for our illiteracy and environment. The children lent every aid in relieving her in caring for the baby, thus, giving more time for her duty as teacher.
>
> She was systematic in her instructions, even to the minutest detail. Every comma, semi-colon, colon, period, etc., was placed for some significant purpose and we were taught to regard them.[37]

In 1874 one of the Hampton graduates returned to his community to teach. The community took real pride and credited him with "bristling with plans of all sorts for our betterment"[38] and that he was successful in teaching the students how to put "letters together so as to form simple words."[39]

Number of Months Schools in Session, School Attendance of Authors

> It was in a school like this, continuing only three months in the summer, when the crops were laid by, that I began my education.

The plantation system continued during the Reconstruction period. Agriculture was what Blacks knew best -- thus, they were locked to the land. Instead of being called slaves now they were called sharecroppers and tenant farmers. However, there was little chance for them to make a living and provide for their families. They were cheated by dishonest landlords, charged enormous prices and high interest for farm supplies. At harvest time the landowners always proved that the Black sharecropper and/or tenant farmer owed more than he earned. Woodson wrote that "The Negro tenant began the year with three mortgages, covering all he owned, his labor for the coming year, and all he expected to acquire during that twelve months."[40]

One of the authors of the Reconstruction period said it this way, "It is interesting to note that, in spite of the Emancipation Proclaimation, there was no apparent change in our status...my father continued to work for his old master..."[41]

The school attendance of the children of the Reconstruction period was tied to whether there was a school in the area and to the economic condition of the family. Most rural Southern families were cotton-farmers. After the Civil War, cotton was decreasing in value and in too many cases cotton was a one-crop cash system for the Black tenant farmer. However, at harvest time, all family members were still needed to pick the cotton.

Thomas C. Walker reported that "some of the pubils went to school for four months but I was allowed to go only for the time when outdoor work was impossible."[42] Henry D. Davidson, born in 1869 in Alabama, wrote that the "primary elementary schools to which I went lasted only three months. As short as the sessions were, quite frequently I did not get to attend but only a part of the session. For if the school session was held in the Spring, I could go only on rainy days and other odd days, for I had to help chop cotton and hoe corn; and if the school was taught in the Fall, I would have to stay out and pick cotton, unless it rained or the cotton-picking season was about out."[43]

"School lasted two months in the year" reported William H. Holtzclaw, "through July and August. The house (school) was three miles from our home, and we walked every day, my oldest sister carrying me astride her neck when my legs gave out."[44]

The authors varied in age when they officially started school. The range was from age four to eighteen years old. One author described his feeling the day he started school at age nine. "I appeared in school the opening day. I recall how I felt when I observed that there was so many children bigger than myself who could not read. Because of my instruction at home I was in the highest class in the school. And I had special pride in the fact."[45]

Section B

This section will summarize the research that examined the issues of personal, social and attitudinal factors which had influence on the authors. The following questions were investigated: who encouraged them to get an education? Who served as a role model for them? Could and/or did their family move from one place to another in order to provide them with a better education? What was the socio-economic status of their family? What were the attitudes towards education of the authors, their parents, teachers, relatives and others directly associated with them? Finally, what was the general state of health of the authors? Because so much of the information shared by the authors on this subject extended beyond the Reconstruction period, some summarized data may reflect the extended period.

Who Encouraged Them to go to School?

The answers varied from specific examples to general feelings. One author who was educated at Fisk University and the Yale University Divinity School, and became a Congregational Minister described two men who influenced him. He reported that when he was about nine years old: "two of the greatest men I had known came into my experience":

> Two brothers by the name of Eelsoe. They were distinguished from the others by being able to write letters, and the people gathered about them in great numbers to get them to write letters to their friends, and to read letters received from them. As they wrote and read these letters they seemed to be the most wonderful men in all the world. I wanted to be like them. As they rode away in their linen dusters they appeared to me to carry away with them the interest of all the gathering. The vision of these men filled my imagination as I lived the life of a country boy in the backwoods.[46]

In some communities the ex-slaves felt that the opportunity to acquire an education was very remote from their experience. Therefore, as a means of handling the possible disappointment of young Black children who talked about going off to school to get an education and not getting the opportunity, the older Blacks would often paint a picture of hardships and difficulty in becoming educated. However, once the older Black person learned that the Black child's dream might come true or was convinced that the younger Black person was willing to suffer the hardship of acquiring an education, everyone pitched in and offered all the encouragement and help they could. William J. Edwards told of such an experience:

> For a long time the people in the quarter did not believe that I was going, and many tried to discourage me. Had it not been for my aunt's encouraging words and sincere efforts, I believe that I could not have overcome the efforts of others to keep me from going. When, however, they all found that I was determined to go, they all became my friends and each would give me a nickle or a dime to help me off.
>
> The night before I left for Tuskegee, one of the neighbors told me that while he did not have anything to give me, he had a contract to get a cord of wood to the woodyard for the train by six o'clock that next morning and if I would take his team and haul it, he would give me one dollar for my service. I agreed to do it and at two o'clock the next morning I was at his home hitching up the team to haul the wood. I had to go about two miles for the wood and there was a heavy frost that morning. By five o'clock I had hauled the wood and had the team back to my neighbor's home waiting for my dollar. I thought this to be the coldest morning that I had ever experienced up to that time. I then got my few things together and was off for school.[47]

For many of the authors encouragement was just having a book. To Henry Damon Davidson born to slave parents, poor, living on a farm in

Alabama, and reared by an aunt, a book was a high point for him. He expressed it this way:

> I was to join the second reader class the following Monday. My aunt was not able to secure a new book for me, but her daughter, Lucinda, had finished her second reader and had been promoted to the third reader class. So her torn and badly used second reader was given to me. It was a source of exquisite pleasure for me to possess a second reader, if not entirely my own. My cousin Lucinda kept constantly reminding me to "take care of and not tear" her book. Instead of simply preparing lessons to recite to my teacher in regular order each day, as was the custom in those days, in a few days and nights I had read the book through from cover to cover.[48]

For Henry Damon Davidson and countless others, encouragement was knowing what your teacher thought of you as a person. The following contains elements reported in one form or another by all the authors:

> I once overheard a teacher say, in talking to a boy who was poor in his classes, "Look at Henry Davidson. He is at or near the head of all of his classes, and I have noticed that he is one of the first on the field to play ball, and is equal to the best in the game, and is about the first in line to pass in when the bell rings to close out the recess. Why don't you be like him?"[49]

The successor to Booker T. Washington as president of Tuskegee remembered a farewell reception that was given in his honor the night before he left for school. It served as encouragement for him and other young Blacks in attendance. "I recall," he said, "that just before we parted there were many speeches," one in particular touched him deeply:

> They were all crude, as I think of it now, yet I have seldom witnessed a more sincere and touching farewell reception. Our old pastor, Armstead Berkely, who was perhaps seventy-six years of age, officiated as master of ceremonies. He had a wonderfully fine voice, strong and melodious. He was a great singer and had all the qualities necessary to make him a fervid, emotional speaker...

> He had the final speech and closed the affair with a very earnest and touching prayer; and while there had been much levity among the young folk the early part of the night, he left them all in a very serious mood. I could not respond when called upon, but the impression of the sincere affection and good will of those simple, earnest people with whom I had lived from childhood has always remained with me.[50]

Most of the autobiographers reviewed for this study were very poor and getting clothes together to go off to school was a major undertaking for them and their parents. Another form of support and encouragement for many of them was the help the students received from parents, relatives and others in getting their clothes together. In many instances relatives gave their own clothes to the students while parents cut down "father's trousers or father's coat" to fit them for their use. To have a "store bought" item was very rare.

One author reported on his good fortune in getting "proper apparel" for a Jewish friend and an acquaintance of the family to whom they sold their cotton. He wrote that when he went to sell his cotton the buyer asked whether or not he was planning to return to school. When he told the buyer that he intended to return but he had no clothes the buyer introduced him to one of his friends who owned a store that sold suits. The following is a report of that experience:

> He called his friend, took him aside, and whispered something in his ear. The friend said, "Cum dis way, John." He led me up a winding stairs and showed me the clothes. "Now you want to go back to school. Take two suits for ten dollars. I am glad to help you." For a moment I was lost for words. Finally, I tried to thank him. With earnestness in his voice and a smile on his face, he said, "It is all right; you're welcome."
>
> What a relief it was to be prepared from a standpoint of proper apparel.

> Down the street at a distance of one block was a confectionery store which I entered. While making a small purchase I noticed a beautiful brown hat hanging on a nail. It is not and never been my custom to pry into affairs of others but on this occasion something told me to make inquiry whether the hat was for sale. The reply was in the affirmative as he lifted it from the wall. "It is number seven," the clerk said. Six and seven-eights was my number, but we made it fit. It was a Stetson. At that time the finest hats in America were made by John B. Stetson and sold for five dollars. This article was also too small for the purchaser and sold to me for two dollars and fifty cents.
>
> How delighted I was in my new tailor-made clothes and Stetson hat, when I returned to the campus. It was not the custom to major in clothes but the majority of the boys aspired to be neat and presentable.[51]

Black children received support and encouragement from family and community as they progressed in learning to read. Authors wrote about the pride family members felt when children could read the paper or help older community people "fill out important" papers. An example of pride in reading was reported by Dr. Perry. He was about ten or eleven years old in 1881 just at the beginning of the Post Reconstruction period. President Garfield had just been assassinated. A newspaper with all the details was found in his home and he could read to his family all about the incident. He recorded the event this way:

> By accident, Providence, or intention, I know not which, a paper, The Globe-Democrat published in St. Louis, found its way into our home. It was read by me to the delight of the family. The paper gave in detail the approach of the assassin, the firing of the deadly weapon, the prostrate fall of the victim, his many days of anguish, suffering, and final death.[52]

The way in which he shared his reading skill with the community was by reading the church sermons, which were published in the paper every week to the visitors who came to his parent's home to hear him

read. Even though the sermons were often a week or more old by the time he received the paper, they were read and re-read, not only to "our immediate household, but to neighbors who often visited our home to hear them read."[53]

One of the more affluent authors described his mother as a role model and a source of great encouragement to learn to read. In his discussion he wrote:

> It was a fine thing for me that I had inherited from mother (if such is possible) a love for reading. I have known mother to sit up nearly all the night reading a book in which she was interested. Her tastes were for the works of Thackeray, Dickens, Scott, George Eliot, and other writers of the Victorian period.
>
> I was especially fond of Dickens and Scott. By the time that I was fifteen or sixteen I had read all of the Waverly Novels of Scott and many of the novels of Dickens. I recall how interested I became in the fate of Little Nell as I read the Old Curiosity Shop. I had put the book in the stable loft among the hay which we kept for the cow, and I would steal away to the loft to read when I should have been cutting the wood, or performing some other task which my father had directed that I should do as he assigned my work each morning before he left for his shop.[54]

<u>Could and/or did Their Family Move From One Place to Another in Order to Provide Them with a Better Education?</u>

Only a few of the authors mentioned whether their families moved during this period for the purpose of improved educational opportunities for the children. One author born in 1868 who had only three months' schooling in the year -- and that was between laying crops -- reported that his mother urged his father to move from the country to the city with the following argument:

> My mother said to my father that they had spent all their lives working for other people; now they should spend the rest of it working for their children. On this decision turned the wonderful advantages I have had to get that education that was denied to my parents.[55]

Another author wrote:

> My father had an elementary education and wanted at least that for his sons. Finding no school system near Greenwood, where my youngest brother, Asbury, was born, he stole away from Fort Lorn by steamboat to P. Line Home, south of Yazoo City, and there, under the instruction of Professors John N. Grandberry, A.H. Stephens, William Holland, and M.F. Gant, my three brothers and I had our first schooling, in a little log cabin by the Yazoo River.[56]

The author who became the founder and principal of an industrial school in New Orleans was sent from a rural county in Louisiana to the city of New Orleans in 1869 to live with her grandmother because her father died and her mother had to go to work. She was eight years old and her brother ten. Her grandmother sent them to a school near her home. She later went to Straight University in New Orleans for a brief period.

Education in New Orleans during that time was considered among the best in the South. As early as 1867 the municipal system in Louisiana began to operate the schools being closed down by the Freedmen's Bureau. The New Orleans school board appropriated $70,000 for Black education and maintained the teaching staff of the Bureau schools.

<u>Socio-economic Status of the Author's Families</u>

With few exceptions the authors were from poor families and without exception their families were considered to be at the bottom

of the social scale by white Southerners. Even in reported cases of authors whose fathers or other family members were politically active and who were delegates to the various constitution convention could not succeed in gaining respect of the white Southerners. They were considered "upperty" and represented a threat to the old Southern way. However, the social order within the Black community was different and these Blacks were respected and highly regarded. They were considered "men of means." Those who were able to buy property after the Civil War moved their families off the plantation and into their own homes. There were, however, countless cases of destitute and displaced persons at the bottom of the social and economic scale. Many of our authors were such persons and one described his life following the death of his mother.

He moved to live with his aunt. She was very poor and was trying to take care of her daughter and her daughter's son. They lived in a one-room ex-slave cabin. He slept on two quilts on the dirt floor. He wore crocus or corn sack shirts -- which were very uncomfortable and sticky. The family could not afford fabric to make a regular shirt. They had very little food and the author was a sickly child. One year he became quite ill. There were very few hospitals that would treat Black people, even though the Freedmen's Bureau established hospitals staffed with physicians, surgeons and nurses, medical needs among Blacks outweighed the relief provided by the Bureau.

One author, a victim of that relationship between illness and professional medical attention described above was treated at home by his aunt. After several months of being sick without professional care, his aunt went about the community begging for money to take him to the local physician. The family often had to beg the neighbors for food, also. Their condition, in part, was the result of an arrangement with a farmer. The family rented from a tenant farmer on a plantation. Their crops of cotton and corn yielded very little and they were always in debt to the owner. Corn bread and corn coffee were their staples.

Many of the authors suffered greatly. One described his economic condition this way:

> My mother cooked for the "white folks," and, her work being very exciting, she could not always get home at night. At such times we children suffered an excruciating kind of pain -- the pain of hunger. I can well remember how at night we would often cry for food until falling here and there on the floor we would sob ourselves to sleep. Late at night, sometime after midnight, mother would reach home with a large pan of potatoes. Very often we would go two or three days at a time without prepared food.[57]

Black parents and Black children worked very hard. They found extra jobs at odd times in order to provide for their families. For example, one author reported that his father sold wood during the off season. He wrote:

> My father did the cutting of the wood and my duty was hauling or driving the team. The price of wood was two dollars per cord. The distance was five miles. One-half cord could be carted at each load and two trips made a day. It required the service of two horses, my father, me, and the wood to earn the small sum of two dollars a day. Circumstances were such that we considered it a privilege to serve in the capacity. The days were long, the sun was hot, the roads were dusty and the sticks of wood heavy, to such an extent that to lift them from their resting place on the frame was almost an impossibility.[58]

"My stepfather died" told another author, "and mother had to take me from school. Brother and I had to help her earn money to support the other three children. I went barefoot all summer to have shoes for winter -- brother never experienced having toys."[59]

"At the end of the first school year there was a trying time for our family..." wrote another and continued:

> On this occasion the teacher ordered all the pupils to appear dressed in white. We had no white clothes, nor many of any other sort, for that matter. Father and Mother discussed our predicament nearly all one night. Father said it was foolish to buy clothes which could be used for that occasion only. But my ever resourceful mother was still determined that her children should look as well on this important occasion as any of our neighbors. However, when we went to bed the night before the exhibition we still had no white clothes and no cloth from which to make them. Nevertheless, when we awoke the next morning, all three of us had beautiful white suits. It came about in this way: my mother had a beautiful white Sunday petticoat, which she had cut up and made into suits for us. As there is just so much cloth in a petticoat and no more, the stuff had to be cut close to cover all three of us children, and as the petticoat had been worn several times and was, therefore, likely to tear, we had to be very careful how we stooped in moving about the stage, lest there should be a general splitting and tearing, with consequences that we were afraid to imagine. At the exhibition the next night we said our little pieces, and I suppose we looked about as well as the others; at least, we thought so; and that was sufficient. One thing I am sure of, --there was no mother there who was prouder of her children than ours.
>
> If there happened to be a school in the winter time, I had sometimes to go bare-footed and always with scant clothing.[60]

The examples were many. Parents -- fathers as a rule -- would travel great distances to find work. These great distances meant they would be away from home many weeks at a time and children had to be taken out of school to work in that parent's place. The financial yield

to the family was often not worth the effort. Other authors wrote that work did not take them out of school. In the words of one author:

> In busy seasons we were called at 4:30 o'clock. Immediately we went to the field and worked until 8 o'clock, hurried then to the house, changed clothing, ate breakfast, and off to school we went. Returning home immediately after school at about 4:30, we continued at our toils until 7:30. By the time chores (watering, feeding the stock, milking the cows) were done, the old farm clock usually was striking 9. This was regulary a daily routine. Saturday afternoon was usually a holiday and was given to fishing, hunting, etc. At the age of twelve, my farm responsibilities were equal to those of my father, except heavy lifting, etc.[61]

<u>What Were the Attitudes Toward Education of the Authors, Their Parents, Teachers, Relatives and Others Directly Associated With Them?</u>

"My one desire was to learn to read the Bible for my old grandmother, who like my mother, was very religious. At last I was able to read the Bible for her. She would listen for hours and she would also sing such songs as, 'Roll, Jordan, Roll'."[62] William James Edwards, born in 1869, founder of the Snow Hill Institute in Alabama had, as a child, been the reader. However, he went beyond the reading of the Bible. After graduating from Tuskegee Institute he became a distinguished educator.

All of the authors included in this study were fully cognizant of the need for education and were highly motivated to go to school and to provide schooling for other Blacks. With the ex-slave's interest in learning to read and the freedom to learn, books and newspapers were sold door-to-door to Southern Black people. These door-to-door salespersons were called book agents. A book agent was considered a

respected occupation during the Reconstruction period. A number of the authors referred to the book agents as the person who sold their parents books or subscriptions to national Black newspapers.

One author described his pleasure with his book from the book agent in the following way:

> I read this book with much interest, perusing carefully every page and every character to the extent of my limited ability. The effort was made to attempt to find some principal possibly for me to emulate. It was plainly seen that these great characters were men of vision, courage, determination, and sympathy. Great love for their country and the welfare of the people characterized them.
>
> Lincoln, Sumner, and Garrison appealed to me most, as the story of slavery was fresh in my memory. The ruthless attitude of the overseer, the long days of toil, and the scars upon the backs were...[63]

Holtzclaw, was highly motivated and quite determined to go to school. In a very dramatic report of his attitude towards education he wrote:

> It was hard enough for me to find a way to go to school. When it was not one obstacle, it was another. More than once I worked hard for eleven months in the year without receiving a single penny. Then, in order to enter school, I split rails at fifty cents a hundred during the month of December to get money with which to buy clothes.
>
> When I reached the age where my school days were for the time at an end I was hired out to a white man for wages, in order to help support the family. Seeing that there was no chance for further schooling, I became morose, disheartened, and pulled away from all social life, except the monthly religious meetings at the little cabin church. Nevertheless, I gathered all the books I could find or borrow and hid them in the white man's barn, where I spent every bit of my spare time in trying to satisfy my desire for knowledge of the world of books. In this manner I spent all my Sundays. It was during this time that I came across the "Life of Ignatius Sancho" who was an educated black West Indian. It was the first thing in the way

> of a biography of a colored man that I had found, and I cannot express the inspiration I received from learning for the first time that a colored man could really make history.[64]

Even though many Black people knew that education would not solve all the problems they faced in America, they knew "that an ignorant and uneducated race...was hopelessly handicapped so long as it remained uneducated and unschooled."[65]

Books were seen as a means of remedying ignorance and became very important to Blacks. Nearly every author discussed his relationship with books. One author discussed reading the "great book, the Bible and all books and paper I could get hold of."[66]

Another explained his interest in writing:

> ...I would go to an old deserted cabin (plantation cabin) nearby, taking a few old boxes and the Bible; there unmolested I would spend hours at a time reading the Bible and pondering over the books. One of the books was an old Davies' Practical Arithmetic. Nothing gave me more pleasure than working out new sums for the first time. I kept up this practice until I had read the New Testament through several times and had worked every problem in the arithmetic.[67]

One author reported that school lasted such a brief time that during the Fall, when school was not in session, "the books had not been cast aside, but were studied diligently at every opportunity. On rainy days when no work could be performed on the farm, the extra hours were spent reading the new book, secured just prior to the close of the summer session. Webster's Spelling Book was almost covered in review. The slate was used to copy practically every new word that was seen."[68]

In another section of this report reference was made to older Blacks telling young Blacks about the hardships associated with

learning. These authors had their own hardship stories to tell. Dr. Perry, who grew up in Texas reported on his hardship in trying to go to school. One year the regularly assigned teacher did not honor his contract to teach the children in his rural county. Perry's parents did not want him to miss a teaching session and so his father made arrangements for him to go to school in town five miles away. He had to travel these ten miles each day. The trip was manageable until the planting season. Then he reported:

> Early in March farmers began preparing the soil for planting, necessitating the utilization of the livestock. No horses for riding, now walking was the only alternative. Each morning at 6 o'clock the trip to school was begun, sometimes through the rain and at other times in the sunshine...
>
> ...Have you ever walked in black Texas soil when it is muddy? Well, if you have not, there can be no conception in your mind as to the difficulty in walking. After a rain, the shoes frequently picked up five or ten pounds of mud. After a rain the ground dries very quickly in the spring, so that feature was rather the exception and not the rule.[69]

In the face of such obstacles the authors were determined to achieve an education. As one author put it "...before going to bed...I had firmly resolved that getting an education was the best thing toward which I could lend my efforts in the future."[70]

The authors credited their parents, teachers, relatives and others for arousing their interest in education. The author who was more privileged than the other authors and traced his genealogy three generations back said of his mother:

> Since mother was such an inveterate reader, that meant for me that there was always plenty of good reading material in the house. Of current literature father and mother were subscribers to the local weekly, published by grandfather

Scott, to the daily newspapers published in the near by city, to the Toledo Ohio Blade, and to the "Sunny South," published in Atlanta, Georgia.[71]

The successor to Booker T. Washington wrote:

Mother was one of the most enthusiastic of the students, while my father, who was much older than my mother, although giving him unqualified approval and encouragement to the school, sat by and listened...

While my work was new, my mother made me devote an hour at night to my blue backed Holme's Primer. She was my teacher, being one of the very few coloured women in our neighborhood who could read at all.

My mother was very careful, therefore, that they should not know that she was teaching me to read, or even that she herself could read. For several years she had kept from them the fact that she even knew one letter of the alphabet from another.

I remember my mother teaching me by the light from the fire...[72]

Moton also wrote that "among my early recollections is the fact that my mother frequently, after working in the field all day, would hurry us through the evening meal in order to get the cabin ready for the night school whcih met regularly in our simple home."[73]

Trying to learn was a contagious activity. Moton wrote about the whole community's enthusiasm and positive attitude towards learning:

I recall now the eagerness with which some twenty-five or thirty men and women struggled with their lessons, trying to learn to read and write while I was supposed to be asleep in my trundle bed, to which I had been hurried to make room for this little band of anxious, aspiring ex-slaves, some of whom came as far as six miles in order to take advantage of this rare opportunity which but a few years before had been denied them. The teacher of this night school was my mother's brother, who, in spite of the penalties attached, had learned to read and write from his young master, picking up here and there snatches of information while they played and worked together, often times without the young master's realizing the gravity of his actions.[74]

Parents had high aspirations for their children and saw education as a means to that goal. One author wrote that his father wanted him to be a teacher. He said just before his father died he called him "to his bedside and repeated his wish -- that I lay aside the thought of studying law and become a teacher of my people. He had some very peculiar ideas about lawyers. With him the name was synonymous with liar."[75]

Again the role of the book agent was important in the breadth of knowledge one author obtained. He reported it this way:

> Book agents were now very prevalent and my father subscribed for the first book, aside from those used for school purposes. The title of the publication was "Our Great Benefactors." The lives of Washington, John Quincy Adams, Lincoln, Grant, Hayes, William Lloyd Garrison, Charles Sumner, and many others too numerous to mention were portrayed.[76]
>
> In the recent past my father had purchased for me a second book entitled "The Cornucopia." It was in my opinion a great volume and read with much interest. It dealt largely with the relation of one to the other, how to make friends, how to be courteous and polite, the book gave wonderful ideas on economy and thrift. It was my daily companion and was included in my list of belongings to be taken.[77]

Parents took great pride in the accomplishments of their children. Dr. Perry remembered how excited his parents were when the teacher reported to them that he had gone beyond the learning capacity of the rural school. He remembered:

> The expression of joy on the faces of my parents is difficult to describe. Tears were mingled with laughter. It was characterized with a feeling of memory of the sad difficulties of the past and the sanguine hopes of the future.

> It required on their part great sacrifice -- of funds necessary for my maintenance and a possibly greater sacrifice of my services on the farm. It was a time long anticipated by both parents, but they possibly were unprepared for its arrival.[78]

Dr. Holtzclaw's quote about his parent's attitude towards education summarized the attitude of all the authors of the Reconstruction period:

> ...My father and mother had great faith in education, and they were determined that their children should have that blessing of which they themselves had been deprived.[79]

Childhood Health of the Authors

Throughout the reading of the autobiographies an image was developed of little Black children who worked too hard and too long and of children who were sick too often. The children had cases of recurrent asthma, typhoid and malarial fever and measles. These illnesses seemed to be ill-treated, or treated inadequately or not at all.

As one author expressed it: "I had not been in Selma (Alabama) long before I was taken ill. I had no medical attention and suffered greatly...After four years of treatment and two operations my health improved to the point that I could walk without pain and work."[80]

Another author born in 1869 on a plantation in Alabama wrote that he had malarial fever twice and measles twice. The second case of measles, he reported, developed after his father sent him to the field to plow. His father thought he had recovered from the first attack and needed him to work to save the crops because all the workers were down with the measle epidemic. This relapse, in his words, "...came

very near taking me."[81] Sickness played an important part in restricting the attendance of the rural Black school children. Horace Mann Bond reported that in his investigation of an Alabama county that he found the schools particularly deserted for several weeks. "Teachers would explain that the children had the chills and fevers."[82] These chills and fevers were often typhoid and/or malarial fever. As if testifying to Dr. Bond's findings one of the authors reared in Texas wrote that the fevers were "very prevalent and usually occurred in September and October."[83]

Section C -- What did Black Parents, the Black Community and Black Organizations do to Provide Schooling for Black Children?

The Reconstruction autobiographies revealed that parents, communities and organizations initiated a variety of activities that resulted in schooling for Black children. These activities ranged from mothers taking in laundry to pay tuition for the children and fathers risking their life in order that their children might go to school, to communities meeting for the express purpose of building a school structure. One author reported that the cost of transportation from his home to the boarding school was $1.25 and that:

> ...it was a good many months before we were able to raise that amount. My mother earned each penny by back-breaking labor. I myself earned a little also, picking up odd jobs from this person and from that, until we had in all $2.25. The clothing I took with me consisted mostly of discarded shirts that her customers had given my mother.[84]

or

> the wash-tub was a source of revenue to her and her children in school regarded her as a never-failing treasure.[85]

Washing clothes for white people was work Black mothers knew well and it brought income to the family.

