

Spring 5-2016

Our Voice, Our Choice: Race, Politics and Community Building on the Pages of Five Historically Black College and University Newspapers From 1930 to 1959

Sheryl Monique Kennedy Haydel
University of Southern Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), [Journalism Studies Commons](#), [Leadership Studies Commons](#), [Mass Communication Commons](#), [Publishing Commons](#), [Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies Commons](#), [Social Influence and Political Communication Commons](#), and the [Speech and Rhetorical Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kennedy Haydel, Sheryl Monique, "Our Voice, Our Choice: Race, Politics and Community Building on the Pages of Five Historically Black College and University Newspapers From 1930 to 1959" (2016). *Dissertations*. 341.
<https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/341>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

OUR VOICE, OUR CHOICE: RACE, POLITICS, AND COMMUNITY BUILDING
ON THE PAGES OF FIVE HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE
AND UNIVERSITY NEWSPAPERS FROM 1930 TO 1959

by

Sheryl Monique Kennedy Haydel

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
and the School of Mass Communication and Journalism
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

Dr. Vanessa D. Murphree, Committee Chair
Associate Professor, Mass Communication and Journalism

Dr. David R. Davies, Committee Member
Professor, Mass Communication and Journalism

Dr. Christopher R. Campbell, Committee Member
Professor, Mass Communication and Journalism

Dr. Cheryl Jenkins, Committee Member
Associate Professor, Mass Communication and Journalism

Dr. Fei Xue, Committee Member
Associate Professor, Mass Communication and Journalism

Dr. Karen S. Coats
Dean of the Graduate School

May 2016

COPYRIGHT BY

Sheryl Monique Kennedy Haydel

2016

Published by the Graduate School



ABSTRACT

OUR VOICE, OUR CHOICE: RACE, POLITICS, AND COMMUNITY BUILDING ON THE PAGES OF FIVE HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY NEWSPAPERS FROM 1930 TO 1959

by Sheryl Monique Kennedy Haydel

May 2016

From 1930 to 1959, the black college student-run press was a prolific voice leading discussions about ways to eradicate racial discrimination, amass political currency, and nurture communal solidarity. Embedded in their mission was a desire to awaken their readers intellectually and emotionally to join a mounting movement toward racial liberation. Yet, historians have ignored this expansive network of black collegian editors and writers, who were a philosophical extension of the professional Black Press.

Like their mentors in the Black Press, black college student editors and writers vigorously advocated for racial equality, took a combative stance against political gerrymandering that left blacks stripped of power and their dignity, and pleaded with their readers to work as a collective to overcome entrenched racism. As a microcosm of the might of the black college student-run press, five schools were explored to determine how the writers and editors covered the prevailing issues of the first half of the twentieth century: race, politics, and community building.

On the campuses of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, North Carolina; Clark University in Atlanta, Georgia; Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia; Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama student editors and writers shared a communal

responsibility to elevate their race. However, each newspaper's voice was shaped by their school's historical origins, the students who served in editorial posts, and environmental pressures, which defined the African American experience.

The researcher discovered the students were able to use their campus newspapers as an authentic outlet of expression. Additionally, the black college student-run press displayed diversity of thought, and often struggled between striking a balance between the philosophical leanings of their mentors and ancestors, and finding their editorial independence. This investigation is significant because it provides insight into how black college women and men communicated about their roles and responsibilities in society during their collegiate years, which traditionally represented a season of social, political, and personal enlightenment. The findings indicate that the five schools embraced a mission to engage their audience in meaningful discourse by delivering news with maturity and passion.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am forever grateful to my committee. Thank you to my Advisor, Dr. Vanessa D. Murphree, for helping me discover a love for journalism history, serving as my committee chair, and pushing me to become a more insightful scholar. Thank you to Dr. Christopher R. Campbell, Dr. David R. Davies, Dr. Cheryl Jenkins, and Dr. Fei Xue for your enduring belief that my scholarship mattered as well as the voices of countless African Americans on the campus of five historically black colleges and universities in the first half of the twentieth century deserved to be heard. To the Mass Communication and Journalism graduate admissions team, who saw my potential as a doctoral student, I can never say thank you enough. I will always be motivated by your investment in me as a person and as a scholar.

Without the assistance, patience and generosity of the archivists, researchers and historians at Bennett College for Women (Dr. Linda Beatrice Brown); Clark Atlanta University; Hampton University (Donzella Maupin and Sonya Basnight); Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College (Angela Proctor); and Tuskegee University (Dana Chandler and Cheryl Ferguson), this project would have remained just an idea. I must thank the Amistad Research Center staff at Tulane University for helping me uncover the archival treasures of historically black colleges and universities - which served as the inspiration for this project.

I send them my sincerest gratitude to mentors and colleagues, who cleared the path for me so I could explore the world without the pain, ignorance, and prejudice of the past. To my unforgettable college professor, Dr. Ann Wead Kimbrough, who shaped the way I teach, interact with students, and push myself, I say thank you. To Dr. Jinx C.

Broussard, who has always recognized the best in me, I say thank you. To Dr. Brenda Edgerton-Webster, who taught me immeasurable lessons during the dissertation process and in life, I say thank you. Dr. Cindy Blackwell, thank you for your friendship. Dr. Kim LeDuff, thank you for being such an amazing role model. Dr. Beretta Smith-Shomade, thank you for your peaceful spirit, wisdom and sisterhood that kept me focused and balanced through it all. Thank you to Dr. Janice Haynes, Dr. Riva Brown, Dr. Trish Minnis and Dr. Shearon Roberts for sharing all that you had to make sure I excelled. To my late aunt Dr. Yvonne Kennedy for fostering a level of achievement within our family, and exposing me to the endless possibilities of higher education all of which allowed me to grow into this moment, I say thank you. Dr. Walter M. Kimbrough, Dr. Salomon Shomade, Dr. Robert Byrd and Shawn Anglim, thank you for always being accessible and positive at every turn.

However, I would be nothing without the love and support of my family during this journey. Thank you to my husband, David M. Haydel, who did more than simply believe in me. He made my dreams, his dreams and I stand in awe of this every day. Thank you to our beautiful children, Clark and Davis, who were patient and always remained my loudest cheerleaders and biggest admirers. Thank you to my mother, Jean C. Kennedy, and sister, Sonia Kennedy Ladd, for their laughter, praise, acts of kindness, and true sacrifice during this project and beyond. A special thank you to my extended family - Cynthia M. Gaudin, Candice Roche Boucree, Maria Roche, and Eric Roche - who were awesome every step of the way.

I am equally as grateful to my numerous friends, such Jamyee C. Pleasant, Ty Salvant, Adria Kimbrough and Charon F. Maple, who loved me through it. There are so

many other friends who showed selflessness as they edited chapters, gave me a shoulder to fill with tears, listened intently to my passion about this project, loaned me books and space to write or sleep when driving home was not an option, spent time with our children, gave me invaluable advice, fed me as well as rallied me to the finish line with their prayers, friendship and smiles. I am humbled and honored because you are reason why I can say, "It is done."

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my father and mother. Thank you LaBaron Kennedy (1940-2000) - a proud graduate of Dillard University - and someone who believed in the power of historically black colleges and universities to liberate African Americans from the fringes of society. Without his belief, investment and insistence that I could do and be more than I ever imagined, my life lessons would be very different. While he is no longer living, his love and lessons keep me lifted.

Thank you to my mother, Jean C. Kennedy, another Dillard University alumnus, her love and unconditional sacrifices are testaments to the best of the human spirit. Thank you mother for showing me how to find my purpose and never abandon my dreams.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iv

DEDICATION vii

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION 1

 The Worthiness of the Black College Press to Narrate the Black Experience 3

 Race, Politics, and Community Building: Concerns of the Black College Press 8

 A Quick Overview: Telling the Black Experience Story From a Collegiate
 Perspective 18

 Going and Staying: The Black College Press as Advocate Accommodationist and
 Agent for Change 23

 Bennett College for Women 23

 Clark University 24

 Hampton Institute 24

 Tuskegee Institute 25

 Southern University Agriculture and Mechanical College 27

 Chapter-by-Chapter: Understanding the Black College Press 28

 Was There a True Need for the Black Press? 31

 The Complexity and Legacy of the Black Press: From Whence We Come 36

 Their Roots Run Deep 37

Division from Within: Break Up to Make Up	39
The Black Press: A Calling, Business Arrangement or Fulfillment of a Legacy	45
Systemic Oppression.....	47
Practicing What was Preached: Southern Cities and the Black College Press Follow the Black Press Template and Survive the Great Depression.....	51
Black Women’s Worth Sustains the Black Press in Good and Bad Times	53
Before College, Black Students are Writing – The Case of Lincoln High and The Kansas City Call	65
Before ‘Black Lives Matter,’ Black Colleges Mattered	68
The Progeny Cometh: The Black College Press.....	87
Newspapers are Black and White: Comparing Mainstream College Press Systems to the Black College Press	89
You Can’t Tell Me What to Say!: Censorship in the Black College Press.....	89
White Space in Student-Run Campus Newspapers	91
The Association of Black College Newspapers: A Network in Action.....	93
A Historical Analysis Breeds Familiarity, Credibility, and Clarity.....	94
Silencing the "Big Lie" and Selling the Truth	95
Themes Provide the Lens to Understand the Black College Student Press	97
The Push and Pull of Historical Analysis, Objectivity, and the Black College Press	99

Race, Politics, and Community Building are the Themes that tell the Story.....	101
CHAPTER II – BENNETT COLLEGE FOR WOMEN: THE BENNETT BANNER .	105
For Country, Culture, and Respect: <i>The Banner</i> uses Journalism to Promote Equality from a Black Feminist Perspective	105
Black Collegian Women Coming Together in Sisterhood and Service.....	109
The Hopes and Dreams of Black Women.....	111
Understanding the Inner Workings of the Banner	115
The Banner's Racial Crusade	120
Presidents, Wars, and Bilbo: The Banner on Politics	131
Brick by Brick: The Banner on Community Building.....	141
The Banner's Truth is Their Legacy	154
CHAPTER III – CLARK UNIVERSITY: THE MENTOR AND THE PANTHER	157
This is Not a Moment, but a Movement: <i>The Mentor</i> , and later <i>The Panther</i> , Utilized its Pages as an Alternative Channel of Student Expression.....	157
The Mentor, The Panther and Clark Grow Together.....	167
On Matters of Race both the Mentor and Panther Speak.....	177
Political Perspectives from the Student Editors and Writers	182
At Clark and Beyond, a Thriving Community Remained a Must	186
With the Mentor and Panther, the Movement Flourished.....	195
CHAPTER IV – HAMPTON INSTITUTE: THE HAMPTON SCRIPT.....	197

We are Nobody's Fools: The Radicalization of <i>The Script</i> to Advance Black	
Intellectual Discourse.....	197
Building Their Newspaper with People and Talents	206
Let Freedom Ring	209
The Script Connects with Their Readers	211
Race as a Tipping Point in the Script.....	216
Court Rulings and Lynchings	224
Without Our Community We are Nothing.....	231
Awareness of Self and Objection to Foolery	235
CHAPTER V- SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY& AGRICULTURAL & MECHANICAL	
COLLEGE: THE CAMPUS DIGEST	239
Tilling the Soil for Change: <i>The Digest</i> Adopts a Balanced Approach When the Rest	
of the World goes Topsy-Turvy.....	239
The Southern Digest: "Rooting " for the Home Team.....	251
Reports for the Digest: "Great Historian Stirs Audience to Race Pride"	253
Another "Negro Congressman" Gets Into Politics and So Does the Digest	260
The Digest takes on Community Building.....	270
The Digest Forever the Advocate: "Remember, it is not how much you do, but how	
well you do it."	276
CHAPTER VI - TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE: THE CAMPUS DIGEST	278

Caught in the Shadows: The Struggle to Honor, Shoulder, and Escape the Legacy of Booker T. Washington's Influence on the Pages of <i>The Camus Digest</i>	278
Between Race and Happiness	289
Political Shenanigans in The Campus Digest	296
Without Community, We are Merely Existing	299
Conservative Campus Digest Discovered an Irreverent Voice.....	304
CHAPTER VII - CONCLUSION.....	306
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	313

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

"Not only a college graduate, but an undergraduate, is supposed to be cognizant of what is happening in the world today. It is his duty to keep abreast of the times and yet not forget what has previously occurred. . . . So while you have the opportunity, correct the mistaken concepts and build up a foundation that will stand under any circumstance."

A Southern University Digest editorial written April 1, 1933

In the early twentieth century, articles written in the black¹ college student-run press were surprising, and inspiring. More importantly, the writings reflected the African American existence – wrought with painful remembrances about their race's treatment at the hands of whites beginning with the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade and antebellum era of forced slavery. Their journey continued through Reconstruction, Jim Crow separatism, and the strength of black soldiers who risked their lives for country as well as to elevate their race during World War II.² Addressing topics like the rising black unemployment rate, the role of education to uplift the black populace to the value of "Negro Week"

¹ For the purpose of this discourse, the terms "black," "Negro," or "Afro/African American" may be used interchangeably to identify individuals of Afro/African descent who are also Americans.

² For African Americans, the Atlantic Charter was revolutionary. It was something, as NAACP Board Member Channing Tobias declared, that black people would be willing to 'live, work, fight, and need be, die for.' (Address [by Channing Tobias] at Tenth Anniversary Celebration of the Reichstag Trial: Carnegie Hall, December 22, 1943, Reel 18, Roosevelt). It appeared that the world's largest capitalist nation had joined with the greatest colonial power and admitted that the world they created in 1919 with the Treaty of Versailles had only led to the rise of a racism so virulent that it even offended Anglo-Saxons. . . The embrace of self-determination, for example, implied that the federal government, or at least Roosevelt, would not fight to end the poll tax, white primaries, and other voter restrictions that disenfranchised millions of African Americans in the South. Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 17.

Also see Crystal de Gregory, email message to the author, April 9, 2013. Jim Crow was more than a series of rigid anti-black laws. It was a way of life. Under Jim Crow, African Americans were relegated to the status of second-class citizens. Jim Crow represented the legitimization of anti-black racism. Many Christian ministers and theologians taught that whites were the chosen people, blacks were cursed to be servants, and God supported racial segregation.

celebrations, and the artistic endeavors of the Harlem Renaissance, these publications explored black culture as well as mainstream society with profound candor and maturity.

Similar to the professional Black Press, the black college press was part of an intentional movement to promote black achievement and racial solidarity.³ The spirit of overcoming their past while providing a distinctive voice that honored their ancestors, and demonstrated the ongoing contributions of Africans and their descendants to America was a consistently shared theme. The premise of cooperative uplift connected black college student newspapers throughout the country to each other as well as to the advocacy role of the Black Press. Their work routinely demonstrated their responsibility, their passion, and their commitment to report news that shaped campus conversations and behaviors. African American college student editors and writers inked the chronological and complex narrative of being black in a country that fought vigorously to exclude them from receiving a quality education, fair housing opportunities, voting rights, and access to better paying jobs.⁴ The black college press captured seminal moments such as the unmerited verdict reached in the Alabama “Scottsboro Boys” case to the racially divisive politics of Mississippi Senator Theodore G. Bilbo.⁵ It was the goal of the black college

³ I. Garland Penn., *The Afro-American Press and Its Editors* (Springfield, MA: Willey and Co., 189). First published 1969 by Arno Press; Dann, Martin E., ed. *The Black Press: 1827-1890 The Quest for National Identity* (New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1971); Armistead Pride and Clint C. Wilson II. *A History of The Black Press* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1997); Ronald E. Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 2nd Ed. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990).

⁴ Mark Tushnet., *Making Civil Rights Law: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court, 1936-1961*(New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994); Steven F. Lawson, *Black Ballots: Voting Rights in the South, 1944-1969*.(Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1999).

⁵ Shanna Gildersleeve, “The Struggle for Justice: How the Media Convicted and Freed the Scottsboro Boys 1931-1937,” *The Atlanta Review of Journalism History* 8 (September 2009); Theodore G. Bilbo, *Take Your Choice: Separation or Mongrelization* (Poplarville, MS: Dream House Publishing Company, 1947); *New York Times*, June 23, 1946, 30.

press to not just write about news from a local, regional, national, or international perspective, but also to provoke positive action among their readers.

The Worthiness of the Black College Press to Narrate the Black Experience

These publications often helped define the intellectual might of black college women and men, and urged them to confront complex issues such as systemic discrimination and public policy deficiencies. Additionally, these student-run newspapers symbolized the steady rhythm of racial progress in the first half of the twentieth century. In fact, the black college student press became the realization of a dream that African Americans could successfully work together to hasten social and economic change while participants of educational uplift. The pages of the black college student-run press embodied the optimism, fears, and victories of its people. Without a doubt, these black college press editors and writers understood the magnitude of their contributions to the permanent record of their respective schools, and the legacy of educated African Americans.

Over three consecutive decades (1940s, 1950s, and 1960s), the narrative surrounding “the black experience” remained a priority for the black college student press. They aptly crafted articles that specifically addressed racial understanding and political activism as an extension of their community’s crusade for equality. Spurred by the knowledge that one day, they too, would face a racially intolerant world, the student-run black press fervently campaigned for social justice. For example, *The Hampton Script*, the black student-run newspaper of Hampton Institute of Virginia, warned graduating seniors that “. . . they will find themselves into a more or less unsympathetic world, and this world makes no provision, or cares little about the fact that these men and

women ever were college students.”⁶ The Script staff hoped to illustrate that the awareness and contributions of black college students remained vital to the journey of all African Americans seeking equality.⁷

Emulating the professional Black Press, black college press students battled for their voice to be heard despite a myriad of obstacles that perpetually confronted them such as censorship. While they welcomed advice from students, faculty, staff, and administration, they only did so when the circumstance was not to the detriment of their editorial freedom. It was part of their mission to “be true to their convictions regardless of the consequences.”⁸ Student editors and writers from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, Howard University in Washington D.C., along with several other notable black colleges frequently employed savvy editorial skills, and the power of their collective voices to fend off censorship from school administrators and community leaders.⁹ They flexed their journalistic efficacy in articles that eloquently framed racial strife, political maneuverings, and community pride. Even in the midst of economic and social uncertainty - which included the Great Depression, both waves of the Great Migration, and the Modern Civil Rights Movement’s Voting Rights Act of 1965 - the will and work of the student-run black college press certainly was pervasive and noteworthy.¹⁰

⁶ "Editorial," *The Hampton Script*, March 19, 1936, 2.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ "It's Our Policy Too!" *The Hampton Script*, October 4, 1941, 2.

⁹ Juan Williams and Dwayne Ashley, *I'll Find a Way or Make One: A Tribute to Historically Black Colleges and Universities* (New York, NY: Amistad Publishing, 2004), 108.

¹⁰ Carole Marks, *Farewell, We're Good and Gone: The Great Black Migration* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1989), 17; Stanley Nelson, producer, *The Black Press: Soldiers without Swords*, DVD (San Francisco: California Newsreel, 1998).