After the death of his father, one of the authors reported that he had to stop school in order to help with work on the farm. But his mother wanted her children to be educated. She quickly remarried "for no higher reason than to permit me and the other children, who were growing up, to go to school."[86]

In reporting on another experience, this author remembered an event regarding the efforts of his mother to provide formal training for her children. He wrote the following account:

> As I grew older it became more and more difficult for me to go to school. When cotton first began to open--early in the fall--it brought a higher price than at any other time of the year. At this time the landlord wanted us all to stop school and pick cotton. But Mother wanted me to remain in school, so, when the landlord came to the quarters early in the morning to stir up the cotton pickers, she used to outgeneral him by hiding me behind the skillets, ovens, and pots, throwing some old rags over me until he was gone. Then she would slip me off to school through the back way. I can see her now with her hands upon my shoulder, shoving me along through the woods and underbrush, in a roundabout way, keeping me all the time out of sight of the great plantation until we reached a point, a mile away from home, where we came to the public road. There my mother would bid me good-bye, whereupon she would return to the plantation and try to make up the the landlord for the work of us both in the field as cotton pickers.
>
> But when I became too large to be conveniently hidden behind our few small pots I had to take my place on the farm. When I was nine years old I began work as a regular field-hand. My mother now devised another plan to keep me in school; I took turns with my brother at the plow and in school; one day I plowed and he went to school, the next day he plowed and I went to school; what he learned on his school day he taught me at

> night and I did the same for him. In this way we each got a month of schooling during the year, and with that month of schooling we also acquired the habit of studying at home. That we learned little enough may be seen from the following incident: I was ordered to get a United States History, and my father went to the store to get one, but the storekeeper, not having one, sold him a "Biography of Martin Luther" instead, without telling him the difference, so I carried the book to school and studied it for a long time, thinking that I was learning something about the United States. My teacher had neglected to tell me the name of the land I lived in.[87]

Black people were determined to provide schooling for their children. A schoolmaster who was building an educational institution by accepting tuition students wrote about a very poor girl whose mother sent her to school and offered a cow as tuition.[88]

After "Mr. Weather had cut all the timber that he could get in that season, and he moved his mills to another district, this left us without a school."[89] This was the predicament one author described that happened during his youth. The role his father played to correct that situation was typical at that time. The author summarized the action this way:

> He called a meeting of the men in the community, and they agreed to build a schoolhouse themselves. They went to the forest and cut pine poles about eight inches in diameter, split them in halves, and carried them on their shoulders to a nice shady spot, and there erected a little schoolhouse. The benches were made of the same material, and there was no floor nor chimney.[90]

There were fathers so determined that their children have the education denied them that they were willing to risk their life. The child of such a determined parent grew up to be an AME minister, dean of a theological seminary and dean of a school of religion in the State of Mississippi. He recorded the witnessing of the incident this way:

> The sharecroppers rules that boys between eight and ten could attend school only two months of the four-month term, because they were needed for work in the fields. The boys in this age group, were put to work in groups of from fifty to one hundred, on account of the team shortage. My father, however, refused to accept this ruling, and I, at the age of eight, witnessed my father withstand both the overseer and the owner of the plantation with his only weapon, a double-bladed, seven-pound ax, which he swung at shoulder height. He would have been shot down if his enemies had been as brave as he was, but they were not. The gunmen's nerves gave way at the thought that they might miss the mark, but an ax in my father's hands would not! Hence peace was declared, and we four Morants were given four months of schooling, while the others bowed to the demand of the landlord. My father had never owned a gun of any kind, and we thought it foolish on his part to invite what seemed to be certain death, but in later years we learned that courage, when one is right, is might. Thus all the Morants were given an opportunity to get all the educational training available, while many who submitted died like beasts of the field.[91]

Fathers showed much interest in the education of their children. There seemed to be great pride when their children went to school.

An author who remembered his father as a man committed to his children and a man who cut forty cords of wood at fifty cents per cord to pay a pledge he made to help build a school for Black children in Marshall, Texas, told the following story:

> The announcement of the opening of the school was hailed with delight. Anxious parents were awaiting the day and hour. My father hurried to town and purchased me a book with his last twenty-five cents. The day prior to the beginning of school, the information was imparted that the book purchased was not the proper one. Monday, when all the children, filled with delight and anxiety, rushed to the improvished hut, I was forced to remain home for the quite obvious reason. The day was a long one for me and a disappointment to my parents.[92]
>
> On awaking Tuesday morning, I saw my father in a convenient place in the yard, with a tool called a drawknife, shaving on a piece of wood. I dressed hurriedly, requiring very little time, because boys wore very few clothes, and ran out where he was working. It was always a delight to be near him and hear his kind words.

> He said, "Mr. _________ told me if I would make him an ax-handle and deliver it this morning that he would pay me twenty-five cents for it. Then I am going to town and buy you a book."
>
> He rode three miles to deliver the handle; then five miles over muddy roads for the book. The distance travelled that day was thirteen miles. He returned with the book and no funds, but happy in his heart that I would enjoy school on Wednesday.[93]

W.E.B. Du Bois and other scholars were of the opinion that the development of Negro colleges was central to the continued education of the race, that it was through these institutions that the growing demand for teachers among Blacks could be met.[94]

One such institution that helped to educated the freedmen was Hampton Institute, founded in 1868. It offered a common-school, academic and collegiate program. Students could begin with an elementary level curriculum. An alumnus of Hampton was the first "certified" teacher in a small Blue Ridge Mountain county in Virginia. The author who himself was educated at Hampton told in his autobiography how the Black people in his county supplemented that teacher's income. He reported that the county paid the teacher only twenty to twenty-five dollars a month. The teacher taught for three or four years and during that time the teacher lived with the author's family and "slept in the same bed"[95] with him and his brother.

During the Reconstruction period the voting power of Blacks enacted educational promises from the politicians in power. Schools for Blacks were developed in the cities and in the rural areas, Blacks generally received a disproportionately small portion of the public-school funds.

Around 1876, in the State of Virginia, a political deal with struck with a Black section. They were promised a school near the plantation where one of the authors lived if the Blacks supported the election of a particular group. The Blacks organized and turned out in significant numbers. "They voted according to instruction and the promise was kept." Following that election, a school was opened for Black children just a few miles from the author's home. It was the first school for Blacks in the area. Records suggest it was the first school of any kind -- Black or white -- in that part of Virginia.

In 1869, provisions were made to give the public school fund the proceeds of the sale of all public lands, which resulted in a magnificent endowment. The state was divided into school districts in 1869 and each district was appointed a school director.[96]

The following account gives a classical description of parent and community action in Texas to provide the first schooling for Black children:

> ...there had been no school and no place to worship. The absence of these important community assets began to prove a disturbing factor in the minds of the people. They particularly abhorred the idea of gross ignorance among their children. After much discussion among themselves and agitation with the whites of the community, they were informed that money was available for a teacher, but no school was possible because of no housing facilities.
>
> This proved a great problem. A meeting was called, with no results. A second meeting was called, still with no results. Finally a third meeting was called and just by chance at our home. I sat in the corner and listened to the discussion. "Uncle Albert" finally said, "We've been talking long enough, it is time now to act." The question was asked, "When shall he start?" The answer, "Tomorrow." What an undertaking with no funds. A collection was taken and three dollars and fifty cents was collected. Uncle Albert said, "I will give the land."

> My father met the challenge, "I will give the logs." Many houses about this era were built of logs.
>
> The following morning the crowd gathered at the selected spot and in no time you could hear the axes, mauls, and the saws almost singing a song, preparing boards to cover the building and logs for the walls. Well do I recall how these determined pioneers waded in mud six inches deep preparing the materials which gave the first opportunity for the children of that section to secure intellectual development.
>
> A chimney was made of red clay, pasted on sticks, piled one on the other. The fireplace for heat was made of the same material. The seats were pine boards, twelve inches wide and twelve feet long, with perpendicular pieces about eighteen inches in height to give support. There were two pieces of twelve inch boards five feet long that had been made smooth by planing; the ends were fastened, blackened, and nailed to the wall for a blackboard. This completed the arrangement for school facilities. Though very poor, it brought gladness to the hearts of those who had longed and struggled for such opportunity. The impovished schoolhouse also served as a place of worship and Sunday school.[97]

This same author who was six or seven years old when this event took place became a physician and practiced in Kansas City. He was educated at Bishop College, Chicago Medical College, served as curator of Lincoln University and was a community activist. As he continued his report on the building of the school he gave information on the help the community gave to their teacher. He said this about her:

> Recognizing her great interest and unselfish devotion to the people, each family where facilities were adequate would assume responsibility of her support by caring for her and the baby for a limited about of time, usually one week or ten days.

An author born in 1871 to one of the less poor families among this group of autobiographers, traced his family genealogy three generations. He reported on an event that took place the year of his birth. His father and a group of friends were unwilling to have their children denied an opportunity to get an education. They met with a group of

Quakers in their local community to discuss getting financial assistance to establish a normal school for the freedmen in their community. The Quakers expressed an interest and offered the help of their associates in New England. Immediately following this conference that event which took place in the year of his birth appeared in the Knoxville Chronicle November 29, 1871 a paper of wide circulation in East Tennessee the following:

"NORMAL INSTITUTE MEETING"

> A Call to the Colored People and their Friends in Blount and Other Counties.
>
> Whereas, the present interest awakened in the public mind on the subject of education calls for suitable efforts on our part to meet the demands of the hour; teachers are so much in demand that competent ones cannot be had; the expense of travel is a bar to much help from the North, and more than this, we feel that it is of the first importance for use to arouse an interest among our people for the vocation of the teachers, and to qualify our own children for it.
>
> We therefore, call a public meeting to consider what steps may be taken to establish a normal institute for the training of teachers and the accommodation of such young men of our own race in these counties as wish these advantages, and to provide means for cheap and comfortable boarding for them while thus engaged in preparing themselves for the honorable calling of teachers.
>
> All persons friendly to such step are invited to meet at Maryville on Friday, the 15th of December at 2 o'clock p.m.
>
> W.E. Scott, Sr., Jacob Henry, H. Lawson Cansler, W.S. McTeer, J.B. Ish, T. Lillard, Henry Debose.
>
> We whose names are appended, fully approve of the enterprise proposed in the foregoing call.
>
> S.Z. Sharp, Y. Warner, S.H. Gualt, W.D. McGinley, Will A. McTeer, W.A. Walker, J.M. Greer, S.P. Rowan.
>
> Knoxville Weekly Chronicle, Wednesday, November 29, 1871.

> This call resulted in several hundred colored people assembling in mass meeting at the courthouse in Maryville on the date called for the conference. Scott and others outlined the purpose of the meeting, and Yardles Warner brought to them the offer of the "New England Yearly Meeting." The offer was unanimously accepted. A brick yard was set up, and free labor given for the making of brick. A site on several acres had been purchased, and within a year there stood at the southern end of Maryville on its Main Street a beautiful ten room brick school building, "The Freedmen's Normal Institute."[99]

The desire to have their children read and write was expressed by Black adults in all the Reconstruction autobiographies. A few typical quotes were: "...so my uncle and a few other colored men began to give serious attention to a plan for establishing a regular school for Negroes...Before the war my father's half-brother, William Morris, had been sold...now our family was settled...My father and uncle sent for Mavis to open a school for Negro children..."[100] "Grandfather helped us build the first church for Negroes in Summit. Being one of the founders and having a little education he was so anxious to have us taught that he gave the use of the church to a northern missionary to open the first school for colored children."[101]

Summary

Fourteen Black autobiographers were selected for the study of the role Black parents and the Black community played in providing schooling for Black children during the Reconstruction period. They were men and women born between 1861 and 1871 who lived and worked in nine of the rural Southern states. They were school age and/or going to school during this period.

Their parents and community residents were intimately involved in securing formal schooling for Black children. They were both influenced and victimized by the harsh environment and attitudes of white people in the South following the Civil War. By and large they were people for whom the Thirteenth Amendment offered little change in their status because the plantation system remained intact. And even though they were now "free," achieving anything resembling economic independence and secure life styles was impossible. Yet they struggled and sacrificed for their children. The parents of the authors were people who had a sense of ambition and vision. Righteousness and true freedom was their life goal. They believed education was a symbol of freedom and were willing to sacrifice for it.

During Reconstruction Black parents and the Black community provided schooling for Black children in various ways all of which were difficult for them and tested their belief in the importance of education. The Black children of this study lived in communities where there was little if any help from the federal Freedmen's Bureau. The parents assumed the responsibility for providing schooling for their children. They paid tuition for children to attend schools away from home, assisted in the salaries of teachers when salaried teachers were available, provided land, materials, and labor in the building of schools, sacrificed income in order to have children go to school, and provided many intangable means of support to their children.

The Reconstruction period Black parent of this study seemed willing to suffer to provide educational opportunities for their children and expected and received little help from the government.

Footnotes

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[2] Meyer Weinberg, Minority Students: A Research Appraisal, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, National Institute of Education, 1977), p. 55.

[3] Ronald E. Butchart, Northern School, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), pp. 14-15.

[4] Carter G. Woodson and Charles H. Wesley, The Story of the Negro Retold, (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publisher, Inc., 1959), pp. 168-69.

[5] Du Bois, p. 167.

[6] Harry S. Ashmore, The Negro and the Schools, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1954), p. 6.

[7] Horace Mann Bond, The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order, (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), p. 31.

[8] William Preston Vaughn, Schools for all the Blacks and Public Education in the South, 1865-1877, (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1974), p. 35.

[9] Du Bois, p. 645.

[10] Ibid., p. 665.

[11] Thomas Calhoun Walker, The Honey-Pod Tree, (New York: The John Day Company, 1958), p. 16.

[12] Thomas O. Fuller, Twenty Years in Public Life, (Nashville: National Baptist Publication Board, 1910), pp. 7-8.

[13] Ibid., p. 9.

[14] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[15] Frances Joseph Gaudet, "He Leadeth Me," (New Orleans: The Author, 1913), pp. 10-11.

[16] William H. Holtzclaw, The Black Man's Burden, (New York: The Neale Publiscation Company, 1915), pp. 93-94.

[17] George Washington Williams, History of the Negro Race in America, Volume II, 1800 to 1880, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1883), p. 180.

[18] John Edward Perry, Forty Cords of Wood: Memoirs of a Medical Doctor, (Jefferson City, Mo: Lincoln University Press, 1947), p. 38.

[19] Walker, p. 41.

[20] Ibid., p. 43.

[21] Ibid., p. 43.

[22] Ibid., p. 45.

[23] Du Bois, p. 658.

[24] Walker, p. 50.

[25] Ibid., p. 45.

[26] Perry, p. 36.

[27] Henry Damon Davidson, Inchings Along, (Nashville: National Publication Co., 1944), pp. 9-10.

[28] Vaughn, pp. 14-15.

[29] Davidson, pp. 24-25.

[30] Fuller, p. 15.

[31]Dwight Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ph.D., The Evaluation of the Negro College, (College Park, Maryland: McGrath Publishing Company, 1934), pp. 187-207.

[32]Vaughn, p. 14.

[33]Holtzclaw, p. 14.

[34]Perry, pp. 41-42.

[35]Davidson, p. 26.

[36]Vaughn, p. 16.

[37]Perry, pp. 43-44.

[38]Walker, p. 21.

[39]Ibid., p. 21.

[40]Woodson, p. 183.

[41]Walker, p. 14.

[42]Walker, p. 20.

[43]Davidson, p. 24.

[44]Holtzclaw, p. 26.

[45]Robert Russa Moton, Finding a Way Out of Autobiography, (College Park, Maryland: McGrath Publishing Company, 1920), pp. 26-27.

[46]Henry Hugh Proctor, Between Black and White, (Freeport, New York: Books Far Libraries Press, 1971), p. 8.

[47]William J. Edwards, Twenty-Five Years in the Black Belt, (Westport, Connecticut: Negro University Press, 1918), p. 20.

[48]Davidson, p. 10.

[49]*Ibid.*, p. 25.

[50]Moton, pp. 47-48.

[51]Perry, p. 63.

[52]*Ibid.*, p. 52.

[53]*Ibid.*, p. 47.

[54]Charles W. Cansler, *Three Generations: The Story of a Colored Family*, (Kingsport, Tenn: The Author, 1939), pp. 97-98.

[55]Proctor, pp. 15-16.

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[57]Holtzclaw, pp. 18-19.

[58]Perry, p. 58.

[59]Gaudet, pp. 11-12.

[60]Perry, p. 50.

[61]Perry. p. 49.

[62]Edwards, p. 5.

[63]Perry, p. 47.

[64]Holtzclaw, pp. 31-32.

[65]Canslwer, p. 36.

[66]Davidson, p. 28.

[67]Edwards, p. 8.

[68]Perry, p. 40.

[69]Perry, pp. 40-43.

[70]Moton, pp. 35-36.

[71]Cansler, p. 98.

[72]Moton, pp. 14-21.

[73]*Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

[74]*Ibid.*, p. 14.

[75]Holtzclaw, p. 61.

[76]Perry, p. 47.

[77]*Ibid.*, p. 53.

[78]*Ibid.*, p. 53.

[79]Holtzclaw, p. 25.

[80]Edwards, pp. 8-11.

[81]Davidson, pp. 158-159.

[82]Bond, p. 293.

[83]Perry, p. 13.

[84]Walker, p. 22.

[85]Fuller, p. 12.

[86]Holtzclaw, pp. 57-58.

[87]*Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

[88]*Ibid.*, p. 192.

[89]*Ibid.*, p. 25.

[90]*Ibid.*, p. 26.

[91]Morant, p. 11.

[92]Perry, p. 35.

[93]*Ibid.*, p. 36.

[94]Du Bois, p. 665.

[95]Walker, p. 21.

[96]Du Bois, p. 56.

[97]Perry, pp. 13-14.

[98]*Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

[99]Cansler, pp. 38-39.

[100]Walker, pp. 17-20.

[101]Gaudet, pp. 10-11.

CHAPTER III

THE POST-RECONSTRUCTION PERIOD 1880-1918

> Reconstruction was over. The South was back in the Union, with the leadership strikingly like that of the South which had suceeded in 1860.[1]

The Post-Reconstruction period was filled with bitterness and disappointment for Black people because the white South was returning to its pre-war political and social position which included removing all political influence Blacks had gained during the Reconstruction period. The white South was determined to either nullify that political strength or to disfranchise Blacks altogether. Therefore, during the Post-Reconstruction period Black people experienced a complete and systematic process of disfranchisement. Black people were denied the vote through violence, intimidation, economic pressure and propaganda. John Hope Franklin reports that other devices were also used to keep the Black voter from exercising the rights guaranteed in the Fifteenth Amendment. Polling places were located far from Black communities or the polling place would be changed without notification, or placed on roads that were blocked for passage. Franklin also reported that if these methods did not stop the Black voter, he would be pressured with promises. Parties were given by white politicans in order to convince Blacks that those giving the parties were friends. These strategies were successful because Blacks were desparately looking for friends. Other pressures included the practice by white planters of taking their

Black workers to the polls with instruction on how to vote and for whom to vote. Further, disfranchisement was exercised by establishing (in Southern communities) literacy and property ownership as a requirement to vote. These criteria were never applied in the case of poor and/or ignorant whites. White Southern lawmakers introduced the "Grandfather" Clause and the "White Primary" system to insure disfranchisement of the Black voter.[2]

Blacks were treated as second-class citizens and segregated in travel and other pulbic accommodation. They were restricted in housing opportunities and exposed to abuse from public and other organized bands of white people.

During the Post-Reconstruction period Blacks were not free. Even though the South; for whatever the reason, allowed the system of public education to continue schooling beyond the primary grades, was to be nothing more than industrial education with a curriculum designed to produce efficient Black workers, not Black thinkers. This authority decided what funds would be spent on Black schools, what should be taught, what textbooks would be used and what certification would be required of teachers.

The school funds spent on white students were "anywhere from twice to ten times as much"[3] as was spent on Black students. In areas of the South where the Black population outnumbered the whites, laws were written to benefit white schools. White school officials would receive the extra funds because of the large Black population and then distributed these funds among the white schools.[4] Black school children

were crowded into a few school buildings and given used or no equipment. Labor contracts, which governed all members of the family unit, required children and their mothers to work during the peak harvest season, therefore, their attendance in school was not compulsory. Teachers were not supervised or selected on the basis of training and competence. Their salaries were low and in some cases, as demonstrated by the autobiographers in this study, non-existent. However, the authors also reported that Black education proceeded in spite of these Post-Reconstruction conditions. Blacks turned to self-help efforts by means of the church, other Black organizations and parents.

White Southern Attitude Towards Education During the Post-Reconstruction Period

Horace Mann Bond has written that the white small farmer who "were truly emancipated by the abolition of Negro slavery as much as were the Negroes,"[5] became an important factor in the question of State supported education after the Reconstruction period. These farmers began to place importance on education and became committed to protecting and expanding the free education system for white children only. Their interest was centered on a need to have the distribution of state school funds reconsidered in a way that would benefit all white children and not just white children who lived in school districts with large Black populations. Ironically, the system of public education at the expense of the state was initiated by Black Southern legislators during the latter years of the Reconstruction period. One reason for the white families interest in distribution was illustrated in the following account of a speaker on the

subject at a Virginia Constitution Convention in 1901. Bond reports that delegate said:

> ...The County the gentleman from Appomattox represents receives on account of the Negro children in that county something over $2,000 of the State money, while it uses only about $900 of the State money for Negro education. Thereby the white children of his county not only get the portion that is allotted to them of the State fund, but they get a portion of that which is allotted to Negroes, while the white children in the white counties cannot make such a discrimination, but can get only each one of them their share.[6]

Bond further states that this group also wanted to establish a local tax for schools. This put them in opposition with the planter class, which cared very little about public education for the small farmers and not at all for the Black freedmen. They had, however, the resources to educate their own children and did not want to spend taxes on Black and white public education.

The result of this dilemma was that the whites decided if funds were not available to educate both Black and white children, "such funds as were available should be distributed among the white children with equity."[7] Whites had determined by this time what Blacks had always felt, that education was a menas of preparing for a better life. Whereas Blacks during Reconstruction offered free education for both Black and white children, many whites only wanted education for their children. The white Southern solution to the expansion of educational needs and limited state funds was the diversion of funds to white children from Blacks.[8]

The highest court of the land supported the attitude the South took towards education for Black childreh. "In 1899, in the <u>Cumming</u>

case, the Court found no constitutional violation when the Richmond County school board closed down the black high school but continued to operate the white one."[9]

Section A -- Who Were the Authors?

Twenty-two autobiographers were selected for the research of the Post-Reconstruction period. They were Southern born and/or worked in the South; they were born between 1875-1912; they discussed in their autobiographies their own experience with education and the role their parents, the Black community and Black organizations played in providing schooling for them and other Black children.

The authors were men and women who became significant individuals to society in general and the Black community in particular. Their professional work included teaching in public and private secondary schools as well as the college level. They were school principals, as well as presidents and founders of Black educational institutions. They were college administrators. They were elected and appointed to high-ranking religious positions. They were social workers, and as social workers they were instrumental in establishing social service agencies in their communities. Many volunteered their skills with activist organizations such as the NAACP, Urban League and political parties. They participated in establishing YMCA's in Black neighborhoods. (The YMCA was central to Black social life during this period.) They were scholars, political journalists, essayist, poets and attornies. They were sharecroppers, iron workers, labor union organizers, and they were also parents.

Three of the authors were born in the late 1870's (two in 1876 and one in 1878); five in the 1880's; eight in the 1890's and the others -- six -- in the early twentieth century (1906-1911). This information is important because the birthdates of the authors covered nearly forty years of the Black experience after the Civil War. They included the last of the 1870's, all of the 1880's and 1890's and five years into the twentieth century. They covered the transition between Reconstruction and Post-Reconstruction. These authors lived during the promise and the denial of opportunity and rights for the freedmen.

Their identity was strongly associated with their academic accomplishment. In an effort to report on who the authors were one must give the answer in terms of their academic prowess.

All three authors born in the late 1870's went to college and graduated. One author whose life spanned 89 years and who had been a graduate student at the University of Chicago and the University of Pennsylvania; shared that he had been a social worker in Chicago and Philadelphia; served as bishop of the AME Church in Africa and the West Indies as well as five Southern states and the Far West.

Another author born in 1881 served as head of the department of Greek and Sociology at Wiley College in Marshall, Texas after graduation from Talladega and Yale. He also served as dean and vice president of Morgan College; received a Masters degree from Fisk University in 1908; and in 1920 became a field secretary for the NAACP.

Who Were Their Parents?

They were ministers, tenant farmers, teachers, hotel porters, farmers, who were hard working and resourceful. The mother of one of the authors who was educated at Talladega College and Yale University was a cook and washerwoman died at age 45 from over-work, too many children and poor medical care. He himself was the sixth of ten children and his father was a poor farmer. Near the end of the decade of the 70's an autobiographer described his forebears as resistant to the system of slavery. This resistance was transformed from physical confrontation with owners and overseer by grandparents to education and service to Black people by parents. He wrote: "I was one of the few children of the community who had educated parents. My father and mother -- (had) a thirst for knowledge and ambition to serve their people through education..."[10]

The only female of the 1880's group wrote that her mother was born on the day the Emancipation Proclaimation was signed and that her father -- born a slave -- was the son of an English plantation overseer.[11] Another author, born in Salisbury, North Carolina in "Livingston College town," as he described it, had free parents and free grand-parents. His father graduated from a public school in 1873 and became a "skilled typesetter" in a printing office. His father also attended Howard University and after three years received a teaching certificate and taught in a rural school.[12]

An author born in 1890 reported that his parents were born shortly after the Civil War and therefore born free. His father, benefiting from the repeal in 1865 of an 1825 Act prohibiting Blacks

from being mail carriers, was a letter carrier for the U.S. Post Office, his mother went to Knoxville College in Knoxville, Tennessee.[13] Other authors born in the 1890's reported that her father worked on the railroad and did "odd and seasonal jobs."[14] All the authors reported their parents were "church goers," who belonged to either AME or Baptist denominations.

The parents of the authors born in the first fifth of the twentieth century had some formal schooling and a strong sense of "race" pride. An example that illustrated this point was expressed by one of the authors in a description of his parents. He wrote that his mother took personal pride in the success of individual Blacks, and his father took pride in such success, but was "irritated that the accomplishments were not more widely known."[15]

Where Did They Grow Up?

All but two of the authors grew up in nine of the Southern states. The two exceptions were born in Missouri and Delaware but worked in the South -- Mississippi and Virginia. Both Missouri and Delaware were fully aggreviated with the interest of their Southern neighbors, therefore, the authors were prepared as children for the Southern experience as adults. The nine Southern states were: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

The Condition of the School Buildings

The authors born in the South were consistent in their description of their schools, whether the reference to the school was during the

years between the end of the Reconstruction, the Post-Reconstruction period, or the beginning of the twentieth century. Whether they lived in Texas or Mississippi white people ignored Black schools. As a matter of fact the quality and condition of the schoolhouses described by the authors were consistent during the whole period 1865-1954.

Schools in South Carolina, the state where four of the twenty-two authors were born, were uniformly poor. One reason for the continuity of poor facilities was a fear white people had that Blacks would gain political power once they became educated. Therefore, after the federal troops were withdrawn, Blacks were virtually disfranchised and the whites of South Carolina made Black schools poor as they dared. One author who was born near Columbia, South Carolina and went to school in the 1880's described his school this way:

> I attended the public school of the community in which I was reared. The school building was a one-room log cabin of the rudest type. There was no ceiling of any kind. The floor was of rough unmatched, unsized, random-width boards. The seats were of slabs with auger holes bored through them in which were inserted sawed off saplings for legs.[16]

The description of another South Carolinian who went to school at the beginning of the 1890's could have applied to the early rural Reconstruction schools. He wrote:

> It was a characteristic Negro schoolhouse built of logs with one door and one window, the latter having no panes and being closed by a board shutter which swung on leather hinges outward. The house was not larger than a comfortable bedroom and had a "fire-place" opposite the door. The children faced the fire-place, so that the scant light fell through the door upon their books. There were no desks; the seats were long board benches with no backs.[17]

One of the authors who became a distinguished educator and religious leader was born in Southwest Georgia near Atlanta. His early recollection of schools for Blacks did not produce a different picture. He recalled that a school named for a New England preacher was opened in a freight car in Atlanta and his own school was a building of "rough boards." Physical as well as environmental conditions were designed to assault the humanity of Black people.

One of the two authors from Tennessee described the location of his school near the turn of the century:

> It was a dangerous location for the school. No children were killed within my memory, but two or three were maimed.
>
> Northward along Central Avenue from the Printing Office location toward the railroad tracks, about six blocks away, were Knoxville's worst saloons and dives. Thus, in retrospect, I can see that the print shop where I worked and the school I attended at that stage of my development were located at the edge of the so-called uptown business district, in the city's worst slum and most notorious section.[18]

A picture of the North Carolina schools for Blacks was painted by three of the authors of this period. One author concentrated the material in his book on the early 1900's embracing his work in rural schools as teacher and supervising principal. His first reaction to a school in which he would work brought the lines from a poem familiar to him: "Still sits the schoolhouse by the way, a ragged beggar sunning." This community in North Carolina was a rural farming town. The principal crops were tabacco, cotton and peanuts. Ninty percent of the Black people were poor sharecroppers and tenant farmers. This "beggars" structure referred to in his poem was an old seven-room one-story gray-painted frame building, hauled to the site from the white school when

they put up two new brick buildings. The structure "had a total of two-hundred sixty-five single desks, most of them scratched and covered through long years of use and abuse. Tom, one of the workers in the school said in a low voice, 'Ain't nary one uv our children ever set in a brand-new seat. All there is hand-me downs, the stoves is hand-me-downs, and nearbout evything else.'" In a reaction to being told that the white school superintendent had said the school given to the Blacks was "good as new," Tom, again observed, "if t'was good as new, how come they didn't keep it?"[19]

An author who was born at the end of the nineteenth century (1897) and went to school in Mississippi and Alabama reported that in his community the first public school for Black children was opened two years after a school had been opened for white children.[20] During the debate regarding a school for Black children, he writes, the issue of separate-but-equal caused considerable controversy. The new Black school and earlier-built white school were as separate but equal as they could be physically. Both were one-room schools with little or no furniture and equipment, and both teachers received a salary of $50 per month.[21] *

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*His report differs from those historians who report that the Mississippi school for Black children reached a peak by 1890 and steadily declined. Primarily because white Mississippians believed that through education all things were possible--which greatly resembled that of the Blacks of the early seventies--and demanded more education for their children. Therefore, through an increase in taxation, but through a reduction of the educational opportunities offered to the Blacks. Enough education to keep the "Negro in his place" was enough in their judgment. (Vernon Lane Warton, <u>The Negro in Mississippi</u>, 1865-1890, p. 249; Weinberg, <u>Chance to Learn</u>, pp. 45-48; Logan, p. 303).

A more typical condition of Mississippi schools is described by an author who founded a high school for Black children in the Delta. He wrote:

> Their little rural schools are many miles apart, the teachers are not paid over an average of $12.00 per month and they hardly measure up the the northern boys and girls in the fifth and sixth grades. One teacher often has as high as sixty and seventy pupils. The little schoolhouses are unsealed, black with soot, without glass windows, rude benches, and no blackboards. A high school had been their forlorn hope.[22]

As late as 1911 -- forty six years after emancipation -- one of the authors working in a rural county of Alabama described her school this way:

> As a general thing, there were no schoolhouses; for the most part the public schools were taught in the churches. Most of the churches were dilapidated and so exposed to the elements that one might as well teach outdoors under an oak tree. There were big holes in the roofs and in the floors. Many a time during a heavy shower of rain the large children would have to hold an umbrella over me while I heard a class recit.
>
> In some of those churches there were small heaters, but no flues; so we had to take out a window pane and run the stovepipe out through the side of the wall. When the wind was high on a cold day, the smoke would turn us all away from the fire. In churches where there were no heaters we were obliged to build big fires outdoors. Then I would have to watch the little fellows to prevent their clothes from catching fire, for many of them were patched like little rag-men. All kinds of patches and all kinds of threat were used on the same garment.
>
> The blackboards were made of rough planks and dyed with ink. Each child would bring an egg or a penny for a piece of crayon. Each child had to go the woods and bring armfuls of wood for the fire. The children drank water out of their dinner buckets or the tops. We used brook-sage straw and pine-tops for brooms to sweep the floors.[23]

Another female author born in the early twentieth century who was ordained as the first Black woman priest, received a doctorate of law from Yale University and was a professor of law and politics at Brandeis

University, contrasted the condition of her school with white schools that existed around 1916:

> Their school was a beautiful red-and-white brick building on a wide paved street. Its lawn was large and green and watered every day and flower beds were everywhere. Their playground, a wonderland of iron swings, sand slides, see-saws, crossbars and a basketball court, was barred from us by a strong eight foot high fence topped by barbed wire. We could only press our noses against the wire and watch them playing on the other side.
>
> I went to West End where Aunt Pauline taught, on Ferrell Street, a dirt road which began at a lumberyard and ended in a dump. On one side of this road were long low warehouses where huge barrels of tobacco shavings and tobacco dust were stored. All day long our nostrils sucked in the brown silt like fine snuff in the air. West End looked more like a warehouse than a school. It was a dilapidated, rickety, two-story wooden building which creaked and swayed in the wind as if it might collapse. Outside it was scarred with peeling paint from many winters of rain and snow. Inside the floors were bare and splintery, and plumbing was leaky, the drinking fountains broken and the toilets in the basement smelly and constantly out of order. We'd have to wade through pools of foul water to get to them. At recess we herded into a yard of cracked clay, barren of tree or bush, and played what games we could improvise like hopscotch or springboard, which we contrived by pulling rotted palings off the wooden fence and placing them on brickbats.
>
> It was never the hardship which hurt so much as the contrast between what we had and what the white children had. We got the greasy, torn, dog-eared books; they got the new ones. They had field day in the city park; we had it on a furrowed stubbly hillside. They got wide mention in the newspaper; we got a paragraph at the bottom. The entire city officialdom from the mayor down turned out to review their pageantry; we got a solitary official.[24]

In what was intended to be a compliment to the efforts of a dedicated Black teacher, a white person described the Black teacher's school this way:

> In the year 1915 there nestled in a pine-forest grove, near the village of Rosebud, Ala., a small schoolhouse presided over by Miss Rosa Young. The outlook was indeed gloomy for her. There was no equipment, no benches, no desks--nothing but dirt, squalor, and poverty. Outside there was grass, and there were trees; the inside was crowded with half-clad piccaninnies.[25]

Instructional Materials, Quality of Institution and Curriculum

"Not having a book for me, she took an old almanac and wrote the alphabet down in lead pencil and began to teach me."[26] Even though the teacher demonstrated creative genius in providing this impoverished Black school child with a book to learn his alphabet, it was a story so often told by the Black authors of this period that this example could not be appreciated as an isolated example of creative innovation. The limited exposure to numbers and types of resources was well documented by our authors. The blue-back speller so often referred to during Reconstruction continued to be a basic book during this period as well. One author discussed the "famous old 'blue-back speller'"[27] with a good deal of familiarity. He wrote:

> After leaving the nonsense syllables in the beginning of that books, the milestones of attainment were first the page of dissyllables beginning with baker and secondly the page of poly-syllables containing compressibility.[28]

By the time some students got to high school "a large book known as 'Barne's General History"[29] was added to the list of standard teaching tools. In the high school of the Barne's General History book the curriculum included beginners Algebra, History, Geography, Latin, and Classical Literature.[30] However, in many schools, teaching materials were critically limited. This condition was still true as late as 1910. One author illustrated the inadequacy this way:

> In addition to a section of the sixth grade, Mrs. Crossett taught first-year general science and civics. Equipment for the former was the big stove, a small kettle, a few tubes, bottles and other discarded articles from the laboratory of the white high school. Answering a taunt from one of our girls attended an academy, Mrs. Crossett said lightly, That's all right. My old science

> teacher told us that an experiment is only a question put to nature. We have enough equipment to ask her two or three questions. She'll answer.[31]

He also made the following comments about the school and its circumstances:

> The situation was more pitiable than praiseworthy, more discouraging than encouraging. Their home-room was shared with twenty-eight seventh graders. The principal, the home-room teacher, taught algebra, Latin, English and some seventh grade subjects.
>
> Three shelves of mostly donated books was our entire library. I wrote "Library" on a piece of cardboard and tacked it over the collection -- just to let the children know we were supposed to have one. In the collection were: a large, much used, outdated dictionary; three stories (for adults) of the then popular Mrs. E. W. D. Southworth; From the Ballroom to Hell; and Talmage's Sermons. The five or six books purchased by the teachers were usable. Right or wrong, we asked for donations, and we wouldn't dare refuse anything that was offered.[32]

Despite such conditions these authors reported a love for learning and a tolerance for the poor conditions they experienced as students and teachers. Many reported on the sacrifices they made in order to assist in the Black students' learning process. One author who had acquired more education than his colleagues reported the following:

> At the request of the County Superintendent Hinkle, I made myself available on Saturdays for helping other Birghton County teachers, some of whom were woefully lacking in elementary subjects, particularly English and arithmetic. Some of the teachers described the children as "tripping at my heels." For this service I made no charge, although Mr. Hinkle assured me he would see that I received a fee if I charged. Occassionally I was given a dollar by a grateful teacher. And I'd always say, I wish I was in position to refuse this.[33]

Another author who knew and was able to utilize opportunities for improving their teaching skills reported that:

> By saving the money I had made by giving piano lessons after school hours, I was able to spend six weeks in Columbia University's summer school to better prepare myself.[34]

And another wrote:

> I believe in a thorough preparation for teaching. While I was doing all this church and public-school work, I was steadily trying to prepare myself for more efficient service by taking a correspondence course. I reviewed all my high-school and normal subjects, and for my own benefit I thought I would take the State examination once or twice every year. During the past years I passed the third-grade State examination seven times and the second-grade State examination four times.[35]

In 1911 in his book, Common Schools and the Negro American, Du Bois reported on the Black schools in the South. One of his conclusions was "that those Negro children who are in school are as a rule poorly taught by half-prepared and poorly paid teachers..."[36] Many authors supported his finding with explicit examples. One author writing about his experiences in 1900 wrote "one teacher taught all grades in a one-room school."[37]

Another reporting his experiences as a teacher wrote:

> The first Monday in January came and I made my first effort at teaching. As I look back I feel ashamed of the type of work I did. I knew absolutely nothing about organizing a school and still less about teaching. But the patrons loved me, and they taught the children to love and respect me. I think I was a successful school keeper.[38]

Affectionately describing his teachers, this author wrote: "The teachers were faithful, but were not prepared to advance the pupils beyond the subjects..."[39] The female founder of a school in Alabama wrote:

> The public-school teachers were inefficient. Not more than one-third of them could pass a third-grade state examination fairly well. Some of them did not have the least idea of how to grade a school. They would permit children to enter the sixth and seventh grades that should have been in the third.
>
> Teachers would ask the children questions about their lessons and have to look in the book to see if the child answered correctly.[40]

Ad Du Bois intimated, however, there were exceptions to the rule and several of the authors reported on those exceptions and related curricula. One author acknowledged that he learned how to study, work and develop a love of reading through his experiences at his school. He also shared the fact that:

> The library of the school housed a collection of probably a thousand books, concerned primarily with theology and the classics, given to the school by the members of the churches of the United Presbyterian Church of the State of Pennsylvania. Indeed, those were more books than I had ever seen. I had already developed a love for reading; before I was graduated, I had read most of the books in this library.[41]

Another author who grew up in a family of college trained parents discussed his seventh and eighth grade experiences during 1903 and 1904 in the following report:

> At the opening of school in the fall, I was in the seventh grade, the only seventh grade for colored children in the city. It was not a part of junior high school, as it became a few years later; but it served very definitely as a connecting link between the elementary and high school of those days. Two subjects of our seventh grade prepared the way for the Latin and Algebra we were to study in the eighth grade, our first year of high school. These subjects were Mental Arithmetic and Etymology. In the first we learned to analyze our problems related to numbers orally and quickly. In the second we learned to break words down into their component parts--prefixes, roots or basic elements, and suffixes.
>
> In the eighth grade there was a Latin course and an English course. The two differed only in language. I took the Latin course and met two new teachers.[42]

> In an effort to have her school accredited in 1915 the female founder of the school listed the courses she offered. The courses which had been prescribed by the Board of Education for the public schools of Alabama, included such subjects as reading, writing, spelling, language, history, geography, arithmetic, physiology, hygiene, etc.; but in addition to these secular branches I resolved to have the Bible taught in my school. For a motto for my school I chose the Bible passage: "Seek ye first the kingdom

> of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added onto you." (Matt, 6, 33. All students were to memorize the school motto.)
>
> Besides this secular and, as I called it, Bible Training Course, sewing, cooking, and music were to be taught.[43]

An author who became a well established businessman attributed his sense of security and drive to the quality of instruction, subjects offered, and an "intangible something"[44] from teachers. In a capsule he discussed his experiences this way:

> It was not an academy in the strictest sense, but academic subjects were taught, including Civil Government, which was my favorite subject, and Latin, which I hated because I could never understand it. In addition there was religious training coupled with the kindly, but first, counsel of Mrs. Tuggle for every problem met by her charges.[45]

In addition to the classical courses many schools offered academic challenges to students through intellectual experience. Many of the authors referred to debating teams, spelling content and literary societies. One of the authors born in Texas who became a banker, civil rights activist, reported that in addition to the subjects of "arithmetic, Latin, algebra, English, grammar, physiology, composition, and rhetoric" he joined "the Debating team and the Literary Soceity where there were critics who once a week made reports on bad grammar and poor pronunciation."[46]

During the Post-Reconstruction period educators and curriculum planners fell into two main philosophical camps. One, the Booker T. Washington view that stressed a concentration on practical industrial training in the Black communities of the country; two, the W.E.B. Du Bois view that stressed "the need for a liberal arts education,

which would train 'men,' not 'money-makers' or 'artisans'. ...that the salvation of the race lay in such an elite."[47]

The authors reflected on these two positions in the description of courses offered in their schools or other schools.

One author reported on the curriculum of his industrial school about 1913 this way:

> We closed the first year free from debt, with an average of eighty-five students. We have taught common English branches and three industries--sewing, basket work and manual training. Some flower gradening and a little in vegetable gardening was started, although we did not have an animal.
>
> Our closing exercises consisted of essays on housekeeping, cooking, sewing, gardening and manual training.[48]

Another gave a very detailed report. He wrote:

> The industrial department had argiculture, wheelwrighting and mechanical drawing, blacksmithing, carpentry, shoe-making, bricklaying, and painting. Most of the teachers in this department were uneducated men, who were acquaintances of former servants of white commissioners who made up the board of managers of the college. They felt the importance of being "professors" far more than the better prepared teachers of literary courses, and most of them insisted on being called "professor."
>
> In spite of this, however, all the teachers in the industrial department impressed me as being good practical mechanics according to the standards of that day. Under them I studied and learned much of painting, wheelwrighting, blacksmithing, carpentry and farming. I helped build these small buildings and clear sixty acres of land, cutting down trees, digging ditches, growing vegetables, going to the city market and doing other chores around the farm.
>
> As the college grew, better teachers were found, as the president insisted upon efficiency. Before I left, the head of the industrial department was a graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, W. W. Cook, who later became a builder of United States post offices and other government buildings.[49]

> All students in the school were required to study a trade one full day each week. The boys took general shop, blacksmithing and carpentry, while the girls learned sewing, cooking and practical nursing. I worked in the general shop and was paid ten cents an hour. When I had advanced to foreman during my high school years, I earned fifteen cents per hour! I developed into a strong youth, able to build wagons and shoe horses.
>
> Tennis and baseball provided the principal recreation. The institute developed some championship baseball teams. Dancing was not permitted. Dormitory students were required to attend church services twice on Sundays and once on Wednesday evenings.[50]

One of the authors in describing his classical or academic training identified an author from the Reconstruction group who inspired him deeply. He wrote of this experience in the following words:

> I attribute this change not necessarily to progress I was making in growing up, but rather to the counsel and guidance of another remarkable man, under whose guidance and instruction I came during my last year as a student at Austin High School. That man was Charles W. Cansler, who was in effect the vice principal. He was in charge of the English course in the high school, and taught the classes in the History of English Literature and English Readings for those of us who were enrolled in the Latin course.
>
> Of the many people whom I knew, and with whom I came in contact during my public school years, I consider Charles W. Cansler the most talented. In addition to an amazing faculty with figures, that is, combining numbers, he possessed a wide knowledge of English history, American history, including Negro history, and the literatures of England and America. And he had read enough law to pass the bar. Before finishing his career as an educator he wrote the delightful volume of reminiscences, mentioned earlier, <u>Three Generations</u>...
>
> To Mr. Cansler fell the task of reorienting us in the art of reading in public. The variety in the work of his English classes made it a pleasure to attend them. Whether we were studying the translation of Homer's Iliad, Scott's Lady of the Lake, or selections from the novels of Scott, Dickens, and George Eliot, we got practice in reading aloud clearly, distinctly and with understanding.
>
> Sometimes when we had had a particularly difficult lesson in Latin, we would ask him to give us a demonstration in what we called lightning calculation. Generally, he would accede to our wishes by allowing us to write what we thought were fantastically large

> numbers for him to multiply. We would write on the blackboard such a number as 7,567,438,932 to be multiplied by 3,456,789,123, or six or eight columns of figures with eight or ten numbers to the column, to be added. In each instance he would stand back, take a good look at the problem, walk to the board and write the answer without hesitation. His time would be two or three seconds.[51]

Number of Months Schools in Session, School Attendance, Scholastic and Age of Authors When Officially Started School

The status of Black people worsened in the Post-Reconstruction period. Blacks were still dominated by the planter class and still tied to the land. Attendance, age for beginning school, and performance were all greatly related to the circumstances of the parents.

One teacher in a rural school near the end of the nineteenth century wrote:

> When I began teaching in Hart County, the school sessions were very short, running from four to five months. The children were needed on the farms, so I closed my school early March, planning to open again in July after the crops were finished.[52]

Another teacher at about the same period of time in rural North Carolina described the seasons as the determinants for school attendance. He wrote:

> When the daylight became just a few minutes more than nine hours, we began when the sun was just peeping over Big Catawba Mountain, and closed just shortly before twilight. I taught seven hours and forty minutes of the eight hours.
>
> Small children came part-time; in fact, any time was all right for any child. Tardies were abandoned, except for those who lived very near the school. And how those eager youngsters came, unmindful of the icy air which surged through the cracks on the floor. They learned how to move in order in the almost constant trek to and from the big wood stove, in which the big boys kept a roaring fire.[53]

Another author was proud of the fact that even though attendance in school was tied to the gathering of the family crops, his academic performance was not restricted. He wrote:

> Because I needed to help gather the crops, I would not always return to school for the opening. However, I used all spare time, day and night, for study, and always returned to school, though late, ahead of my class.[54]

Another author described the educational advantage he experienced when his family moved to the city; and their disappointment when they had to move back to the rural country under the authority of a white planter:

> There was one certain advantage; the children obtained six months instead of six weeks of schooling.
>
> In those years, when the mind is supposed to receive so much, I had about two short terms of schooling so poor that in New England it would not be called schooling at all.
>
> For the first year the children were kept out of school in hope of getting rid of the debt. Very small children can be used to hoe and pick cotton, and I have seen my older sisters drive a plow. The next year we attended the short midsummer and midwinter sessions of the plantation school. The school was dominated by the interests of the planter when the children were needed in the fields he simply commanded the school to close.[55]

Another teacher wrote about her rural school in Kentucky:

> My enrollment was around sixty with an average daily attendance of around forty-five, which was a good record for a rural school. Traditionally rural children attended school very irregularly, partly due to the distance they had to travel daily, but mainly because parents kept them out about half of the time to help with the farm work.[56]

As recently as 1913 an author wrote:

> That year our school was in session only six months. It closed the last Thursday and Friday of March, 1913.
>
> The next year our school was in session seven months. It closed the last of April, 1914. Hundreds of people attended the closing exercises. It was reported by a committee appointed to coult the people that besides the white people eight hundred colored people were present.[57]

In Knoxville, Tennessee in 1907 the city schools inaugurated an honor roll which was published in a local newspaper. One of the authors gave an account of his scholastic success in the following way:

> We had the numerical grading system, and every pupil whose average grade for a quarter's work was 90 per cent or above would have his name published in the honor roll. The names were published by school group, White Schools and Colored Schools, as well as by individual school as Austin School and by grade, Seventh Grade.
>
> As far as scholarship was concerned, that year I did quite well. At the end of each quarter, like Abou Ben Adhem, my name led all the rest, for the forty or fifty pupils in the seventh grade at Austin School, and my grades were higher than those of all other colored children below the seventh grade.[58]

The age when the authors entered school varied depending on family needs and the availability of schools. One author born in 1878 started school in 1884 at six years of age. Another wrote that, at fourteen years old, she had had a total of three years and three months of schooling.

On the other hand one of the authors started school at age five in 1893. He wrote:

> At the age of five I entered college. Let me hasten to explain that I wasn't a genius; it was simply that Livingstone College, because of the inferior level of the public schools for Negroes in Salisbury, undertook to provide education at all levels. What I actually did was enter the kindergarten class at Livingstone.[59]

In 1897 one of our authors and his sister entered first grade. He was seven years old. He wrote:

> Both Lillian and I entered the first grade at the Eastport School in the fall of 1897. We soon grew to love our teacher, Miss Minnie Young, and to look up with awe at the principal, Mr. Esau Yett, a stalwart six-footer, with a shapely head and even white teeth that contrasted sharply with his smooth black complexion.[60]

An author born in 1891 began at nine years old; another author born in 1911 began at age six and after completing the eighth grade requested that he be sent to a training school in an all-Black community in Alabama. The author who later became president of Jackson State College in Mississippi started his career path quite early. He was born in 1897 and wrote about how he started school:

> I went to school for the first time when I was not quite five years old. According to school regulations, I was not old enough to go to school; but I cried so much to go with my older brothers that one day my mother let me go. I will never forget that day. School was held in the church house about a half mile from our home. The middle-aged teacher, Miss Mary Johnson, was very kind to me because I was the youngest child among thirty-five pupils.[61]

Section B -- Who Encouraged The Authors to go to School?

The authors reported that, as children, they received encouragement from many quarters to go to school: From parents, grandparents, and other relatives, and from teachers, ministers and neighbors in thier communities.

One author wrote about a conversation he had with his father concerning an advanced degree:

> When I was about eighteen, my father told me about a young man named William E. Burghardt Du Bois who studied at the University of Berlin, Germany, and who would get his Ph.D. degree from Harvard University. "Son," he said, "you should plan some day to go to Germany to get the Ph.D. degree. Up to now only a few of our race have received that degree. I believe you have the ability to win it." Although I was only a sophmore in college, I decided then and there that some day I would go to Germany, and that I would earn a Ph.D. degree.[62]

The authors recognized encouragement even though it may have been given in different forms to the Black children. One author knew her grandfather's ways so well that she knew the degree of his encouragement

by his use of the language. She reported on a time when she read her lesson to her blind grandfather. She said he was so sensitive to every word in her recitation that he knew when she was prepared and when she was not. She had great respect for him and was thrilled when he complimented her on her work. On one occasion when her grandfather was satisfied with her recitation he said:

> "That will do. That's pretty good for a little girl. You may make a fine scholar some day if you keep at it." When grandfather said something was "pretty good" he meant it was almost perfect. He said he never wanted me to have a swelled head.[63]

Praise seemed to have been a technique used by many Black adults to encourage Black children to "work and study hard." In reporting on his experience in a training school, one of the authors described his affection for the director and her encouragement of the students:

> From the first minute she inspired in me respect that almost amounted to awe.[64]

> "This is Arthur George Gaston, and he is going to be a great man," Granny Tuggle had announced last night at the Knights of Pythias convention. Granny liked to show us off. I was often made to stand while she said nice things about me.[65]

He added that he was encouraged to do all things well, and wrote:

> I found joy in each job and worked at it until it was perfect, even though others working with me teased me for it. But I had my goal squarely set, and besides Grandmama and Mama and Granny Tuggle had taught me well. I would often remain behind to polish a window I discovered was streaked, when I thought I had finished.[66]

The relationship between the religious denominations and Black education in the South was clearly visible during the Post-Reconstruction period. Each of the major denominations maintained secondary schools and colleges. In the late 1800's one author reported that her education was aided by:

> Two Presbyterian missionaries, the Rev. Mr. E.W. Williams and wife, who visited for a brief while at my Uncle's home, were so favorably impressed by my earnestness and desire to please that they suggested a plan whereby I might earn board and tuition at their school in Abbeville, South Carolina. Aunt Caroline prevailed upon Mother to give her consent to this plan.[67]

Throughout this period ministers and/or churches are cited as supporters of schooling. Teachers were very important to the authors. The authors reported many accounts of teacher encouragement; classroom academic teachers as well as Sunday School teachers.

One Sunday School teacher made a lasting impression on one of the authors who was eighty-nine years old when his autobiography was published. His recollection of that teacher was as follows:

> I remember the Trinity Colored Methodist Church around the corner. The first person I remember outside of our family and the pastor was Miss Mamie Brown, my Sunday School teacher, who gave me a beautiful Sunday School card with the words, "Keep Thyself Pure" printed on it. I could not read it, but I can now see my mother reading the card and explaining it to me. I kept the card for many years, and it had much influence on my life.[68]

Secular teachers also were very important. The influence of one of the Reconstruction scholars appeared again in the report of one of the Post-Reconstruction authors. In writing of the special interest Mr. Cansler took in the author during his senior year in high school he recalled:

> ...I can remember well how he would ask me about my daily schedule from waking-up time to going-to-bed time. Chuckling--he was a big heavy man, a brown-skinned copy of Dr. Samuel Johnson, only better looking and with frizzled hair--he would say of me, "I didn't know we had a time machine among us." Then he would tell about the period about twenty years before, when he had been a big-headed, goggle-eyed, gangling youth. "Things will get better, after a while, if you are physically able and determined to stick it out," he said. That was the beginning of an understanding that ripened into an excellent friendship, that was to prove to be a boon to me in an unexpectedly near future.

> Well might Mr. Cansler have conditioned my contined progress and my ultimate achievement by the clause, "if you are physically able to stick it out."69

One author wrote about a female teacher who influenced and encouraged him greatly. Her name was Lucy C. Laney. This woman was considered one of the great educators of her day along with Nannie Helem Burroughs, Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Mary McLeod Bethuen. All these women founded schools and taught Black children. The author's description of Mrs. Laney is representative of Black female teachers of the period. He wrote:

> The first formal teacher to awaken my interest and register the unusual with me was a little black woman named Lucy Laney who had been a schoolmate of my parents at Atlanta University. She established Haines Industrial Institute in Augusta, where she made a fine reputation as a teacher, and particularly as a disciplinarian. Her pupils came chiefly in the upper grades, and her teachers were chosen with care. She was positive even unto severity, and in a time when authority of black leadership was too often challenged, she stood out as one who would "stand no foolishness." If you went to her school it was to get an education, and if you stayed there she saw that you got some education. She believed in, and practiced, corporal punishment, and did not hesitate to take a young man of eighteen years of age down into the basement, throw him across a barrel and paddle him until he could feel it. Yet,. she always taught us that only animals need to be beaten, and that she had to whip those who insisted upon behaving like animals, rather than conducting themselves like men of thought and reason.
>
> Miss Laney awakened in me a real love for study. I was only thirteen when I went to her school, and I decided that I should never give her occasion to whip me, for I would try to act as a reasoning human rather than an unreasoning animal. She never flogged me.70

Teachers seemed to have been willing to extend themselves beyond the call of duty to help a conscientious Black youth. One author expressed appreciation for such a teacher in her autobiography:

> The primary teacher, however, showed a great interest in me. She told my mother that she would begin teaching me when I reached the age of five if my mother would buy me a printer and send me to school a little more regularly. This was a special favor because the legal age for beginners was six.[71]

Teachers also expressed encouragement by knowing his/her student's life with some familiarity. For example, an author gave this account:

> ...sometimes when the going got rough, particularly if none of us seemed to have studied his lesson, he would call out, "Sonny, Sonny Jim, you are old man history, tell us all about it." He was alluding to my having read Ellis' American History the year before. And somehow he had learned my nickname, which was rarely used except around home.[72]

Another author described several teachers who offered encouragement and they also served as role models. Of one he wrote:

> Upon sober second thought it was the teacher, perhaps, rather than the subjects. James H. Leiper, our seventh grade teacher, was one of the four impressive personalities that it was my good luck to meet up with in the Knoxville Public Schools. He was of the athletic type--six feet one or two inches, straight, broad of shoulder and narrow of hips, with powerful arms, and the left hand off at the wrist. His color was burnt chocolate. His mien was serious, but he could break into a simple childish smile upon occasions.
>
> Mr. Leiper was a man of strong determination. He was the first "two-job" man of my early life. His four acres of new potatoes out near the Knoxville College settlement, hand cultivated, were the town talk, especially after a feature article in the morning Knoxville Journal and Tribune told how he nearly doubled his salary by raising potatoes. Yet there was nothing of the rustic about Mr. Leiper. His white shirt seemed to be always freshly laundered, his black serge suit pressed, and his black shoes shined. His spirit made me forget my troubles, and his intelligence was a constant challenge,
>
> He disciplined us with work. And he kept in close touch with what was going on in his classes, even the grapevine.[73]

Many of the Post-Reconstruction authors were greatly influenced by the life and work of Booker T. Washington. He became the role model for a number of authors:

> Dr. Washington had spoken to us in chapel that morning, and as always he had held me transfixed, the influence of his powerful personality lingering all day. I picked up his book Up From Slavery by Booker T. Washington, read the faded cover, worn from much thumbing. This was the first book I had ever owned, and it had been an inspiration for me for some years now.[74]

> I excelled in arithmetic. I had a dream then that I would try to outdo the famous Booker T. Washington, who was accomplishing great things for the students at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.[75]

Not all role models were as famous as Dr. Washington:

> Edward Sebron was my inspiration. He was the first Negro in the county to finish high school. Newly graduated, he was clerking for a Negro grocery store owner; Leon Green. I was fascinated by him and made many trips to the store, necessary and unnecessary, just to see him working. Edward Sebron was to me the height of education and success. Indirectly he was responsible for my present business success...[76]

Neighbors and community people encouraged the authors to follow their desire for education and challenged them to excel.