Spanning the decades between 1930 through 1959, black college student-run newspapers regularly discussed racial empowerment, political awareness, and community loyalty. Their newspapers offered the black-student perspective as well as a contemporary contextual analysis on international, and national socio-political movements that often ran contrary to the ideals and convictions of the Black Vanguard of thought and press – the very ones black college press students sought to emulate. Their publications offered a safe place for students to openly share and vet information with each other, nurture burgeoning leaders, and foster an authentic appreciation for their journalistic predecessors. Even more notable, the black college student-run press was a gateway into adulthood for many young black women and men who arrived on campus in search of a purpose that would change their world. Many of these students went on to professionally write for the Black Press because they intimately understood and embodied the same commitment to advocacy journalism as their predecessors albeit their theoretical frames often differed.

The rarely documented legacy of the black college student press represents a segment of journalism history that has been overlooked by scholars. It is a narrative that begs revelation – in honor of those who have laid the groundwork and in preparation for those yet to exist. The black college student press symbolized the need and value of community-based journalism as reflected in the direct and indirect mentorship from the Black Press. Since most African Americans viewed “literacy and education as a channel through which to better their condition of life,”¹¹ student-run black college press editors and writers fully embraced their role as community advocates responsible for accurately

¹¹ Albert N. Whiting, *Guardians of The Flame: Historically Black Colleges Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 1991), 1-3.

reporting comprehensive and factual stories that challenged and celebrated their readers' ideology and actions. In fact, the black college student press believed that their journalistic work was a duty-bound service and they were obliged to the community and, in many regards the nation, to execute it with professionalism and integrity.

Without question, during these three early twentieth century decades, historically black colleges represented a collective sense of responsibility, racial identity, and community among young African American students. Although each black college newspaper had its specific mission, the short-term purpose was to chronicle campus life, and to simultaneously highlight and contextualize the world's vents from a student's point of view.¹² In the long-term, the black college press hoped to mold the social and cultural narrative of black colleges and black people as competent and worthy so readers would have an elevated opinion of them.¹³ Reflective of the Black Press, the black college press tailored their publications to generate cultural pride, raise journalistic credibility, and to serve as a vehicle of preparation for careers in journalism.¹⁴ Although small in volume and constrained by scant resources, black college newspapers repeatedly evoked commentary and response that, in turn, prodded students to assume leadership roles – both intellectually and socially.¹⁵

Furthermore, scholars have labeled this era a distinctive chapter in black history when a burgeoning civil rights movement was afoot on black college campuses and students engaged head-on with social justice issues confronting America.¹⁶ Unlike their

¹² Pamela Foster, email message to author, March 25, 2013.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Jane Rhodes, interview by author, March 4, 2015.

professional Black Press counterparts, black college press students had more editorial freedom (or at times believed they did) to explore the frailties of the world around them without the swift and often deadly social consequences experienced by the professional Black Press. In a sense, the college campus provided some literal and figurative protection from local, state, and federal harassment that the professional Black Press customarily endured.¹⁷ Moreover, black college campuses served as a respite from the entanglements of the world. College students on black campuses in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s were somewhat isolated from the defining social problems of the times.¹⁸ Most students lived on or near campus and were shielded from the suffocating racism and poverty that enveloped their home communities off campus. This mere physical distance afforded students ownership of the newspaper to explore issues honestly on black college campuses.¹⁹

Most student editors and writers in the black college press used ownership of the newspapers as a catalyst for change as evidenced by the fact that the 1930s and 1940s served as a harbinger to the activism of the Modern Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. For example, black college students, primarily from black schools, worked with civil rights organizations throughout the decades such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and often used their student-run college newspapers to build awareness about political and social crusades.²⁰

It was in this environment, black college student-run newspapers documented the rising discontent with racism, racial violence, and the oppressive and dehumanizing

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Pamela Foster, email message to author, March 23, 2013.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Crystal de Gregory, email message to author, March 23, 2013.

power of the treatment of African Americans.²¹ As such, the black college press was both sacred and a unique form of expression because it allowed students to embrace a newly acquired form of writing (journalism) that could in tandem inform, entertain, and convict the masses.

Race, Politics, and Community Building: Concerns of the Black College Press

Student writers and editors of the black college press discussed *race*, *politics*, and *community building* during consecutive periods of economic, political, social, and racial unrest. Based on the literature, there is a link between the treatment of blacks in society, and what African American students wrote about in their college newspapers primarily because it was difficult for *all* black people to escape the influence of the racially restrictive times between 1930 and 1959.

Historically, blacks in America have always placed a high value on reading and writing (although often illegal or systemically inaccessible throughout the country's history), this cultural objective has been facilitated via both the Black Press and the black college press. Underscoring the historic and cultural value of literacy among African Americans, Perry and Steele's *Young Gifted and Black* recognizes that notable slaves, such as Phyllis Wheatley, Frederick Douglass, David Walker, Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey, and countless others, both read and taught other slaves to read pamphlets and newspapers in order to keep abreast of the anti-slave movement, and strengthen a skill set that had immeasurable social currency.²² Scholars maintain that literate slaves emerged as leaders because of their ability to gather information and interpret writings that facilitated

²¹ Ibid., April 9, 2013.

²² Theresa Perry, Claude Steele, and Asa Hilliard III, *Young, Gifted, and Black: Promoting High Achievement Among African-American Students* (Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2003), 14.

all of their desires for freedom. Also, for slaves (and the generations that follow), learning to read became both an individual achievement and a communal accomplishment. African Americans often used the significant social denominator of literacy to liberate themselves from a life-sentence of ignorance and shame. Once achieved, it proved a skill that could not be stripped away. Additionally, it became a diving rod for community building since “literacy was something to share.”²³

The shared objective of literacy and community building, often facilitated via the Black Press and black college press, becomes an important foundation for civic response at pivotal times throughout history. For example, most scholars (including Perry and Steele) believe “The Great Depression of the 1930s worsened an already bleak economic situation for blacks”²⁴ and that such pecuniary instability for them sparked major social movements that could never have been successfully executed without a significantly literate populace who could engage with the Black Press network. Among numerous examples, the St. Louis Urban League launched a national “Jobs for Negroes” campaign in the late 1920s to early 1930s²⁵ that advocated boycotting stores who served predominately black customers but only hired white employees.²⁶ Black newspapers (with its pass-along legacy) certainly became the defining conduit of information that supported such an event particularly since commercial radio was only in its infancy, and viewed African Americans as negligible stakeholders in that burgeoning communication medium.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Walter R. Allen, Joseph O. Jewell, Kimberly A. Griffin, and De’Sha S. Wolf, “Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Honoring the Past, Engaging the Present, Touching the Future.” *Journal of Negro Education* 76, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 263-280, 521-522, 524-527.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

Lizabeth Cohen's *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* explored the power that working class blacks experienced during the 1930s. Cohen explained that African Americans, who migrated from the South to the North in the first half of the twentieth century, embraced newfound opportunities to vote and eagerly took advantage of social programs such as Chicago's Unemployed Councils and Workers' Committees in 1934.²⁷ Both socially and politically, blacks worked to be heard as well as acknowledged. In return, they appreciated reading their voices in the pages of the Black Press and the black college press.

Collectively, scholars have written extensively that African Americans became more politically aware and active during the 1930s and 1940s due to the shattered reality of their political clout to affect real change. Although historians and economists agree that multiple causes brought on the unprecedented economic devastation of the Great Depression, Republican President Herbert Hoover shouldered much of the blame for the country's dismal existence and outlook. Historically and systemically ignored by Republican Administrations, thousands of blacks simultaneously migrated to the North and into the Democratic Party - out of protest and genuine frustration as a result of direct prompting from the Black Press and black college press.²⁸ Consequently, in 1932, many African Americans supported Democratic Presidential Candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt, demonstrating that while their environment remained hostile, their sentiment and attitude remained hopeful under his administration.²⁹

²⁷ Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 266.

²⁸ Allen, Jewell, Griffin, and Wolf, "Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Honoring the Past, Engaging the Present, Touching the Future," 263-280, 521-522, 524-527.

²⁹ Ibid.

David M. Kennedy's *Freedom From Fear* provides insightful analysis of the importance of a black literate and the Black Public Sphere (that the Black Press and black college press had created) in his discussion of the promise and malfunction of President Roosevelt's New Deal. The government-sponsored social reform programs were designed to benefit all U.S. citizens and boost the country's fragile economy in the 1930s; however, since individual states implemented this national program, equitable receipt of funding for all residents proved extremely vulnerable to internal and often unchecked discrimination against the most marginal segment of the population – African Americans.³⁰ For example on the agricultural side of the New Deal, only white farmers or tenants (sharecroppers) could collect and cash vouchers for growing or not growing certain crops. Black farmers that owned their land outright, and experienced the same challenges as white farmers in maintaining their mortgages after the Great Depression, did not receive the same government-sponsored relief as their white counterparts. According to Journalism Historian Berkley Hudson, Mississippi farmer Sylvester Harris read about the availability of government assistance in the Black Press *Memphis Tri-State Defender* (a subsidiary of the *Chicago Defender*), telephoned the White House in March of 1931 -- a year after President Roosevelt "launched his campaign to resuscitate the ailing spirit and economy of the United States" -- and subsequently made the nearly 900-

In response, the Roosevelt Administration relied on black leaders and a job-stimulating proposal called the New Deal to create opportunities for Americans including African Americans. FDR's New Deal was designed as an economic engine to get the sluggish economy moving by creating jobs that put all Americans back to work. The New Deal had several strategies to address the economic crisis including declaring a four-day holiday to stop people from withdrawing their money from shaky banks, and establishing the Works Progress Administration that was responsible for hiring Americans to build and run post offices, schools, parks, bridges and highways.

³⁰ David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 378.

mile trek on his mule “Jessie” to Washington, D.C. to directly petition the President.³¹ His request was simple: “a plea to save his home from mortgage foreclosure” just as the other white farmers from his region had received.³² With the President’s assistance, the Lowndes County, Mississippi farmer received an extension on his mortgage; however, this was not the outcome for most African Americans, who lacked education and resources to save them from the racial and socioeconomic perils of society. Under threat of expulsion, imprisonment, or death, black farmers or tenants (sharecroppers) turned over farm vouchers that came in their name to the owners *in addition* to paying perpetual annual expenses for farming their land. The Black Press and the black college press proved instrumental in not only informing African Americans of this illegal practice, but also often provided step-by-step instructions to remedy the situation.

On the employment side of the program, unfortunately, the New Deal did not reverse Jim Crow laws; but, with the help of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, “the president brought African-Americans into the government in small but unprecedented numbers.” Under the New Deal, qualified and over-qualified African Americans rarely secured Civil Servant positions; and, when they did, they suffered from lack of promotion and professional development opportunities unlike their white counterparts who sometimes had less education, time-in service, or lower Civil Service Test scores. Kennedy wrote that due to the Black Press and black college press exposure of the adulterated implementation of the New Deal programs, President Roosevelt invited, and frequently

³¹ Berkley Hudson, “The Mississippi Negro Farmer, His Mule, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt: Racial Portrayals of Sylvester Harris in the Black and White 1930s,” *Journalism History* 32, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 201.

³² *Ibid.*

gathered with an “informal black cabinet”³³ to strategize methods of addressing and abating such discriminatory practices. Educator, Activist, Black Press Contributor, and Bethune College President & Founder Mary McLeod Bethune (1904 in Daytona Beach, Florida) was a key member of President Roosevelt’s “black cabinet,” who gave him advice and shared the concerns of black Americans.³⁴

Kennedy maintains that President Roosevelt “appointed the first black federal judge, William Hastie,” along with several other “advisers for Negro affairs” to different government agencies³⁵ in order to re-build the New Deal’s infrastructure, stabilize the whole economy, and ensure black Americans could begin to experience a better today, as well as, a better tomorrow. The legacy of a black literate and the power of the Black Press and black college press helped position African Americans of the early twentieth century to participate more fully in the radically socialist government programs of the New Deal.

Even after President Roosevelt’s twelve years in office, and modest gains on economic and racial issues, blacks were still seeking opportunities for social advancement, and recognition. According to William E. Leuchtenburg’s article “The Conversion of Harry Truman,” prior to his presidency, as a Democratic Senator from Missouri, Truman made statements that infuriated and isolated blacks. As might be expected when President Harry S. Truman (1945-1953) succeeded President Roosevelt, African Americans often watched him sympathize with Southerners and share their separatist outlook on race relations while publicly maintaining that he never regretted that

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 378.

the “Civil War had ended in a Union victory”³⁶ As African Americans attempted to untangle his inconsistent messages as reported in both the mainstream and Black Press/black college press, they sought opportunities to work with his administration in order to garner the country’s recognition of their place as full-fledged American citizens.

For example, President Truman publically announced, “I think one man is just as good as another as long as he’s honest and decent and not a nigger or a Chinaman;”³⁷ that “he did not question Jim Crow,” and (during a 1940 National Colored Democratic Association of Chicago assembly) that “I wish to make it clear that I am not appealing for social equality of the Negro. The Negro himself knows better than that.”³⁸ Ironically, at the same moment in time, he created a President’s Committee on Civil Rights to investigate racial violence, such as illegal lynchings, entertained discussions from the Black Vanguard (many of whom belonged to the Black Press) on the importance of racial integration. Additionally, he passed Executive Order 8802, which desegregated American military troops and federal government work places.³⁹

As African Americans remained steadfast in their quest for equality throughout President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Administration, both the mainstream and Black Press/black college press viewed him as one slow to react to racial indignities and stood virtually silent during the national debate on the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 and the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955. Civil Rights Scholars Robert C. Baron and Samuel Scinta said he “finally acted in Little Rock, Arkansas, when

³⁶ William E. Leuchtenburg, “The Conversion of Harry Truman,” *American Heritage* 42, no. 7 (November 1991): 55.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 58.

nine black girls (and boys) [sic] were selected to integrate Little Rock Central High School.”⁴⁰ President Eisenhower sent federal troops to Little Rock, and ordered them to remain at the school until the end of year “to ensure the safety of the black students.”⁴¹ Although, in 1957, President Eisenhower signed the first Civil Rights Bill since the Reconstruction Era concerning voting rights, as a whole, his administration was not an ally to the burgeoning Modern Civil Rights Movement for black equality.⁴² This philosophical divide underscored the inescapable fact that African Americans and their press systems toiled on all fronts to bring about incremental social, political, and cultural change in the U.S.

This discussion cannot effectively take place without acknowledging that a special and distinctive social movement simultaneously played a major part in the quest for black equality and found expression in the Black Press and black college press. In Lisa Levenstein’s *A Movement Without Marches*, she explains that between the late 1940s and throughout all of the 1950s, African American women, particularly in urban cities across the North such as Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago, lived “struggling with various combinations of low wages, poor health, joblessness, inadequate housing, and domestic violence.”⁴³ Many joined a “movement without marches,” Levenstein wrote, and aggressively sought financial assistance from local welfare departments to piece together a life for themselves, and most importantly, their children.⁴⁴ Aside from

⁴⁰ Robert C. Baron and Samuel Scinta, “1950-1960 Peace and Prosperity: 1957 Eisenhower Sends Troops to Little Rock, Arkansas,” *Millennium 2000 – 20th Century America: Key Events in History* (1996): 74-75.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Lisa Levenstein, *A Movement Without Marches* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 4.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

needing money to feed their families, the working-class black women, believed education was the only emancipator to economic stability. They relied heavily on the public school system and remained certain that their efforts “would provide their children with opportunities that they had lacked.”⁴⁵ Many of the black women in the Levenstein study, which is considered one of the more significant investigations into this topic, did not graduate from high school and “believed that their limited education had impeded their ability to earn an adequate living.”⁴⁶ Because the black women refused to lose hope that education would provide a better life for their children, they fought for admission to “good” public schools and resources (libraries, recreational centers, etc.).

The tipping point for black women's rights came before Levenstein's research. Betty Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin wrote about an intricate and well established network of black women's organizations designed to combat racial and gender inequality. For instance, the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) held its twenty-first biennial convention in the summer of 1939 in Boston.⁴⁷ And while the term “civil rights” did not become widely used until the 1940s, black women, in particular, were actively protesting “racial discrimination in education, voting, public accommodations, armed services, and housing.”⁴⁸

Women’s groups were working to develop national strategies to end social injustices in their communities. Other women’s organizations such as the New Jersey Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority’s Non-Partisan

⁴⁵ Charles M. Payne, *I’ve Got The Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (California: University of California Press, 1996), 123.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin, *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights – Black Power Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 21.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 22.

Council on Human Rights, the National Council for Negro Women, and the National Association of Colored Women along with the NACW were all working from similar agendas to liberate their communities from oppression in the first half of the twentieth century.⁴⁹ Collier and Franklin wrote that these women's groups represented diverse pockets of the black community. Many of the club representatives were “teachers and business women and the wives of lawyers, physicians, and the other professionals;” however, “there were also many representatives who were domestic servants, day laborers, and other service workers.”⁵⁰ More specifically, Collier and Franklin said that the federation of organizations used its collective will to draw attention to the needs of the black community when whites did their best to ignore the collateral damage caused by segregation.⁵¹

Aside from women's organizations, Black Greek-letter Organizations grew to national prominence in the first half of the twentieth century. Scholars such as Walter M. Kimbrough and Gregory S. Parks believe that organizations such as Alpha Kappa Alpha and Delta Sigma Theta sororities along with Alpha Phi Alpha and Omega Psi Phi fraternities focus on academic achievement, camaraderie, leadership, and community service were much-needed reinforcements to the onslaught of racial discrimination

⁴⁹ Ibid., 23.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 43-46. Civil rights and journalism luminaries like Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Irene McCoy Gaines, A'lelia Walker, Mary McDowell, Mary Church Terrell, and Mary McLeod Bethune supported the efforts of working class men's organizations (like the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters) and their auxiliary working women's clubs through their memberships on the Citizens' Committee; however, very few such “club women” regularly joined the local city chapters. In fact, “even among the wives of the BSCP national organizers, only Walter (Mrs. C.L.) Dellums actively participated in the Oakland local's activities. Lucille Randolph [Mrs. A. Phillip], Elizabeth Webster, and Hazel Smith had their own circles of social service and club friends and did not [initially] belong to their local Women's Economic Councils. Historian Deborah Gray White argues such divisions were ‘the cost of club work, the price of black feminism’.” Some twenty years later (1946), Lucille Randolph joined the local New York Ladies' Auxiliary “when her husband paid for her dues.” Melinda Chateaufort, *Marching Together: Women of the Sleeping Car Porters* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 14.

pillaging all rungs of the African American community. In *Black Greek-Letter Organizations in the 21st Century: Our Fight Has Just Begun*, Parks wrote that these group became as essential organ in not only the African American community, but throughout the country. Their elite membership ranks included many in the Black Vanguard such as Mary McLeod Bethune and Reverend Martin L. King Jr., who were at the forefront of the crusade for racial equality ⁵²

A Quick Overview: Telling the Black Experience Story From a Collegiate Perspective

It is critical to note that by this time of the 1940s and 1950s, the formerly blind-eyed federal government turned its attention of admonishment to Southern states and levied massive pressure to stop discriminatory practices. They did so in an effort to slow the quickly escalating migration of African Americans to the North where access to public assistance, housing, and schools had become limited and strained.⁵³ Meanwhile, for African American families, who encountered blatant discrimination, bigotry, and limited access to financial resources regularly in the 1930s, this new era of the 1940s and 1950s afforded many young black people (via their campus press systems) access to journalism education, a public voice, and other opportunities that Roosevelt's New Deal was unable to generate let alone sustain.⁵⁴

Many African American students took advantage of their newfound access to activism visa vie attending college. They often joined organizations (including the black college press and Black Greek-letter organizations) that gave them visibility and structure

⁵² Gregory S. Parks *Black Greek-Letter Organizations in the Twenty-first Century: Our Fight Has Just Begun* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008).