One author who decided to run away from home in order to go to Tuskegee told of the help he received from a neighbor:

> ...She then told her husband to look in her dresser drawer and get twenty-five cents for me. It was every cent of money she had in the house, she said. This, added to the dime I already had, gave me thirty-five cents in cash. So with my leather bag and with about half an hour to get out of town before daylight, I hurried away.[77]

Another typical example of verbal encouragement was reported by an author who was getting ready to go North to school. He recalled that one of the neighbors who was proud of his accomplishments, gave the following advice:

> When I left for Chicago, an old ex-slave said: "Don't you let those white boys up North beat you in anyting," and I determined not to do so. For, I felt that I not only represented myself, and the prestige of Professor Wright's family, but also the whole Negro-American race.[78]

Could and/or Did Their Family Move From One Place to Another in Order to Provide Them With Better Schooling?

During the Post-Reconstruction period there was considerable interstate and intrastate movement among the freedmen in search of better conditions for themselves and their families. This movement was encouraged and urged by labor agents promising Blacks fabulous sums for their labor, and in some cases promising land and government protection and support. Historians cite many reasons for the movement of Blacks during this period and beyond; but the basic reason seems to lead to the fact that the movement was a direct response to economic pressures within the regions involved.[79]

Black parents assumed the movement was one way to maximize educational opportunities for their children. There was the general belief among Blacks that schools were better in the ruban than in the rural areas and there would be improved schooling for their children.[80]

The authors of this period, writing on the issue of families moving from one place to another in order to provide them with better schooling offered their insight on the question. One author spoke to the issue this way; from age four:

> ...till I reached the age of eighteen I can count no less than twenty removals of our family.
>
> The motives that carried my mother and father from the country into the little town of Pendleton were more than good; they were sacred.[81]

He referred to "sacred" in the earlier text as the desire for education. He continued:

> The desperate move to Galloway, in the neighborhood of Little Rock, was by no means an unlucky one. For one whole year, of course, we children were kept out of school to clear up the new debt. The debt was paid.
>
> We moved to Argenta in the winter of 1890-91. This move cityward was not promoted, as is usually charged in such cases, by any desire to get away from work, but by the high motives of education and the future.[82]

To demonstrate a tradition of moving for the purpose of improved schooling, the author, born in 1878, made this point:

> My grandmother, Grandma Wright hearing that the northern missionaries had started a school in Atlanta, Georgia, set out with her three children to walk from Cuthbert to Atlanta in order to put them in school. It took three months to reach her destination.[83]

The author who was denied an opportunity for continuous education until late in life made her point this way:

> After Christmas of 1889, Father decided that he wanted to live near a school, so that his children could attend. He disposed of his farm equipment, the mule, and the other live stock, and moved into the town of Pendleton. For a while he dug ditches on nearby farms for seventy-five cents a rod. Some days we would dig one and a half rods, and thus the new work was more profitable than farming. In order that we might attend the schools, which was conducted by the Silver Spring Baptist Church, Father moved his letter from the Methodist Episcopal Church which he had previously attended, and submitted to baptism by immersion at Silver Spring.[84]

Recognizing the fact that the length of time children were in school played a role in the quality of learning, one author expressed real excitement when his mother's search for a better school situation proved successful. He reported,

> Meanwhile my mother heard that in the city of Little Rock and in the town of Argenta, across the river from Little Rock, there were nine months' terms of school. Think of it! Nine months of school for the children.[85]

Another author summarized the common condition this way:

> ...It was a consideration for the future of their children. Having lived nearer town for a year, they learned that the houses, the wages and the schools of the village were superior to those of the country. The country school was poorly housed and still more poorly taught. Its sessions lasted for only a few hot weeks of summer after the 'laying by' of the crops, and for a few cold weeks of winter between the last harvest and the time for cleaning the fields. School interests were secondary to farm interests; the raising of children must not interfere with the raising of cotton. The landowner would not tolerate a tenant who put his children to school in the farming seasons. In the town my mother had cooked and washed, in the country she had been a field hand. A cook has somewhat better opportunities to care for small children...[86]

Socio-economic Status of the Families of the Authors

The economic condition of the freedmen during the Post-Reconstruction period was dismal. Even those Black people who had been able to establish some political and limited economic progress during the Reconstruction period were reduced to an impoverished condition. The mass of Black people, of course, were poor during Reconstruction and they remained so during this period.

The political power some Blacks gained during the Reconstruction period was greatly reduced and the tendency to minimize the value of political participation by Blacks was widely preached by Southern whites. Black political leaders never-the-less attempted to identify with the political party, the labor groups or other organized efforts that could help them improve their condition.

The social status among Blacks even within their own community was greatly influenced by the events of the day. One of the contributing factors was a formula of literacy and/or property qualifications written into Southern state constitutions in an attempt to disfranchise Black people. Many Blacks did no support these formulas and distrusted Blacks

who did. However, Black people who accepted the formula did so with the understanding and belief that it would be honestly and evenly applied to Blacks and whites. In actual practice unfortunately the requirements were administered dishonestly.

The majority of Black people held on to the hope that acquisition of education and property would gain for them the right to vote. Literacy became the major thrust. The authors of this period and their families reflect the range of social and economic conditions of Blacks of the times.

An author who was born in 1878 and lived until 1967 came from a family of more financially and educationally secure members than most Blacks of his generation. He wrote:

> Grandfather Alexander Howard lived in Columbus, Georgia on Third Avenue, and conducted his own livery stable. Before I was twelve years of age I learned to ride his horses and I could drive in his buggy, and was allowed to sit by him when he drove his two-horse carriage. He owned his home and was one of the founders of St. John A.M.E. Church; his daughters were school teachers in Columbus, and married "outstanding" men. Grandpa was black, like my father, but grandma was "light."
>
> ...grandpa, who in slavery had been a coachman, was undboutedly thrifty and ambitious, and grandma, an intelligent mulatto girl, was equally ambitious. Both, when I knew them, could read, write and figure well, had money in the bank and owned their home and other property. Grandpa owned several horses, drays, and carriages, and had a prosperous business.[87]

Another author who also lived to be eighty nine years old and was one of the female authors of this period reported on the economic condition of her family in the following manner:

> ...parents and "maternal" grandparents were sharecroppers--I spent my childhood on Woodburry Farm in South Carolina.

> Her father labored in the field, to support his wife and four children. Her maternal grandmother, Grandma Milliner, lived in the neighborhood--maternal grandparents owned 16 acres of land and also owned their log cabin.[88]

In 1881, the year Booker T. Washington opened Tuskegee Institute, one of the authors was born who lived long enough to witness the overturn of the U.S. Supreme Court's Plessy v. Ferguson. This author states that his:

> ...parents were farmers of the tenant or day-labor class.
>
> ...they were illiterate, but were beginning to learn to read the large-print in the New Testament in the books sold by the book agent.
>
> My father started working for a man who ran a bar and hotel, mother was the cook. The next year all the family worked together and produced a bigger and better crop--but we were still in debt. Even though there was a law to cover the contract between the land and the tenant farmer, the farmer was not protected.
>
> Father was able to make an agreement with a landowner in Little Rock, he rented a small farm and escaped, with his family, from a Mississippi planter to Little Rock in about 1890.[89]

The author observed that "a rented farm with a definite loan is a different proposition than being in a state where the creditor sells all the produce you produce and does all the counting too."[90]

An author born in 1888 in North Carolina described his family's social status by reporting that his father:

> was also a man of national, even international, prominence and--by the standards of the time--a wealthy man. At any rate his position as U.S. Collector of Customs at Wilmington, N.C., gave him an economic status far above that of most people in the town, and this led to great resentment on the part of some of the whites.[91]

In his book, From Slavery to Freedom, John Hope Franklin mentioned this author's father. His father, John C. Dancy, was one of the

personalities involved in the brief resurgence in 1894-95 of Black political involvement in North Carolina and other Southern states. This was a result of a "successful fusion between the newly organized Populists and the remnants of the old Republical Organization."[92] His father was appointed collector of one part of Wilmington and several other Blacks were appointed to prominent positions during this period.

In 1883, an author born in Georgia who later identified factors in the death of his mother and step-mother as overwork and large families. He further described his father as a man who once owned a "small amount of property" but was unable to purchase enough land or a house to escape the "renter class and remained there the rest of his life."[93]

One of the authors born in 1890 revealed that his family moved to the city once when he was about four, then back to the rural area and back again to the city when he was about seven or eight. He reported:

> I remember vividly the home on Ross Street in what was then called Eastport, a suburb of Knoxville. It is now Park City. We had a new, roomy cottage with plenty of clean fresh air and sunlight all around. There was a cistern in the yard. Our family had no thought of indoor heat and plumbing at that time.
>
> The Ross Street home was one of five new homes built on a 40-acre track of grazing land that had been purchased some ten years before by three fraternal organizations. Approximately one fifth of the tract was occupied by their cemeteries, which formed its south boundary. The five hourses and lots, of which ours was one, formed the east boundary of the tract. The rest of it, an area about one-eighth of a mile wide and a quarter of a mile long, was still grazing land when I first saw it. It became my first great playground.
>
> In about 1897-98...we had moved back to town and were living on Nelsom Street again. This time we were in a two-story house set in the side of a hill, and located directly behind the Odd Fellows Hall in East Vine Avenue. This house, about ten years old, contained eight rooms, was of frame construction, and was in good repair. Water was obtained from a hydrant in the kitchen. The water-closet was located outside.[94]

After the death of his father the author reported that the family suffered financial difficulties. He described the role his mother played in helping the family financially:

> She had been a teacher in the colored schools of Abingdon, Virginia, her birthplace, before her marriage to my father.
>
> ...she was able to tutor from three to six of the children in the neighborhood, whose parents were employed in domestic service and who, perhaps for the very reason that their parents were employed away from home, had fallen behind in their school work.[95]

By 1903, two years after the death of his father the author's family financial situation worsens and his mother becomes a book agent. Even though the family had limited finances his mother, believing that all the children should know something about music, arranges for his sister to have private piano lessons.[96] The family's condition reached a new low when his Aunt, his mother's sister, died and his mother took charge of his cousins. The family then took in roomers to ease the finances but that placed strain on the living arrangements in their home. The author said the "house became very crowded."[97] He added:

> I will confess that my physical needs were worrying me more and more. I was still wearing second-hand men's clothes, not yet having been able to get a full new suit. My mother did her best to see that all of us were clean, and that the older ones wore few patches. My trousers had been very skillfully reinforced at the knees and my sweaters neatly mended at the elbows. Even so, many of my schoolmates were well groomed, "every day and Sunday, too," as I used to say. These were the sons and daughters of the schoolteachers and government employees, city and federal I was kept too busy to envy them, but I could not help thinking, that if our father had lived, we would have been dressed as well as these associates of ours.[98]

The daughter of a tenant farmer and hand laundress wrote:

> --Alice's father Willie was a tenant farmer.
> --Alice's mother was a "hand laundress."[99]

> My family was never actually in poverty. We never had cash money, nor were we able to buy what were then considered luxuries, such as radios and cars, but we had the necessities of life.
>
> We owned our home. The three-room cottage, which I mentioned earlier, had now been enlarged to a seven-room, two-story, white-washed house.
>
> An extra room had been built for the children soon after I came into the world. And in later years, when my brother and I reached the age where separate bedrooms were required, the roof of the house was lifted and a second story added by building three large rooms above the three ground-floor rooms, making seven rooms including the kitchen.
>
> It was most unusual for a Negro family living in the country, or even in an urban area, during these years to own a house of this size.[100]

The female author born in 1906 continued:

> My parents occupied one of the ground-floor rooms, my grandmother used the other, and the third had been converted into a dining room. My brother and I each had separate bedrooms on the second floor with a spare room for guests.
>
> We always had an abundance of food because we raised a variety in our garden, including asparagus and peanuts. We had a variety of fruit trees such as apple, peach, cherry, plum. The hogs my family slaughtered in the winter supplied enough meat for year-round use. Our cow supplied sufficient milk and butter to serve our family needs and often enough to share with the neighbors. We raised hundreds of chickens; many supplied food and others were kept as...
>
> We never had a lot of clothes, but we always had enough to keep clean and warm. My mother was a stickler for cleanliness and comfort.
>
> When we didn't have a car, we had a horse and buggy, the common method of transportation of the day.
>
> While we had plenty of food, my mother was just too proud to admit that their cash income was not adequate to cover additional expense, regardless of how small.[101]

Another distinguished female author who was born in 1910 and died in 1984 wrote about her schoolteacher aunts describing the social status of her family:

> My aunts carried thmselves with an uprightness befitting their high station as examples to the community. They had been teaching for many years as Grandfather had done before them and all the grown folks regarded them with deep respect. The children looked upon them with a mixture of fear and awe not unlike that accorded to a policeman.[102]

What Were the Attitudes Towards Education of the Authors, Their Parents, Teachers, Relatives and Others Directly Associated With Them?

One of the authors who grew up with a college trained mother described the influence his mother had on his knowledge of Black history and respect for education. She told her children about her college experiences and fondly remembered and shared events with them. He wrote:

> The good times my mother talked about were those in connection with musical and literary programs, the dramatic reading of elocutionists like Hallie Quinn Brown, the singing Sisretta Jones, better known as Black Patti, the lectures of nationally known personalities, like Frederick Douglass. Too, there were the interesting and varied programs of their own literary socieities.
>
> Through her vivid recollection of her school days at Knoxville College, my mother passed on to two of her children a knowledge of the disciplines of work and social living that she had acquired in some six or seven years at the institution.[103]

The mother of another author:

> ...had been to school as far as the fourth grade and could read, write, and do arithmetic, which she soon taught my father. She read books, papers, magazines--everything her mother would bring her from the 'Big House', and kept up with many of the affairs that would affect Negroes and would get publication in the white newspapers. Once in a while she would get a copy of a Negro publication through her church, since there were Negro newspapers being published in Galveston: The Spectator from 1873, which became the Freedman's Journal in 1887; The Herald of Truth, a 'red hot' semi-monthly which ran about two years, published by an African Methodist Episcopal minister, who later edited the Torchlight Appeal in 1888, and later moved to Denison to publish The Texas Reformer.

To the point of a mother's attitude and impact on a family, this author wrote:

> ...my mother's constant talk and ambition was to get an opportunity 'to school the children.' One of the chief causes of the rapid advancement of the Negro race since the Civil War has been the ambition of emancipated black mothers for the education of their children. Many an educated Negro owes his enlightenment to the toil and sweat of a mother.[104]
>
> The opportunity which a mother's pride created for my schooling during her life could not continue after her death. She died of overwork and consequent broken health. She had been determined to keep her children in school and had worked from early morning till late at night at that end. We seldom waked early enough to catch a glimpse of her, and before her return at night sleep had weighed down the eyelids of the younger children. I had just entered upon my fourth year in the city school when my mother died in October. Imagine, if you can, the sorrow and confusion, amounting almost to dismay, that filled the heart and mind of a boy of thirteen, who was ambitious and who knew that his mother was the mainstay of his education and his future--a boy who loved school as dearly as any other boy ever loved a gun or a motor-cycle. I knew what my mother had meant to the family and that without her it would be impossible for my father to keep all the children in school. It was her love and ambition, I knew, that had given me the high privilege of study, and without her I could not be certain of my daily bread for the school year on which we had just entered.[105]

The author whose mother went to college and father was of the first Black to become a letter carrier, remembers in the Fall of 1896 his:

> Mama continued to read nursery rhymes to my sister Lillian and me, as she had since we moved to Eastport. Also, she read aloud the leading news stories in the Knoxville Journal and Tribune, our morning daily newspaper, whenever she thought these stories were not too sensational. She had certainly read to us the highlights of the Presidential campaign, not omitting Bryan's famous Cross of Gold speech. And she had had Santa Claus bring us a blackboard chart with A.B.C's in block and script form, and some simple problems in numbers. I was fascinated by the work in numbers, but did not take to the alphabet instruction. With my sister it was the other way around.[106]

As he grew older he remembered his mother's attitude towards reading:

> While Mama required that we go to bed by ten o'clock, she relaxed a little in my case, after hearing that I was reading. We had no public library, and all the school libraries were closed tight for the summer. So I turned to my westerns and detective stories.[107]

This author's father died while the children were quite young but remembered that his father loved books and was an amateur artist. He wrote about finding examples of his father's artistic work after his death. He writes:

> I have never forgotton those etching-like drawings of peacocks with their glorious tails fanned out, guinea fowls, swans, turkeys, and smaller birds on the wing. There was a poen, "Remember Your Papa, My Boy" that I would like to have kept. The bookcase and its contents were lost in storage. Only the list of books came into my hands. I know well those that were accumulated after his death, so by the process of elimination it is possible to pick out those he had bought, like the Memoirs of General Grant (whom he admired), Balzac's Human Comedy, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Crogman's The Remarkable Progress of the Afro-American, Old Moorish Stories by Washington Irving, Webster's Unabridged Dictionary and Card Games by Hoyle.
>
> I have often wished that I had learned more about my father's life than I did.[108]

Among the Christmas gifts, when his father was alive, were an assortment of story books, including nursery rhymes for my baby sister.."[109] Another father was remembered this way:

> Father was greatly concerned that we should have the best education it was possible for him to provide for us--including sending me to one of the country's finest prep schools. But he was even more concerned with impressing us with the merits of good, plain common sense.[110]

A sharecropping father illustrated his attitude about schooling this way:

> My father did his best to keep his children in school, which began in November at the close of the cotton season, and lasted for five or six months at the most.[111]

Expressing the attitude of "self-help" among Black families, this author wrote:

> All over the Southland, the struggling freed people were trying to give their children an education and opportunities that many of them had never had.
>
> Nowhere was the government making any effort to help in the campaign for education, or to provide educational facilities for the black American. Hence, it was left to the Negro himself to make sacrifices for the sake of education.[112]

In discussing the example his parents set in shaping his attitude towards education and his determination to get the best schooling availalbe, a well known clerk said:

> In my home I saw hundreds of books, but never a can of beer or a bottle of whiskey or wine. I listened to good music and enlightened coversation from our leaders, white and black, who came to my father's house. I became convinced early that I could not only assimilate the best education, but I would have it.
>
> My earliest teachers were my mother and father in the home, and I still regard their early teaching as the most important part of my education. They set the compass of my life. Had they had been what they were, I should have missed the enthusiasm for education.
>
> My mother always asked me about my lessons and offered to help me over the hard places; but I did not always take her help; I had the "do it yourself" complex. She encourage me in my homework, and praised me when I made good marks or won prizes for good behavior and scholarship. She taught me to speak correctly, to say "I have" instead of "I has"; "I went" and not "I gone"; "I saw" rather than "I seen"; and corrected errors I had picked up from my schoolmates.[113]

One of the authors who was teaching in a rural school around 1911 wrote about the parents of the children of his school:

> Every room was full, and running over. My room, the sixth and seventh grades, had fifty-five noisy youngsters, some standing while five or more parents sat in the rear. The children knew what assignments had been made the last day of the previous session, and most of them had books, but only a very few had new books. I liked their eagerness to talk to me. Parents were there to observe and participate in the activities in the classroom.[114]

Authors who reported on their early recollection about the attitude of parents and others towards education wrote about them in great detail. Many remembered their grandparents reporting on their efforts to educate their children. An author born in 1910 wrote:

> During these difficult years when there was scarcely enough money to keep a roof over their heads, Grandmother undertook to educate her children. She bundled up Aunt Pauline in the spring of 1880 and sent her down to Raleigh to St. Augustine's School, which had been organized in 1867 under the Protestant Episcopal Church. Grandmother had attended there herself for a short time and she had great faith in Episcopal education. It was a daring thing to do; the first morning Aunt Pauline was led into the classroom by Miss Mary Pettiford, every gasped in astonishment.
>
> "They brought me every subject they studied," Aunt Pauline recalled. "I read for them, worked problems in arithmetic, answered questions in history, gave the parts of speech, spelled and recited poetry. The said I knew the work all right but I was too young to stay. They sent me home again and told me I could come back when I was ten. My tenth birthday came that September, so Mother put me on the train again and I entered St. Aug's."
>
> For several years she attended there she was the only child in the school. Grandmother sent down butter, eggs, or chickens to help pay her tuition whenever she could, but she had to work her way alone most of the time. While she was there, Grandfather made his first application for a pension...Aunt Pauline had to come out of school that year. In September, she put up her hair, put on a long grown-up dress and went to take the county teachers' examination.
>
> "There I was with many men and women twice my age," she recalled. "I was so afraid they'd find out I was only fourteen and send me home again, but they didn't ask any questions. When the certificates were issued I received a First Grade Certificate, nine days before my fifteenth birthday."[115]

Another author born in 1878 wrote:

> Grandma Howard must have been born about 1825. She learned to read and write and was among the very few colored who, at the emancipation, could help teach their fellows to read. At that time, learning to read the Bible was the height of the ambition of most adult freedmen.[116]

The author born in 1897 wrote on this subject the following:

> My mother remembered that she often heard her mother, Millie, pray that some day her children would be free and could learn to "read and write like white folks."[117]

Another avenue for learning was discovered by an autobiographer. He found a relative:

> Within a matter of weeks, I had tapped a new rich source of additional information on the doings of the Spaniards in Cuba. It came through Ed Turner, Uncle Ed, the husband of my father's oldest sister, Augusta, Aunt Gus for short. Uncle Ed, who was a member of the police force of the city of Knoxville, subscribed to the Police Gazette, a popular weekly tabloid that presented news features, particularly war, crime and sports, sensati-nally on a pink sheet. After getting a taste of the sensational stuff carried in the Gazette, I found many reasons for visiting Uncle Ed and Aunt Gus often. Thanks to Mrs. Hargo, I had learned to read well enough to devour the war stories in the tabloid.[118]

Older siblings were also a real source of attitudinal development about education. Older brothers and sisters often demonstrated a positive attitude about learning by "showing off" a bright younger sibling. One example of that was shared by an author who wrote:

> I had readily learned my ABC's under sympathetic tutelage at home,...
>
> This is where I received my first slight acquaintance with the English alphabet. I learned it so quickly that my sister took delight in leading me to school with them and having me recite for her class. I must have been at least two years under school age.[119]

Teachers and extended families of the community were critical in the process of developing an attitude towards education and schooling. One teacher was discussed by an author who attended elementary school around 1889:

> The teacher insisted that the students sit in statuesque postures, not moving a limb too often. Persuasion to study and good deportment consisted of a hickory switch, a cone-shaped "dunce cap" and a stool on which the offender must stand on one foot for an enormous length of time.
>
> ...about all I remember of this first schooling is the menacing words of the teacher, the movements of that switch and the astonishing balancing acts of the dunce cap wearers.
>
> This teacher's name was J.S. Pleasant, and although he was very strict, the name is not at all inapplicable to his general character. He was my teacher for the following four years. Very often when the teacher had passed a question or a problem around to all the rest of the class and they had failed to answer or to solve it, he would say, "Well, 'Always Ready' will take it" -- which was a nickname he sometimes applied to me.
>
> At the end of that very year I received from the teacher a prize for being "never absent, never trady." It was a book entitled "Our Manners and Social Customs," and it was the first book outside of a school text that I had ever read.[120]

After the death of the father of one of the authors of the Post-Reconstruction period a friend offered to help the author by hiring him and making sure his education did not suffer. The economic conditions in 1901 were hard for Blacks but as long as the family friend could he served as a surrogate parent for this author. The author reported that his work in the friend's print shop was successful and that:

> During the first two months I made such progress in learning the work of the shop, that Mr. Smith said that at the beginning of the next school year, in September, I could clean up the shop in the morning, go to school and work in the shop after school and a full day on Saturdays. My pay was $1.50 a week, full time or part time.[121]

This pay helped greatly towards school tuition. The author said the print shop had an old Webster's Unabridged Dictionary on a wooden stand "that was his constant companion." This author had many extended family members who had positive attitudes about education. He wrote about:

> Mrs. Gentle who was very refined...For me her conversations were always historical. She was a Who's Who and History of Knoxville combined for the period beginning with Gran'ts second administration. What fascinated me, I suppose, and made me literally sit at her feet in search of information, were the first stories she told me about the stirring 1870's...[122]
>
> "James, you know about the Homestead Act, don't you? Well, it was after Grant had gone out of office and the colored people had found out that Hayes would not do anything to help them, that Benjamin Singleton began to talk up a migration of the colored people to the West. You know he was called Pap, and he was from Nashville. Before the Ku Klux became so powerful in Tennessee, he thought he would have the colored people from South Carolina, Louisiana and Mississippi, where they were having such a hard time, come and make their home in Tennessee. Then he decided that Kansas, John Brown's home state, would be the ideal place for the colored people to go and work out their salvation, so many of the rural colored people built high on the Exodus, as it was called. He was a good salesman and he spread the idea far and wide. Thousands got their cases, pasteboard boxes and plain paper bundles and started for the new Canaan in Kansas.[123]

He also discussed the pharmacist in his community:

> Systematically, he acquainted me with some of the basic principles of chemistry. From the neat rows of bottles with their gold-bordered labels, the pharmaceuticals, he poured liquids into test tubes and shook them up or into the mortar and stirred them. He told me about the reactions, and showed me how some of them worked out as equations.
>
> I worked very hard for Dr. Sevier, not for the drug company, because he did so much to free me from the prevalent ignorance and superstitions of that time. His thinking processes were simple and clear. His knowledge of life made him bold but not boisterous or overbearing. My association with him made me more observant generally and more rational in my thinking about life. I was dead serious and anxious when I first met Dr. Sevier. Four months with him and I was a more wholesome teenager.[124]

The painter friend continued his support and:

> After I had made very high marks during the first two years of high school, Mr. Smith offered to pay my tuition for my first year in college, at Harvard University, if I should break all existing scholastic records at Austin High School. The numerical system of grading was used in the Knoxville public schools at that time.
>
> My average for the year was approximately 97 per cent. Three fourths of my classes had been taught by our scholarly principal, Mr. Manning; the others by Mr. Cansler. Gleaner Smith, as he had begun to be called, was overjoyed. My schoolmates shared in my elation. So did all of my playmates, colored and white, and all of the city -- so it seemed. And Mr. Manning, upon hearing about Mr. Smith's offer "to send me to Harvard" assured him that I would be able to pass the college entrance examinations, a requirement at that time, I believe, for entrance into any of the colleges of New England.[125]

Motivation and Attitude of Authors Towards Education

In the period of Post Reconstruction Black people began to seriously question the avenues opened to them for racial advancement. It appeared that politics was no longer opened to Black people, that segregation was spreading and that white people were becoming more hostile to any progress of Black people. Self help, race pride and education seemed to be the avenue for economic development and that wealth and middle-classness "would thus earn acceptance from whites and the walls of prejudice would crumble."[126] The authors of the Post Reconstruction period placed deep faith in the theory of "tumbling" the walls of prejudice. This belief motivated them highly and they worked extremely hard to become educated. The data were extensive in examples of self motivation.

Describing his week long journey to get to school, the motivation of this author born in 1876 in South Carolina is without question:

> Early that morning with a pack containing some bedding and enough cooked provisions to last until Friday, I started out. On the way, friends would ask: "Are you going to the railroad?" (A railroad was then being built from Johnston to Greenville.) A negative reply was given and I continued the journey. I arrived at the home of a friend of my family in Greenwood late that afternoon. Here I was received and allowed to spend the night. Early next morning I made by way across town out to Brewer in time for devotion. One Reverend J.W.E. Jewett, his wife and daughter, the latter a Mrs. Ponds, were in charge. Immediately following devotion I was directed to Mrs. Jewett's room for classification and assignment to the quarters where I was to stay. Mrs. Jewett was very kind to me. I was classified and given some books. I paid her forty-five cents only, and told her that I would look after the balance and also my tuition later. Every weekend I walked back home for clean clothes and a new supply of food for the following week. This was done throughout my first year at Brewer.[127]

Another author born two years later expressed his motivation in the following report. His report corraborated information documented by leading historians.