⁵³ Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: the Functions of Public Welfare* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971), 194.

⁵⁴ Brian E. Harper, "African American Access to Higher Education: The Evolving Role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities" *American Academic* 3, no. 1(January 2007).

to actively work for equality while also obtaining an education that would later qualify them to equally engage with their white counterparts as professionals. According to Journalism historian Vanessa D. Murphree, “February 1, 1960, four black college freshmen” “sat in” protest of “white only” seating at a F.W. Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. The very next day, *thirty* more students joined the movement that sought equal rights for blacks.⁵⁵ Even though the implementation of sit-ins as a strategic demonstration of black frustration with inferior treatment occurred in the 1960s, it is vital to remember that the actual planning of the sit-in movement began in the late 1950s on the campus of Bennett College for Women, a black school in Greensboro.⁵⁶ It was a collective effort comprised of black students who led this effort, Linda Beatrice Brown wrote, and became a force of words (through their press systems) and actions (through their protests).⁵⁷

It is of value to mention that some of these African American students came from families with a tradition of higher education and leadership roles in their communities. Civil Rights historian Charles M. Payne described how Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) founder, Ella Baker, while not herself a youth, encouraged and advocated for high school and college aged students to create a space for their own voice of protest. She helped them to identify and acknowledge their family legacies of civic

⁵⁵ Vanessa D. Murphree, “The Selling of Civil Rights: The Communication Section of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee,” *Journalism History* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 21.

⁵⁶ Linda Beatrice Brown, *Belles of Liberty: Gender, Bennett College, and the Civil Rights Movement in Greensboro, North Carolina* (Greensboro, NC: Women and Wisdom Press, 2013).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

involvement as a right of lineage in order to become effective grassroots advocates of the Modern Civil Rights Movement.⁵⁸

A 1927 valedictorian and graduate of Shaw University, a black college in Raleigh, North Carolina,⁵⁹ Baker drew both praise and frustration from the college administration. During her time at Shaw, she protested via the school newspaper “the school’s restrictive dress code for students,” as well as “its policy of having students sing Negro spirituals for white visitors”⁶⁰

Baker shared with the youth that she learned the power of protest from examining her “...family tradition of just being concerned about people, being involved” and that her grandfather acquired a section of the plantation he worked and created “a model black community” by renting out plots to other black families to build homes or grow crops.⁶¹ She told them that her mother was an eloquent public speaker and active member of her church⁶² and her father worked as a waiter on a ferry that traveled from Norfolk to Washington who always allowed her to ask questions about the world around.⁶³ In sharing these examples, she taught these young people to view their family members’ contributions through a bottom-up analysis, as providing important stepping-stones to the student’s role as a social advocate for change, rather than from a top-down lens that might not see the value in their citizenry.

Baker’s work with college-aged youth in SNCC remains a seminary example of effective social activism as it intersects the power of the Black Press. Without exception,

⁵⁸ Payne, *I’ve Got The Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*, 80.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

this topic is especially important because it provides continued insight about how African Americans have used the Black Press throughout history as an effective instrument for activism. Consequently, this study demonstrates that the black college student-run newspapers proved no different than their professional predecessors in covering important topics of their day. In addition, this research implicates the black college press of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s as the foundational drive of what will be the cataclysmic efforts of the collegiate and professional Black Press of the Modern Civil Rights era.

Focusing exclusively on student-run newspapers at black colleges makes this study significant because it provides a fuller understanding of how these students communicated their expectations of the world and interpreted social roles and responsibilities as collegians. Additionally, an examination of the black college student press is notable because it reflected a microcosm of the professional Black Press's mission and mantra of advocacy and personal accountability. It also provides the rarely considered perspective of the collegian's journey of social, political, and personal enlightenment as a lens of historical analysis.

Too, the investigation of the black college press is noteworthy because many of the universities attracted black students from varying socioeconomic backgrounds and regions across the country. On black college campuses, and specifically during the time period for this study, students typically came from either end of the spectrum. Educational opportunities during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s proved quite scarce for many African Americans; so, on most black campuses the demographics of the student body represented an eclectic pool of young people. Some students, who came from "privilege," had traveled the world along with benefitted from parental financial support.

On the other hand, others were from impoverished towns, had never left their rural settings and supported their education via scholarship and employment. With this as a backdrop, the student-run newspapers (and their newsrooms) proved fertile ground for discussions about empowerment and responsibility – both personal and social.⁶⁴

Historical frames of analysis for this study will investigate race, politics, and community building as measures of defining the work of black college students. It will also demonstrate the particular differences that exist among each institution of higher education as it relates to a method of obliterating the notion that all black colleges are homogenous. This study examines the following black college student-run newspapers because of their historical relevance in American black higher education, and the crucial role they performed in positively transforming the African American community:

- Bennett College for Women - Greensboro, North Carolina;
- Clark University - Atlanta, Georgia;
- Hampton University – Hampton, Virginia;
- Southern University - Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and
- Tuskegee University – Tuskegee, Alabama.

Working definitions for this study include the term *race* and refer to the ethnic grouping of people such as those of black, Negro, Afro or African American decent. *Politics* references discussion about the actions of the federal, state, or city government and/or its officials including Congress and U.S. Presidents.⁶⁵ Finally, this study defines *community*

⁶⁴ Pearl Stewart, “Will They Overcome” *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* 23, no. 13 (August 2006): 18-21.

⁶⁵ Created by the author.

building as an individual or collective obligation to enhance the welfare of the place in which the students lived.⁶⁶

Focusing on the critical years from 1930 to 1959, the research questions below underscores the concerns of the black college press and situates the following study as a subset of overall Black Press history:

- What specifically about *race* did black college students write in their campus newspaper?
- How were the *politics* of the day discussed on the pages of the black student press?
- How did these publications encourage positive *community action/building* on or off campus?
- Based on the above measures, what differing characteristics emerged about these institutions? And, what does this mean about how they carried out the tasks of journalism?

Going and Staying: The Black College Press as Advocate Accommodationist and Agent for Change

Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, North Carolina, was founded in the early twentieth century as one of only two colleges exclusively commissioned to educate African American women (the other Spelman College for Women in Atlanta, Georgia). Scholars agree that the efforts of black women proved essential to the fight for racial equality; yet, history has often omitted their vast contributions. Until recently, African American women's commitment and success in bringing about social change and gender

⁶⁶ Ibid.

equality have virtually been invisible to historians. Interestingly, Bennett was one of a handful of institutions of higher education to appoint an African American woman as “college president” during the time period of this study.⁶⁷ Exploring the *Bennett Banner* (the college’s student newspaper) for this study provides a richer evaluation of the role black college women played in their quest for freedom, representation, and respect.

Clark University in Atlanta, Georgia, is worthy of this examination because of its geographic location and diverse mission. Clark was not necessarily established to educate a gendered black elite, but rather African Americans, both men and women, who often came from humble or working class backgrounds, and sought a traditional liberal arts education in order to change the trajectory of their lives. As the city of Atlanta, Georgia transformed into a hub of black enlightenment as well as empowerment (the furthest south of its predecessors in Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C.), Clark University was also part of this renaissance. In the first half of the twentieth century, Civil Rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois, was one of the founding faculty members for the school’s social work department, a sociology department head for ten years, and also taught in the economics and history departments.⁶⁸ Du Bois’ fervor on the matter of racial equality had a lasting imprint on both the University and its collegiate press -- *The Mentor*, later renamed, *The Panther* -- and provides an essential component to the investigation of the black college student press.

Hampton Institute (now University) in Hampton, Virginia, was considered *the model* institution for African American higher education and provided future notable blacks such as educator Booker T. Washington, and *Chicago Defender* founder, Robert S.

⁶⁷ Linda Beatrice Brown, interview by author, February 25, 2015.

⁶⁸ Clark Atlanta University. “CAU: History.” www.cau.edu (accessed June 12, 2015).

Abbott, with the resources to improve their lives and elevate their communities.⁶⁹ It was Washington's time at Hampton (1872 to 1875) that prepared him to assume leadership positions in academia, and coveted spots in political circles throughout the country.⁷⁰ Hampton's curriculum routinely graduated scholars who immediately secured jobs that contributed to their local economy, the reputation of the institution, and the effectiveness of a slower, rational path to "uplift" among a historically marginalized people.

Hampton's founder, General Samuel Armstrong, a white retired military officer with a reputation for working well with blacks, was determined to use the college to improve race relations in a post-Reconstruction America. In addition, he created a template of the most effective and sustainable method of educating African Americans who would become "true credits to their race."⁷¹ In fact, the structure and curricula of Hampton was often "shopped" as the grand design that most black colleges followed in the subsequent years. Considering these factors, a study of *The Hampton Script* as a mouthpiece of what was considered the model design for black higher education is vital to better understanding the black college student-run press.

Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama -- modeled closely after Hampton Institute, brought the tradition of a "practical education" to the "deep South."⁷² The city of Tuskegee, and the surrounding communities, struggled to free themselves from years of enslavement, abject poverty, and systemic oppression. Washington's "racial uplift

⁶⁹ Hampton University. "About Hampton U: History." www.hamptonu.edu (accessed June 12, 2015).

⁷⁰ Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery: An Autobiography* (1901; repr., New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1995).

⁷¹ William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, Teaching for Social Justice 6 (New York, NY: Teaching College Press, 2001).

⁷² Washington, *Up From Slavery*.

through education and assimilation” approach gave many southern blacks hope.⁷³

Washington, a central figure in the African American higher education debate, proved politically relevant on the national scene, particularly during Theodore Roosevelt’s presidency, and attracted some of the best minds to invest in Tuskegee’s mission and its students. The fruits of such an investment would become central to the content of this institution’s black student-run newspaper -- *Campus Digest*.

For instance, notable scientist George Washington Carver --a black professor at Tuskegee -- patented several uses for the peanut and other innovations that remain a significant part of everyday life today.⁷⁴ In addition, Monroe Work, a celebrated sociologist in the early twentieth century, who also once worked with W.E.B. Du Bois, founded and led the Department of Records and Research at Tuskegee University.⁷⁵ Under Work’s leadership, his department began the initial documentation, recording, and mapping of illegal lynchings of African Americans and would hallmark the Jim Crow era in United States history. It was also during his time at Tuskegee, from 1908 to 1945, when Work wrote the first *Negro Year Book* -- an annual publication that used statistics to dismantle racial myths about blacks.⁷⁶

Another significant aspect of Tuskegee’s contribution to the Black Press and African American history was its role as the architect of the “Tuskegee Machine.” Through Washington’s “Tuskegee Machine,”⁷⁷ which anonymously owned several southern black newspapers, Washington espoused a philosophy that heralded education,

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Dana Chandler, interview with author, Tuskegee, AL., May 27, 2015.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Clint C. Wilson, *Black Journalists in Paradox: Historical Perspectives and Current Dilemmas* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991), 55; Louis Harlan, preface to *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1983), viii.

land ownership, and an accommodationist approach to relations with the white mainstream⁷⁸ including the Northern *New York Age* (NY) - a major advocate of Washington's ideology. The white mainstream praised the newspaper, particularly President Roosevelt,⁷⁹ because it prided itself on working to "help black people do better for themselves without damage to the race relations we've all worked hard for with whites."⁸⁰

Perhaps most historically noted is Tuskegee's role in helping train the nation's first military black fighter pilots from 1941-1945. The United States Air Force and Tuskegee trained more than a thousand African American pilots and mechanics to support the country's World War II efforts. The *Tuskegee Airmen* not only shattered the mainstream belief system that blacks were incapable of learning complex strategies, but also herald their unrivaled education, character, and determination to serve their country as true patriots despite the bigotry they endured at home and in the military. The contributions of men such as Washington, Carver, and Work underscore the importance of Tuskegee's student narrative in the fight for "victory at home and abroad."

Southern University Agriculture and Mechanical College was Louisiana's first Land-Grant school established to educate African Americans. The southeastern portion of the state of Louisiana had a significant black population between 1930 and 1959 and made Southern (located in Scotlandville near Baton Rouge and nearly 90 miles from the state's most populated city – New Orleans) an educational destination for African Americans from all sectors of a widely diverse state as well as region.

⁷⁸ Washington, *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography*; Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915*, 203.

⁷⁹ Wilson, *Black Journalists in Paradox: Historical Perspectives and Current Dilemmas*, 41.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

The institution's distinction as "the first for blacks" gave Southern's student-run newspaper -- *The Southern Digest* -- a reason to motivate their readers to attain a higher level of educational enlightenment, and a deeper awareness of self and community. Ironically, Southern's founding and expansion occurred during a time when many in the Black Press, including the *Chicago Defender's* Robert S. Abbott, urged African Americans to leave the South and seek racial freedom and economic prosperity in the North via the Great Migrations. Undoubtedly, an exploration of the pages of *The Southern Digest* proves fundamental to documenting the depth of the black college student-run press's dual function as agents for change and catalysts of contradiction.

Collectively, these institutions represent a distinctive chapter in the history of the black college experience and the Black Press. From 1930 to 1959, the black student press from the aforementioned five colleges published an array of stories and addressed topics such as President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" legislation, the necessity and residual effects of World War II and the Korean War, the height of the Jim Crow era with the legalized expression of white hatred toward African Americans -- mass lynchings, and the clarion call among young collegians for "black unity."

Chapter-by-Chapter: Understanding the Black College Press

Chapter I (Introduction) provides the backdrop to and the rationale for the development and importance of the Black Press's progeny – the black student press. This chapter describes the ardent ability of the black college student-run press to rouse critical analysis on the politics of the day while simultaneously advocating the dichotomy of "uplift through accommodation" and "protest for change." With a short narrative of the circumstance that created each of the schools and their respective student-run

newspapers, this chapter contextually identifies *race*, *politics*, and *community building* as the lens of examination in this study of five very different historically black institutions of higher education.

In addition, this chapter provides a review of scholarship on the Black Press, black student-run press, the mainstream collegiate press, and the application of racial, political, and community-building systems to the articles/editorials found in the journals of five uniquely different black colleges. A discussion about the limited scholarship on black college student-run newspapers and historiography as a viable methodology to examine collegiate newspapers. This chapter concludes with a detailed discussion of the primary and secondary resources used and outlines the procedure of historical evaluation employed for this research.

Chapter II examines Bennett College for Women student newspaper (For Country, Culture and Respect: *The Banner* Uses Journalism to Promote Equality from a Black Feminist Perspective). This chapter outlines how the student editors and writers work ran parallel to other women journalists in the Black Press such as Ida B. Wells. The themes of race and self-empowerment were also discussed in this chapter as well as how their work redefined the value of African American womanhood in the black student-run press and to the community-at-large. Scholarship from researchers about how African American women shouldered their gender and race's sojourn to freedom fills out the discussion surrounding the work of the *Banner*. Research from Black Feminists scholars and journalism historians such as Clenora Hudson-Weems, bell hooks, and Jinx Coleman Broussard provide deeper context to this discussion.

Chapter III investigates Clark University student-run journal ('This is Not a Moment, But a Movement:' *The Mentor*, and later *The Panther*, Utilizes Their Newspaper as an Alternative Channel of Student Expression). This chapter focuses on the influence of national Black Greek-letter Organizations on the editorial decisions of the student-run newspaper. From this exploration, it becomes difficult to separate the successful temperament of the Clark editors and writers' work from the rise of the black sororities and fraternities that advocated for academic achievement, community service, spiritual enlightenment, and racial uplift. More importantly, the students saw their writings as a contribution to a larger movement afoot across the country that required the collective resources of all pockets of the black community. Noted scholars Walter M. Kimbrough and Andre McKenzie add depth to this discussion about Clark's student-run journal, and the presence of Black Greek-letter organizations on their campus.

Chapter IV evaluates Hampton Institute's *Script* ('We are Nobody's Fools:' The Radicalization of *The Script* to Advance Black Intellectual Discourse). This school, firmly rooted in conservative ideology, nurtured the most prolific student-run newspaper included in this study. The staff often used their radical tongue to rally for racial equality and solidarity. The editors and writers were unafraid to philosophically trample on the storied legacy of Hampton alumnus Booker T. Washington to distinguish their voice from their mentors in academia, the Black Press, and Black Vanguard. Comparisons of their work to Civil Rights activist Ella Baker and A. Philip Randolph provide the context for this discussion about radicalism on the pages of the *Hampton Script*.

Chapter V analyzes Southern University Agricultural and Mechanical College's *Campus Digest* ('Tilling the Soil for Change: *The Digest* Adopts a Balanced Approach

When the Rest of the World is Topsy-Turvy). As Louisiana's first land-grant institution, *The Southern Digest* worked to insert a voice that showcased their commitment to their country as well as to the liberation of their race. Scholarship from noted psychologist John L. White shows the interconnectivity between the psychology of Southern's student-run newspaper tinged with the history of African Americans. The exploration brings awareness to the pivotal role of the black college press in rural Louisiana.

Chapter VI explores Tuskegee Institute's student-run newspaper (Caught in the Shadows: The Struggle with the Legacy of Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee Machine's Influence on the pages of *The Campus Digest*). The patchwork between Washington's legacy and yearnings of the *Campus Digest* to be independent yet respectable of their forefather are discussed in this chapter. Numerous scholars such as August Meier and David H. Jackson, Jr. cement the argument that Washington, Tuskegee Institute, and its student-run newspaper spun a complex narrative about the struggle for racial respect and recognition as well as the path African Americans should travel to receive protection from marginalization.

Chapter VII (Conclusion) takes a look at the value of this study to the existing pool of historical research about the black college student-run press along with its potency, failings, legacy, and connection to the professional Black Press. The researcher shares suggestions for future investigations.

Based on the study's themes, the length of each chapter varies based on the availability of primary and secondary resources for the researcher's consideration.

Was There a True Need for the Black Press?

American historical and cultural artifacts of literature, newspapers, magazines, and radio document the relentlessly negative portrayal of African Americans and provide an essential rationale for the motivation and mission of the Black Press and the black college press. The creation of both press systems aimed to not only advocate for the practical economic, educational, and social uplift of African Americans, but also to impugn the country's degrading socio-cultural perception of blacks with literal documentation of their positive accomplishments and attributes. Understanding this objective of the Black Press provides invaluable insight into why they believed their voice needed to be chronicled and functioned as a direct response to the misrepresentation African Americans that routinely appeared on the pages of mainstream media – extreme marginalization and subject to one-dimensional media narratives.

Journalism scholar Carolyn Martindale's article, "Coverage of Black Americans in Five Newspapers Since 1950," maintains that newspapers such as the *Boston Globe*, *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Atlanta Constitution* identified blacks as "negroes" in news stories until the mid-1960s. Martindale's study examined these specific mainstream newspapers to determine each journal's treatment of blacks before the momentum of the Modern Civil Rights Movement changed the tide of acceptable media verbiage.⁸¹ She concluded that newspapers of the 1950s, with the exception of the *Youngstown Vindicator* -- a daily newspaper in Ohio, routinely perpetuated contemporary stereotypes of African Americans or provided a whitewashed coverage of civil rights events if they addressed them at all.⁸² Likewise, Kevin K. Gaines' *Uplifting the Race:*

⁸¹ Carolyn Martindale, "Coverage of Black Americans In Five Newspapers since 1950," *Journalism Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (Summer 1985): 321-436.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 325.

Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century, explains that the structure and journalistic disposition of the Black Press bravely pushed against a formidable tide of marginalization and entrenched hatred that habitually dominated the pages of white newspapers.⁸³

Richard L. Allen and William T. Bielby showed that African Americans preferred to read publications produced by members of their community.⁸⁴ They cited Jack Lyle's *The Negro and the News Media* that postulated that black publications "were considered more accurate and complete, but sensational and biased toward certain persons." In their research, Allen and Bielby also determined that a reader's level of education correlated with their ability to detect sensationalism in that the more college education an individual possessed, the more he/she objected to the conspicuous use of sensationalism. Additionally, they wrote that the "perceived need for black newspapers was highest in the concentrated black community."⁸⁵

Catherine Squires explains that African American readers believed that when covering the black community, the white mainstream media purposely focused on racially damaging themes and put much effort into negatively portraying blacks with the recurring themes of being untrustworthy, ignorant, lazy, and having little cultural value. Pointedly, she maintains that as a way to perpetually stoke the flames of racism and reinforce the social mantra of white superiority, mainstream reporters highlighted only the shortcomings of African Americans in their news coverage and not their progress,

⁸³ Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 69.

⁸⁴ Richard L. Allen and William T. Bielby, "Blacks' Relationship with the Print Media," *Journalism Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (Autumn 1979): 488-545.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 489.

accomplishments, or contributions to American society. Squires argues the notion that mainstream news journals accentuated the normal human failings of people as specific to only blacks, and other minority groups, as a scheme “to incite conflict and controversy” among their white counterparts.⁸⁶

In Michael Schudson’s 1996 book, *The Power of News*, explains that since audiences tend to think about news long after their initial interaction, all aspects of the media wielded immeasurable influence when it comes to developing worldviews.⁸⁷ “News is part of the background through which and with which people think.”⁸⁸ Historian Barbara W. Tuchman often said that the “news is a window of the world” and should be seen as a serious pursuit of storytelling. Through its frame, Americans learn of themselves and others. Tuchman's point about the inherent value of news was applicable to the Black Press and the black college student-run press. Scholar Barbara Barnett agrees that journalists harness immense power when it comes to molding public opinion. The media determines what is news, why it is considered news and provides a contextual interpretation of how news impacts society, Barnett wrote, and how they often employ familiar stereotypes because it helps them organize as well as quickly disseminate news for a desirous audience.⁸⁹ So Barnett, like other scholars, believed that those who reported and published the news were among an influential elite. Tim Baylor wrote that “social movements and the media are interdependent. Movements often rely on the media

⁸⁶ Catherine Squires, “Black Audiences, Past and Present: Commonsense Media Critics and Activists” in *Say it Loud! African American Audiences, Media and Identity*, ed. Robin Means Coleman (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 53.

⁸⁷ Micheal Schudson, *The Power of News* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), 16.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Barbara Barnett, “Feminists Shaping news: A Framing Analysis of News Releases from the National Organization for Women” *Journal of Public Relations Research* 17, no. 4 (2005): 341-362.

to communicate its (sic) goals and grievances while reporters search for copy," making the role of the Black Press and black college student-run press even more necessary.⁹⁰

Noted scholar Robert Entman wrote that there is an intentional decision in the framing process making an issue, situation or event "noticeable, meaningful or memorable to the audiences."⁹¹ Especially valuable in evaluating the mainstream media's portrayal of African Americans during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, his theory proposes that social, cultural and experiential frames provide the lens used to filter facts and disseminate information. This point, never more so true, pertains to the coverage of blacks in the mainstream media.⁹² While Entman believed that "framing" highlighted reality, he also admitted that it obscured other salient and often positive attributes, which could mislead the audience to adopt the persuasively negative narrative on the cultural treatment and socially acceptable perception of African Americans.⁹³

Also, Denis McQuail's research focuses on the media effects of framing in that consumers adopt the frames of reference journalists present, and that often with or without reinforcement, audiences tend to persistently see the world through the lens first presented to them.⁹⁴ On the other hand, scholars Sharon H. Iorio and Susan S. Huxman contend that while the media frames the issue, readers tailor the frame to better fit their individual or shared ideologies.⁹⁵ Arguably, the scholarship showed what motivated the

⁹⁰ Tim Baylor, "Media Framing of Movement Protest: The Case of American Indian Protests" *Social Science Journal* 33, no 3 (1996): 241.

⁹¹ Robert Entman, "Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm" *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (Autumn 1993): 51-58.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 55.

⁹⁴ Denise McQuail, *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory* 6th Ed. (New York, NY: SAGE Publications, 2010).

⁹⁵ Sharon H. Iorio and Susan S. Huxman, "Media Coverage of Political Issues and the Framing of Personal Concerns" *Journal of Communication* 46, no 4 (1996): 97-115.

Black Press, and the black student press to write stories, which emphasized their community's intellect, and integrity.

The Complexity and Legacy of the Black Press: From Whence We Come

While the historiography of black college student-run newspapers is limited, the opposite is true of the Black Press. Thanks to a small cadre of prolific scholars, an exhaustive canon of research on the Black Press, its advocacy role, and the diversity of worldview perspective among the newspapers' owners, editors, and writers exist in order to inform projects of historical analysis such as this one. According to scholars Windy Y. Lawrence, Benjamin Bates, and Mark Cervenka, the emergence of the Black Press proved essential to African American's quest for equality and a public voice.⁹⁶ As a historically marginalized group, African American newspapers allowed black people (with little, if any, voice among the mainstream populace) to "gain access to the public sphere" or national debate in arenas that routinely excluded the involvement of black citizens.⁹⁷ Since the *act of publishing* equates to exercising basic United States Constitutional First Amendment Rights, Americans often perceive communities with local newspapers as "fuller citizens" because they actively demonstrate the behavior of a committed citizenry and make "more informed political decisions."⁹⁸ Consequently, in those early days, news publications (of any quality or standard) served as tangible evidence that communities were "full economic" participants in the "American social order." Primarily because their publications appeared "at [the same] newsstands

⁹⁶ Windy Y. Lawrence, Benjamin Bates, and Mark Cervenka, "Politics Drawn in Black and White: Henry J. Lewis's Visual Rhetoric in Late-1800s Black Editorial Cartoons" *Journalism History* 40, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 138.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

alongside white newspapers [particularly in the North],” the Black Press existed as a medium that, in tandem, fought against social injustices and literally transformed the socio-political identity of African Americans “from slave to citizen.”⁹⁹ Notably, Roland E. Wolseley wrote in his book, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, that the Black Press exerted their power as a civic leader, yet, remained committed to publishing stories omitted on the pages of the mainstream press. And, in doing so, the Black Press amplified its own voice about its own people through its own journals.

Their Roots Run Deep

Since the American mainstream press started publishing 137 years earlier and had a significant head start on constructing a narrative – negative or not -- about black Americans, Wolseley reports that consequently a looming sense of urgency to strategically reverse this practice influenced much of the Black Press’ editorial decisions.¹⁰⁰ A co-dependent relationship has always existed between the Black Press and American social movements. Beginning with the first African American newspaper *Freedom’s Journal*¹⁰¹ founded in New York City in 1827 by John B. Russwurm and Samuel Cornish and nearly 40 years before the end of slavery, the goal was to speak to and about black people in a way that would stand in opposition to deeply entrenched beliefs of the mainstream population and provide justification for abolition movement of the nineteenth century. Consider Charles A. Simmons’ *The African American Press: A*

⁹⁹ Ibid., 139.

¹⁰⁰ Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 24.

¹⁰¹ In an effort to attain civil rights for African Americans, this journal set an important precedent within the American Press system. Penn, *The Afro-American Press and Its Editors*; Bernell Tripp, *Origins of The Black Press: New York, 1827-1847* (Northport, AL: Vision Press, 1992); Henry Lewis Suggs, ed., *The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983), 3; and Martin E. Dann, ed., *The Black Press 1827-1890: The Quest for National Identity*. (New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1971), 33.

History of News Coverage During National Crises, with Special Reference to Four Black Newspapers, 1827-1965 and his persuasive argument that black publications existed as instruments of reliable and valid communication in the 1930s and beyond.

Additionally, in an effort to demonstrate its level of sincerity and appreciation for standard journalism practices, the Black Press crafted a credo or mission statement written from the editor's perspective to the journals' constituents. In American journalism, the Black Credo is a "statement or platform" peculiar to the Black Press in that it outlines the goals and purposes (social and political) of the journal. Wolseley explains "the presence of such credos and platforms serves as a commitment of the paper to publish news and other information that will sustain the premises or aims of the platform...and serve as the rhetorical counterbalance [to the mainstream press]." ¹⁰²

Now, fast forward to the end of the Civil War and slavery in 1865; the number of African American newspapers had grown to more than 40 journals, and strategically established itself as an indispensable of the black community. ¹⁰³ For example, African Americans in the deep South desperately relied on the primarily Northern Black Press (and its auxiliary papers located in the most Northern regions of the South) to inform them of important political, social, and economic issues as well as portray positive images of black achievement. ¹⁰⁴ Although authorities finding an African American in possession of these Black Press journals could mean death or banishment, blacks deemed the abundance of otherwise unattainable information and the opportunity to participate in public discourse among their peers a worthy risk. In essence, this phenomena created the

¹⁰² Pride and Wilson II, *A History of The Black Press*. Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 2nd Ed., 205.

¹⁰³ Tripp, *Origins of The Black Press: New York, 1827-1847*, 9.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

foundation for a legacy of diverse thought in the Black Public and Counter Public arenas.¹⁰⁵

Additionally, in the years of post-Civil War Reconstruction, several black newspapers advised African Americans on what they should do with their new-found freedom and ways to build their individual and community wealth. The ideology of Booker T. Washington's "uplift" would remain at the core of black intellectual thought for the next forty or more years. By means of his prolific "Tuskegee Machine,"¹⁰⁶ which anonymously owned and operated several southern black newspapers, Washington championed education, land ownership, and the wisdom of accommodationism toward the white mainstream.¹⁰⁷ Continuing to carry the torch of "responsibility in freedom," T. Thomas Fortune took over the *New York Age* (NY) in 1887 and received public praise from the mainstream, particularly that of President Theodore Roosevelt,¹⁰⁸ for his commitment to "help black people do better for themselves without damage to the race relations we've all worked hard for with whites."¹⁰⁹

Division from Within: Break Up to Make Up

¹⁰⁵ For the purpose of this study, the "Black Counter Public" refers to the protagonist public sphere that developed within the Black Public Sphere of accommodationism and uplift ideology of the early twentieth century. Fostered during this era by W.E.B. DuBois, some of The Black Press broke with the traditions of the Black Public Sphere and endorsed the Double-V campaign that pressured the U.S. Government to address issues of inequality among African Americans. Subsequent examples of the power of the Black Counter Public include the Black Power Movement within the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Feminist Movement within Second-Wave Feminist Movement, and the Black Gay/Lesbian Pride Movement. Michael Warner, *Publics and Counter Publics* (New York, NY: Zone Books, 2002), 121-22; Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience—Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

¹⁰⁶ Clint C. Wilson, *Black Journalists in Paradox: Historical Perspectives and Current Dilemmas* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991), 55; Harlan, preface to *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915*, viii.

¹⁰⁷ Washington, *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography*; Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915*, 203.

¹⁰⁸ Wilson, *Black Journalists in Paradox: Historical Perspectives and Current Dilemmas*, 41.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

Particularly during the height of Booker T. Washington's rise to fame, diversity in intellectual thought begins to emerge and play out in journals of the Black Press. Initially, most Black Press owners and editors supported Washington's ideology, which irked W.E.B. Du Bois - a Harvard sociologist who opposed the Tuskegee Institute president's congenial approach to "uplifting the race."¹¹⁰ Du Bois accused Washington, and his allies, of misguiding the majority of African Americans into aspiring for social heights that only 10 percent could realistically attain – thus the "talented ten" philosophy. Du Bois also suspected Washington of subsidizing the Black Press to ensure editorial endorsements of his philosophy. Du Bois would later prove that, while not all of the Black Press cow-towed to Washington, "lieutenants" in the "Tuskegee Machine" had, in fact, sent payments to African American "editors at the *New York Age* and the *Boston Citizen*," in return, for their editorial support.¹¹¹

Journalism scholar Cristina Mislan notes that such "gentlemen's discord" in the Black Press allowed African Americans to publicly promote alternative perspectives and gave black activists a way to "express their thoughts on and experiences with the struggle for racial and economic equality."¹¹² Such disagreements fostered a healthy exchange of ideas and agendas that normalized the Black Press as containing a proficient discourse of public debate. Mislan explains that Marcus Garvey's *Negro World* during this same time period "served as a leading newspaper that promoted pride, self-respect, and integrity [in performing journalism differently than the standard Black Press approach]"¹¹³ Moreover,

¹¹⁰ Catherine Squires, *African Americans and the Media* (Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2009), 31.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Cristina Mislan, "An Obedient Servant: Internationalizing and Capitalizing on Blackness in Marcus Garvey's *Negro World*," *Journalism History* 39, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 115.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

journalism historian Kim Gallon wrote that often the relationship between the Black Press and its readers appropriately reflected diversity within the race. In a question to its readers on April 7, 1934 and again on April 14, 1934, the *Baltimore Afro-American* (a nationally distributed black newspaper based in Maryland and the District of Columbia - 1892) asked about interracial relationships¹¹⁴ as a means to garner the diversity of thought on the matter and demonstrate that a difference of opinion existed in the black community. Her example from the *Afro-American* demonstrated the diversity of topics – ranging from politics, race, and communal responsibility that the pages of the Black Press routinely explored.

Likewise, in Richard Digby-Junger's article "The Guardian, Crisis, Messenger, and Negro World: The Early 20th Century Black Radical Press," he asserts that the Black Press did not fit into one homogenous category and the growing number of black radical publications more narrowly focused on fighting institutionalized racism and systemic oppression. Digby-Junger writes that *The Guardian*, a weekly publication that appeared in Boston in November 1901,¹¹⁵ and its editor, William Monroe Trotter -- a magna cum laude graduate of Harvard University and a native of Boston -- embodied the raging discontent among blacks.¹¹⁶ He maintains that Trotter published the newspaper's mission in order to serve as "an organ which (voiced) intelligently the needs and aspirations of the colored American."¹¹⁷ Digby-Junger also said that, as critical as they were toward their African American colleagues, the "radical" journals of the Black Press launched solidly

¹¹⁴ Kim Gallon, "How Much Can You Read About Interracial Love and Sex Without Getting Sore?" *Journalism History* 39, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 104.

¹¹⁵ Richard Digby-Junger, "The Guardian, Crisis, Messenger, and Negro World: The Early-20th-Century Black Radical Press," *Howard Journal of Communications* 9 (1988): 265.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

more visceral attacks on the mainstream press. For example, *The Crisis* – an organ of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and considered an “attractive monthly magazine” was founded and published in 1910 by the likes of Journalists Ida B. Wells-Barnett and W.E.B. Du Bois. The journal consistently criticized white media outlets such as the *Associated Press* as “the most assiduous enemy that the race has today.”¹¹⁸

Digby-Junger found that while the Black Press had varying definitions of advocacy and adhered to different editorial policies, their physical structure appeared very similar to mainstream newspapers in terms of layout and format. “An indiscriminate glance could be deceiving because black radical publications often concealed their fiery rhetoric and sensational narratives with a pleasing appearance,” Digby-Junger adds.¹¹⁹ The journals placed radical rants in a specific section of the newspaper and only certain black leaders or writers, who had earned the privilege, could write a dissenting opinion. “For every radical pronouncement, there were dozens of stories about weddings, graduations, and club meetings,” said Digby-Junger. “Black poets, historians, musicians, philosophers, and theologians had a critical piece of real estate on the pages of The Black Press to uplift, inform, or convict.”¹²⁰

By the mid 1950s, the legacy of diverse voices in the Black Press persisted as historian E. Franklin Fraizier called “the Negro press” a profitable enterprise solely controlled and owned by African Americans in his seminal manuscript, *Black Bourgeoisie: The Rise of a New Middle Class in the United States*. He claimed that while

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 267.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

the Black Press allowed African Americans to present news of the day, opinions up for national debate, and messages of communal uplift, it also celebrated a “world of make-believe,” especially for the black elite, who attended black colleges, had professional careers, and became the vanguard of contemporary political thought.¹²¹ Frazier argues that the Black Press inadvertently revealed the insecurities and broken self-esteem of its people as evidenced in the inflated “economic well-being and cultural achievements of Negroes... and inconsequence in American society.”¹²² While he maintains that many publishers actively pursued their roles as social advocates, such as *Chicago Defender* founder Robert S. Abbott, who routinely “infuriated white southerners with his lucid accounts of lynching and encouraged blacks to migrate to the North,”¹²³ many of these publications quickly became a catalyst for the establishment of black millionaires and a budding black middle class.

Similar to Frazier, NAACP President Walter White wrote that since black publications lacked a strong advertising base, “the perpetuation in the Negro Press of personal journalism,” came with “advantages and disadvantages.”¹²⁴ White believed that the character of the Black Press evolved around the interest of its readers. Scholar Vilma R. Potter sums up this notion, “...the newspaper editorial thus becomes the articulate voice of an inarticulate interest.”¹²⁵

¹²¹ E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie: The Rise of a New Middle Class in the United States* (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1957).

¹²² *Ibid.*, 10.

¹²³ Mark Ellis, “American’s Black Press: 1914-1918,” *History Today* 41, no. 9 (1991), 24.

¹²⁴ Walter White, *A Man Called White: The Autobiography of Walter White* (New York: Viking, 1948), 209.

¹²⁵ Vilma Raskin Potter, *Afro-American Publications and Editors, 1827-1946* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1993), 17.