> My first goal in education was to win an A.B. degree from Atlanta University; after that, to go "up North" to a "white" school, like Yale or Harvard. One of my main reasons for wanting to go to a white school was to show the white people that a black boy could learn as well as a white one. In those days, this was the incentive that many young Negro-Americans had, because most people, including an overwhelming number of former slaves themselves, did not believe Negro-Americans had equal intellectual ability to whites. As the years passed and I entered my teens, this ambition became even greater. It so happened that two boys had gone from our town, Augusta, and had done well in northern "white" colleges. John Hope and John W. Gilbert had gone to Brown University in Rhode Island. Gilbert had won a fellowship in Greek and was a student in Athens, Greece. My father's schoolmate, William S. Scarborough, had also gone to Oberlin College, Ohio, and graduated. He had written a Greek textbook which did much to convince white people that Negro-Americans could learn Greek; Henry Flipper had gone from Georgia to finish at West Point. I wanted to do like Hope, Gilbert, Scarborough, Flipper, and others. I was anxious to help disprove what Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina had said about a Negro-American being unable to learn the Greek alphabet.[128]

The excitement and enthusiasm for learning of an author born in 1881 could be felt as he reported his experience with learning:

> The prospect (of going to school nine months) struck me with so much force that I set to work and learned to write before I could be sent to school. I could not enter at once -- work had to be done and means gotten so that we could start in the fall of 1891.
>
> I was deeply in love with school and study. Very often I reached the schoolhouse before the janitor arrived. From the nickles and dimes which I received for errands and small jobs I would have sufficient money to buy my books. When I was attended the grammar school my mother endeavored one day to keep me at home to draw water for the washing. She never tried it again -- I cried and pleaded as if my heart would burst. The prospect of missing my classes for a day seemed to me absolutely unbearable. It seemed that it would tear down all that I had built. My mother seized a switch to chastize me, but when she listened to my words and looked into my face she saw that it was not rebellion, and with a rather satisfied laugh she said that I might go, if I was that "crazy" about school. I can see now that she was rather proud of the event, for never again did she make any arrangement that would keep me out of school for a day. The whole family came to regard my attendance at school as a foregone conclusion. The children called me "old man," because I would not play until after I had learned my lessons. These were almost invariably learned before sundown.
>
> But the ways of Providence are inscrutable, and this confusion and predicament thrust upon me a blessing. I secured a place to earn my board by rising a four o'clock in the morning and also working after school hours until seven o'clock in the morning -- and I got my lessons just as well, or better than ever beofre.[129]

A high school education was the goal of this author. He continued his report:

> High school of Little Rock, what a critical moment was passed, what a vista was opened for me! Three more years of schooling were assured. I could work on the ferry in summer and at week-ends to buy necessary books and clothing. I plunged into that high school work with a zest such as I have seldom experienced since. My never-absent, never-tardy record was maintained, and indeed during the three high school years only once was I absent, and then because of an illness that took me for a day in the spring of my last year.

> In June of 1899 I was graduated as the valedictorian of my class. This first graduation, where most men stop, filled me with the greatest desire I have ever experienced for further education.[130]

In discussing her motivation one of the authors wrote:

> My brother and I walked five miles every morning to the Silver Spring School. Though his trousers were cut from Father's jeans, and my aprons were made from worn-out sheets, and though in the winter time we wore brassed tipped brogan shoes, neither of us thought of ourselves as other than well-dressed. We were clean and happy. Brother was an apter pupil. He could spell every word from the "Blue Back Speller," while I missed on an average of five a day and drew a whack for every miss. I shone, however, in recounting the story of 'The Little Red Hen', and other choice bits from the 'First Reader.'[131]

One author who had to find work while in route to school, illustrated his motivation for an education with the following story:

> Even though I was tired and weak from exposure and lack of sufficient food, it was necessary that I keep constantly active because of the biting cold.
>
> The first day I cut nearly two cords of wood. I did not realize how very cold I was during the day, until after I had gotten inside the house. I found that both of my ears had been badly frost-bitten. My feet began to swell because of the constant standing in the snow with shoes that had holes in them and afforded little protection. The constant gripping of the axe handle without gloves cramped my hands and it was not until after more than a year that I could entirely straighten my fingers. Despite all this I continued to cut wood, and soon earned enough money to pay for my axe, get something to eat, pay something on my delinquent board bill and purchase some much needed warmer underwear. When my new employer had enough wood cut I was again out of a job.[132]

An author who founded a school in Alabama and believed in having religion in the curriculum attributed her motivation to religious belief. She wrote:

> When I completed my elementary education in the public schools, the Lord gave me a strong desire for a higher education. There is no good thing within us; all good things without and within

> us come from God. The words of the Bible-verse: "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it," John 14, seemed to have been written in large print upon my heart...
>
> ...I carried my books along with me in a sack each day as if I were going to school. After lunch I would steal away a short distance down the stream from the crowd, where I would lie down on the bank of the creek and study and pray during the noon hour.[133]

The author needed tutoring and received it from one of her teachers:

> Mrs. A. Wells Henderson was kind enough to help me with my back work at night. I would walk across the town several blocks every evening to the place where Mrs. Henderson was boarding, recite my back lessons, then return to my room and prepare my lessons for the next day. In addition to that I had to study the lessons in advance in order to be able to make my class before school closed, because I was obliged to leave school every year before it closed. Therefore I studied till twelve and one o'clock every night.[134]

The author whose mother was a book agent helped illustrate his attitude towards education and his interest in learning:

> One benefit from my mother's selling of books was the acquaintance that we got with other books. A title that intrigued me comes back to my mind, The Book of Facts. It was a big book some 750 pages, quarto, with a board binding, and it contained in the usual fact-book concise form the story of all the wonders of 1900 and before. It combined two of my favorite subjects in one--history and geography.
>
> At night, after we had studied our lessons, while the other children were preparing for bed, my sister Lillian and I often played a game we called Know It, our version of today's $64,000 question. Generally she asked the questions, based on the Book of Facts, and I answered. We had a very pleasant time. As a rule I did pretty well, but when I went into a slump, or got in beyond my depth, rather than let me be teacher so as to get even, she would quietly, patiently, and in a very soft voice, say "Now couldn't it be..." and lead me into the correct answer.[135]

This author reported on intellectual challenges he accepted during the course of his learning. Two friends who were students at the

Knoxville College tested what he was learning at the Knoxville College High School. He wrote:

> They studied the same subjects in the Knoxville College High School that we did in the city schools, but they used different texts. Besides, they had all white teachers, and there was a belief in the neighborhood that they were learning more in their classes than we were in ours.
>
> And after I had made better grades during two or three quarters than all the other pupils in the colored schools, regardless of class, Charley and Myra came over at first, I believe, to try me out. Realizing that the exposure to another set of textbooks was helpful to me, I accepted the challenge in all seriousness, and it was not long before all of us realized the advantage of studying together in preparation for our work, even if we were in different school systems.
>
> Of course, this was not the first time that I had had an opportunity to match wits with students who were attending other schools. Bill McMillan and Frank Dryzer, two white boys whose fathers owned stores in the block where the Gleaner Printing Office was located, often exchanged algebra problems with me. Both attended the white Knoxville High School. But I held my own. The Irish member of the duo became a successful business man, the Jewish one became a university teacher in the Mid-West. But the loss of the study hour at home was real. I missed the fellowship.[136]

An author born in 1891 wrote:

> Before beginning school at age of nine, I became very much interested in learning the alphabet. I mastered it several months before I was allowed to attend school.
>
> I cannot recall a single instance when it became necessary for my parents to urge me to study my lessons.[137]

Fear seemed to work for a number of the authors in pursuading parents that they were truly interested in schooling. Another author of her efforts:

> Whenever I was forced to miss a day from school due to inclement weather, I would cry practically all day in spite of my mother's effort to convince me how downright silly it would be for me to leave home on a rainy morning and plod that long distance in a

> downpour just to keep from missing a day at school. I worried my mother to the extent that if the rain ceased by mid-morning she would practically order me to "get out of here, gal, and go on to school so I can have some peace!" If there was time for me to reach the schoolhouse by noon, in time for the afternoon classes, I'd be off.[138]

Childhood Health of Authors

There are no recorded statistics to support the general impression from the research materials that the authors of the Post-Reconstruction period suffered from poor health as children. The diseases that caused the greatest illness were typhoid and measles. Around 1902 there was a typhoid epidemic at Tuskegee Institute and one of the authors lost his brother to "the fever." This was the brother who had encouraged him to go to Tuskegee. The author also became critically ill but survived. Another author reported:

> I was about four years old and had my own way about most things that I wanted to do. The reason for this was that, between my third and fourth years, I was very ill with typhoid, for months, and somewhat later with measles.[139]

An author who worked very hard to found a school told of her illnesses which included yet another affliction. She wrote this passage about her youth:

> During this period of my life I was also sickly, suffering with rheumatism. At one time I was helpless for eight weeks, and after that I had to walk with a crutch for over a year. All the neighbors said I would hardly survive.[140]

There were times when some of the authors became too ill to work and during the Post-Reconstruction period there appeared to be a few more doctors to whom the Black would go. They weren't always treated well by the white physicians and Black physicians were extremely rare. One author reported that:

> ...Finally it got to be too much for me and I became very ill. My family found a doctor who would examine me. The doctor ordered me to give it up. He forbade me to do any more heavy lifting, and advised against rushing and worrying.[141]

In countless cases the authors were treated by family members:

> When my life was despaired of, my grandmother on my mother's side, Rhoda Works, came to live with us in order to nurse me, her first grandson. She was about to save me but lost her own life. I understand that she died of typhoid a very short time after contracting it from me. This period of illness is blank, as far as I am concerned. I remember nothing about it. Years later, my mother told me that the move from Nelson Street to Eastport, outside the corporate limits of Knoxville, was made for my sake. I was so very frail.[142]

Section C -- What Did Black Parents, the Black Community and Black Organizations do to Provide Schooling for Black Children?

The autobiographies of the authors of the Post-Reconstruction period described the role their parents, siblings and other family members played as well as the role their teachers and the extended family played in providing schooling for Black children. The authors also described the involvement of the religious denominations in this effort and their own religious belief system that gave them strength to endure the struggle for education.

One of the authors who was born in 1878 and served as the first principal of a "colored high school" in a historic struggle by Black people to a high school for their children in Augusta, Georgia reported that his grandparents scarificed to send his mother to the local schools. When his mother had completed all that community had to offer Black children his grandparents sent her to the historic Atlanta University to finish her studies.

The author reports further that in 1877:

> My father was selected by the American Missionary Association to open "Howard Normal School" of Cuthbert. After his marriage my mother assisted him. The A.M.A. paid him a small salary and the people promised to pay "two bits" or twenty-five cents a month tuition for each pupil. As the people were poor, two-bits was much, and very few kept paid up for the months the school operated. Many paid tuition with chickens, eggs, potatoes, and anything else that could be bartered for education. The school prospered and became a center of inspriration to the colored people.[143]

One of the female authors was born in Alabama in 1890. She reported that as late as 1901 schooling in her home town was provided only through the first four grades for Black children and that in order to obtain a high school education Black children had to go out of their home community and pay tuition, room and board at a private school. For this author such an arrangement was a true hardship. However, the family decided to send her to high school. They arranged for her tuition and room and board:

> My parents shipped my eatables, such as they raised on the farm, to me monthly.[144]

Another Alabama author born in 1892 who became a very successful businessman reported that when he reached school age his mother sat him down and said:

> Art, I been doing some thinking...been doing some looking around. A boy your age, he needs to go to school. He needs to have some education or he'll wind up swabbing by the flames in the blast furnace and falling into bad company. He needs to meet well-to-do, educated colored people early. Like I said, I been doing some looking around and I have a place picked out...
>
> So Mama left me in the care of Granny Tuggle at Tuggle Institute on Enon Ridge in the hills of northwest Birmingham.[145]

An interesting side point is that as late as 1908 Alabama was still sending homeless children to jail and Granny Tuggle:

> ...begged the courts to give her custody of a small boy sentenced to ten days in jail. The judge consented, setting a precedent followed many times until Mrs. Tuggle's death in 1924. With this first child she began a practical institute for the education and rehabilitation of orphans and any other Negro children who needed a home.[146]

A Mississippi-born author who went to school in 1909 wrote that his mother:

> ...persuaded my father to send my brother Eugene and me to school at Miller's Ferry Institute. My father was troubled with the problem of obtaining the money for our expenses. Room and board were five dollars per month. Indeed, it was amazing to see my mother open an old chiffonier and take our forty dollars for our expenses.[147]

Another author described his home environment during a period of his recouperation from an accident. He wrote:

> Even though I lost earnings for the entire time and was out of school, the loss was not total, at least as far as learning was concerned. In our collection of books at home were six volumes of Ellis' History of America. The books were one of the last additions to our library purchased by my father. The books were beautifully bound in buckram, heavy bond paper with gilt edges, duodecimo, and each volume contined about 400 pages. I dipped into the first volume just to see what it was like. I was so fascinated by the illustrations that within two hours I had settled down to the business of reading the volume. I liked the story so well that I continued until I had completed the entire set before I returned to school after the Christmas holidays. I can well remember how thrilled I was by the experience.[148]

An author born in Texas in 1891 reported the following activity of his parents. Even though the means to provide schooling for their children seemed remote:

> Nevertheless, my father and mother, though uneducated themselves, were greatly concerned about the education of their children. When my oldest sister became seventeen, my parents sent her to Palestine, Texas, to attend high school while living with our

> uncle. The following year, our uncle obtained a job as a cook at Boyd Academy at Oakwood, Texas and my sister transferred there for further schooling. At this time I was fourteen. During this period, my father and I picked wild dewberries that grew in wooded areas and along railroad tracks. I sold the berries from door to door to white families, earning a little change to help keep my sister in school.[149]

Many families had a history of struggle and commitment to provide schooling for their children. Another female author who was born in 1910 and died in 1984 wrote of such a family tradition in discussing her grandmother's effort. She wrote:

> My grandmother used whatever cash she could raise from her crops and fruit to send the children off to school. When she had no crops or fruit, she'd sell the chickens, the hogs or whatever else she could lay her hands on.
>
> Aunt Sallie would never forget the time Grandmother sent Aunt Maria to Hampton Institute to take up the tailoring trade. When time came for tuition, Grandmother had no money so she decided to sell her cow. Grandfather was away from home working on his pension, Aunt Pauline was off teaching and Uncle Tommie was away at school. Grandmother had no one to send to market except Sallie and Agnes, who were about twelve and eleven years old at the time, but she was not dismayed.
>
> "Children," she told them, "I want you to drive this cor down to Durham and take her to Schwartz' market. Tell Mr. Schwartz that Cornelia Smith sent her and that she's a fine milk cow. I want a good price on her and I'm depending on you to get it."
>
> So the butcher bought the cow on the spot and Aunt Maria stayed in school another few months.[150]

In the custom of teaching each other as one learns, an author, feeling proud of her teaching, expressed her contribution to the schooling of her siblings in the following way:

> I soon became the family teacher. I taught all the younger children at home every night. They did not attend school. I think my teaching much have been good, as my brother Sheffield Lorenz, who never attended public school, but whom I taught from the time he became of school age, made the seventh grade when he entered Snow Hill Institute, Ala.[151]

The extended family was very important to many of the authors as they described their efforts or the efforts of their families in fulfilling the dream of an education. One author wrote about an experience that nearly curtailed his path through school. His father died when he was in the sixth grade. His father's best friend gave the author a job in his printing scop and the printer's wife took a special interest in the author's welfare.

One day when the author was in the seventh grade he was wrongfully expelled from school by the Superintendent. The wife of the printer encouraged her husband to use his influence with the president of the board of education on behalf of the author. The printer did and the author was reinstated and allowed to complete the school year. The author reported that that act, on his behalf, "saved his future." This same author wrote of assistance he received from other Black adults on his road to education. While working to help his mother finance the needs of the family he recalled:

> Another person who brought light and hope into my life by way of Peoples Drug Store was Dr. William Sevier, head of the Department of Pharmacy at Meharry College, a physician for financially sick drug stores, who came to us in the summer of 1906 after the close of the school year at Meharry. That was the most educational summer of my hoyhood. In a very short time Dr. Sevier had the drug store shining like new gold.
>
> Dr. Sevier was a chemist and knew comprehensively and clearly his materia medica. Austin High School offered no courses in chemistry and had precious little equipment and materials for laboratory experiments in its science courses--phsiology and hygiene, physical geography, botany, geology and physics. In all the courses, except physics--taught by Mr. Manning--the question and answer method was used. There were few references to any other than the one textbook. We had laid aside our

> drawing pads for keeps, so it seemed, when we left the seventh grade. To me, Dr. Sevier represented an opportunity to overcome some of the lacks in the field of science that Mr. Hastie and he had made me aware of.[152]

In this era of self-help of the Post-Reconstruction period Black adults contributed to the schooling of Black children in a variety of ways. Two of the most frequent ways were organi.ing new schools and teaching.

One author who taught and founded a school in Mississippi described how he tried to persuade a Black farmer who owned land to give a portion of his land for the purpose of building a new school. This author reported he spent a day with the farmer talking about the farmer's work and the author's ideas about the school he wanted to build. They had dinner in the farmer's log cabin and they:

> talked until three o'clock the next morning and he decided to give forty acres of land and fifty dollars in money toward the substantial beginning of the school. The next day we went down and looked over the "forty" that he had decided to give us. The following Saturday we went to town and deeded this forty to the trustees of the Piney Woods Industrial School and gave a check for fifty dollars.[153]

According to the author once the land was cleared:

> We now called a great meeting of the people, some eleven hundred came afoot, horseback, in ox-wagons and vehicles of every description.
>
> The result of the meeting was a subscription list headed by the $50.00 of the ex-slave, Taylor, liberal gifts from these white folks, some of whom were only able to five a few pennies; altogether we had enough to start a building. Mr. Webster gave the lumber promised, and we set a day to begin work. In the meantime, a good old lady brought two geese across the country nearly five miles, she said, "Fesser dis is all dat I had to give, but I wants to see dis school go up, as I has some chil'en I wants educated." This was truly the "Widow's mite" -- she gave all that she could.[154]

The role of Black teachers in providing schooling for Black children took many forms, took tremendous sacrifice, and took much faith in the value of the effort. One author described the effort an alumnus of his school made in a very rural community in Mississippi. This teacher:

> had taken the little dilapidated school, helped white wash it inside and outside, had put in two glass windows, a fense around the building and had set out some trees in the yard. The entire place had been cleaned up and the schoolroom showed evidences of the use of a scrub-brush. She had organized a sewing club among the girls and a corn club among the boys. She was obtaining no pay for this work, just carrying out the spirit of the Piney Woods Country Life School. All of this was a revelation to these simplest country folk.[155]

Teachers often worked without salaries or adequate materials. Many were described as dedicated individuals who served the needs of their students. A routine report would normally include the following sentence:

> There was no money for salaries and what donations we could get about us, were used for building up the school.[156]

The Alabama legislature, in 1891, passed legislation which in effect legalized abuse of education funds designated for Black schools. The law gave local townships authority to distribute funds. Weinberg reports that the law was legal permission to aid appropriations for Black schools, and in townships where Blacks clearly outnumbered whites the authorities took a bigger percent of funds and sepnt in on the schools for white children. Further, he reports that by 1901, Blacks had been thoroughly disfranchised and all emphasis had been placed on educating white children in the state. In terms of funds for schools, Blacks did not exist educationall.[157]

One of the Alabama authors born in 1890 who worked in the state as a school teacher around 1909 tried to singlehandly correct the injustices of the state system by responding to what she thought was a legitimate problem for Black children. She reported:

> At that time there were in this part of the country some very peculiar local laws pertaining to the public schools in certain districts. One was that, if the colored people failed to have a public school for any one scholastic year, the public-school money would be returned to the county and be given to the support of the white schools.
>
> Most of the so-called public-school teachers were not able to pass the State examination and secure a State certificate. On that account there were a number of vacant schools every year in nearly every county. Worse than that, in some counties the colored people had no public school at all, no funds having been appropriated for the training of the little colored children.
>
> I resolved to render some service to my race by teaching for them each year in as many of these vacant schools as I could nad thus help them retain the small public fund that had been set aside for the colored youth.
>
> On June 5, 1909, I went to a place called Piney Woods and held a school meeting. In this meeting I offered my services to teach a summer-school for four months, beginning June 7. To this they all gladly and willingly agreed.[158]

This author believed "the Lord was guiding" her actions and with "His help she would help her people." In her autobiography she described a time when she was assigned to teach school in a rural church building. When she arrived the church doors were locked and only one little girl was on the church grounds. She went to the preacher and convinced him to give her the door keys. She put her story this way:

> So with the key in my hand, the little girl at my side, and a prayer in my heart, I hastened back to the little church in which I was to teach the school. When I approached the church-yard, I saw a woman with a little boy leaving the grounds. I

called to her, "Wait, lady! Why are you leaving?" She began to mutter, "'Cuze de do' are locked, an um gying to care my boy back ham."

"O, no," I exclaimed, "don't do that! I have the key. Give me this little boy for the summer-school; I shall take good care of him." These soft words won the confidence of the old lady at once. She smiled and handed me the little boy's dirty book-sack and the bucket, with his dinner in it.

After sweeping the church and dusting the benches, I was ready to begin school. With a plantation song, the Lord's Prayer, and those two destitute little colored children, I began my life-work at Piney Woods in a little Baptist church called "Coonslide."[159]

The name "Coonslide" was another way of demoralizing Black people. Some authors may have gone beyond the call of duty in their service as teacher-founder in providing schooling for Black children. The author gave a chronology of her effort to provide schooling for Black children in rural Alabama. However, the following account covers the first three school years. (Little wonder this author became seriously ill before she was thirty.)

She reported:

We closed the summer school in Piney Woods the last week in Septmeber, and without a week's vacation I went right on to open the fall school in Pine Gove, Autauga Co. the first Monday in October.

I closed the Pine Grove school the latter part of 1910 and resumed the school-work in Piney Woods the first Monday in February. That spring the school was a decided success. The enrollment reached something over a hundred--I do not remember the exact number. As I had no assistant teacher, it was a difficult task for me to keep all the pupils interested and see that they made good progress in their studies; but by diligent prayer, careful study, and thorough preparation for each day's work I ended the school-term successfully.

I was now asked to teach the summer-school for my home people at Rosebud. Without a week's vacation I began the school the first Monday in June and taught for the next four months. Most

> of the parents and even many of the children knew me from girlhood and seemed to have the greatest confidence in me and respected me, and they did everything in their power to make it pleasant and agreeable for me.
>
> At the close of the summer-school at Rosebud in September I was called to Fulton in Clarke County and began teaching the first Monday in October, 1910. I had not been in Fulton a month when I received two appointments.
>
> When I left Fulton, I went to Mulberry, Autauga Co., and taught a four months' school during the spring of 1911. In the summer of that year I taught my home school again. That fall I was elected the lady principal in the Fairview Industrial School at Dothan, Houston Co., Ala.
>
> When I organized the school at Rosebud, July 8, 1912, the poor colored people had no money to give toward defraying the expense of building a school; therefore I assumed the responsibility of raising the required capital by soliciting from the generous public for the cause and of having everything to readiness for the opening of school on the first Monday in October, 1912.[160]

Teachers were fund-raisers, general contractors on a school building project, community organizers, as well as educators. One of the authors, referred to earlier, after finally raising enough money to construct a new school building wrote:

> On the appointed day, after scripture, reading and prayer, some started to hauling lumber, others to getting the ground ready for the foundation.
>
> In my overalls I helped swing the axes and pull the cross cut saw that felled the first tree. I then spent a part of my time helping to clear the building site and haul the lumber. The good farmers' wifes would come at noon and bring baskets of food and we would all rest under the shade of the trees until time to go back to work. During the rest period I would conduct a farmers' experience meeting and attempt to show them their past mistakes in farming and point out the better way.
>
> After supper, if the moon gave enough light, we would clear some land or do what we could out of doors, otherwise, I would hear his lessons.
>
> We progressed rapidly and soon had the farming up and the weatherboarding on.

> We worked on, and finally were able to move into our new building, which was dedicated and named "Taylor Hall" in honor of the ex-slave who gave the first $50.00 towards it erection.
>
> The old cabin now served only for sleeping quarters and the office.[161]

There are numerous accounts of the community supporting and participating in the construction of buildings. Another typical report follows:

> The next day Sheffield and I went to this sawmill and asked for Mr. Arthur Lee. After figuring and figuring we came to an agreement. He promised to let me have the lumber for $2 per thousand. I was to pay down a certain sum and the balance in partial monthly payments.
>
> I returned home and went through the community hunting for wagons. I asked every man in the community who owned a wagon to haul a load of lumber free of charge. The colored men did not have any money to give me for the building, but at my request they started their wagons rolling. For nearly two weeks, day and night, one could see wagon loads of lumber and hear the men throwing the lumber on the school ground. It was in mid-summer and so hot that the men had to do most of their hauling at night.
>
> After a considerable quantity of lumber was on hand, I started out to find a carpenter. I went to more than half a dozen men and was turned down because I did not have the amount of money they wanted for building the school.
>
> At last I went to "Brother" Nathan T. Ramsey. When I approached him, I said, "Mr. N.T., I have come to get you to help me, and I do not want you to deny me."
>
> He requested me to tell him what it was about. I then explained to him that I had asked so many men to build my school, but that they had all turned me down because I did not have the amount of money they required. "Brother" Ramsey and I continued to talk and figure until at last he agreed to build my school as a deed of charity for $90.
>
> Soon after this, "Brother" Ramsey called his men together and began work. One day, when I came to the building, "Brother" Ramsey had thirteen men hired, paying each a dollar a day.[162]

tudents also participated in the process of providing their own schooling. The author, reporting on the construction of a new school, wrote that the students in his school worked half a day and went to school half a day. This method allowed the construction to move along more quickly.

He also gave the following account to illustrate the level of commitment of the students to take advantage of an opportunity for schooling. He wrote:

> I want to give just here some concrete instances of the desire of these boys and girls for an education.
>
> A girl by the name of Bertha McCalipan heard of the school and being without parents and without money told her friends of her longing for an education. For railroad fare and suitable clothing they helped her as follows. It is outlined as she told it to me:
>
> Aunt Hester Robinson gave a pound of butter and a dime.
> Grandma Willis gave a chicken.
> Aunt Lucy McCornell "fo bits" (.50).
> Sara Pernell--a chicken.
> Effie McCoy--cooked a cake and gave five cents.
> Same McCoy--.05.
> James Buckner--"two bits" (.25).
> Mrs. Church--seven cents.
> Meal Kyle--"two bits."
> Mollice Pernell--a few things.
> Chlora Pernell--a dime.
> Bessie Harvey--one of her dresses.
> Washington Lincoln Johnson--two pecks of meal.
> Mandy Willis--one of her waists.
> Annie Wilson--a dozen eggs.

Here is the outline of the work that was done by Ella Gray, one of the students who stayed to work through the summer to pay for her schooling the following term:

Helped pile and burn brush in the new ground.
Cut brush and small sapling pines.
Helped plant corn.
Helped hoe corn.
Helped dig potatoes.
Worked in the garden.
Helped pick wild blackberries and to put them up for the school.
Helped set type for "The Torch."
Helped wash and iron for the school.
Helped in the kitchen with the meals at times.
Milked two cows every morning.
Attended night school.
Then, when she went home for a few days' faction se:
Helped strip sugar cane.
Picked cotton.
Brought to her mother's attention the use of wild berries learned at school.
Used her knowledge of sewing by sewing for her mother.[163]

The role of the Black church denominations and Black fraternal organi;ations in providing schooling for Black children became more pronounced during the Post-Reconstruction period. As the social and economic conditions grew worse and as hostility increased towards Blacks, Bkacks were forced to develop separate Black community efforts in order to achieve leadership and/or any sense of self-worth. At no time did Blacks feel free from white prejudice and discrimination.[164] Even though there was competition among the church denominations they would unite for the sake of Black children. In addition to the churches and fraternal groups the authors also talked about support they received from P.T.A.'s.

An author reporting on an incident which began in 1915 in North Carolina, described the strategy that was to be adopted by the Black community and different religious groups. They were trying to convince the white school board to build a high school for Black children

and to rebuild another school that had been destroyed by fire. His edited report follows:

> The question of the Duraton Negroes, while not flatly denied as was the case in some communities, was taken under consideration. The second request was ignored; the third request was answered by a visit of the chairman of the school board in person.
>
> I have heard, said the minister, that the chairman said the board was studying the feasibility of a Negro high school. Then a member of the Negro group replied: 'Mr. Frank, we done studied that kinder ability, and we're prepared to take care of it.'.
>
> But what was not understandable was the silence of the board of the question of a new building.
>
> "School Board Faces a Dilemma" was the caption in the Duraton Daily. Bonds must be voted for a new school, the story said. It is unlawful for such money to be used exclusively for one race. The white people are not, at present, in need of a new building, consequently it is extremely doubtful if they would vote such bonds, even if the law could be construed for the money in that way, the story concluded.
>
> This group proposed that ten thousand dollars he raised by the Negroes and given to the board for the new school. Then the white people would be asked to give twenty thousand dollars for the same purpose. The group believed their initiative would spark encouragement from the white people. In fact, they let it be known that they had "very good reasons" to believe this.[165]

As the community discussed its strategy:

> Kenneth Mansfield said, "This is the time for us to lay aside our differences and support this movement."
>
> "Ten thousand dollars! Not one cent from me," said Dr. Hamilton, a leader of the emerging "new breed."
>
> "I favor the proposal," said Aaron Ruff, "Because it's the smart thing to do. Somewhere in the Bible it says, "Make a deal with your adversary.' Now I'm not saying the white folks are adversaries, but I say it's smart to make a deal with 'em."