In another effort to enrich the understanding about the diversity of the Black Press, journalism historian Jinx Coleman Broussard's article, "Saviors or Scalawags: The Mississippi Black Press's Contrasting Coverage of Civil Rights Workers and Freedom Summer, June-August 1964," explores three black newspapers including the *Jackson Advocate* to determine their coverage of race relations. She explains that Mississippi's *Jackson Advocate* editor, Percy Greene, morphed through many philosophical shifts that impacted the newspaper's race coverage according to his changing belief system. In the 1930s, he was the editor of *The Colored Veteran*, a publication "devoted to the affairs of black American veterans, who because of segregation, were not allowed to join freely."¹²⁶ By the 1940s, Greene supported African American men's involvement in World War II, denounced military segregation, and championed blacks participating in the political process as well as registering to vote.¹²⁷ Then by the 1950s, Greene turned away from most of "the black agenda" and opposed the *U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. According to Broussard, he feared the Mississippi legislature would dismantle the state's public school system, leaving black teachers and administrators without jobs.¹²⁸ Simmons wrote that Greene "was a strong believer that the solution to racial betterment is to be found in the ability of the Negro to look inward" and not dwell on racial inequalities, political frailties or noticeable community voids as a reason to lose focus or squander hope.¹²⁹ When compared to his

¹²⁶ Jinx C. Broussard, "Saviors or Scalawags: The Mississippi Black Press's Contrasting Coverage of Civil Rights Workers and Freedom Summer, June-August 1964," *American Journalism* 19, no. 3 (Summer 2002): 65.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 78.

¹²⁹ Charles A. Simmons, *The African American Press: A History of News Coverage During National Crises, with Special Reference to Four Black Newspapers, 1827-1965* (North Carolina: McFarland & Co., Inc., 1998), 64.

northern counterparts, such as Black Press *Pittsburg Courier* editor Robert Lee Vann, “When this war shall have ceased THE NEGRO WILL HAVE ASSUMED HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE OPINIONS OF AMERICANS. He could then ASSERT HIMSELF AS A MAN – not as a black man – AS A MAN,”¹³⁰ Greene’s opinions fall noticeably flat as an advocate in that his newspaper refutes the role of both advocate and agitator within its community.

The Black Press: A Calling, Business Arrangement or Fulfillment of a Legacy

While newspaper ownership historically has been (and remains) a risky financial proposition for all publishers whether white or black, historian Jane Rhodes maintains in “Race, Money, Politics and the Antebellum Black Press,” that this gamble proved worth it for African American editors and writers. Because of the potentially high societal return of reconstructing mainstream public perception of the value of black lives and the revenue yield to owner/publishers that ushered in the appearance of some of America’s first black millionaires, owning a black newspaper was worth it.¹³¹

Scholar Alan D. Desantis says that the scrutiny of the Black Press from all sectors of mainstream existence often pushed black newspapers owners to exceed expectations. For example, *Chicago Defender* founder Robert S. Abbott’s newspaper career, which spanned thirty-five years, from 1905-1940, defined a new era of black journalism.¹³² As a graduate of Hampton Institute and fundamental Washingtonian assimilationist, Abbott chose to start *The Defender* after encountering racial discrimination. Desantis further

¹³⁰ Ibid., 43.

¹³¹ Jane Rhodes, “Race, Money, Politics and the Antebellum Black Press,” *Journalism History* 20, no. 3/4 (Autumn/Winter 1994): 95.

¹³² Alan D. Desantis, “A Forgotten Leader,” *Journalism History* 23, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 63.

explains that Abbott used *The Defender* to influence social change through persuasive rhetoric and become self-sufficient¹³³

Adam McKible further notes that publications such as *The Messenger*, a literary and political magazine known for covering the Harlem Renaissance, went through multiple transformations much like the community it covered. The New York publication began in 1917 as a “black radical journal devoted to politics, economics, and the arts,” but slowly became a magazine that reflected the lifestyle of the “African-American bourgeoisie...”¹³⁴ During *The Messenger’s* later years, the editors and writers worked to “define a national black identity at a time when Jim Crow laws and the Ku Klux Klan flourished.”¹³⁵ He also said in 1925, under the leadership of A. Philip Randolph, the magazine took another turn.¹³⁶ Randolph organized the first successful black labor union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and until the last issue in 1928, used *The Messenger* as a mouthpiece for the new union.¹³⁷ Citing very conservative statistics of a black person lynched approximately every four days (during the 1920s and 1930s), clearly *The Messenger’s* uncompromising advocacy role proved necessary for a community constantly under violent attacks.¹³⁸

Adding more contextual details to the Black Press legacy, journalism historian Jinx Coleman Broussard also examines Mary Church Terrell’s use of journalism “to

¹³³ Ibid., 65.

¹³⁴ Adam McKible, *The Black Press*, ed. Todd Vogel (New Jersey: Rutgers University, 2001), 123.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

enlighten and elevate...race and gender, and to advance an activist agenda.”¹³⁹ In her 2002 article, Broussard wrote that Terrell keenly understood that African Americans had been relegated to the lowest rung of society because of countless unspoken and explicit rules they endured. Terrell’s articles on “lynching, chain gangs, and other realities of life for African Americans” found life in the Black Press and helped expose to readers at home and abroad of the post-slavery mistreatment of blacks.¹⁴⁰ Broussard agrees that along with advocacy, the Black Press fulfilled several roles including entertaining, informing, and persuading black intellectual thought – all topics that would never see the light of day in a mainstream journal. She says Terrell demonstrated the best of Black Press’s advocacy because she used it to advance an activist agenda in that Terrell “argued for the same basic rights” for blacks as those experienced by whites.¹⁴¹ Additionally Broussard points to the fact that Terrell’s articles details “the outrage she felt about wrongs blacks suffered at the hands of whites, especially white Southerners.”¹⁴²

Systemic Oppression

Consistent with the timeframe of this study, leading black newspapers such as the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *Chicago Defender*, “considered themselves important partners” in the creation of community among blacks. In addition, African Americans found their heroes on the pages as well as in ownership of the Black Press. Brian Carroll’s article explains that the Black Press created a sense of black male heroism through its intentional use of imagery in words and pictures in its coverage of the athletic

¹³⁹ Jinx C. Broussard, “Mary Church Terrell: A Black Woman Journalist and Activist Seeks to Elevate Her Race,” *American Journalism* 19, no. 4 (Fall 2002): 13.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 22.

accomplishments of African Americans. During the 1930s and 1940s, Black Press reporters pointedly covered every aspect of Negro League Baseball and the lifestyle of its owners, as well as Jessie Owens's triumph at the Berlin Olympics. For example, the *Pittsburgh Courier's* owner made sure that his paper published stories about Owens' four gold medal wins in six days and contributed "\$500 to help pay for the Olympic team's travel."¹⁴³ Hence, the Black Press, especially in the South, consistently combated a steady stream of negative portrayals of African Americans in mainstream newspapers. Historian Robert Drake writes that the influence of the Black Press certainly helped sway public support in favor of overturning Alabama's "hasty" decision against the "Scottsboro Boys" in 1931.¹⁴⁴ Historians credit the onslaught of 1937 editorials from Northern black newspapers (like the *Chicago Defender*), with influencing the exoneration of four of the nine "Scottsboro Boys" in avoiding a death sentence. The trial accused the boys -- ranging in age from twelve to nineteen years of age -- of raping two white women while riding.¹⁴⁵

By the early twentieth century, scholar Mark Ellis said the Black Press had more than "200 weekly newspapers and a half-a-dozen monthly magazines."¹⁴⁶ In his 1991 article, Ellis argues that the existence of the Black Press accurately reflected the division between black and white Americans.¹⁴⁷ Ellis described the climate as racially violent. He wrote that "black people were hunted down by white rioters in Atlanta, Georgia, and

¹⁴³ Brian Carroll, "Early Twentieth-Century Heroes: Coverage of Negro League Baseball in the Pittsburgh Courier and the Chicago Defender," *Journalism History* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 39-40.

¹⁴⁴ Robert Drake, "Jesse Who?: Race, the Southern Press, and the 1936 Olympic Games," *American Journalism* 28, no. 4 (Fall 2011): 84-85.

¹⁴⁵ Gildersleeve, "The Struggle for Justice: How the Media Convicted and Freed the Scottsboro Boys 1931-1937. "

¹⁴⁶ Ellis, "American's Black Press: 1914-1918," 21.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Springfield, Illinois, in 1906 and 1908”¹⁴⁸ Much of this racially charged temperament spilled into the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. He also detailed how the federal government tried to undermine the Black Press with three distinct strategies.

First, they indirectly or directly fed government propaganda to black newspapers in hopes that they would publish it. Black Press owners, editors, writers, and readers remained equally concerned about government attempts to sabotage publications. Scholar Harry Amana wrote in his 2004 article, “The Art of Propaganda: Charles Alston’s World War II Editorial Cartoons for the Office of War Information and The Black Press,” about how the U.S. Office of War Information produced editorial cartoons by black artist Charles Alston in support of World War II.¹⁴⁹ This government propaganda targeted black audiences to manufacture black involvement, and support of the war. While black newspapers were not obligated to publish the illustrations, which generally used positive images of black leaders involved in wartime activity, Amana believes Alston’s cartoons allowed Black Press owners and editors an opportunity to cooperate with the government, and at the same time, appease unhappy readers, who wanted the Black Press to take a more militant stance.¹⁵⁰ At the time, many supporters believed this was an assault on the mission and effectiveness of the Black Press.

Second, federal officials told Black Press editors that the government had chosen them to perform a special service to their government by publishing certain information. Washburn has written extensively about the Double V Campaign that the *Pittsburgh Courier* introduced in February 1942. As America entered World War II, the *Courier*

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 20-21.

¹⁴⁹ Harry Amana, “The Art of Propaganda: Charles Alston’s World War II Editorial Cartoons for the Office of War Information and The Black Press,” *American Journalism* 21, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 79.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 79-80.

vigorously advocated for their country to defeat the Japanese, Germans, and Italians, but also against the systemic racism at home that kept the armed forces segregated, and blacks treated as inferior citizens. The "V" stood for victory at home and away. According to Washburn, other black newspapers supported the *Courier's* Double V Campaign, such as the *Chicago Defender*, and by the summer of 1942, more than two hundred thousand people had sent five cents to the *Courier* in support of financing the country's win, and this sojourn to racial equality.

Also during this window, beginning with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Administration, the Black Press fought to become full-members of the White House Press Corps. Scholar Earnest Perry wrote that black newspapers did not have full access to the White House.¹⁵¹ They were forced to trust secondhand accounts from the mainstream press or other blacks, such as Walter White, NAACP executive board member who could pass for a white man, or Mary McCloud Bethune, a member of Roosevelt's "Black Kitchen Cabinet," and friend of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt – all of whom had their own agendas to attach to any retelling of White House news.¹⁵² By 1943, according to Perry, the Black Press, more specifically the Negro Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA),¹⁵³ forced the Roosevelt Administration into a compromise that allowed the first black journalist, Harry S. McAlpin,¹⁵⁴ to cover the president full-time with complete access to White House press conferences and all information sessions.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Earnest Perry, "We Want In: The African American Press's Negotiation for a White House Correspondent," *American Journalism* 20, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 31.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁵³ An organization founded John Sengstacke, the publisher of the *Chicago Defender*.

¹⁵⁴ McAlpin worked for both the *Atlanta Daily World*, the only black daily newspaper at this time, and the NNPA.

¹⁵⁵ Perry, "We Want In: The African American Press's Negotiation for a White House Correspondent," 31-37.

Finally, enemies of the Black Press used threats or intimidation to editorially control them. In Patrick S. Washburn's 1986 article, "J. Edgar Hoover and The Black Press in World War II," he wrote, "In Hoover's mind, The Black Press was troublesome, even un-American." By 1940, Washburn wrote, the Black Press's growing criticism of discrimination inspired the FBI to visit the *Pittsburg Courier*, the country's largest black newspaper at that time.¹⁵⁶ Hoover habitually filed complaints with the U.S. Justice Department against black newspapers, such as the *Chicago Defender*.¹⁵⁷ Washburn said that Hoover believed the Black Press remained vulnerable to Communist Party influence and needed close scrutiny to protect the country's welfare. Washburn added that the FBI viewed Jamaican-born journalist and activist Marcus Garvey of the *Negro World* in the same manner and claimed he "promoted global solidarity among black people,"¹⁵⁸ which worried government officials.

Practicing What was Preached: Southern Cities and the Black College Press Follow the Black Press Template and Survive the Great Depression

According to Henry Lewis Suggs, the Great Depression of the 1930s had decimated much of the American Press system, including the Black Press, which included many of the college student-run newspapers as the mouthpiece for communities neighboring their campus.¹⁵⁹ Once a thriving industry, by the 1930s, hundreds of Black Press newspapers folded due to insurmountable economic pressures of the Depression era. Consequently, the black college newspapers quickly stepped up and filled the vacuum. For instance,

¹⁵⁶ Patrick S. Washburn, "J. Edgar Hoover and The Black Press in World War II," *Journalism History* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 27.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Suggs, *The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979*, 17.

Tuskegee (Alabama) Institute’s Extension Department introduced a monthly journal, the *Rural Messenger*, in the early twentieth century.¹⁶⁰ The publication focused on agriculture trends, soil improvement, and livestock care; however, after the Great Depression, the *Rural Messenger* merged with the *Tuskegee Student* in order to give the journal a “wider scope”¹⁶¹ and shift the primary focus of the paper to addressing the needs of the community-at-large and not solely the students.

Scholar Thomas J. Davis wrote, that over in Louisiana, the Black Press “scratched along” for its survival.¹⁶² While the city of New Orleans’ divergent collection of black newspapers remained viable organs of discussions and addressed the needs of its surrounding communities, it remains unclear whether the Baton Rouge (Louisiana) community had a functional Black Press journal. The research does bear out the fact that the diverse student body and the spirit of activism that played out on the pages of the *Southern A&M University’s Digest* addressed the apparent absence of a robust professional black newspaper in that area.

According to Suggs and Moses Duncan, the same proved true in Greensboro (North Carolina). The *Bennett Banner* (Bennett College for Women) fulfilled the role of the city’s defunct Black Press journal, and represented a consistent voice in the black community until the emergence of the *Future Outlook* in 1941.¹⁶³ The publisher, J.F. Johnson, admitted feeling “fraught with uncertainty,” and “characterized the *Outlook* as a

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 50.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid., 167.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 269.

vehicle of expression.”¹⁶⁴ Although several short-lived predecessors to the *Outlook* came and went, none attacked racial issues with the same venom as the *Outlook*.¹⁶⁵

Meanwhile, the *Journal and Guide*, a preeminent voice for black (Norfolk) Virginians, sharply criticized President Herbert Hoover’s lackluster response to the “Scottsboro Boys.” Known for its scathing political editorials about racial discrimination, the newspaper’s owner, P.B. Young, Sr., sat on the Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC) - a group that worked to build a better society through “negotiation, arbitration, and conciliation.”¹⁶⁶ Young believed the Black Press gave the white South “an opportunity to learn the truth” about African Americans.¹⁶⁷

An important exception to the wrath of economic instability ravishing the ranks of the Black Press was the *Atlanta Daily World* - founded in 1928. It actually became the first black daily newspaper to *begin* publishing during the Depression era.¹⁶⁸ Alton Hornsby’s explains that while the black student-run newspaper on Clark University’s campus did not have to become the voice of Atlanta (Georgia), the prestige and ability of the *Daily World* to thrive in the leanest of times directly caught the attention of and influenced the nearby black college and its students.

Black Women’s Worth Sustains the Black Press in Good and Bad Times

Bennett College for Women, one of only two colleges established to exclusively educate black women, struggled for a public voice much like the women it sought to educate particularly among African American men. Women in Journalism Scholar

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 269-272.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 405-406.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 119.

Rodger Streitmatter explains that scholarship about black women journalists’ “struggles and contributions” slowly began to emerge in the early 1930s and that in short measure, the annals of history will record their voices.¹⁶⁹ As predicted over a quarter of a century later, the “invisible” African American women no longer alludes the interest of historians and has found a resounding “voice of herstory.”

Amy Helene Forss’ *Black Print with a White Carnation: Mildred Brown and the Omaha Star Newspaper 1938-1989*, acknowledges the long legacy of African American women journalists dating back as early as Maria W. Stewart and her invited anti-slavery speeches published in William Lloyd Garrison’s *Liberator* – a white Boston abolitionist and newsman.¹⁷⁰ Inspired by Stewart’s work, Mary Ann Shadd Cary founded, published, and edited the *Provincial Freeman*. Known for its potent rhetoric and strident tone, this publication provided a forum for Cary’s views as an ardent civil rights agitator who routinely defied labels assigned to twentieth century women.¹⁷¹

Interestingly, notable black women in history such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, and Amy Jacques Garvey, also used newspapers as their primary medium of choice in the advocacy of African American civil rights. Their work laid an important and lasting foundation for the work of black women in journalism that followed.¹⁷² In *Giving a Voice to the Voiceless: Four Pioneering Black Women Journalists*, Jinx Coleman Broussard examines these black women and their ability to

¹⁶⁹ Rodger Streitmatter, “Alice Allison Dunnigan: An African-American Woman Journalist Who Broke the Double Barrier,” *Journalism History* 16, no. 3-4 (Autumn-Winter 1989): 87.

¹⁷⁰ Amy Helene Forss, *Black Print with a White Carnation: Mildred Brown and the Omaha Star Newspaper 1938-1989* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 83.

¹⁷¹ Jane Rhodes, *Mary Ann Shadd Cary: The Black Press and Protest in the Nineteenth Century* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1998), xi.

¹⁷² Jinx C. Broussard, *Giving a Voice to the Voiceless: Four Pioneering Black Women Journalists* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

communicate the needs and rights of African American people via skill of the pen and intellect of the Black Public Sphere. Broussard said that while such pioneering black women journalists used their investigative and creative literary skills to combat racial injustices, they also shamed white onlookers into taking positive action. Additionally, their writings spurred *all* African Americans to fight for social changes.¹⁷³ Whether shining the light of journalism on the illegal practice of lynchings in the South or helping black women find their voice amid a patriarchal society, their words in newspapers, magazines, poetry, lectures, and the classroom helped initiate a women-centered crusade of uplift that powered their readers past the hurt and humiliation of being black and being a woman in America.¹⁷⁴

Much like Streitmatter's assertion nearly three-quarters of a century ago, contemporary socio-political news pundit Melissa Harris-Perry explains the "internal, psychological, emotional, and personal experiences of black women . . ." ¹⁷⁵ She investigates the conflict black women face between their assigned societal roles and internal desires for the world to recognize them as capable and worthy members of society. In her work, she references Zora Neale Hurston's novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, to showcase black women's American narrative riddled with poverty, menial employment as well as physical and emotional violence.

In her scholarly exploration of patriarchy, slavery, Jim Crow, urban segregation, and racism,¹⁷⁶ Harris-Perry also focuses on the ideology of "strong black woman," and

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Melissa Harris-Perry, *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America* (2011: repr., Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2013), 5.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 21.

how this image developed out of a need to appease whites and distract blacks. She maintains that the media, more often than not, portrays African American women as resilient. Even though oppressive circumstances often fill (and over fill) the lives of black women, the media routinely characterizes these socially ostracized citizens as possessing superhuman qualities that allow them to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. To their own detriment, African American women often consciously and unconsciously don the cape of unrealistic expectations and help craft, to some degree, their own social oppression.¹⁷⁷

Harris-Perry uses American Press history to frame contemporary topics of debate around race, gender, and economic power in an effort to debunk mainstream media portrayals of African American women.¹⁷⁸ “...My primary concern is to begin understanding the emotional realities of black women’s lives in order to answer a political, not a personal question: *What does it mean to be a black woman and an American citizen?*”¹⁷⁹

Harris-Perry says that after years of inhuman treatment, the media-driven social perception of “the strong black women” is only a consolation prize used to pacify and sidetrack black women about the reality of their humiliating circumstances. Harris-Perry also explains that the black woman’s world is just one “crooked room” that never truly confronts “race and gender stereotypes.”¹⁸⁰ The social perception that their “superhuman qualities” help level the playing field forces African American women to operate in a

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 20.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 29.

dual reality that defines them as less qualified and worthy than their white female counterparts, yet innately “strong” enough to find some semblance of success.

Additionally, Harris-Perry says that in 1923, Mississippi Senator John Williams launched a campaign to erect a “National Mammy Monument.” Williams proposed a bill with the goal of finding federal land, possibly near the Lincoln Memorial, which would honor (and provide the cultural lesson as to the social status of) the thousands of black women who nursed, nurtured, and trained generations of white Americans.¹⁸¹ Even though the monument never came to fruition, Harris-Perry maintains that the connotation of black women as “Mammy” is forever enshrined in the American psyche and serves as a tangible example of the powerful imagery and on-going marginalization of black women.

Similarly, other scholars argue that society (including black men) unapologetically ignore black women. Black Feminist, bell hooks, wrote that black women not only needed freedom from racial oppression, but also craved “liberation” from gender biases as well. The journalistic work of women such as Mary Church Terrell, Sojourner Truth, Anna Cooper, Amanda Berry Smith, and many others publicly shattered the repressive silence that marginalized black women had endured for innumerable decades. Through the use of journalism to address racial inequities, suffrage efforts, and other such discourses, these scholars outline the differences between the political and social needs of black men and women as expressed in the pages of the *Black Press*.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁸² bell hooks, *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Massachusetts: South End Press, 1981) 3.

When white men supported giving black men the right to vote before *any* woman (white or black), hooks says this action demonstrated that sexism existed in America as a greater issue of divisiveness than racism.¹⁸³ Celebrated men such as Horace Greeley and Wendell Phillips “called it the “Negro’s hour” (African American men earning the right to vote), but hooks maintains that in actuality “black suffrage was black male suffrage”¹⁸⁴ because the media taught “twentieth century black women to accept sexism as natural, a given, a fact of life.”¹⁸⁵

As stated earlier, the Black Press has proven itself a potent tool in the fight for social justice; however, all mainstream journalism schools excluded African Americans, including black women, from attaining a formal journalism education at their institutions of higher education. In 1939, Lucile Bluford, an editor and reporter for *The Call* (The Black Press weekly in Kansas City, Missouri) challenged this systemic and oppressive barrier. Although Bluford applied to and received acceptance to the graduate School of Journalism at the University of Missouri, once the school determined her racial identity, it swiftly denied her enrollment. Missouri legislators had deemed higher education in the state should remain “separate but equal.”¹⁸⁶ The flagship state school in Columbia was for white students. Lincoln University, located 33 miles away in Jefferson City, was for blacks; and, so goes the argument. Since, at that point, no other black college in the state offered a degree in journalism, Bluford filed suit to desegregate the University of

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 4.

¹⁸⁶ Diane E. Loupe, “Storming and Defending the Color Barrier at the University of Missouri School of Journalism: The Lucile Bluford Case” *Journalism History* 16, no. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 1989): 20.

Missouri's School of Journalism Graduate Program. She lost her civil case, but not her determination to continue to fight for admission.¹⁸⁷

In response to her aggressive letter-writing campaign to the University President, Bluford's action of legal appeal to the Missouri State Supreme Court, and the controversy that erupted across the nation and around the world (no doubt driven by the Black Press), the state of Missouri established the country's first black college's journalism school. On February 1, 1942, the underfunded Lincoln University School of Journalism opened with a faculty of four inexperienced scholars and journalists. Although Bluford refused to attend Lincoln's journalism program, (because she had more professional experience than anyone they hired and the blatant "inadequacies of the new journalism coursework at Lincoln"), she continued to write for *The Kansas City Call* and advocate for civil rights.¹⁸⁸ Her lawsuits, and that of other several similar cases of admission/enrollment denial (including Lloyd L. Gaines' attempt to enter the University of Missouri's School of Law), would become watershed cases that made up the historically pivotal decision of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* – "separate can never be equal."

Moving now into a brief discussion of women journalists and the war years, Caryl Cooper's "Selling Negro Women to Negro Women and to the World: Rebecca Stiles Taylor and the Chicago Defender" underscores sentiments and concerns of black women journalists during World War II.¹⁸⁹ Taylor penned columns, which appeared in the *Chicago Defender* between 1937-1953 and identified black women as part of a larger, interracial diverse, global community. Taylor believed that black women journalists

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 26.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 26-29.

¹⁸⁹ Caryl Cooper, "Selling Negro Women to Negro Women and to the World: Rebecca Stiles Taylor and the Chicago Defender, 1939-1945," *Journalism History* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2014): 242.

also carried the burden to educate “. . . her government and the entire world to see her as a HUMAN BEING deserving of the rights and privileges accorded to her under the constitution of the government.”¹⁹⁰ She lamented that all women did not share the responsibility of bringing world peace and democracy equally since white women did not have to endure the cruelty of segregation. To accentuate her strategic vision of using her columns for the promotion of social justice, Taylor believed that she must “Sell Negro womanhood to Negro women and to the world,”¹⁹¹ and espoused black female leadership and development as the only means to equality.

Also, Cooper maintains that World War II proved an opportune time for black women to share their “political philosophies and strategies for inclusion”¹⁹² in that Taylor’s columns, published in one of the largest black newspapers in the country, served as the official voice of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) - an organization dedicated to the social uplift and overall welfare of the black community. Like most black women of her era, her family, race, and available educational/employment opportunities dramatically influenced Taylor’s career. She became a prominent leader among elite black women, and continued to search for racial and gender equality through her writings.

Black women journalists continued to break barriers well into the 1950s. Jinx Coleman Broussard and Skye Chance Cooley examined the work of Era Bell Thompson in their 2009 article, “Ebony’s Era Bell Thompson Travels the World to Tell the

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 242, 244, 247.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 245.

¹⁹² Ibid., 242.

Story.”¹⁹³ As a black female foreign correspondent for *Ebony* magazine, Thompson found that her journalism career positively framed blacks, specifically black women, worldwide, and came at a crucial time. Collectively, the Black Press believed the mainstream media marginalized not only the worth of their people, but also the journalistic value of their publications.¹⁹⁴ Black journalists rarely participated in the elite group of foreign correspondents, and African American women foreign correspondents proved even more of a rarity. According to Broussard and Cooley, Thompson discussed race and juxtaposed it with the current state of America, in nearly all of her articles.¹⁹⁵ Also, in keeping with *Ebony*’s tradition of portraying positive stories about blacks, Broussard and Cooley wrote that Thompson’s work focused on the “happy” news and often glossed “over turmoil, poverty and infighting.”¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, scholars argue that marginalized groups, such as black women, must have a voice to move society forward – past hatred and cruelty.¹⁹⁷ For a time, Thompson was such a voice.

Most black women journalists avoided the society page in favor of writing about politics, international events, and emerging issues that impacted the plight of all African Americans. Streitmatter extensively writes about the contributions of Ethel L. Payne.¹⁹⁸ In 1951, Payne, the granddaughter of slaves, began her career with the *Chicago Defender* as a feature writer, who without fail “found a hard news angle in any story” that her

¹⁹³ Jinx Coleman Broussard and Skye Chance Cooley, “Ebony’s Era Bell Thompson Travels the World to Tell the Story,” *American Journalism* 26, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 7.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁹⁸ Rodger Streitmatter, “No Taste for Fluff: Ethel L. Payne, African-American Journalist,” *Journalism Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 528-530.

editor gave her to cover.¹⁹⁹ By 1952, she earned the Illinois Press Association honors for the best news story. From there, the *Defender* gave her permission to cover anything that met her journalistic standards.²⁰⁰ Streitmatter credited Payne with helping push the Modern Civil Rights Movement onto the national stage.

One day, she asked President Dwight D. Eisenhower, “when he planned to ban segregation in interstate travel” during a 1954 White House press conference.²⁰¹ President Eisenhower’s visible irritation made headlines in the mainstream newspapers such as the *Washington Evening Star* and the *Washington Post*.²⁰² After that exchange, President Eisenhower essentially ignored her at press briefings and conferences. While Payne considered “the incident one of her finest moments,”²⁰³ Streitmatter believes that for Payne, from that point forward, “. . . civil rights was moved to the front burner . . . Suddenly, civil rights began to be the big issue.”²⁰⁴

Arguably, Mildred Dee Brown also exemplified the determined spirit of black women and their role within the Black Press. Brown co-founded Nebraska’s *Omaha Star*, in 1938, as a clarion journal for racial and gender equality.²⁰⁵ As the longest-published black newspaper founded by a black woman, Brown saw her work as a “ministry,” and her work served as a beacon of possibilities for the black community on the Near North Side of town. She joined the *Pittsburgh Courier* in its Double V Campaign during World War II to fight for justice abroad and at home for black Americans. Brown, Nebraska’s

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 528-529.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 532.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Forss, *Black Print with a White Carnation: Mildred Brown and the Omaha Star Newspaper 1938-1989*, 83.

first black woman editor of a black publication and respected matriarch of her community, used journalism to speak for racial progress with a distinct and consistent voice. Her personal motto - “Dedicated to the service of the people that NO good cause shall lack a champion and that evil shall not go unopposed” helped amplify her voice.²⁰⁶

While hooks concedes that by the beginning of the Modern Civil Rights Movement, of the 1950s, “black women and men again joined together to struggle for racial equality...[but] black female activists did not receive the public acclaim awarded to black male leaders.”²⁰⁷ She maintains that in a male-dominant society, black women remain subject to both racial discrimination *and* gender marginalization; and, concludes that while the Civil Rights Movement sought to free all black people, black men used it as a vehicle to firmly establish black male patriarchy and, once again, relegate black women to subservient roles.²⁰⁸

In Paula Giddings’ 1984 *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*, she wrote about the need for black women to make progress, despite the systemic obstacles of black womanhood in America. According to Giddings, African American women continually tried to redefine themselves as women and not property, even in the worst of times. They found themselves on the national stage protesting racial and gender injustices because of their desire to regain control of their lives. She describes the formation of the National Black Women’s Club as a defining moment in African American history.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 18.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 5.

²⁰⁹ Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York, NY: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1984), 95.

Likewise, Patricia Hill Collins wrote that black women fought vigorously to be heard. When black women and men worked together, black women often had to, at least publicly, acquiesce to the philosophical whims of black men. Collins also believed that black women had a unique perspective because they stood where race, gender, and class politics intersected during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. The knowledge that they gained from their inherent position in society only added value to American society, and reconstructed the stereotypical narrative about black women.²¹⁰ Collins said that black women created a sub-culture for themselves because mainstream society had exploited them in ways that it had not done to black men. She says acknowledgement of this fact gives black women insight and a reason to get involved in changing the trajectory of their community.²¹¹ Collins also referred to black women as “outsiders within” since many worked for white families and no matter the depth of their assimilation, African American women would never truly belong. “As outsiders within, black women have a distinct view of the contradictions between the dominant group’s actions and ideologies.”²¹² For example, “If women are allegedly passive and fragile, then why are black women treated as mules and assigned heavy cleaning chores?”²¹³

Conversely Collins wrote that black women icons, such as Sojourner Truth and Ida B. Wells, not only exhibited “intellectual genius” in written word and speech, but also discovered that their unique voices of accomplishment resonated with freedom

²¹⁰ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008) 10.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid.*, 11.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 12.

fighters.²¹⁴ Black women intellectuals provided leadership - an important component to defining black feminist thought – and proved responsible stewards of its power.²¹⁵

Before College, Black Students are Writing – The Case of Lincoln High and The Kansas City Call

In the early twentieth century, even before arriving on campus, black college students, specifically women, learned and practiced advocacy journalism.²¹⁶ They actively published articles, columns, and poems on “self help” and racial pride.²¹⁷ Press scholar Henrietta Rix Wood explains that Lincoln High School students, the only secondary school for blacks in Kansas City (Missouri), purposefully “reflected the agenda of the professional black press such as the *Kansas City Call* and the NAACP’S *Crisis Magazine*.”²¹⁸ Using Jane H. Hunter and Reed Ueda’s theory that school-sponsored publications organically cultivate a strong sense of community, Woods notes the Lincoln students fashioned their journalistic participation “in the racial uplift movement” after the work of Black Press newspapers like *The Kansas City Call*, which vowed to criticize local racist practices, and *The Crisis* magazine of the NAACP, which promised to do the same on a national level. It was through their work on the school’s various student-driven publications where Lincoln High students learned the true power

²¹⁴ Ibid., 30.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 34-35.

²¹⁶ A form of journalism that solely focuses or advocates a specific angle without regard to neutrality of opinion; in this case the Black College Press writings often unabashedly advocated for the political and social “uplift” of African Americans and the dismantling of a legal political and social system that favored the white populace in its publications. Wilson, *Black Journalists in Paradox: Historical Perspectives and Current Dilemmas*, 55; Harlan, preface to *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915*, viii.

²¹⁷ Henrietta Rix Wood, “Transforming Student Periodicals into Persuasive Podiums: African American Girls at Lincoln High School, 1915-1930,” *American Periodicals* 22, no. 2 (2012).

²¹⁸ Ibid., 199.

of advocacy journalism “construct[s] community,” racial pride, and celebrates “middle-class values” in an era of ardent prejudice and racial isolation.²¹⁹

Additionally, Lincoln High School students enjoyed a close relationship with the Kansas City Black Press. They frequently interacted, and received direct mentorship from editors and writers from *The Kansas City Call*. The importance of this relationship cannot be overstated for two critical reasons. First, only a little more than 150 miles away, the nation’s first School of Journalism (undergraduate and graduate) was established in 1908 at the state’s Land-Grant University of Missouri-Columbia. As previously mentioned, Lucille Bluford, an African-American female writer for the Lincoln High School journal, first in her class at the all-black Lincoln High School in 1928, graduated with high honors from mainstream University of Kansas-Lawrence in 1932, and a well-respected and practicing journalist at *The Kansas City Call* summarily received a denial of enrollment (albeit previously granted admission) once the University discovered that she was an African American into its Journalism Graduate School in 1939. Although Bluford sued the University and received a concurring opinion from the Missouri Supreme Court in 1941 that mandated her admission, “the Missouri School of Journalism [conveniently] closed its graduate program shortly after the state supreme court decision due to low student and faculty numbers as a result of World War II.”²²⁰ Bluford went on to become

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ *Lucille H. Bluford (1911-2002)*, The State Historical Society of Missouri – Historic Missourians, <http://shs.umsystem.edu/historicmissourians/name/b/bluford/>, accessed October 12, 2015. Likewise just the year before, The US Supreme Court reversed UMC’s 1935 denial of admission of Lloyd Gaines to its Law School under the “separate, but equal act” (which maintained that state schools must admit African American students when no other equal school exists in the state and HBCU Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri did not qualify under those standards since it did not have a law school). Multicultural Mizzou: A Timeline of Social Change and Notable First at the University of Missouri, “1938 - US Supreme Court rules in favor of Gains,” <https://diversity.missouri.edu/timeline/>,

the editor of the *Kansas City Call*, an ardent civil rights activist, and lasting hallmark to Black Press excellence. As such, the University of Missouri and its School of Journalism awarded Bluford an honorary doctorate in 1989. No doubt, due to her personal experience and the recognition that the Black Press would have to continue to “grow their own,” Bluford and her staff maintained and celebrated the pipeline relationship between local African American high school and college students and the black newspaper well into the twentieth century.

Secondly, as Wood argues, these meetings awakened the students’ racial ideology, already “endorsed” by the professional Black Press, and provided practical instruction on using the press as a tool of advocacy and uplift – a skill they would later employ in college and as salaried wage earners. In fact, journalism historian Patrick S. Washburn wrote that society “owed a heavy debt to black newspapers” because of their role in advocating for societal change.²²¹ Washburn believed that the Black Press chose to ignore traditional objective journalism, and adopted a persuasive voice that pushed whites, and even some blacks, to take them seriously.

Charles E. Coulter’s, *Take Up the Black man’s Burden: Kansas City’s African American Community, 1865-1939*, explains that the Black Press’ approach to journalism helped Lincoln High School students create a “parallel community”²²² through their writings. He believed African Americans minimized the atrocities of segregation by establishing their own schools, organizations, businesses, and newspapers; but they also

accessed October 12, 2015. Phillip Jeter, “Journalism and Mass Communication Education at HBCUs: History and Current Issue,” *Education* 123, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 2-6.

²²¹ Patrick S. Washburn, *The African American Newspaper Voice of Freedom* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2006), 8.

²²² Charles E. Coulter, *Take Up the Black Man’s Burden: Kansas City’s African American Communities, 1865-1939* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 103 and 108.

fought for inclusion in the mainstream world.²²³ Coulter maintains that the Lincoln students, in particular, championed the “New Negro” philosophy of self-reliance, racial unity, and pride while developing a black middle class mindset valuing education and independence. Coulter calls the “New Negro” of this era, a “more politicized, more assertive, and more militant...” black person. He insists this label described African Americans in Kansas City, and throughout the country, in the early twentieth century.²²⁴ No doubt, this ability to create the sense of a transformed parallel-community generated great anticipation for the work of the Black Press. Additionally, it convinced many of these African American high school students to become journalists for their college newspapers and beyond.²²⁵

Before ‘Black Lives Matter,’ Black Colleges Mattered

The scholarship and history of American black colleges primarily focuses on the origins and commitment of well-intentioned whites to help blacks climb out of racial and intellectual oppression through the power of education. Scholars found that the mainstream population, from 1930 through 1959, had a considerable role in black college curriculum design as well as whether black institutions of higher learning opened and operated. Debates over ideas of assimilation, accommodation, or independence from mainstream society found their way into classroom discussion at most black colleges; however, no debate surrounds the fact that black colleges faced (and still face) ongoing financial and philosophical obstacles throughout their existence. Their legacy, spirit of

²²³ Ibid., 6-7.