> Said Hugh Ponson, "If Aaron don't know his white folks no better'n he knows his Bible, he don't know 'em. I talked with white people about this-them that got money--men like Dr. King, Jacob Cronheim, Frank Delman, and they shook their heads. Course if we's fools enough to give 'em that much money--"
>
> If the bonds are voted, as we all believe they will be, the eighth grade of 1915 should graduate from our four-year high school in 1920.
>
> Almost simultaneously with the reopening of schools, four or five weeks later, the voters were asked to approve a thirty-thousand dollar bond issue for a Negro school.
>
> Immediately the request became a red-hot issue. The so-called "working class" of white people in the mills and factories overwhelmingly opposed it. And they were supported by other white people, some of whom threatened to carry the question to court. On the other hand, it was said that Mr. Delman let it be known that if the bonds failed to be approved, one of the white people's buildings would be given to the Negroes.
>
> The bonds were approved by a large majority. And it was said that Duraton became the first community anywhere in the country to vote bonds to be used exclusively for a Negro school.
>
> The Negroes' unrelenting insistence over the years for a tax-supported high school was rewarded.[166]

Inadequate schooling for Black people in the deep South was of concern to one of the authors working in Alabama. He observed that:

> At the turn of the century, public education for Negroes in the Black belt was the worst in the nation. Most of the counties in this area provided no high school facilities for Negroes. The United Presbyterian Church operated a system of three high schools and some ten elementary schools in Wilcox and adjacent counties.[167]

He further reported that an institute in Wilcox County, Alabama:

> was founded in 1896 by Dr. Charles H. Johnson of Tennessee. Isaiah H. Bonner, senior bishop of the A.M.E. Church, was principal when I attended school there. This institution was unique at the time because its founder and all of the faculty were Negroes. The racial situation existing in rural Alabama at that time probably would not have permitted a white mor mixed faculty.[168]

Booker T. Washington's procedure for building Tuskegee was copied by many of the authors who were interested in building a school. There, too, the church was a vehicle for raising funds. As one of the authors reported, she wrote to Dr. Washington for assistance in her effort to build a school:

> I have appealed to Booker T. Washington for help, and he advised me to write to the Lutheran Mission Board in St. Louis for help. as they might assist me. Imagine this lady's great joy when the chairman of the board agreed to send Rev. N.J. Bakke, then on his way to St. Louis, to look into this matter. He came on Saturday afternoon, December 18, and preached to this little band on Sunday. This lady begged and besought Rev. Bakke to help Miss Young for the sake of the race. Her prayers were answered; and there was started that Saturday night the Alabama Lutheran Mission.[169]

She offered the following information as a point of history:

> According to the history of the African Methodist Church, Bishop Payne drifted into this church shortly after Richard Allen, its founder, severed his relations with the white Methodist Episcopal Church. Bishop Payne was a great man in the African Methodist Church and was called the Apostle of Education. He founded twenty-six schools for that Church.[170]

This ambitious female author born in 1890 continued her report on her effort to build her school and her faith that, with the help of the Lord and the church, it would be built. She wrote:

> Having composed my course of study, I turned my attention to devising plans for raising money to buy the land and build. The first step I took was to pledge to give up all my living, the two hundred dollars I had saved from teaching in the public school. I resolved to raise the rest of the money by subscriptions from my white friends. Then I considered ways and means of securing funds for the support of the school after its organization and establishment.
>
> 1. I resolved to see the county board of education and the district trustees and contract for the public school fund, which was seventy-five dollars for four months. This was to help pay the teachers' salary.

2. I resolved to organize a local board of trustees and ask for the trustees to pay five dollars a year tuition for their children. This money was also to help support the teachers.

3. I resolved to charge each child one dollar to enter and twenty-five cents a month for tuition. The money thus realized was also to be used to help pay the salary of the teachers.

On Sunday after the close of the Sunday-school we held our meeting in the Rosebud Methodist Church. There was quite a large number of interested persons, for Brother Ramsey had been very busy in the performance of his duty as a committee of one to notify the people of the meeting and invite them to come.

After the meeting had been opened with a song and a prayer, I arose and read my resolution, including the course of study and plans for securing funds. After much discussion by both men and women, the resolution was accepted. Then we organized our local board of trustees. It consisted of eighteen members.

Thus was organized the Rosebud Literary and Industrial School for the benefit of the destitute, common people, July 8, 1912. The Lord Jesus, who knows all things, knew the thoughts of my heart and that I meant well. He beheld my desire and longing to do something for the Lord and my race.[171]

Throughout the reading of autobiographies reference was made to important assistance some of the churches gave to providing schooling for Black children. In 1907 when one of the authors entered the ninth grade at an academy in Texas, four or five teachers, in addition to advanced students were sponsored financially by two Baptist organizations.[172] The history of mutual benefit and the national fraternal organization is not well documented; however, several authors mentioned the Masons, Oldfellows, Knights of Labor and Knights of Pythias:

...The effort was sponosred by the Order of Calanthe, the women's auxiliary of the Knights of Pythias. This fraternal society was headed by Mrs. Tuggle and supported by good people throughout the city, both white and colored.[173]

> When classes and homework were finished Granny let me go around with her to various fraternal and church meetings, where members often gave her donations for the school.[174]

In discussing the role of the P.T.A., the following account offers a classical description of a meeting between teachers and parents in a rural community:

> We talked about the school needs and how they could be met. I said we should organize ourselves into a Parent-Teacher's Association, an organization which could help the school. They were delighted at the idea and the school's first PTA was formed.[175]

Meeting a school need:

> Dixon came to my rescue, at the request of the PTA. He agreed to have the church organ brought down to the schoolhouse for our use.

The PTA sponsored the fund-raiser:

> The proceeds from this affair were turned over to the treasurer of the PTA and an agreement was reached to use it for interior decorating.[176]

In discussing the PTA as an on-going successful organization, the author wrote that in her second year as teacher:

> The PTA as its first business meeting of the year decided to use the money left in the treasury from last year's commencement exercise to build a coalhouse. This was agreeable to me because the school had neverhad a coalhouse and the county board of education refused to build one. When the coal was delivered to the premises it was dumped in a heap on the schoolyard. This was quite a disadvantage especially in wet weather. So the building of a coalhouse solved another of our problems and added one more comfort to our school.[177]
>
> Through our school affairs we had added more funds to our treasury, and were seeking the best use of them. The PTA decided, upon my recommendation, to improve the exterior of the building. We bought red paid for the tin roof that was now beginning to show slight signs of rust. As usual, the fathers volunteered their service to do the work.[178]

Summary

The Post-Reconstruction period has been identified by a leading historian as "The Betrayal of the Negro...The Nadir."[179]

The twenty-two authors whose books were researched for this period would tend to agree with Professor Logan. The authors were men and women born between 1875 and 1912 and wrote of their educational experiences converning the years referred to as Post-Reconstruction -- 1890-1918. They were individuals who lived or worked in the South and included in their autobiographies their experiences with education. The authors lived or worked in eight of the Southern states.

Black people in these states were very politically active during Reconstruction. Whites resented their involvement and felt threatened by the potential political power of their numbers. During Post-Reconstruction there was a complete disfranchisement of the Blacks. For example, educational funds were curtailed or diverted to white schools. Their economic status was sharply downgraded and Black children's educational opportunities were seriously denied. Blacks turned to a system of self-help through organized religious and fraternal groups as well as the determined work of parents.

The authors reported on the interest Black families had in education and their persistent belief that education would be the vehicle to liberation. They reported on how families purchased books, magazines, and other materials to be used as tools in the education of their children. Debating clubs and other literary societies were created by churches, teachers, and parents.

P.T.A.'s were organized and parents were encouraged to help the schools. Even though there were more Black teachers during this period, certification and supervision were not strongly enforced. Black parents, the Black communities and the system of extended families provided schooling for Black children during the Post-Reconstruction period.

Footnotes

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[4]*Ibid*., p. 697.

[5]Horace Mann Bond, *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order*, (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1966), p. 87.

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[7]*Ibid*., p. 99.

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[27]Pickens, p. 10.

[28]Ibid., pp. 10-11.

[29]Ibid., p. 40.

[30]Ibid., p. 40.

[31]Pope, p. 106.

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[34] Ibid., p. 109.

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[42] Atkins, pp. 61-69.

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[46] Sewing, pp. 27-28.

[47] Julius Lester (ed.), The Seventh Son, The Thoughts and Writing of W.E.B. Du Bois, Vol. 1, (New York: Vintage Books, 1971). p. 385.

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[49]Wright, Jr., p. 34.

[50]Reddix, p. 60.

[51]Atkins, pp. 91-92.

[52]Starks, p. 43.

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[55]Pickens, p. 13 & 27-28.

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[61]Reddix, pp. 54-55.

[62]Wright, Jr., p. 31.

[63]Murray, p. 5.

[64]Gaston, p. 25.

[65]Ibid., p. 27.

[66]Ibid., p. 24.

[67]Hunter, p. 37.

[68]Wright, Jr., p. 29.

[69]Atkins, p. 92.

[70]Wright, Jr., p. 32.

[71]Dunnigan, pp. 29-30.

[72]Atkins, p. 62.

[73]*Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

[74]Gaston, p. 26.

[75]*Ibid.*, p. 27.

[76]*Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

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[82]*Ibid.*, p. 5.

[83]Wright, Jr., p. 16.

[84]Hunter, pp. 23-24.

[85]Pickens, p. 35.

[86]*Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

[87] Wright, Jr., pp. 20-21.

[88] Hunter, pp. 11 & 16.

[89] Pickens, pp. 7-8.

[90] Ibid., pp. 16-30.

[91] Dancy, p. 60.

[92] Franklin, p. 271.

[93] Campbell, pp. 7-8.

[94] Atkins, pp. 25-28.

[95] Ibid., pp. 48-49.

[96] Ibid., p. 78.

[97] Ibid., p. 78.

[98] Ibid., p. 89.

[99] Dunnigan, p. 21.

[100] Ibid., p. 23.

[101] Ibid., pp. 33-35 & 53.

[102] Murray, p. 17.

[103] Atkins, p. 23.

[104] Sewing, p. 13.

[105] Pickens, pp. 42-44.

[106] Atkins, p. 27.

[107] Ibid., p. 60.

[108] Ibid., p. 16.

[109] Ibid., p. 50.

[110] Dancy, p. 60.

[111] Sewing, p. 18.

[112] Sewing, p. 18.

[113] Wright, Jr., pp. 28-31.

[114] Pope, p. 43.

[115] Murray, pp. 238-40.

[116] Wright, Jr., p. 20.

[117] Reddix, p. 11.

[118] Atkins, p. 64.

[119] Dancy, pp. 43-44.

[120] Pickens, pp. 10-11; 39 & 42.

[121] Atkins, p. 37.

[122] Ibid., p. 64.

[123] Ibid., p. 65.

[124] Ibid., p. 86.

[125] Ibid., p. 94.

[126] Meier & Rudwich, p. 195.

[127]Starks, p. 21.

[128]Wright, Jr., pp. 30-31.

[129]Pickens, pp. 35-42.

[130]*Ibid.*, pp. 55 & 75.

[131]Hunter, pp. 27-28.

[132]Campbell, p. 35.

[133]Young, pp. 22-29.

[134]*Ibid.*, p. 30.

[135]Atkins, p. 74.

[136]*Ibid.*, p. 84.

[137]Sewing, p. 25.

[138]Dunnigan, p. 30.

[139]Atkins, p. 25.

[140]Young, p. 17.

[141]Dunnigan, p. 79.

[142]Atkins, p. 25.

[143]Wright, Jr., pp. 21-22.

[144]Young, p. 29.

[145]Gaston, pp. 20-21.

[146]*Ibid.*, p. 22.

[147]Reddix, p. 59.

[148]Atkins, p. 55.

[149]Sewing, p. 26.

[150]Murray, pp. 242-244.

[151]Young, p. 17.

[152]Atkins, pp. 84-85.

[153]Jones, p. 28.

[154]*Ibid.*, p. 30.

[155]*Ibid.*, p. 51.

[156]*Ibid.*, p. 32.

[157]Weinberg, p. 48.

[158]Young, p. 40.

[159]*Ibid.*, p. 41.

[160]*Ibid.*, pp. 42-45 & 66.

[161]Jones, pp. 30-31.

[162]Young, pp. 73-74.

[163]Jones, pp. 64-65.

[164]August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1969), p. 13.

[165]Pope, pp, 23; 98-99.

[166]Ibid., pp. 100-105.

[167]Reddix, p. 61.

[168]Ibid., p. 59.

[169]Young, p. 12.

[170]Ibid., p. 24.

[171]Ibid., pp. 64-65.

[172]Sewing, p. 27.

[173]Gaston, p. 22.

[174]Ibid., p. 24.

[175]Dunnigan, p. 97.

[176]Ibid., p. 100.

[177]Ibid., p. 115.

[178]Ibid., p. 117.

[179]Rayford W. Logan, The Betrayal of the Negro, (London: Collier-MacMillan LTD., 1967), Title Page.

CHAPTER IV

AFTER WORLD WAR I TO THE BROWN DECISION--1920-1954

> But today we return! We return from the slavery of uniform which the world's madness demanded us to don to the freedom to civil garb. We stand again to look America squarely in the face and call a spade a spade. We sing: This country of ours, despite all its better souls have done and dreamed, is yet a shameful land...
>
> It encourages ignorance:
>
> It has never really tried to educate the Negro. A dominant minority does not want Negroes educated. It wants servants, dogs, whores and monkeys. And when this land allows a reactionary group by its stolen political power to force as many black folk into these categories as it possibly can, it cries in contemptible hypocrisy: "They threaten us with degeneracy; they cannot be educated."[1]
>
> ...However, it is testimony to the determination and resilience of the Black community that by 1954 its protests had brought about an end to the official sanction of segregated education in the South...[2]

After World War I, Black soldiers and other Black citizens were convinced that their role in America would be different. Because Black men had fought bravely, in faraway places -- for democracy and freedom -- Black people felt their place in the society would be more secure than before the war and they would become first-class citizens.

Scholarly accounts of this period from historians agree that there were many whites who were determined that Black people would not share in the rewards of first-class citizenship.[3] Franklin writes that one of the groups of whites that had great influence on the attitude white people developed toward Blacks was the Ku Klux Klan. This secret

organization which had been outlawed during the Reconstuction period was renewed. After the end of the war, the "Klan" introduced a program "uniting native-born white Christians for a concerted action in the preservation of American institutions and the supremacy of the white race.[4] With this broadly stated program of militant action, the membership increased to "more than 100,000 white-hooded knights."[5] Within ten months after the end of the war, this organization had "made more than two hundred public appearances in twenty-seven states."[6] They had become so powerful that politicians felt the need to be "on good terms with the Klan, preferably as members."[7] There developed across the nation a sense of "lawlessness and violence that characterized the postwar period..."[8]

The attitude of Southern whites towards Blacks was reflected by this organized group of hoodlums. Franklin writes that:

> --more than seventy Negroes were lynched during the first year of the postwar period;
>
> --ten Negro soldiers, several still in their uniforms, were lynched;
>
> --Mississippi and Georgia mobs each murdered three returned soldiers; in Arkansas two were lynched; while Florida and Alabama each took the life of a Negro soldier by mob violence;
>
> --fourteen Negroes were burned publicly, eleven of whom were burned alive.[9]

This general anti-Black mood and innumerable acts of violence continued in spite of the efforts of Blacks to protect themselves. The NAACP and other protest groups turned to Congress and the courts in order to safeguard the rights of Black citizens. The legal system moved very

slowly but the fact that it moved at all on the behalf of Blacks offered some encouragement for Blacks to continue to use the courts.

During this period Blacks manifested the same intense interest in education as they had in the period immediately following emancipation. "The pattern of oppression," reports Weinberg, "inveritably affected the schools."[10] He wrote about Black children who were deeply affected by the violence of the times and lived in fear of being lynched.[11] Black children in many parts of the South felt helpless as they saw their parents powerless. This was the climate in which Black children were expected to learn and do well in their academic pursuits. On the other hand this period can be characterized as one in which the issues of providing schooling for Black children were carried to the courts for redress.

White Southern Attitude Towards Education

For the purpose of this dissertation one response to the questions regarding the white Southern attitude towards education after World War I to 1954 is best illustrated by citing the results of research conducted by other scholars on expenditures for education in the South. Bond reports that the condition of Black schools "at the beginning of the twentieth century...was but slightly improved over their condition in 1875."[12] Weinberg writes that from 1900 on Black schools fell far behind white schools. By 1930 the gap reached its greatest extent.[13] The gap was created by a formula white school systems used in the South to finance education for white children at the expense of Black childre-. Observed Bond, in his examination of expenditures by race in the South,

that the formula was "inextricably bound up with the proportion of Negroes in the total school pupulation which determined apportionment of state funds for education."[14] Apportionment and tax funds was based on the principle of per capita payments which "lent themselves to racial discrimination to the peculiar advantage of small white populations in heavily populated Negro areas..."[15] In other words, in those communities where Blacks outnumbered whites the school district received large funds on a per capita basis -- whereby each child (or "capital") theoretically received an equal amount -- racism and the legislature sanction allowed white administrators to give most of the money to white schools. The outcome of their discussion can be seen clearly in Tables I and II that were analyzed by Bond. The tables are for the 1929-30 school year.

John Hope Franklin recorded that by 1930, for every $2 spent for Black education $7 was spent for white education. By 1935-36 the ten Southern states -- Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas -- spent an average of $37.87 per white pupil and $13.09 per Black student. He also reported that the differentials were even greater in the delivery of educational services such as transportation, visual aids, laboratory equipment, and the construction of new and modern school buildings.[18] He gave as an example North Carolina where Black education was said to be given more support than in the other Southern states. In that state, Franklin writes, "more money was spent in 1929-1930 for school trucks for white children than was spent for new schools for Black children."[19]

TABLE I

Expenditures of Two Alabama Counties for Educational Purposes By Race, 1929-1930

Expenditure (Purpose)	Jackson County				Lowndes County			
			Expenditure Per Capita Child				Expenditure Per Capita Child	
	Money Spent		Enrolled		Money Spent		Enrolled	
	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro
I. General Control, School Boards, Superintendents, Compulsory Attendance	$7,136	$132	$0.80	$0.19	$4,382	$1,782	$5.24	$0.38
II. Instruction in Day Schools, Teachers' Salaries, Supplies, etc.	127,727	2,330	14.30	3.41	49,014	19,944	58.69	4.3[illegible]
III. Operation of School Plant, Janitors, Fuel, Light, Water, etc.	3,447	0	0.38	0	1,258	0	1.50	0
IV. Maintenance of School Plant	2,292	0	0.25	0	0	0	0	0
V. Auxiliary Agencies, Transportation, Libraries, Lunchrooms, etc.	15,759	0	1.76	0	20,199	188	24.19	0.01
VI. Capital Outlay, New Grounds and Buildings, New Equipment	17,005	2,871	1.90	4.20	5,250	75	6.29	0.02
VII. Fixed Charges, Rent, Insurance, etc.	1,797	0	0.20	0	0	0	0	0
VIII. Instruction in Night Schools	3,176	0	0.35	0	60	0	0	0.02
IX. Debt Service	43,435	0	4.75	0	0	0	0	0

Table I (continued)

	Jackson County		Lowndes County	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
Total Enrollment	8,931	684	835	4,634
Total Payments	220,774	5,333	80,103	22,049
Total Payments per Child Enrolled	24,72	7.79	95.93	4,76

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[16] Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education for the State of Alabama, 1920-1930.

TABLE II

Tentative Values of the Various Teacher-Units for the 1929-1930 Alabama State Minimum Program

Kind of Unit	Salary Portion of Each Unit	Maximum Value of Entire Unit
White		
Elem. Teacher	$ 550.00	$ 687.50
High-School Teacher	1,050.00	1,312.50
Helping Teacher		2,400.00
Additional Accounts for Special Services*		
Elem. Principal	800.00	1,000.00
High Principal	1,200.00	1,500.00
Voc. Agr. Teacher	1,200.00	1,500.00
Colored		
Elem. Teacher	275.00	343.75
High-School Teacher	525.00	656.25
Helping Teacher		1,200.00
Additional Accounts for Special Services*		
Elem. Principal	400.00	500.00
High Principal	600.00	750.00
Voc. Agr. Teacher	600.00	750.00

*These accounts apply only to certain teacher-units

[17] Bulletin of the State Department of Education, Equalization in Alabama 1929-1930, State Printers, Montgomery, 1930, p. 5.

Section A -- Who Are the Authors and Where Did They Grow Up?

The authors of this period are men and women born between 1914 and 1934. There were fourteen in Brignano's collection who satisfied the criteria for this study. Of that number, nine are very well known to the general public and were even classified as celebrities.* Two of the remaining five are lesser known to the general public but well known among their colleagues. The impact their status had on the researcher for this chapter is that there is less information on the role played by Black parents and the Black community in providing schooling for Black children. The emphasis is on the role the authors played in addressing the issues discussed in this research. Therefore, many of the questions raised in the earlier material could not be answered in the works of these public figures. Their celebrity status demanded that they give the public, through their autobiographies, more of themselves and less of others.

The same questions, however, were researched throughout their autobiographies. The purpose of the questions was to determine what was happening in education during these periods of our history. There were instances when the questions on the form used throughout this research were not priority issues for the authors. However, these authors were quite clear on what was happening in education during this period of

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*Unlike the writers of the earlier period these authors had their autobiographies published by well established publishing houses. The authors of the earlier period had to utilize their own resources of those of philanthropic groups in order to have their autobiographies published.

history. Therefore, this chapter reflects the information obtained from this group of autobiographies.

These authors were very conscious of the racial conditions around them. They described the racial climate in their writings and were deeply involved in the analysis and elimination of discrimination and oppression in this country. Their birthplaces were in the deep South. One of the authors was born in the state of Alabama; two born in Arkansas; two in Georgia; one in Louisiana; one in Mississippi; two in North Carolina; one in South Carolina; one in Tennessee; one in Texas; one in Virginia; and one "somewhere in the South." Eight of the authors were explicit about their college education. Four identified Black colleges as their Alma Mater. Their occupations included the fields of economics, sports, journalism, writers of novels and history. They were Civil Rights activists and one was a Catholic nun, some were also teachers and high school administrators.

Who Were Their Parents

Two of the female authors were reared by their grandmothers. One author discussed extensively the positive role the extended family had on her psychological development. She wrote:

> There is nothing in my memory to suggest that I suffered from this early breakup in my family. I can recall only warmth and love and protectiveness from all of the people around me. Nor did it seem strange to me as I grew up that my mother did not live with me. I had an identity as Mrs. Beasley's granddaughter and Mrs. Polk's niece, and the fact that both of them were teachers gave me more than a little status in the Negro community.[20]

The principal caretaker was her paternal grandmother who she called "Mama." She was a retired schoolteacher and one of the first of her generation to be college trained. The material grandmother was the principal caretaker of the other author who grew up in an extended family environment. This grandmother ran a small store in town. The author, who became a Catholic nun, reported that her grandmother lived to be 113 years old and that her grandfather bought his freedom for $800 just before the Emancipation Proclaimation was signed. Her paternal grandparents were classified as free mullatoes.

One of the journalist authors described his parents as poor who lived in a small Tennessee rural community. One of the civil rights professionals said that her parents were ordinary people who "had to take the abuse of local whites to survive" in Arkansas.

Another author, born in West Texas, only gave background information on his maternal grandparents. He reported that his grandfather "was once a slave and died in 1938." The mother of another author worked in a tabacco factory in North Carolina and her father "worked on a farm and at odd jobs." The author who became a well known economist said his parents gave up on the conditions in North Carolina and moved just before the second world war in 1939.

Issue of Educational Condition of School Buildings Influencing Education, Instructional Materials, Quality of Instruction and Other Issues

One of the authors who was born during the Post Reconstruction period and taught school in North Carolina until 1928 described the

building that was finally constructed after several years of "petitioning the school board":

> The twelve classrooms of the new building were equipped with brand-new furniture, including teachers' desks and the principal's office, and the shelves in the small room for the library.
>
> The building reduced congestion, the number of part-time classes, and by continuing the use of the old frame annex, made possible the second-year high-school class.[21]

When the new structure was inspected for certification as a high school, the author gave this report:

> While the new building filled Mr. Walden's prediction, it did not meet all requirements for a modern high school. The so-called library was nothing more than an ordinary book-room; the one science room was equipped with discarded furniture from the white high school; there was no privacy for the men teachers; and no student lockers.[22]

Another Post-Reconstruction author teaching during 1920-1954 in rural Kentucky described her first school. She was eighteen years old and the Black minister in the community went with her to see the school where she would teach. She wrote:

> Once settled in...Reverend Bigbee and I went over to take a look at the interior of the school building before opening time at eight. The inside was as crude as the outside. The floor was rough and dusty. The unpainted walls and ceiling were graying with age. A rusty potbelly stove sat near the center of the room with several joints of stovepipe shooting upward, then elbowing into a hole cut in the roughly constructed flue. The pipe was secured by a strand of rusty wire wrapped around it and stapled to the ceiling. The wall around the flue hole was blackened with smoke, and brown jagged streaks ran down the wall, marking traces of rain which had from time to time poured through the leaky roof.
>
> The seats were old, rough-hewn, discarded church pews in which odd initials and other funny markings had been carved by mischevious boys and their trusty jack-knives.[23]

She also reported that during the school year 1925-26 she was still the only teacher in the school building and that she was also the school janitor. She reported that experience in the following way:

> Since the school teacher had to serve as janitor as well as instructor, it was my responsibility not only to clean the building after school was dismissed at four o'clock, but also to arrive early enough in the morning to make a fire in the heater and have the room warm when the children arrived for eight o'clock opening. This created a big problem on rainy days since it was difficult to start a quick fire with wet coal.
>
> A hardship was also imposed on students, who had to go out in the rain to shovel up scuttles of coal all through the day to keep the fire going. It was even more difficult during snowy weather when it was necessary to dig beneath inches of snow to retrieve a few lumps of wet coal. So the building of a coalhouse solved another of our problems and added one more comfort to our school.[24]

One of the celebrity authors born in 1922 grew up in Arkansas. She described her school this way:

> School opened. Nothing had changed. We had the same worn-out textbooks handed down to us from the white school. With the first frosts the teacher wrestled with the potbellied stove. Days drifted by as we tried to gain an education in these surroundings.[25]
>
> Near Christmas, the weather got very cold. The old potbellied stove at the school acted up. Most of the time we sat in class all day with our coats on.[26]

Another celebrity described what he called a "company town school." He compared that school with the one financed by the public funds. The "company town" was a community built about 140 miles east of his home and organized around an aluminum industry. The company built and rented houses to its employees and built two schools for the children -- one for white children and one for Black children. His description touches on several significant differences which he considered important for learning:

> For Negro children Alcoa has a large grammar-high school with seventeen teachers. A new gymnasium, two classrooms, and a lunchroom were added in 1950. The facilities are not equal to those for whites, but they are about as nearly equal as is possible under a segregated system. McMinnville has a Negro school about one third as large, with seven teachers. There is a small lunchroom, no gymnasium, and an inadequate recreational area. McMinnville Negroes have been waiting for a gymnasium since 1941, when the state ran a highway across the school grounds, cutting the football-baseball field in two. The McMinnville school is new, the old one having burned down.
>
> With the inducement of the gymnasium and an active sports-program, along with vocational training and a school of which they can be somewhat proud, 521 pupils were enrolled in the Alcoa Negro school, 132 of them in high school. This is more than twice the enrollment in McMinnville. It indicated that many McMinnville youth had quit school, primarily because they found it necessary to supplement their family income.
>
> The principal of Alcoa's Negro school reported that for September of 1950 less than four students out of every one hundred enrolled were absent during the month. The average for white Alcoa schools was about the same -- in fact, not quite as good -- as for the Negro school. In McMinnville, Negro attendance is considerably lower than that for whites. It also is considerably lower than that for either whites or Negroes in Alcoa.[27]

Another company town was described quite differently by one of the authors who lived and went to school in a company town in Arkansas. The conditions under which the Black children lived, as late as 1924, affected their sense of self-esteem and their ability to gain academic tools necessary to move away. She wrote:

> I was born Daisey Lee Gatson in the little sawmill town of Huttig, in southern Arkansas. The owners of the mill ruled the town. Huttig might have been called a sawmill plantation, for everyone worked for the mill, lived in houses owned by the mill, and traded at the general store run by the mill.
>
> The hard, red clay streets of the town were mostly unnamed. Main Street, the widest and longest street in town, and the muddiest after a rain, was the site of our business square. It consisted of four one-story buildings which houses a commissary and meat market, a post office, an ice cream parlor, and a movie house.

> Main Street also divided "White Town" from "Negra Town." However, the physical appearance of the two areas provided a more definite means of distinction.
>
> The Negro citizens of Huttig were housed in rarely painted, drab red "shotgun" houses, so named because one could stand in the front yard and look straight through the front and back doors into the back yard. The Negro community was also provided with two church buildings of the same drab red exterior, although kept spotless inside by the Sisters of the church, and a two-room schoolhouse equipped with a potbellied stove that never quite succeeded in keeping it warm.
>
> On the other side of Main Street were white bungalows, white steepled churches and a white spacious school with a big lawn. Although the relations between Negro and white were cordial, the tone of the community, as indicated by outward appearances, was of the "Old South" tradition.
>
> As I grew up in this town, I knew I was a Negro, but I did not really understand what that meant until I was seven years old. My parents, as do most Negro parents, protected me as long as possible from the inevitable insult and humiliation that is, in the South, a part of being "colored."[4]

It is significant that the issues of self-esteem have been raised by many of the authors of this period since educators have concluded that self-esteem is an important factor in the ability of children to learn. Another example of what Black children experienced in the South relative to self-esteem is reported here by another author. This information is important because it contains many of the elements described in the educational psychology literature:

> I knew, of course, that we were different from whites, the obvious differences being skin color and hair texture. But the differences that mattered were those of privilege. The whites had parks, a library, a swimming pool, a YMCA, and the choice seats at the movies and on the buses. On the buses the seating was most annoying, for each bus had only four short seats and one long one behind the sign that read "Colored." All of the seats ahead of the sign were reserved for whites, whether there were any whites on the bus or not. Often the seats in the Negro section would be filled and we would be jammed together standing in the

> aisle behind the sign, while the front of the bus would be all but deserted. Later, when I was in high school and rode the bus to school on rainy days, the driver would pack us in and shout at us to move back, though the front of the bus was empty. One driver in particular seemed to take delight in jamming us all toward the rear of the bus and them slamming on the brakes at each stop to make us fall forward.[29]

The Mississippi co-publisher of a newspaper described her school year 1939-40 as a six year old entering first grade:

> The school had all the grades through high school and was called "the crackerbox" because it sat high on one of Vicksburg's hills and looked as though it might topple from its perch at any moment. It was fifteen blocks from home, and I walked form the first day, carrying my lunch in a paper bag up and down the steep hills. On rainy days when the unpaved streets of the Negro section ran with muddy water and the torrents formed ruts so deep that cars couldn't make it up the hills, it was great fun to splash along to school in my galoshes.[30]

In an offer reminiscent of earlier periods in the experience of Black people, this author wrote that in 1954 the governor proposed to eliminate the estimated $115,000,000 disparity between white and Black schools if the Black community would support a plan to build a white school.[31] Another female author who started school in North Carolina in 1939 and "loved school" wrote of her first sense of low self-esteem. She was seven years old and entering the second grade. She put that experience this way:

> On the first day of school Mrs. Ross let three of us girls take the books out of the boxes. We were laughing as we traded secrets of the summer. The boys took the books from us to distribute to the class. I bent over the box to get a book, and grasped it the wrong way; it fell open to a page that had yellow tape on it. I was about to close the book when I saw the words PROPERTY OF BRAGGTOWN SCHOOL. Stunned, I sat down, while the others continued to talk and laugh. I looked at the front of the book, and there were two names and the same words: PROPERTY OF BRAGGTOWN SCHOOL. We were paying book rent for books that the white children at the brick school had used last year. I looked

> at the books as the others picked them up. All of them were secondhand. They felt dirty to me. I wondered about the girl who had had my book last year. She was smug and laughing at me. I had to use her old book. It wasn't right. I was very quiet for a long time.[32]

This author wrote that her teachers played an important role in helping her recover from that feeling of low self-esettem and on to a sense of pride. Weinberg reported that, in the years following the war, the American Missionary Association supplied reading materials that were highly race conscious.[33] In the case of this Mississippi student her sixth-grade teacher "brought loads of newspapers and magazines to school." She continued:

> There were the Norfolk Journal and Guide, the Baltimore Afro-American, the Pittsburgh Courrier, the Chicago Defender, and others. Every week there would be pictures of outstanding black people, and I had the job of reading the newspapers and cutting out the pictures and articles and fixing the bulletin board. I loved the job and spent part of every day reading the news, for Mrs. Graham believed that each of us should know what was going on in the world. We had a current-events quiz every Friday, and I liked that. Every student had to tell something of importance that had happened in the world that week -- no murders, car wrecks, no crimes of any kind, but instead news about the president or Congress or important blacks. Without knowing it, I had tuned in on the twentieth century. It didn't sit so well with everybody, though.[34]

On the discussion of teacher qualifications and quality of instruction during the second quarter of the Twentieth Century the author who taught school at age eighteen in 1924 described the curriculum offered in her local school in Kentucky:

> Our school had no extracurricular activities. It taught no science because it had no laboratory. Sicne there was no demand for Negro typists or secretaries, nor for business administrators or executives, there were no provisions made to teach courses in office procedure, such as typing, shorthand, bookkeeping, accounting or any other business or commercial courses.

> No vocational education was taught since there were no opportunities for the employment of black boys in skilled trades. No courses in woodwork were scheduled since there were no shops. Up until this time there had been no courses in home economics even though cooking for private families was about the only type of work available in that area for girls who did not qualify to teach school.[35]

After completing the tenth grade she went to Kentucky Normal. "Normal schools" she wrote:

> ...were composed of a regular four-year high school with two years of normal for teachers' training equivalent to freshman and sophomore college classes.
>
> Graduates from eighth-grade elementary schools, with sufficient financial backing, could enroll at KNII for the entire six-year course, which would give them a full high school education and two years of college. Upon graduation they would receive a certificate entitling them to teach for three consecutive years, after which their certificate would automatically be renewed for life.
>
> Eighth graders who were unable to stay through the full course, could enroll in a special elementary teachers' training course, which would award them a two-year teacher's certificate for work in elementary schools following two years of study.[36]

Another author was a student who did not have sufficient financial backing to complete the six-year course. Therefore she:

> ...enrolled in the intermediate teachers' training course. Had I remained in this course for two years I would have qualified to teach a junior high school for a period of four years. When I discovered that I would be unable to return for my second year's study, I asked the dean if it would be possible to be awarded a two-year elementary teacher's certificate since I had already done a year's work beyond the requirement for this type certificate...
>
> Impressed with my grades, the dean smiled and assured me that anyone who could earn grades like this in spite of all the obstacles I had to face, certainly deserved some reward. Before school closed for the year I had in my hand a certificate authorizing me to teach in any elementary school in the state for a period of two years.[37]

In 1924, rural Kentucky was lucky to have a teacher and this eighteen year old teacher taught all the grades in her one-teacher school. Her story continued:

> The grades in a one-teacher school ranged from primary through the eighth, and included all elementary subjects. The upper classes carried a schedule of ten subjects, which of course, had to be alternated on different days to fit into the eight-hour schedule. Their worklaod included spelling, reading, arithmetic, English, history, geography, agriculture, general science, art and public school music.
>
> The heavy curriculum imposed upon rural schools required a carefully worked out daily program.[38]

The quality of instruction in Black schools was often related to the supply of teachers. McCuistion reported in 1930 that there were 47,426 Negro teachers certified in fifteen Southern states."[39] Bond wrote in 1929-1930 "if Negro teachers were supplied for the children of Southern states in the ratio characteristic of the nation at large"[40] roughly 24,000 more teachers would be needed to supply the coverage necessary for Southern Black children. In many school districts, this shortage of teachers meant that added responsibility was placed on existing staff. In many cases, it also meant that teachers were not trained to teach. One of the authors described having being placed in such a situation. She wrote:

> In those days, of course, schools in Starkville were segregated. The school for blacks from the first grade through high school was the Oktibbeha County Training School. The students, the teachers, and the principal were all black.
>
> ...he moved me around wherever he needed a teacher. My major field was Home Economics, but at various times he had me teaching other subjects including English and 9th grade American History. I ran the school library during my lunch hour (the State sent me to Fisk University to study Library Science during the summers of 1939 and 1940).

> ...since I played the piano, I was the school's musician.
>
> ...planned and conducted the music for all the class nights from the first grade through the twelfth. I would start preparing the children for class nights beginning in April, and the work load was so heavy I had to have some of the students teach my regular classes. For a time I was teaching Home Economics in one building and rushing to another to be near the piano for Music, all for $25 per month.
>
> ...I did not realize how hard I had been working until I left teaching and learned the school had hired three persons to replace me.[41]

By 1954, Black educators began to reflect various theories of education that they were learning in the Northern and Eastern teacher training schools. These "new" education philosophies created difficulty for some school principals. One author described his experience with an interpretation of the learning theories of John Dewey, who, in 1945, became principal of a Black school. The children and teachers became quite angry with him when he interpreted Dewey's "child-centered" theory for his school. He wrote that in his newly assigned building all events seemed to have gone smoothly with schedules and student registration at the beginning of the school year. Then:

> A day or two later the work began. It seemed as if someone had turned out a pack of wolves; students were as loud and boisterous in the classrooms as they would have been out of doors. The hall was never cleared. If a student didn't prefer to attend class or wanted to leave the campus during the day without permission, he did so. On one occasion I accosted a young lady for running down the hall; she began crying and said that she was going to tell her father. She asked me if I had heard of Mr. John Dewey. I told her yes; then she paused and said, "You must haven't," and continued on her escapade.
>
> Speaking to one of the teachers the next day about the occurrence in a courteous tone, as I had thought, without any hesitating she told me a "piece" of her mind. She had me to know that Staley was selected a few years ago as an experiment school whose sole aim

> was to practice and teach democracy. She said, "Our children do as they please here, and I am afraid that you are going to get into trouble if you try to stop them."[42]

Reporting on studies conducted on the health of Blacks in the late 1920's, Dr. Bond stated that the death rate of Blacks in all sections of the country, is higher than the death rate of white people."[43] He suggested that the schools might be the vehicle for educating Black children and their families on ways to help improve their health.[44]

Dr. Bond acknowledged that many causes of poor health among Black people could not be addressed by the schools. However, where schools could help he urged that they should. In working with the schools he stressed, therefore, the need to make health care a cooperative project between school and home. In the report that follows, it would appear that Dr. Bond's advice was not followed. Neither the author nor her family was prepared for the introduction of a nurse in her school. The report suggest the nurse did not help create a spirit of cooperation. In about 1939 or 1940 the following event took place:

> One day a big, broad-chested woman come to our room. She was very black and clean. She was the cleanest woman I had ever seen. Her dress was clean, her shoes were clean, and she herself was clean. We stared at her and she looked back at us, stern, unsmiling, through very clear square glasses. I was scared of her. Mrs. Johnson said that she was the "nurse." Nurse, I thought. What is a nurse? Why were they always saying these magic words that I didn't know? The whole class lined up and followed her up the hall to the auditorium. There were glass bottles, and cotton and clear fluids in jars. Each child went to her and she took his or her head in her hands and looked and did something that I couldn't see. They turned around with a piece of cotton on their arm. Sometimes she took something from around someboy'd neck, and it made a sound as she threw it in the wastebasket. "Afesda," I thought she said. Some of the children wore small bags around their necks. I had never thought about it. I thought that they were born that way. But the nurse was throwing the bags in the

wastebasket. I breathed a sign. I didn't have one. I was all right.

When I got to the head of the line, she turned my face this way and that, looked at my chest, and then got mad.

"What's this?" She asked. She was looking at a square piece of cloth, plastered to my chest, that was brown with salve and constant wearing.

"It's my flannel cloth," I said.

"Flannel cloth?" she said. "What are you doing wearing a flannel cloth?"

"Mamo says so's I won't catch a cold." My chest felt tight. I could barely speak.

"Such ignorancy!" she said and grabbed the cloth, balled it up, and threw it in the wastebasket. I was heartbroken and terrified. I always wore a flannel cloth. Mama put it on us when the first chilly morning came. She greased it on the side next to the chest with a brown salve and we wore it all the time, day and night, until it got warm again, never removing it at all except for the Saturday-night bath. It was never washed, so by the time the weather got warm again, the flannel, which had originally been soft pink and blue and grey, was very brown.

While I was wondering what to tell Mama, I looked to see what was the cold that was going on my arm. It was alcohol. Then the nurse reached for some sharp, shiny needles and I knew that this was the "shot" that some of the older children had talked about. What was I going to do? Daddy had told Mama that he didn't want any of his children taking shots.

"Don't let 'em give you no shots," he'd said to me.

"No sir," I'd said.

What was a shot? I had never seen a shot. I tried to open my mouth to tell the nurse what Daddy had said, but I couldn't get my breath. I felt a sharp tingle in my arm and she gave me a shot when Daddy had told me not to take any. What was I going to do? The nurse was grown like Mama and Daddy, but she did things different from them. Something was wrong.

Mama told me not to tell Daddy about the shot, and Aunt Jo made me another flannel cloth.[45]

Another author born in 1930 and lived in North Carolina wrote about an experience he had with his school not involving his parents in a matter of health care. He, too, was in elementary school and he wrote:

> One episode may indicate something of the role of a teacher in a small, poor, and uneducated black community at that time. One day the teacher noticed a large bandage on my finger covering a cut I had received while chopping kindling wood. She decided it needed medical attention, assigned two boys who knew the way to the health department to take me there after school, and assigned another boy to go tell my mother why I would be late getting home that day. We, of course, all did as we were told and no one -- at school or at home -- challenged her authority to make much decisions. It so happened that the segregated city medical facilities for Negroes were in an old house located right across the street from a big new building housing the health department for whites. In this house a nurse washed my wound out under a faucet and it was sewed up without anesthetic. For many years that scene would come back to me as I heard the words, "separate but equal."
>
> Near the end of the third grade, in May 1939, we moved to New York. The school back in Charlotte promoted me to the fourth grade, but we were not sure the promotion would stick in New York, where black children from the South were traditionally put back a grade.[46]

Section B -- Who Encouraged the Authors to go to School?

The authors of this period identified their relatives, teachers and their own drive as sources of encouragement to go to school.

One author born in Texas in 1929 wrote:

> Getting an education became the most important thing in my life. It had been drummed into me with religious fervor and an almost mathematical certainty that education would open doors of acceptance and success. Getting an education meant I would make it in the mainstream, or as close to the mainstream as they let niggers get.[47]

A female author, who was born in Mississippi in 1933 wrote that her extended family had been a positive force in her life, reported on her continual feeling of encouragement. On the drive to college, after finishing high school she was:

> Squeezed in the back seat between my grandmother and Aunt Myrlie, the two people who had raised me and surrounded my childhood with adoration, protection, and towering hopes, I tried to conceal the pride, the nervousness, the joy and the fear that fought for possession of me.
>
> My pride was of two sorts; first, in the certainty that by going off to college I was fulfilling ambitions both of these strong and loving women had held for me almost since I was born. Both, being teachers, were strong believers in higher education, and both had sacrificed to achieve at least part of a college education for themselves. In a way, I suppose, I represented their hopes and ambitions for themselves, and in any case I was carrying on an important tradition.[48]

This author also wrote about her maternal grandmother who encouraged her to read and "be well informed." She called this grandmother "Big Mama." She wrote:

> Big Mama's day off was Thursday, and each Thursday I would cross the street to visit her. She saved the Robinson's newspapers every week, and on Thursdays I would read the previous Sunday's funny papers.[49]

Another female author wrote of patience and encouragement she received from her elementary school teacher. This author started school before she was of school age because she wanted to go with her siblings and the teacher approved of her going.

In describing what she did in class, the author wrote:

> I drew a big circle with a smaller one on top, put on a tail, and called it a cat, then patiently filled it in with yellow, purple, green. Mrs. Johnson called it beautiful and I was satisfied. Then I drew a big circle and put a smaller one on top, drew some ears, and called it a rabbit. Then I filled it in with red, brown, black, trying not to color it over the edge, and showed it to Mrs. Johnson. She said it was just like Mr. Bunny, and I went back to my seat quite pleased with myself.[50]

Her parents were role models for her in developing a desire to learn. She remembered:

> When Mama came home from work in the evening and Daddy came in from the fields, she'd read the paper to him. He could read, but he had to get his round glasses with the yellow rims, the ones he used when he was working mathematics problems. Mama wore her glasses all the time, so when she was reading, she'd read aloud to him. They both talked about the part that said: "Roosevelt said."[51]

Socio-economic Status of the Families of the Authors

The authors who supplied information on this topic were in three economic categories -- very poor, poor and above average. The very poor wrote:

> Daddy went to the Bottom every day. Tobacco and cotton grew there and were supposed to be money crops, but Daddy never made any money off them. As a matter of fact he never made much off anything.[52]

> Daddy hauled away trash for people, to see to the junkman. When he came back with the trash, he dumped it in a pile in the backyard.[53]

The author who described his youth in Tennessee wrote:

> With memories as vivid as if it were the day before, Shockley and I talked of torrid summer days when he, my father, and other McMinnville Negroes stood atop stacks of oak timber, literally bathing them in sweat bought at two dollars a day. Those mills were the only industrial employment open to Negroes, and twelve dollars a week earned there fed more family than did seven or eight dollars earned for a week's work as a domestic.[54]

> Probably fewer than five Negro men in McMinnville earn more than thirty-five dollars a week.[55]

The author whose family was classified above average or middle income in the 1940's described her family's home with the following details:

> Mama's house, where I spent my childhood, sat on top of a steep embankment, many steps above the narrow dusty street of dirt and crushed rock that had been scraped straight up the side of one of Vicksburg's steepest hills. It was a frame house, whitewashed outside, neat and clean inside, and as a child it seemed to me enormous. There were two large bedrooms, one for my father, one

I shared with Mama, with huge beds with carved headboards and feather mattresses into which I all but disappeared at night. A dresser with a neavy marble top held a pitcher and washbowl.

The living room was also large and, in addition to a big over-stuffed sofa and other furniture, it had a bed where Mama's own grandmother -- my great-great-grandmother -- slept. The dining-room table was round and on the same massive scale as everything else; I remember playing house under its generous roof.

At the same time that I began school I started taking piano lessons once a week from my Aunt Myrlie Polk.[56]

Section C -- What did Black Parents, the Black Community and Black Organizations do to Provide Schooling for Black Children?

This section is divided into two distinct parts. The first part discusses the continued effort on the part of teachers, parents, and community to supply the needs of school children and the second part discusses the use of the legal system by parents, community and organizations. A teacher of the self-help philosophy wrote that:

> Between 1920 and 1923 we supplied more than half of the necessary equipment for two years of high school.
>
> We sold hundreds of boxes of candy, and I suppose miles of hot dogs. If we hadn't -- well, we just could not afford to take the time to wait. Delay was dangerous.[57]

Another teacher writing about the needs of her rural school in 1925-26 reported that she went to the school superintendent and pleaded the case for her school. She remembered that she:

> ...discussed with the superintendent of the many things needed at our school. He didn't take too kindly to the lengthly list. He did agree, however, that a new roof was necessary to keep out the rain, and windowpanes were essential to keep out the cold and let in more light. He offered me some second-hand desks that were stowed in an old warehouse if I could get them hauled to the school. The county furnishes no delivery service, he said.

> Agreeing that dust is detrimental to the health of children, he gave me some cheap oil to liven up the floor and abate the dust.
>
> ...These improvements served as an incentive for the teacher, with the help of the parents, and the cooperation of the children, to do more for the beautification of the old building.[58]

During the same period of remodeling the school this author wrote:

> We bought red paint for the tin roof that was now beginning to show slight signs of rust. As usual, the fathers volunteered their service to do the work.[59]

Another author teaching in 1945 wrote that the P.T.A. in her high school in a small town of Georgia raised enough money to purchase a school bus. The success of that effort encouraged the parents to do other things for the school. He reported:

> That episode was the beginning of a series of curious activities. The P.T.A. saw the need for a bus for transportation of our famous band and "losing football team." When the time came for a vote to give one hundred dollars from the P.T.A. treasury, one woman stated that there was no need for a bus, because the school had no means for protecting the girls and boys on out-of-town trips. The argument lasted for two hours before the president could get the vote to a test. A large majority voted in favor of releasing the money.[60]

A well known author of the protest era supplied most of the data for this section on the use of the legal system by parents, the community and Black organizations. Her report included data that described the climate of the South during this period which led to the 1954 _Brown_ decision. The NAACP was the primary organization guiding the legal action of individuals and groups. This author reported that her husband, who was on the staff of the NAACP:

> ...was told of a meeting with the local school board after a petition had been presented asking for an end to school segregation. The white chairman of the school board, after reading the petition aloud, had singled out a young Negro in the back of the

room. "There is a nigger back there who is a sharecropper," he said, pointing. "Nigger," he continued, looking straight at the young man, "don't you want to take your name off this petition that says you want to send your children to school with white children?"[61]

She wrote that the pressures of individuals who attempted to support the work of the NAACP as the school desegregation case was being developed was often too powerful to encourage lasting protest. She said that:

> There were a few Negro voices of protest to be sure, but those that were not quickly silenced in one way or another too often took on the sound of a cry in the wilderness, too fragile and isolated and certainly too dangerous to be listened to.
>
> When thoughts of resistance to segregation, or even to one aspect of it, did arise, there was almost always a recent event to turn such dangerous thoughts aside. Somewhere in the state a Negro had disappeared, had been murdered or lynched, had been railroaded through the white man's courts to a living death in the state penitentiary at Parchman.[62]

Many of the individuals silenced were:

> ...teachers who knew that even a whisper of a connection with the NAACP could mean loss of jobs. Beyond that, some of them actually feared an eventual desegregation of schools. It was at least conceivable to them that the state might someday permit some Negro students to attend white schools. It was inconceivable that Negro teachers would be allowed to teach in those schools. And the Supreme Court, after all, had said nothing in its decision about teachers.[63]

Two years before the Brown decision one of the young professionals in Mississippi who was also a branch president for the NAACP became a victim of white Southern resentment towards Blacks and the NAACP. The story of his experiences as was told to this author by her husband was a typical account of white reaction. The details are as follows:

> Dr. E.J. Stringer, a young dentist from Columbus, Mississippi, had helped build the NAACP conference from twenty-one branches in 1953 to thirty-one in 1954. Membership in the state had grown from 1600 to more than 2700 in the same period, and in his own branch in Columbus, where he also served as president, Dr. Stringer

had exceeded his own 1954 membership goal of 150 to end the year with a whopping 400 members.

None of these gains had been made without sacrifice...Dr. Stringer had lost the use of his automobile when his liability insurance, required by state law, was suddenly cancelled. Creditors who previously gave him a reasonable time to make payments on dental supplies began to require immediate payment. A Negro schoolteacher who had paid Dr. Stringer for her dental work by check was accused of making a donation to the NAACP when someone at the bank passed the word to a white school official. It required a sworn affidavit from Dr. Stringer that the check was in payment for dental work to keep her from losing her job.

Mrs. Stringer had been a teacher in the Negro public schools in Columbus, one of the few who held a master's degree...she lost her job. But the economic pressure, difficult as it made the Stringers' lives, was nothing compared to the terror. Day and night were were anonymous telephone calls, obscene threats, murder warnings. At night, cars would drive slowly past the Stringer house, and the knowledge that one of them might contain a man carrying a home-made bomb forced the Stringers to sleep in their middle bedroom.

In the midst of this harassment, Dr. Stringer was suddenly called in the Internal Revenue Service for an audit of his federal income-tax returns. It might have seemed an isolated incident but for the fact that a number of outspoken critics of segregation were suffering the same fare at the same time. What this suggested, of course, was that still another department of the federal government was being used by racists to make life difficult for Southern opponents of segregation. It was not until later, when a 1958 survey of thirty-four prominent white and Negro desegregationists in the South was made public, that it finally became known that the federal income-tax returns of these men and women had been audited at almost four and a half times the normal rate. One of those who by that time had also been subjected to the new kind of harassment was Medgar.

Because few men could withstand this kind of pressure over a long period of time, Dr. Stringer had declined to run for a new term as state president at the end of 1954.[64]

The <u>Brown</u> decision was handed down on May 17, 1954. On July 30, 1954 state officials of Mississippi were trying to ignore the gravity of that decision. The author concludes her account of events regarding the

education of Black children in Mississippi with a report on the July meeting.

> On July 29, 1954, the night before the scheduled meeting with the governor, more than ninety Negro leaders met in Jackson to discuss their plans for the following day. Later reports indicated that the session was long and the debate heated. By the next day, however, the Negro delegates were ready. Walter Silers, Speaker of Mississippi's House of Representatives and a long-time segregationist politician, opened the meeting and introduced Governor White. The governor welcomed the participants confidently and swung into a eulogy of the fine relations between the races that Mississippi had always enjoyed. What it cost him internally to brazen his way through this speech to the very people in the best position to know what a monstrous lie it was no own will ever know, but he appeared, according to later reports, to be enjoying himself. When he had finished, a Negro delegate took the floor with an outright demand for an end to segregation.
>
> The first speaker, Charlie Banks, was followed immediately by others, and their message was the same. Finally, and almost in desperation, Speaker Silers called for J.W. Jones, a conservative Negro teacher known to be a friend of the white man. Jones performed as expected, coming out meekly for segregation, and Governor White was seen to relax a little. But Jones was followed immediately by a Negro woman delegate who denounced him roundly and held him up to ridicule as a classic example of the results of segregation.
>
> Again Speaker Silers broke in. He called on the Reverend H.H. Humes, a Negro minister presumed to be a trusted ally. All eyes were on the minister as he rose slowly and began to speak. "Gentlemen," he said deliberately, "you all should not be mad at us. Those were white men that rendered that decision. No one colored man had anything to do with it. The real trouble is that you have given us schools too long in which we could study the earth through the floor and the stars through the roof." It was a moment in whcih many of the Negro participants felt for the first time a surging pride in being a Negro in Mississippi.[65]

<u>Summary</u>

During the period 1920-1954, the South reaffirmed its determination that Black people would not enjoy full citizenship. Many World War I veterans, several still in uniform, were maimed, murdered and lynched.

Old terrorist groups were revived and performed random acts of violence against Blacks. It was a period in which expenditures for Black and white education were greatly out of balance. In many Southern communities, ten times as much money was spent on white schools than on Black schools. In school districts where Black children were in the majority, white administrators used per capita allocation of education funds creatively to the advantage of the white minority and to the disadvantage of the Black majority. The issues of education, during this period, were the same as the earlier period. The physical structures were grossly inadequate: teachers were over-worked and under-paid; instructional materials were so inadequate that the curriculum did not prepare Black children to move out of their condition of poverty.

During this period Black children and their parents faced "new" challenges of school-home cooperation. The school became the vehicle for introducing information school administrators wanted the families to know, and in some cases, parents began to feel out of control and in conflict with the school. The authors of this period, as in the earlier periods, identified parents, other relatives and teachers as their greatest sources of encouragement and support. Even though most of the authors from poor circumstances, as a group they covered the range of limited socio-economic opportunities. This period saw a new type of activity by parents and others. The Black organization of the NAACP was very strong and the groups utilized, to a greater extent, the legal

system in attempting to correct the mis-education of Black children. During this period the Supreme Court of the United States handed down a unanimous opinion in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka. This decision outlawed the "separate but equal" ruling of a earlier period.

Footnotes

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[40]*Ibid.*, p. 54.

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[42]*Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

[43]Dunnigan, p. 50.

[44]*Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

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[53]*Ibid.*, pp. 427-429.

[54]Mebane, pp. 41-42.

[55]Sewell, pp. 3-4.

[56]Williams, p. 54.

[57]Evers, p. 7.

[58]*Ibid.*, p. 39.

[59]MeBane, p. 45.

[60]*Ibid.*, p. 69.

[61]*Ibid.*, pp. 11 & 17.

[62]Rowan, pp. 55-56.

[63]Evers, pp. 36-38.

[64]Pope, p. 110.

[65]Dunnigan, p. 95.

[66]*Ibid.*, p. 96.

[67]Grant, p. 65.

[68]Evers, pp. 153-54.

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CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE EDUCATION OF BLACK CHILDREN

As demonstrated in this study, Black parents and the Black community from the era of the Reconstruction period in American history to the Brown decision have been interested in the education of Black children; have placed high value on their children's education; have maintained a belief that education is a method of benefiting from the opportunity of the American society; and that their interest has been translated into action by providing schooling for Black children throughout the period covered by this dissertation.

The autobiographies selected for this research span three major periods of this study -- Reconstruction, Post-Reconstruction and the period after World War I to the Brown decision. This research, historical and largely descriptive, was designed to investigate the role Black parents and the Black community played in providing schooling for Black children in the South, from 1865 to 1954. The range of autobiographies selected included Black people born in the South and from various walks of life. They were teachers, doctors, school administrators, ministers, athletics, writers, religious administrators, civil rights activists, founders of private schools, administrators of higher education as well as parents. They represented various age groups, varying philosophies and outlooks on life. The autobiographies traversed eighty-nine years of American history.