²²⁴ Ibid., 11.

²²⁵ Ibid., 200.

perseverance, and commitment to excellence unite black colleges with others that share similar struggles.

During the first half of the twentieth century, two black scholars, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois, garnered national headlines because they propagated the debate about black higher education in both African American and mainstream media. Their philosophical disagreements about an industrial versus a liberal arts education polarized the black community at worst, yet, riveted the nation at best. Similar to the history and debate on the “Black American struggle,” scholarship reveals that both whites and blacks (for a variety of reasons) attacked the necessity and wisdom of black colleges in America. Although, in the midst of this discourse, black college administrators, educators, and students began to intentionally use their voice to amplify the educational, social and political needs of African Americans. Without a doubt, the importance of black colleges from their birth and throughout their evolution in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, cannot be exaggerated.

Since inception, black colleges remain central to blacks' battle for dignity and equality.²²⁶ Although disjointed, a large part of the establishment of black colleges occurred under the leadership of religious organizations such as the Freedmen's Bureau, the American Missionary Association, and the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church that collectively opened schools from Talladega College (Alabama), Clark University (Georgia), and Bennett College for Women (North Carolina).²²⁷ These

²²⁶ Allen, Jewell, Griffin, and Wolf, “Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Honoring the Past, Engaging the Present, Touching the Future,” 263-280, 521-522, 524-527.

²²⁷ Arthur J. Clement and Arthur J. Lidsky, “The Danger of History Slipping Away,” *Society for College and University Planning*, (April – June 2011): 149-158.

universities were built in two phases – in the North and South – before and after the Civil War, and represented organized philanthropy.²²⁸

During the “tense, traumatic aftermath of emancipation and the Civil War,” black as well as white leadership realized that if the country had any hope of economic and social stability, access to education for the estimated four million freed slaves seemed paramount.²²⁹ Of this population of African Americans, less than five percent of them could read or write. For these reasons, General O.O. Howard, who in the late nineteenth century served as the “head of the powerful humanitarian Freedmen’s Bureau that established over 4,000 Black schools, and for whom Howard University was named,” urged all Americans to embrace this “daring and much-debated experiment in the education of the new black citizen.”²³⁰

Congress established the Freedmen’s Bureau in March 1865 to help the South in the transition from slavery to freedom. The Bureau supervised all abandoned lands as well as controlled all subjects both refugees and freedmen. Southern white opposed the Bureau because they believed blacks should not have any rights at all. One of the goals the Bureau was able to accomplish in its tumultuous history was opening several training schools, colleges and universities for blacks such as Hampton Institute and Howard University.

Since it organized in approximately 1844, the American Missionary Association has actively worked to improve the condition of American blacks. It first worked to abolish slavery, and then provide relief during and following the Civil War and establishing and managing a string of Southern schools strategically placed throughout the region. The merging of four groups that shared a similar mission to help people of color including Native Americans formed the group. Berea College in Kentucky is the product of the AMA’s work efforts. The institution admitted “white and color students and taught them in the same classes without contamination and reproach.” In 1858, Berea was established under this motto, “God has made of one blood all nations of men.” The College was committed to educating both races.

The Freedmen’s Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church formed in August 1866 to abolish slavery. They believed education would help emancipate the freedmen and give them a better life. By 1869, the Society opened six colleges and “normal schools” including “Central Tennessee College at Nashville, Tenn. (later Walden University), Clark University in Atlanta (later Clark Atlanta University), Claflin University at Orangeburg, South Carolina and Shaw University at Holly Springs, Miss. (now Rust College).”

²²⁸ Clement and Lidsky, “The Danger of History Slipping Away,” 149-158.

²²⁹ Daniel C. Thompson, *Private Black Colleges at the Crossroads* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1973), 9.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

The first black college was Cheyney State University in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Cheyney was founded during the pre-Civil War years of the early nineteenth century in 1837 as the African Institute, also referred to as the Institute of Colored Youth²³¹ and nearly twenty years later, the Ashmun Institute. Finally, it was renamed Lincoln University of Pennsylvania – opened its doors in 1854 and, only two years later, Wilberforce University in Ohio (the first American university to accept both black and white students) was founded in 1856.²³²

Following the birth of these black colleges and universities, an Act of Congress in 1865 created the Freedmen’s Bureau, giving financial assistance and governmental protection of the American Missionary Association to establish black schools mainly scattered throughout the South.²³³ Not only did most of the country’s black population live in the South, but also approximately ninety percent of them believed that a formal education was their bridge to economic, social, and intellectual freedom.²³⁴ According to scholar Henry A. Bullock, the qualities that blacks most admired in whites centered on formal education and land ownership “and [that] they, too, could acquire them if they once got the necessary schooling.”²³⁵

Opened to meet the “needs of their predominantly rural constituency,” the first black colleges and universities existed near plantations, on the outskirts of urban hubs, and primarily pastoral areas where several generations of African Americans had been

²³¹ Kenneth E. Redd, “Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Making a Comeback.” *New Directions for Higher Education*, 102, (Summer 1998): 33-43.

²³² *Ibid.*, 102.

²³³ Thompson, *Private Black Colleges at the Crossroads*, 10.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

forbidden to read, write, or exercise any semblance of independence.²³⁶ Initially, one of the cornerstones of every black college was to train teachers (“normal school”) to help increase black literacy rates and blacks employability. The overarching sentiment that blacks should learn from one another prevailed;²³⁷ however, black colleges routinely faced poor funding and direct opposition from many whites, who believed blacks did not deserve a formal education.

By the 1930s and as the Depression raged on, President Roosevelt’s New Deal sputtered, while black colleges searched for new revenue streams. Between 1930 and 1940, many Black Colleges (such as Atlanta University becoming the graduate school for Morehouse and Spelman Colleges) merged in an effort to remain financially solvent.²³⁸ Likewise in 1935, Tuskegee Institute President Frederick D. Patterson²³⁹ lacked the fundraising savvy of his predecessors, Booker T. Washington and Robert R. Moton,²⁴⁰ and labored to keep the school afloat. Marybeth Gasman recounted in her 2007 book that facing the reality of cutting the school’s programs and budget by several thousands of dollars, Patterson placed an advertisement in the black-owned *Pittsburgh Courier* asking African Americans, and more importantly, leaders of black colleges to work together to raise money for their respective ailing bottom lines.²⁴¹ At the initial meeting, eighteen black college presidents along with prominent white philanthropists, including John D. Rockefeller Jr., attended and became the founding members of the United Negro College

²³⁶ Ibid., 23.

²³⁷ B. D. Mayberry, *A Century of Agriculture in the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and Tuskegee University – 1890-1990* (New York: Vantage Press, Inc., 1991), 5.

²³⁸ Marybeth Gasman, *Envisioning Black Colleges: A History of the United Negro College Fund* (Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 19.

²³⁹ Frederick D. Patterson served as president of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama from 1935-1953.

²⁴⁰ Robert R. Moton succeeded Booker T. Washington as president of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. He served in this role from 1915-1935.

²⁴¹ Gasman, *Envisioning Black Colleges: A History of the United Negro College Fund*, 15-21.

Fund (UNCF), an organization formally established in 1944 to raise money for black private schools.²⁴² Their ultimate goal was to fundraise collectively to address the member schools' most immediate needs such as building repairs. UNCF sought to insure that no private black college would go without necessary funding, and face the difficult decision to shutter their doors. Gasman referred to this as a seminal moment in the chronology of private black colleges. In a collective effort, they secured their own financial and philosophical independence in a way that had not been attempted before.

Aside from the private black colleges and universities, land grant or taxpayer-funded institutions opened under the Morrill Act of 1890, but required "separate schools for the two races..."²⁴³ By 1892, seventeen land-grant colleges and universities educated African Americans including Southern A&M University, the first federally funded institution established to educate blacks in Louisiana.²⁴⁴ Their primary mission to teach industrial and agriculture courses and skills²⁴⁵ occurred along with a fervent commitment to teach a trade-based curriculum, the philosophy of these institutions remained "dedicated to racial uplifting."²⁴⁶ The notion that African Americans primarily administered land-grant institutions redefined the schools as a place where the "struggles, hopes, and aspirations of the black masses" motivate students to attain a better standard of living.²⁴⁷ Black colleges played a significant role in creating African American leaders

²⁴² Ibid., 21-23.

²⁴³ Dwight Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Evolution of the Negro College* (New York, NY: AMS Press Inc., 1934), 150-154.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Lorenzo L. Esters and Terrell L. Strayhorn, "Demystifying the Contributions of Public Land-Grant Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Voice of HBCU Presidents," *The Negro Educational Review* 64, nos. 1-4 (2013): 120.

²⁴⁶ Mayberry, *A Century of Agriculture in the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and Tuskegee University – 1890-1990*, 4.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

as well as fostering shared ideologies of community service, social justice, education, and racial pride.²⁴⁸

Additionally, the effectiveness of the black college's ability to educate and graduate highly skilled students can be measured by its results. With less than five percent of the black population able to read or write, the turn of the twentieth century witnessed the literacy rate among African Americans increase to fifty-five percent, and by 1920, to seventy-seven percent.²⁴⁹ According to author B. D. Mayberry's 1991 book, *A Century of Agriculture in the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and Tuskegee University – 1890-1990*, this achievement can be attributed to black colleges consistent ability to nurture and train disenfranchised students with sensitivity and flexibility.²⁵⁰ Mayberry wrote that the schools proved sensitive to the African Americans' dehumanizing past and restrictive socioeconomic standing in the early twentieth century. On the other hand, the black schools employed flexible teaching styles and curriculum design; however, the balance between sensitivity and flexibility did not distract from the college's academic rigor, instructional quality, and expectation that each student would leave their institution capable of positively contributing both the black community and society-at-large.²⁵¹

Considerable growth of black colleges during the 1930s indicated that, approximately one hundred and nine black colleges existed across nineteen states including Washington, D.C.(in 1932). Their combined enrollment ran roughly between

²⁴⁸ J.O. Jewell, "To Set an Example: The Tradition of Diversity at Historically Black Colleges and Universities," *Urban Education*, 37, (2002): 7-21.

²⁴⁹ Thompson, "*Private Black Colleges at the Crossroads*," 11.

²⁵⁰ Mayberry, *A Century of Agriculture in the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and Tuskegee University – 1890-1990*, 4.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

twenty-three and twenty-five thousand students.²⁵² Some schools, about eleven, had an enrollment of five hundred or more; “twenty-five had 250 to 499 students; twenty-nine from 100 to 249; and forty-four with less than 100 students.”²⁵³ The ascent of black colleges and their students’ quest for respect and achievement demonstrate increased enrollment numbers in 1930s and beyond. The percentage of black colleges that experienced substantial enrollment growth moved from fifteen to eighty-five percent and indicated “a rapid decrease in the proportion of students of elementary and secondary grades attending these schools.”²⁵⁴

Meanwhile, scholars Lorenzo L. Esters and Terrell L. Strayhorn maintain in their 2013 article, “Demystifying the Contributions of Public Land-Grant Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Voice of HBCU Presidents,” that while the legislation provided funding for black Land-Grant Schools, it failed to provide financial endowments at the same level as those at white Land-Grant Universities. This oversight forced public black colleges to secure funding on their own or face closing their doors.²⁵⁵ Despite the country’s economic vulnerabilities during the 1930s, enrollment at black colleges grew during this decade and beyond.²⁵⁶ But, unfortunately, the revenue streams that supported many of these institutions began to diminish, making it difficult to invest in campus improvements or uninterrupted publishing of a student-run newspaper.²⁵⁷

²⁵² Dwight Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Evolution of the Negro College*, (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1934), 207.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ Esters and Strayhorn, “Demystifying the Contributions of Public Land-Grant Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Voice of HBCU Presidents,” 120.

²⁵⁶ Redd, “Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Making a Comeback,” 102.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Many of the private black colleges established by the Freedmen's Bureau and missionary organizations exhausted their financial resources while white Northern philanthropy became more attractive to black college trustees and administrators. Industrial tycoons such as John Slater, George Peabody, Julius Rosenwald, Andrew Carnegie, and John D. Rockefeller offered financial support to black colleges out of "a deep commitment to Christian benevolence;" however, some feared that their giving "dovetailed neatly with their desire to control industrial enterprises nationwide."²⁵⁸ For example, a conglomerate of white Northern philanthropists, the General Education Board (GEB), led by John D. Rockefeller Jr. gave black colleges millions of dollars between 1903 and 1959.²⁵⁹ Yet, the group proved preferential toward black schools – such as Hampton Institute in Virginia, with an industrial curriculum that included shoe shining, dress making, and cooking – all domestic (and not professional) occupations that kept African Americans relegated to labor status.²⁶⁰

By 1915, the financial giving by white Northern philanthropists shifted to schools with a traditional liberal arts curriculum that aligned more with the philosophical leanings of scholar and black activist, W.E.B. Du Bois.²⁶¹ The GEB clearly sought to create an elite group of black colleges and universities by solely allocating funding in their direction. According to Gasman, through such black institutions, the GEB wanted to "produce college-bred leaders to acculturate Black Americans into the values and mores of southern society."²⁶² The collaborative believed in training African American leaders

²⁵⁸ Gasman, *Envisioning Black Colleges: A History of the United Negro College Fund*, 13.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

at colleges “in touch with the conditions to be faced by the young people in later life rather than in the North by institutions . . . out of touch with southern life.”²⁶³ White philanthropists agreed that the development of a handful of black schools strategically reduced the overall number of black colleges.²⁶⁴

Not surprisingly, the complicated relationship between black institutions of higher education and their funding sources often influenced the rhythm of the campus and its student-run newspaper. For example, many black colleges remained staunchly conservative, and upheld Southern traditions as to not upset the interest of their white philanthropic partners.²⁶⁵ Interestingly, even with such divisive control, white philanthropists continued as the main source of revenue for numerous black colleges until the 1940s. Conversely, since their doors opened, black colleges continue to labor for independence. William Watkins wrote that educating African Americans in the early twentieth century created a cadre of politically driven and astute blacks. He believed that greed, fear, and racial stereotyping motivated whites to control black education on all levels. More importantly, Watkins concludes that black education helped African Americans transition from slavery and oppression into an “acceptable” and productive member of American society. The curriculum for blacks focused on “accommodationist” education and eventually evolved into a primer for obedient citizenship.²⁶⁶ In *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, Watkins quoted Carter G. Woodson, “When you can control a person’s thinking you can control

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 15.

²⁶⁶ Watkins. *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, 6.

that person. Colonial education in America was designed to control, pacify, and socialize subject people.”²⁶⁷ This quote proved a symbolic sentiment that explains the constant power dynamic surrounding black higher education.

The list of white architects that Watkins examined was not exhaustive. He selected this group of “great men” because they are under-studied; yet, had considerable roles in shaping black higher education.²⁶⁸ For instance, General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, who founded Hampton Institute in Virginia,²⁶⁹ employed American ideologies crafted, controlled, and whole-heartedly embraced by the dominant culture – white men. Ideologies, both subtle and overt, accepted such perspectives as the “natural order”²⁷⁰ of things. Watkins’s wrote that for nearly four centuries, dating back to 1619, the “Negro question” or “Negro problem” remained a pivotal topic of conversation in both social and educational arenas as well as black and white spheres of influence in the early twentieth century.²⁷¹

Historically, African Americans received their education on the plantation and viewed industrial schools as a means to illuminate this skill set. Washington suggested that slaves received an education “by virtue of their lives and work;”²⁷² and that following the Reconstruction period, mass schoolings only became popular because African Americans demanded social participation and demonstrated the need for a black educational system.²⁷³ Watkins wrote that Christian missionary societies that sponsored

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 1.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 2.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 9.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 11.

²⁷² Ibid., 13.

²⁷³ Ibid., 14.

black education in the North and South centered their curriculum on topics of humanism such as self-development, salvation, and free expression.²⁷⁴

In Elizabeth McHenry's 2002 book, *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies*, she recounts W.E.B DuBois' quote about Booker T. Washington.²⁷⁵ "It was a whole race trying to go to school. Few were too young, and none were too old, to make the attempt to learn."²⁷⁶ An examination of these writings further solidifies the desire for a disenfranchised citizenry to expand themselves academically. While missionary education prior to the Civil War aimed to "civilize" and "Christianize" blacks, after a point in American history, corporate philanthropic education had political objectives.²⁷⁷

Nevertheless, it is important to note that black voices worked to circumvent whites' control of higher education. Scholars Windy Y. Lawrence, Benjamin Bates, and Mark Cervenka wrote in their 2014 article, "Politics Drawn in Black and White: Henry J. Lewis's Visual Rhetoric in Late 1800s Black Editorial Cartoons," that attributing the public debate about black education to W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington both "oversimplified" and reduced the credibility of other African American contributions to this heated discourse.²⁷⁸ Nearly fifteen years before the intellectual skirmishes between Du Bois and Washington, Henry J. Lewis's editorial cartoons, published in the *Freeman* - a black newspaper based in Indianapolis, ignited public acrimony about the

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ W.E.B. Du Bois quotes Booker T. Washington in *Black Reconstruction in America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992) 641.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Watkins. *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, 23.

²⁷⁸ Lawrence, Bates, and Cervenka, "Politics Drawn in Black and White: Henry J. Lewis's Visual Rhetoric in Late-1800s Black Editorial Cartoons," 139.

appropriateness of the educational approach of self-help or doctrine of political agitation as a means to propel African Americans toward social equality.

In Daniel Walden's, *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Crisis Writings*, he reveals that Du Bois believed education should be given to "all children in the largest amount of general training and intelligence possible before teaching them a particular trade or vocation."²⁷⁹ Another fundamental issue for Du Bois, mandated that blacks should control black education. In the 1930s and 1940s, Du Bois believed that the black college and the black industrial school had simultaneously failed and succeeded. Du Bois thought these colleges failed to produce viable black leadership, and that industrial schools only trained blacks for trades that rapidly would become obsolete.²⁸⁰ Du Bois said that the "Negro American University" must focus on the "American Negro problem" unlike its white counterparts, and that black colleges should not pretend they are teaching whites or worldly citizens, but blacks who have been systemically ostracized from American culture.²⁸¹

Du Bois urged black colleges to acknowledge not only the challenges of their past and present, but also to celebrate the achievements and potential of their community. He maintained that the contemporary problems facing the black community should be at the center of a black college's mission, "above all it is founded or it should be founded on a knowledge of the history of their people in Africa and in the United States, and their present condition."²⁸² Du Bois believed this should be done "without whitewashing or

²⁷⁹ Daniel Walden. *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Crisis Writings* (Connecticut: Fawcett Premier Book, 1972), 129.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 130.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 178.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 179.

translating wish into fact,” but with truth about the realities facing African Americans that included poverty, marginalization, and mis-education.²⁸³

Although countless opposing views about black education existed, scholars admit that education proved a prerequisite for African Americans to find better opportunities. Walter R. Allen, Joseph O. Jewell, Kimberly A. Griffin, and De’Sha S. Wolf assert that in many ways, education proved the *ultimate* emancipator for blacks and that it effectively enabled an alienated group of people to achieve social and intellectual mobility.²⁸⁴ They noted in their research that the black college student press adopted this same mantra of academic achievement as their preferred equalizer. Consider data from the U.S. Department of Education, which reported approximately seventy-seven black colleges by 1930 with nearly fourteen thousand students in attendance.²⁸⁵ Despite the economic Depression of the 1930s, enrollment at black colleges blossomed²⁸⁶ and, according to Theresa Perry and Claude Steele, these institutions organized themselves to counteract the perception of black inferiority.²⁸⁷ So did their student-run newspapers.