From these materials the author is confident that the results measured what was designed to be measured and the responses to the questions were considered across the period.

One great advantage of using primary sources for historical research is that the investigator can get much nearer to the human realities of the facts, in their context, as experienced by the individuals involved and the conditions under study. For example, this type of research helps to recapture events as they occur in a given time and place. This is especially important in studying issues related to Black education, because the educational experiences of Black minorities in this society are very complex and cannot be evaluated in isolation of their life experiences. Statistical studies do not always yield knowledge about the lives of minority individuals in ways that address the complexities of being a minority in a majority culture.

In their own words, these authors reported that their parents and community placed high value on education and were willing to sacrifice in order to have their children acquire an education. During Reconstruction, the activities ranged from mothers taking in laundry in order to pay their children's tuition to fathers risking their lives in order that their children might go to school. Community people organized to build buildings, purchase and beg for land and supplies, pay the salaries of teachers and supplement teachers' salaries with food and housing.

During the Reconstruction period, attempts at educating Black people provoked very intense and bitter acts of hostilities by white

Southerners. Education of Blacks was seen as a means of ruining a profitable, pre-emancipation economic system. This attitude and belief on the part of white Southerners produced many violent reactions including destruction, by mob violence, of any structure Blacks used as a school to teach Black children. Additionally, instructional materials were extremely inadequate or nonexistent. If there was a school within walking distance of Black children they could only attend if there was no work to be performed on the owner's land. This often meant that, in some cases, attendance may only be for three months. During this period, Black children were frequently in poor health and the medical community which was staffed by white Southerners would not treat them.

During the Post-Reconstruction period, there was less emphasis on the need for the community to erect school buildings and more on trying to get Black children to where schools already existed. These parents had to send their children away from home in order to provide them with schooling. In most cases, local schools were so inadequate that they could accommodate no more than the first few grades. Providing them with clothes, transportation, tuition, and food took the attention and ingenuity of parents, the church, and the community.

This research demonstrated that during the Post-Reconstruction period the education system separated Blacks from whites. White administrators provided white children with more resources than they provided Black children. The data indicated that, in some instances, these resources amounted to ten times more for white children. More Black children than white children were crowded into fewer school

buildings. These buildings were dilapidated and unsafe. Black children were also handed down used and often well-worn instructional materials. School attendance for Black children was not compulsory because farm labor contracts required that they be included in the labor force during planting and harvest seasons.

Education for Black children during the period after World War I to the Brown decision barely improved over the education Blacks received during the Reconstruction period. The data revealed that an extensive gap developed between Black and white schools, giving white children an undue advantage well into the mid 1930's. This gap resulted from a system of funding white administrators used to finance segregated school systems. By 1930, for every $2 spent for Black education $7 was spent for white education and by 1935-36, the South spent an average of $37.87 per white pupil compared to $13.09 per Black.

During the period after the first world war and through the Brown decision the focus of Black people and Black organizations was on the legal process. The study supports the finding that Black parents, Black organizations and community members were willing to sacrifice security, jobs, and their lives to establish, through the courts, the right of Black children to receive an education.

What is clear from this study is that the white authorities in control of the education of all children in America were primarily interested in the education of white children and this fact adversely affected the education of Black children. This research demonstrates that across the periods studied Black children did not have the same educational advantages that white school children had.

Additionally, the study demonstrates that there was a clear pattern of oppression and denial of educational opportunities for Black people. The American system of education was not interested in having Black people educated or integrated into the Southern system. Each era produced strategies by white Southerners to prevent Black people from becoming educated.

It has been amply demonstrated, that Black people struggled for education even under conditions of slavery. After the Civil War, these struggles broadened and by 1880 about one-third of Black children attended public schools. Pressure, high visibility and organization by Black parents were the principal reasons for their accomplishments. Few Americans, Black or white, are adequately informed about this. As a result, many people are open to the most curious explanations of the current condition of Black education, tending primarily to absolve the school system and the government from any responsibility. Some even resort to racist "explanations" that attribute the failure of school systems and government agencies to the race of the children.

This dissertation suggests that the widespread belief among whites that Blacks have a low regard for education is erroneous. "Blaming the victim" may be a means of limiting and controlling the percentage of Black people allowed to pass through the screen of educational opportunity. Further, this study suggests the need to re-examine the issues related to why Black children are not given an equal educational opportunity. To monitor this process, Black parents, as the first teachers, must become more involved in the education of Black

children. However, in order to do this more effectively, the schools must bring Black parents into the system.

Black parents must assume a role of participating directly in collaborative planning and decision-making. Black parents must also assume a more active role in monitoring and evaluating their own children's learning. This can be accomplished by adopting the following procedures:

1. Black parents must be involved in deciding the goals of the school. The schools in most communities are old institutions with mission statements which predate current school administrators, parents, or changes in society. Black parents must demand and be involved in a review, evaluation and where necessary redefinition of the goals of educating with the school as the agent for education.

2. Black parents must evaluate the program/curriculum of the school. This evaluation must tie into these new goals of education for their children.

3. Black parents must be involved in drawing up the budget of their child's schools. In this way, monies spent might be channeled more directly into meeting new goals.

4. Black parents must be involved in selecting school personnel. Teachers and administrators are critical in meeting the goals of education. Teachers must be more than certified. They must possess both cognitive and affective skills. Black parents must be involved in determining whether educators working with their children possess these skills; finally,

5. In order to effect the implementation of the aforementioned considerations, a process of evaluation involving parents must be established. This evaluation process must carry with it authority and autonomy.

The above suggestions can be means by which the role Black parents and the Black community play in providing education for Black children will make a difference.

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Appendices

Key Categories for Recording Information Extracted from Autobiographies

Category I -- Statistics on Authors

Name, date of birth, place of birth, parents-slave or free, schooling-formal, religion, material status, children, occupation and age when autobiography was written.

Category II -- Activities

a. Mother's activities, re: schooling?
b. Father's activities, re: schooling?
c. Older siblings' activities, re: schooling?
d. Other relatives' activities, re: schooling?
e. Other adults' activities, re: schooling?
f. Ministers' activities, re: schooling?
g. Teachers' activities, re: schooling?
h. Black organizations' activities, re: schooling?
    1. Type of organizations?
    2. Which group?
    3. Where performed?
    4. When performed?
    5. How performed?
i. What other action did Black parents take in providing schooling for their children:
    1. Call conferences?
    2. Draft petitions?
    3. Take legal action?
    4. Other?
j. What principal problems arose in the course of such action?
k. How were parents' efforts distributed geographically and over what period of time?

Category III -- Education

l. Condition of school:
    1. Physical?
    2. Rural?
    3. Urban?
m. Quality of instruction?
    1. Training of teacher?
    2. Materials?
n. School attendance of author?
    1. Scholastic performance?

o. Age when author started school?

Category IV -- Personal/Social/Attitudinal

p. Encouragement from others?
    1. Modeling others?
q. Family moving for purposes of better schools?
r. Author's motivation and interest in education and learning?
s. Socio-economic status of family?
t. Awareness of need for education?
u. Attitude towards education?
    1. Parents?
    2. Teachers?
    3. Relatives?
    4. Friends?
    5. Other?
v. Physical condition of author?

Category V -- Vignettes

AUTOBIOGRAPHERS

RECONSTRUCTION (1865-1877) BIRTH DATES (1861-1871)	AUTHOR	TITLE	STATE OF BIRTH
1861-1934	Frances Joseph Gaudet	He Leadeth Me	Mississippi
1862-1953	Thomas Calhoun Walker	The Honey Pod Tree	Virginia
1867-	Ella Earis Cotton	A Spark For My People, A Sociological Autobiography of a Teacher	Virginia
1867-1942	Thomas Oscar Fuller	Twenty Years in Public Life, 1840-1910	North Carolina
1867-1940	Robert Russa Moton	Finding A Way Out	Virginia
1868-1933	Henry Hugh Proctor	Between Black and White	Tennessee
1869-	Henry Damon Davidson	Inching Along	Alabama
1869-1950	William J. Edwards	Twenty Five Years in the Black Belt	Alabama

AUTOBIOGRAPHERS (continued)

RECONSTRUCTION (1865-1877) BIRTH DATES (1861-1871)	AUTHOR	TITEL	STATE OF BIRTH
1870-1943	William H. Holtzclaw	The Black Man's Burden	Alabama
1870-1962	J. Edward Perry	Forty Cords of Wood: Memoirs of a Med Doctor	Texas
1870-1961	John James Morant	Mississippi Minister	Alabama
1871-1953	Charles W. Cansler	Three Generation: The Story of a Colored Family	Tennessee
1871-1938	James Weldon Johnson	Along This Way	Florida
1862-1931	Ida B. Wells	The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells	Mississippi

AUTOBIOGRAPHERS

POST RECONSTRUCTION (1880-1918) BIRTH DATES (1875-1912)	AUTHOR	TITLE	STATE OF BIRTH
1876-	Oliver Pope	Chalk Dust	North Carolina
1876-1944	John Jacob Starks	Lo These Many Years: An Autobiography Sketch	South Carolina
1878-1967	Richard R. Wright, Jr.	87 Years Behind the Black Curtain: An Autobiography	Georgia
1881-1954	William Pickens	The Heir of Slaves	South Carolina
1882-1971	Jane Edna Harris Hunter	A Nickel and a Prayer	South Carolina
1884-1975	Laurence Clifton Jones	Up Through Difficulties	Missouri
1888-1967	John C. Dancy	Sands Against the Wind	North Carolina

AUTOBIOGRAPHERS (continued)

POST RECONSTRUCTION (1880-1918) BIRTH DATES (1875-1912)	AUTHOR	TITLE	STATE OF BIRTH
1890-1969	James Atkins	The Age of Jim Crow	Tennessee
1891-	Henry Warren Sewing	Henry Warren Sewings Founder of the Douglas State Bank: An Auto	Texas
1892-	Arthur George Gaston	Green Power: The Successful...	Alabama
1897-	Jacob L. Redding	A Voice Crying in the Wilderness	Mississippi
1898-	Hosea Hudson	Black Worker in the Deep South	Georgia
1906-	Alice A. Dunnigan	A Black Woman's Experience: From Schoolhouse to White House	Kentucky

AUTOBIOGRAPHERS (continued)

POST RECONSTRUCTION (1880-1918) BIRTH DATES (1875-1912)	AUTHOR	TITLE	STATE OF BIRTH
1906-	J. Saunders Redding	On Being Negro in America	Delaware
1909-1973	Bennie Carl Elmore	The Story of a Great Pioneer in Black Education	Texas
1910-1985	Pauli Murray	Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family	North Carolina
1911-	Cleon Richard Bonner	A Black Principal's Struggle to Survive	Alabama
1890-	Rosa Young	Light in the Dark Belt: The Story of Rosa Young as Told by Herself	Alabama
1893-	Ely Green	Ely	Tennessee
1908-	Robert & Sadye H. Wier	A Black Businessman in White Mississippi, 1886-1974	Mississippi

RECONSTRUCTION (continued)

POST RECONSTRUCTION (1880-1918) BIRTH DATES (1875-1912)	AUTHOR	TITLE	STATE OF BIRTH
1883-	Thomas Monroe Campbell	The Movable School Goes to the Negro Farmer	Georgia
1894-1984	Benjamin Mays	Born to Rebel	South Carolina

AUTOBIOGRAPHERS

AFTER WORLD WAR I TO THE BROWN DECISION (1920-1954) BIRTH DATES (1914-1934)	AUTHOR	TITLE	STATE OF BIRTH
1914	Daniel T. Grant	When the Melon is Ripe: The Autobiography of a Georgia High School Principal and Minister	Georgia
1914	Sister Mary Gabriella Guidpy	The Southern Negro Nun: An Autobiography	Louisiana
1915	Margaret Abigail Walker	How I Wrote Jubilee	Alabama
1918	Pearl Mae Bailey	Talking to Myself	Virginia
1919-1972	Jackie (John Roosevelt) Robinson	Breakth Rough to the Big League	Georgia
1921	Howard Olean Jones	Shall We Over Come? A Challenge to Negro and White Christians	"Somewhere in the South"

AUTOBIOGRAPHERS (continued)

AFTER WORLD WAR I TO THE BROWN DECISION (1920-1954) BIRTH DATES (1914-1934)	AUTHOR	TITLE	STATE OF BIRTH
1922	Daisy Gatson Bates	The Long Shadow of Little Rock	Arkansas
1925	Carl Thomas Rowan	South of Freedom	Tennessee
1927	Althea Gibson	I Always Wanted to be Somebody	South Carolina
1928	Maya Angelou	I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings	California--reared in Arkansas
1930	Allen B. Ballard	One More Days Journey	Pennsylvania-experiences in S.C.
1930	Thomas Sowell	Black Education: Myth and Tragedies	North Carolina
1933	Mrs. Medgar Evers	For Us, The Living	Mississippi

AUTOBIOGRAPHERS (continued)

AFTER WORLD WAR I TO THE BROWN DECISION (1920-1954) BIRTH DATES (1914-1934)	AUTHOR	TITLE	STATE OF BIRTH
1933	Mary Elizabeth Mebane	Mary	North Carolina
1929	Cecil Williams	"I'm Alive"--An Autobiography	Texas

Appendix 1: The Brown Decision and Black Parents

The Action of Black people and their vital importance in the legal process of getting the Brown cases before the Surpreme Court cannot be overstated. With the guidance of professional counsel and knowledge of the history of brave Black people before them, the Black people of the school systems of Topeka, Kansas; Clarendon County, South Carolina; Prince Edward County, Virginia; Wilmington, Delaware; and Washington, D.C., wrote another chapter in the story of Black resistance. They exemplified what Dr. Vincent Harding, organizer of the Institute of the Black World in Atlanta, wrote in 1975. In order, according to Harding, for there to be significant change there must be "the willingness of black men and women to risk their jobs and land to sign affidavits, to challenge Southern white officials, to place their seemingly frail lives against the entire weight of the South and the nation..."[1] In time, the courage, unity and strength demonstrated by these Black people would serve as a model for the next wave of Black protest for justice and the next chapter in the story of black resistance.

What motivated the participants in the Brown cases were the fundamental beliefs that the struggle for fairness and justice was a moral one; that God was on their side; and that the Black community was right in its demands. Because of these and a pattern of vicious discrimination against Blacks, there were in all cases similarities

that linked one community with the other. There were for example similarities:

--in the experiences of the Black leaders;

--in the poor physical condition of the Black school buildings and teacher's materials;

--in the treatment Blacks received by the authority established to address their issues of segregated schools; and

--in the fact that Black parents wanted their children educated in order to end, by what DuBois termed, the semislavery status that existed for Black people.

So insignificant were the differences in the school communities that made up the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka cases that they neither prevented the Black parents from acting on behalf of their children, nor averted the path of the cases of the Supreme Court. For example, the cases from the states of Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware were argued on behalf of the plaintiffs, from the bases of due process of law under the Fourteenth Amendment. However, because the Fourteenth Amendment speaks to protection of those residing in states, the District of Columbia plaintiffs alleged that school segregation deprived them of due process of law under the Fifth Amendment.[2]

Other differences of no significance to the outcome of the cases getting to the court were:

--the timidity with which the Topeka parents became involved with the NAACP;

--leadership in Prince Edward County was shared with a Black female high school student;

--four cases were sponsored by the NAACP, the fifth by an organized group of parents.

On the other hand the similarities were overwhelming. The most salient of these were the experiences of the Black leaders and the physical condition of the Black schools in the Brown cases.

Black Leadership

Blacks lived from day to day in an atmosphere that ranged from hostility and denial, to loss of job and threats of loss of life. The Black leadership in each school community was so committed to his/her role in the struggle for improving the Black schools that they were willing to accept the additional hardships associated with their position.

In Simple Justice Richard Kluger described the experiences of Reverend Joseph DeLaine, the Black leader in Clarendon County, South Carolina who experienced the full range of possibilities this way:

> Before it was over, they fired him from the little schoolhouse at which he had taught devotedly for ten years. And they fired his wife and two of his sisters and a niece. And they threatened him with bodily harm. And they sued him on trumped-up charges and convicted him in a kangaroo court and left him with a judgment that denied him credit from any bank. And they burned his house to the ground while the fire department stood around watching the flames consume the night. ...and fired shotguns at him out of the dark. But he was not Job, and so he fired back and called the police, who did not come and kept not coming. Then he fled, driving north at eighty-five miles an hour over country roads, until he was across the state line. Soon after, they burned his church to the ground and charged him, for having shot back that night, with felonious assault so be became an official fugitive from justice...[3]

McKinley Burnett, President of the Topeka, Kansas branch of the NAACP, challenged racism wherever he saw it in Topeka. He urged his employer at the Forbes Air Force Base to hire Black secretaries. For

this he was labelled a "troublemaker" and ostracized by his fellow workers.

In 1948, three years before the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka was filed, Burnett and his NAACP co-worker Daniel Sawyer, a father of seven children, petitioned the board to instruct the school superintendent to desegregate the elementary school and to treat all students and teachers fairly regardless of race. This stance by Burnett upset one board member so badly that, according to Lucinda Todd, the NAACP Branch Secretary, the board member "jumped up and threatened to fight Burnett" then and there. His sensitivity to racism and his willingness to identify it in Topeka only produced for him hostility in the white community.[4]

Reverend Griffin, President of the Prince Edward County, Virginia NAACP and Pastor of First Baptist Church, was nearly fired by his own church members because he permitted the community to hold a mass meeting in the church. That meeting resulted in giving the NAACP Legal Defense Fund lawyer authority to represent the plaintiffs in the Prince Edward County school case.

Reverend Griffin's role with the NAACP and his permitting the Black community of Farmville to meet at First Baptist, the largest Black church in Prince Edward County, was in the historical tradition of that church. In a study prepared by Dr. DuBois for the U.S. Labor Department entitled "The Negro in Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study" (1898) he noted that First Baptist had always been a center for social action. However, the 1950 congregation, conditioned by a

legacy of racism and conservatism, was not comfortable with confrontational policies in Farmville and attempted to dismiss him as pastor.[5]

Boyd Jones, principal of Farmville's Moton High, was fired by the school board because "he had not acted forcefully to squelch the (student) strike."[6]

Additionally, the majority of the Black leaders were also parents and were therefore challenged to help their children distinguish between being Black and being inferior. This included teaching Black children through words and action not to confuse the injustice meted out by an unjust society with their sense of self worth.

A few Black parents, as a result of their own sense of self worth, their level of education, or their economic status in the community, were able through demonstration to teach their children to be proud and resistant to discrimination.

These lessons, well learned, were demonstrated by Barbara Johns, the student leader at Moton High. She grew up in a family of educated and self-assured individuals. Barbara described her paternal grandmother as a lady who "had no fear and was not the slightest bit subservient to whites."[7] Her mentor, was her father's brother, Reverend Vernon Johns. Reverend Johns was college trained, well travelled and preacher of the social gospel (the teaching not to acquiece to the status quo, but to justify fighting back). Barbara remembered that "he was beyond the intellectual scope of everyone around the country" and that "no white man bested him in an argument."[8]

Barbara was exposed to her uncle's library and read extensively. Her reading, discussions with her uncle, and her sense of self esteem all were factors in her leadership at Moton High.

What seemed to have bothered Barbara Johns the most in Farmville was the knowledge that the white high school was so much better than the Black high school. The comparison made her very angry. She knew that situation was unfair and decided the students had to help their parents in their struggle for a better Moton High School.

The success of her efforts endangered her life. Her parents were forced to send her away for her safety and to finish high school. They sent her to her Uncle Vernon.[9]

Gardner Bishop, a Black father and leader in the Washington, D.C. case told of an experience he had with his daughter. One Sunday morning he took his young daughter for a walk near their home. During their walk they passed the for-whites-only playground. No one was in the park and his daughter wanted to swing; the father put his small daughter on the swing reserved for white children. After a while a policeman came and forced them out of the park and took the father to jail because he said out loud the law was unfair and stupid. The daughter witnessed this treatment of her father.[10]

The experiences of the Black leaders was only one of the similarities; another salient similarity was the condition of the Black school.

Condition of Black Schools

Writing about segregation in 1943 Dr. Charles S. Johnson, author of Background to Patterns of Negro Segregation, noted that "the most complete system of racial segregation appears in the schools...school policy regarding racial separation is perhaps the most obvious index to the racial 'climate' of a region..."[11] This was all too true in 1950 because not only was racial segregation intense in the Brown schools communities, but the schools Black children attended were inferior in every way to those of the white children.

Judge Waring, United States Judge for the Eastern District of South Carolina, described the Black schools in Clarendon County in 1950 this way:

> You could drive through Clarendon County, as I often did...and see these awful-looking little wooden shacks in the country that were the Negro schools. The white schools were nothing to be really enthusiastic about, but they were fairly respectable-looking. In the towns, they were generally of brick and some of them had chimneys, running water, and things of that kind. The Negro schools were just tumbledown, dirty shacks with horrible outdoor toilet facilities.[12]

The judge could have added, white children were transported to school while Black children walked. White children had individual desks but Black children had none.

White schools were less crowded with a lower teacher-student ratio while Black schools were over-crowded with higher ratios. White children had new school books and libraries, but Black children had used school books and no libraries. The list of discrimination, racism, and overt denial of equal opportunity for Black children was inexhaustible.

The NAACP lawyers and the Black community "were convinced that the relationship between the law and society was the key"[13] to equal opportunity for Black people.

As Alfred Kelly,* a white historian, observed, they "believed in the American dream and that it could be made to work for black men too. Thurgood Marshall was--and is--an American patriot. He truly believes in the United States and the Constitution, but that the whole system was tragically flawed by the segregation law. Wipe away those laws and the whole picture would change."[14] However, Kelly read history differently then and years later we can see why he was skeptical. History will record that while the parents and their lawyers successfully challenged Plessy v. Ferguson, the equality of opportunity they struggled for remains elusive.

Nonetheless, the experiences seemed to strengthen the Black communities in the Brown cases; to point out just how pervasive racism is in our system of government; and, to remind Black people that the struggle for equality and justice goes on.

From all available evidence the realities of the Brown decision suggest the following:

--that the highest law of the land can be manipulated in such ways that justice for all is avoided at worst or delayed for generations at best;

*Kelly was invited by Thurgood Marshall, the Chief NAACP Legal Defense lawyer, to work with the legal team as it prepared arguments for the Supreme Court.

--that racism is etched so deeply in the fabric of American life that Brown II, ordering implementation of Brown I, "...with all deliberate speed...," is not fully realized thirty years later;

--that many white Americans view the 1954 Supreme Court desegregation decision as a problem rather than as an effort to correct a problem;

--that the public appears to be increasingly more critical of public school education; and,

--that the policies of the public schools are being influenced and shaped by an angry, prejudiced, miseducated white public.

It would appear that elements that produced staying power are no longer or may seem to no longer exist in today's society. Many Blacks are questioning the traditional belief that education is the great equalizer.

Although there is still the conviction that God is on their side, the urgency to ferment change that existed in the past seems to have diminished. Black people have now seen the results of the Brown decision and are keenly aware that it has made a difference in the access to opportunities. It should be noted however, that despite the improved access to educational institutions there remains the need to improve equal opportunities for Blacks in the society. Interestingly, after all the experiences some Blacks have had they are beginning to question whether education, afterall, is the panacea for equality.

Whereas the process to desegregate education satisfied some of the early demands made by Black parents and Black communities there are a new set of hurdles to overcome. For example in the Brown cases the issues seemed clear and direct.

Black parents wanted their children admitted to the public schools of their communities on a nonsegregated basis because:

--the physical condition of the Black schools was so clearly inferior to the white schools;

--they wanted their children to have the same transportation to their schools that the white children had;

--they wanted their children to receive an education that would prepare them to share in the benefits society offered whites but denied to Blacks;

--they wanted their children to be spared the psychological damage of feeling inferior because they attended schools regarded as inferior; and

--they wanted their Black teachers to receive the same pay and working conditions as white teachers.

In the struggle to educate Black children since Brown the issues facing Black parents and the Black community are not nearly as clear nor direct. Even though the new hurdles are quite subtle they are equally as insidious. For example, many Black children are taught by teachers who believe them to be inferior and therefore treat them that way. To the contrary the same teachers teach white children that they are superior. Curiously, the degree to which Black children are experiencing this from teachers has increased since the enforcement of Brown. Many Black children are forced to fight their way rather than learn their way through school in an effort to gain self respect.

Another important hurdle is the process of maintaining the significance of school named for Black people. Black schools once historical landmarks in the Black community are relegated to structures of non-importance. This is a critical point because Black

schools carried the names of Black historical figures, consequently Blacks learned much about their history through the names of their schools.

Many experienced Black teachers have been removed from classrooms with large numbers of Black children where they served as models and have either been "promoted" to an administrative position or reassigned to a white majority school. Furthermore, teachers are offered pay incentives, classified as combat pay, to accept teaching assignments in schools in Black neighborhoods. All of these behaviors and policies perpetuate institutionalized racism which is etched deeply in the American social fabric.

Dr. DuBois, one year after the historic May 1954 decision, predicted that it would force Black people to face:

> ...a cruel dilemma...with successfully mixed schools they know what their children must suffer for years from southern white teachers, from white hoodlums who sit beside them and under school authorities from janitors to superintendents, who hate and despise them...They must eventually surrender race 'solidarity' and the idea of American Negro culture to the concept of world humanity, above race and nation. This is the price of liberty. This is the cost of oppression.[15]

Unfortunately, DuBois was accurate in predicting the experiences Black children would have in desegregated school systems. He even predicted "...much teaching of Negro history will leave the school and with it that brave story of Negro resistance. This teaching will be taught more largely in the home or in the church where, under the current Christian custom, segregation by race and class will remain until the last possible moment."[16]

What Black children need is an equal opportunity to be educated. What Black parents and other Black community people must do is find the energy, strength, unity and commitment that were demonstrated by those adults associated with the Brown cases. What Black children need is an environment of safety and a teacher who respects him/her and support of the learning process. That process must include church and community as partners with the Black child's home. What Black adults must do is be involved in all that affects Black children. Black adults must once again take upon themselves the primary responsibility for the spiritual and emotional health of Black children.

Evidence suggest that educators, parents and others must agree that the time has come again to address the following issues more directly:

--the quality of education Black children are receiving;

--the experiences of Black children at the end of the bus ride;

--the effect integration has had on Black teachers and political administrators;

--the extent to which Black children are prepared, as a result of their public school training, to compete for the benefits of society enjoyed by whites; and

--the extent to which Black children are trained, today, to feel inferior while attending majority white or majority Black schools.

Moreover, the evidence also suggests that educators, parents, and community leaders should follow--at a minimum--the following steps as a way of honoring the struggle of the brave heroes of the

Brown decision, and to save an endangered species--the Black American. To be more effective Black people must:

1. Eliminate programs that "blame the victim".

2. Develop curricula that addresses meaningfully the issues of being black in a white society.

3. Assume the power to examine issues and determine for itself what is beneficial for Black children.

4. Reaccess the need, as Dr. DuBois advised, to train parents, students, and community leaders to use social power effectively. Social power is the power to initiate action in the interest of Black children.

5. Develop a sense of independent thought for the Black community. Evaluate each idea on its value to the Black community; and

6. Develop a sense of peoplehood that embraces the entire Black community. In other words a consciousness that requires all Black adults to be concerned about all Black children, and all Black adults acting responsively for the welfare of the Black community.

These issues may appear to be contemporary but in fact they are the same issues Black people have faced historically. They now must be faced and fought by a new generation of heroes. Once again the old adage, "the more things change, the more they remain the same" stands the test of time. The Brown decision could be described, thirty years later as "Battle won--war continues."

FOOTNOTES

[1]William Strickland, "The Road Since Brown: The Americanization of the Race," The Black Scholar, September/October, 1970.

[2]The Crisis, June-July 1954, pp. 325-333.

[3]Richard Kluger, Simple Justice, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), p. 3.

[4]Ibid., pp. 392-94.

[5]W.E.B. DuBois, "The Negro of Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study," Bulletin of the Department of Labor, III (1898) 34, pp. 1-38.

[6]Kluger, Simple Justice, p. 478.

[7]Ibid., p. 454.

[8]Ibid., p. 454.

[9]Ibid., p. 479.

[10]Ibid., pp. 512-13.

[11]Charles S. Johnson, Backgrounds to Patterns of Negro Segregation, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1943, pp. 12-13.

[12]Kluger, Simple Justice, pp. 301-2.

[13]Ibid., p. 639.

[14]Ibid., p. 639.

[15]Philip S. Foner, W.E.B. DuBois Speaks. Speeches and Addresses 1890-1919, (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), p. 283.

[16]Ibid., p. 283.