During the three decades analyzed in this study, Williams and Ashley maintain that black colleges have sweeping historic significance. Before the turn of the twentieth century, black schools such as New Orleans’s Dillard University (resulting from a merger between New Orleans University and Straight College in 1935) penned mission statements in order to remind their students, faculty, staff, and surrounding communities

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Allen, Jewell, Griffin, and Wolf, “Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Honoring the Past, Engaging the Present, Touching the Future.” 263-280, 521-522, 524-527.

²⁸⁵ Redd, “Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Making a Comeback,” 102.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Perry, Steele, and Hilliard III, *Young, Gifted, and Black: Promoting High Achievement Among African-American Students*, 88.

that success was attainable.²⁸⁸ The university's founders aimed "to develop graduates who are broadly educated, culturally aware, concerned with improving the human condition, and able to meet the competitive demands of a global and technologically advanced society."²⁸⁹ Williams and Ashley assert that black universities adopted creative strategies to raise money. For instance, Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, leveraged their Jubilee singers, a group of students, to travel across the world and raise money to keep the school open.²⁹⁰

Black education scholar, Henry Allen Bullock said, "In all the South, as late as 1910, there was not a single eighth grade rural Negro public school. No Negro public school, rural or urban, was approved for two years of high school work."²⁹¹ The predominant and lingering image of blacks held by whites predating and existing after the Civil War "was suffused with belief in their [blacks] limited mental capacities; even liberals held to that view."²⁹² By 1940, approximately half of the black students attending college attended black public institutions²⁹³ and their curriculum focused on elementary and secondary education until the first half of the twentieth century.²⁹⁴ The fact that many African Americans came from porous educational backgrounds necessitated such a curriculum design; and, although eager to receive a college education, they often lacked

²⁸⁸ Williams and Ashley, *I'll Find a Way or Make One: A Tribute to Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, 55.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 110.

²⁹¹ Allen B. Ballard, *The Education of Black Folk: The Afro-American Struggle for Knowledge in White America* (New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, 1973), 12.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁹³ Patricia Gurin and Edgar Epps, *Black Consciousness, Identity, and Achievement: A Study of Students in Historically Black Colleges* (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1975), 22.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

the skill set needed to handle the rigors of college-level course work. Black colleges wisely provided remediation to address this education phenomena.

Interestingly, author Carter G. Woodson noted, that dating back to the eighteenth century, the American literary society customarily ignored black American writers. Phyllis Wheatley, a prolific and accomplished poet, received severe scrutiny simply because most whites honestly believed that blacks did not possess the capability to master the verbal skills of English or any other language (such as French, Spanish or German) let alone become proficient writers.²⁹⁵ On the contrary, Woodson said, evidence exists that these black colleges provided a competitive education to its students and demonstrated the academic success of the first, second and third generation descendants of its graduates.²⁹⁶ Additionally, the narrative of black illiteracy overshadowed thriving literate pockets in the black community that regularly consumed literature (poems, short-stories, and classic American novels). In Elizabeth McHenry's research, primarily Northern blacks realized that "reading was a potentially transformative activity, not only for individuals but for society as a whole"²⁹⁷ that gave freed blacks a sense of urgency to learn and the inherent value of reading. In 1936, Historian Dorothy Porter shared a substantial list of "Negro Literary Societies," who met regularly to pour over literature from both black and white authors.²⁹⁸ The gatherings, sometimes kept secret, included families and multiple generations of blacks who shared books and a love of reading as

²⁹⁵ Carter G. Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861: A History of the Education of the Colored People of the United States from the Beginning of Slavery to the Civil War* (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, Inc., 1919), 89.

²⁹⁶ Gurin and Epps, *Black Consciousness, Identity, and Achievement: A Study of Students in Historically Black Colleges*, 25.

²⁹⁷ Elizabeth McHenry, *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002), 3.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

well as maintained extensive home libraries. These were some of the very people to attend black colleges to expand their education. Black narratives such as that of Frederick Douglass learning to read as a response to his master's utterance, "If you teach that nigger . . . how to read, there will be no keeping him" inspired these literary clubs to continue, and included respected black leaders such as Mary Church Terrell, who occasionally used the meetings to discuss race, politics, and community building.²⁹⁹ The wherewithal and courage possessed by countless blacks demonstrates a determination in their efforts to seek higher education, African Americans from all different socio-economic backgrounds and limited access to a formal education aspired for a better life. McHenry's work provides insight into the complex landscape of the African American educational experience.

Black colleges often rallied to stimulate the "cultural, economic, and political development of the black community,"³⁰⁰ became the largest employers for African Americans, and contributed to the formation of the black middle class.³⁰¹ While the assumption could be made that black colleges were homogeneous enclaves in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, in their 2002 article, "The Danger of History Slipping Away," Arthur J. Clement and Arthur J. Lidsky maintain that "these institutions had different histories, different cultures, and different resources."³⁰² A myriad of characteristics such as physical location, student population, and faculty members made each university unique, and reflective of the diversity within the black community. For example, Hampton

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 1.

³⁰⁰ Gurin and Epps, *Black Consciousness, Identity, and Achievement: A Study of Students in Historically Black Colleges*, 26.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Clement and Lidsky, "The Danger of History Slipping Away," 149-158.

Institute, in Virginia, had a sizeable Native American student population in the early twentieth century.

Expanding on their earlier mission, black colleges served both the educational and emotional needs of a varied group of people within the black community.³⁰³ Educated blacks wanted to advance the best minds in their communities to reach the American dream of achievement and change the trajectory of an oppressed race.³⁰⁴ Scholar Joseph O. Jewell wrote in his 2002 article, “To Set an Example: The Tradition of Diversity at Historically Black Colleges and Universities,” that Black Colleges played a significant role in creating leaders as well as a sharing social ideology of community service, social justice, education, and racial pride.³⁰⁵

Additionally, scholars Allen, Jewell, Griffin, and Wolf wrote that black institutions were “called to preserve a culture, prosper a community, equip a new generation of leaders, and model what is best about America.”³⁰⁶ Similarly, they suggested that a critical link between the black college’s mission and the students who worked on its campus newspaper. Black intellectuals, such as W.E.B. Du Bois and others of sequestered under the umbrella of *The Talented Tenth*, deemed college educated blacks not only destined, but also obligated to lead discussions that “directs its thoughts and heads its social movements” as it reviews the state of the “Negro,”³⁰⁷ Du Bois wrote that the “Negro college” produced a much-needed pool of “teachers of their own race and

³⁰³ Allen, Jewell, Griffin, and Wolf “Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Honoring the Past, Engaging the Present, Touching the Future,” 263-280, 521-522, 524-527.

³⁰⁴ Crystal de Gregory, email message to author, April 11, 2013.

³⁰⁵ Jewell, “To Set an Example: The Tradition of Diversity at Historically Black Colleges and Universities,” 7-21.

³⁰⁶ Allen, Jewell, Griffin and Wolf, “Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Honoring the Past, Engaging the Present, Touching the Future,” 263-280, 521-522, 524-527.

³⁰⁷ W.E.B. DuBois, *The Talented Tenth* (1903: repr., California: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 17.

blood” equipped to teach “ignorant people” that would prove an invaluable undertaking because it created a culture of learning that, perhaps, gave blacks the best opportunity to escape intellectual isolation.³⁰⁸

Alcorn State University President M. Christopher Brown II (a black college in Lorman, Mississippi) wrote that while African Americans frequently talk about black colleges, their history remains extremely understudied.³⁰⁹ Brown argues that the literature of scholarship on black colleges is either “complimentary or controversial,” but fails to find the middle ground.³¹⁰ In a 2002 study, researcher Allen Jewell found that in the early twentieth century, scholarly literature on the viability, political, and social awareness, and academic abilities of black colleges revealed four areas of concern: the impact black colleges had on their communities; the effect black colleges had on society-at-large; the perspectives of the college community regarding class and race; and the role of the college in social movements, such as civil rights.³¹¹

Diverse in their educational background and socioeconomic status, black college campuses have a legacy of ethnic diversity as well. Black colleges in the South became some of the first institutions to open their doors to anyone regardless of race.³¹² Although some black colleges such as Bennett College for Women (Greensboro, North Carolina) as well as Spelman and Morehouse colleges (both located in Atlanta, Georgia) catered to students based on gender, by the mid-1930s, the majority of black colleges accepted

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 17-18.

³⁰⁹ M. Christopher Brown II, “The Declining Significance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Relevance, Reputation, and Reality in Obamamerica,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 82, no. 1 (2013): 3-19.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 4.

³¹¹ Allen, Jewell, Griffin and Wolf, “Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Honoring the Past, Engaging the Present, Touching the Future.” 263-280, 521-522, 524-527.

³¹² Redd, “Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Making a Comeback,” 102.

anyone eager to participate in their communities.³¹³ In light of the literature concerning the breadth and depth of the black college, students on those campuses embodied a spirit of determination to live a life of purpose and uplift.

The Progeny Cometh: The Black College Press

Scholarship over the last thirty years has created a commonly accepted cannon on the historical development of the Black Press as well as the tangentially significant place of black colleges and universities in the United States; however, only a very limited amount of literature actually addresses the intersection of the two – *the Black College Press*. Although meager in number of published sources, when joined with historical and cultural context, the resulting narrative powerfully constructs a broad understanding of the history of black college student-run newspapers. With the road markers of censorship, comparative analyses against newspapers published on white campuses, and the collective aspirations of African American students to apply the same professional standards of the Black Press to their collegiate efforts, the journey of the black college press during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s certainly should have a more celebrated standing in the “Long History of the Modern Civil Rights Movement.”

Historians agree that prior to the emergence of formal journalism programs, many black college campuses such as Tennessee’s Knoxville College, founded in 1877, began publication of a student-run newspaper with an activist spirit around 1931. Not far away in West Virginia, Bluefield Teacher’s College,³¹⁴ which opened to educate blacks in

³¹³ Pearl Stewart, email message to author, March 24, 2013.

³¹⁴ Bluefield Teachers College in West Virginia opened to serve the racially segregated public schools in the coal camps, progressive citizens of both races worked together to establish Bluefield Colored Institute, a high graded school for Negroes, in 1895. The institution thereafter evolved into a black teacher’s college, adopting formal teacher training in 1909 and was renamed Bluefield State Teachers

1875, and evolved into a college for teachers; also in 1931, began printing a student-run newspaper.³¹⁵ Additionally, Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute³¹⁶ in Alabama, founded in 1881, published a student-run newspaper that focused on agriculture and student achievement during the same time period.

Researcher Phillip Jeter wrote that while most black college student-run newspapers informed their readership about university events, they more importantly provided intellectual responses to happenings in their community. The student editors and writers used the cultural lessons learned from the analysis of social circumstances to prepare themselves for the demands of life beyond their campus borders.³¹⁷ Journalism scholars agree that the Black Press intentionally cultivated a symbiotic relationship with its readers. While most of the black college newspapers sporadically published in some printed form – newsletter, tabloid, and broadsheet – historical accounts of campus news often run congruent to the origins and mission of the black college. During this time period, African Americans expected their press to “critique, and protest against mainstream media depictions of black America.”³¹⁸ Black college press student writers

College in 1931. The name, Bluefield State College, was adopted in 1943, reflecting a growth in the number and diversity of the institution's academic programs. Bluefield State College was integrated after 1954. By the 1960s, the College had a comprehensive four-year program of teacher education, arts and sciences, and engineering technology. Gradually, a variety of two-year technical programs evolved in response to local needs.

³¹⁵ Discovered through the author's research at Tulane University's Amistad Research Center in New Orleans.

³¹⁶ Tuskegee Institute was founded in a one-room shanty, near Butler Chapel AME Zion Church, thirty adults represented the first class - Dr. Booker T. Washington the first teacher. The founding date was July 4, 1881 and House Bill 165 authorized the school.

³¹⁷ Phillip Jeter, “Journalism and Mass Communication Education at HBCUS: History and Current Issues,” *Education* (Fall 2002): 200-204.

³¹⁸ Squires, “Black Audiences, Past and Present: Commonsense Media Critics and Activists,” 45.

and editors proved no different and eagerly, yet dutifully, worked to depict blacks as an introspective and purposeful people determined to thrive under suffocating racism.³¹⁹

Newspapers are Black and White: Comparing Mainstream College Press Systems to the Black College Press

While, in some aspects, black schools operated differently than white institutions, they also shared similar experiences and traditions. Educator Allan Abbott wrote about “the flood of journalism schools spreading the country over.”³²⁰ During an exhibition of several newspapers from New York City schools, Abbott said that although abundant, the showing only represented a slice of the number of publications throughout the country.³²¹ Aside from the journals functioning as vehicles of information dissemination, Abbott noted that black college journalism programs persuasively build community, chronicle the school’s history, encourage positive relationships among students, and serve as a window into the students’ ambitions and concerns.³²²

You Can’t Tell Me What to Say!: Censorship in the Black College Press

Authors Juan Williams and Dwayne Ashley wrote in *I’ll Find a Way or Make One: A Tribute to Historically Black Colleges and Universities* that the black college student-run press kept their readers informed and occasionally frustrated administrators because of their commitment to share news – sometimes news the university did not want shared. For example, they note that at Tennessee’s Fisk University in Nashville - March 1918, a student wrote a letter of displeasure to the University President Fayette

³¹⁹ Pamela Foster, email message to author, March 25, 2013.

³²⁰ Allan Abbott, “High-School Journalism,” *School Review* 18, no. 10 (December 1910): 657-58.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

³²² *Ibid.*

McKenzie, a white man who enforced restrictive policies to preserve “order” on campus.³²³

According to Williams and Ashley, in the early years of McKenzie’s administration, he implemented numerous tactics to control the students’ voice, which included dismantling the student government association. Additionally, McKenzie abruptly “ceased publication of the student newspaper, the *Fisk Herald*, effectively ending any medium for students to publicly comment on the climate at the university.”³²⁴ McKenzie’s decision to eliminate the *Fisk Herald*, the oldest student newspaper on a historically black campus, sparked campus protests and alumni outrage.³²⁵ Interestingly, McKenzie viewed the student newspaper’s role as collaborator, not a voice of dissent. He routinely censored articles before publication, and eventually made the decision to shutter the publication.³²⁶

After years of unrest, W.E.B. Du Bois, a prominent alumnus, revived a 1924 copy of the *Fisk Herald*. He immediately used its opinion pages to condemn McKenzie’s tactics and his attempt to silence students who disagreed with him. *I’ll Find a Way or Make One* articulates Du Bois’ utter frustration in the reformatting of the newspaper’s banner: “Formerly a Monthly College Journal published by the Literary Societies of Fisk University, Suppressed by Fayette A. McKenzie in 1916, Re-established in 1924 by the

³²³ Williams and Ashley, *I’ll Find a Way or Make One: A Tribute to Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, 108.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 109.

³²⁵ Timothy Reese Cain, “Of Tempests, Laughing Horses, and Sacred Cows: Controlling College Student Presses between the World Wars,” *American Journalism* 29, no. 3 (2012): 19.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

Associated Fisk Clubs, and dedicated to the emancipation of the Fisk Spirit from its present slavery.”³²⁷

Most notably, journalism historian Timothy Reese Cain wrote in his 2012, “Of Tempests, Laughing Horses, and Sacred Cows: Controlling College Student Presses between the World Wars,” that the Fisk *Herald* was not the only black college student newspaper to face censorship.³²⁸ Howard University’s *Hill Top*, the student-run newspaper that published its first issue in 1924, also fought the school’s administrators, who required all articles to be approved by the faculty advisor before publication.³²⁹

The struggle for editorial independence was not unique to the black college press, and mirrored the plight of the professional Black Press. The black student editors and writers were committed to publishing authentic news because their readers expected it. Journalism historians Aimee Edmondson and Earnest L. Perry said that unlike their white counterparts, black “publications were read by believers rather than the people whom they wished to convert.”³³⁰ Edmondson and Perry maintain that the mainstream media did not deem “racism” a story worth covering until the horrific deaths of white college students during the Modern Civil Rights Movement much later than the timeframe of this study.³³¹

White Space in Student-Run Campus Newspapers

³²⁷ Williams and Ashley, *I’ll Find a Way or Make One: A Tribute to Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, 109.

³²⁸ Cain, “Of Tempests, Laughing Horses, and Sacred Cows: Controlling College Student Presses between the World Wars,” 20.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ Aimee Edmondson and Earnest L. Perry, “To the Detriment of the Institution: the Missouri Student’s Fight to Desegregate the University of Missouri,” *American Journalism* 27, no. 4 (Fall 2010): 105-131.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 107.

The white college student-run press has a historical advantage of longevity over their black counterparts. In fact, researcher Walter Havighurst wrote in his 1984 book, *The Miami Years 1809-1984*, that a tradition of mainstream college press could be traced back to Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, where the students began publishing the *Literary Focus* in June of 1827, making it the oldest university newspaper in the United States.³³² *The Literary Focus* later became the *Miami Student* and one of more than a hundred white college publications active in the 1800s.³³³ Ironically, it was the same university where 135 years later black and white college students trained in peaceful resistance techniques prior to their social movement assignments (that often included communication/journalism tasks) to assist severely marginalized African Americans in the Mississippi Freedom Summer Voter Registration Project of 1964.³³⁴

Initially agents of change, the white college press informed the student body as representatives of the university. Havighurst maintains that while white student newspapers often struggled for survival and to articulate their purpose, their drive to publish centered more on receiving notoriety and esteem associated with functioning as a university ambassador than social crusader.³³⁵ Conversely, the black student-run press served as an agitator, an inspiration, an advocate of truth, and a concrete demonstration of racial intelligence, independence, loyalty, and leadership.³³⁶

³³² Walter Havighurst, *The Miami Years 1809-1984* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1984).

³³³ Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 260 years: 1690-1950 Revised Edition* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 411.

³³⁴ Brenda Edgerton-Webster, "The Tale of 'Two Voices': An Oral History of Women Communicators from Mississippi Freedom Summer 1964 and a New Black Feminist Concept," University of Missouri, Columbia, 2007, Dissertation Order No. DA3353499.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ Jinx C. Broussard, "Saviors or Scalawags: The Mississippi Black Press's Contrasting Coverage of Civil Rights Workers and Freedom Summer, June-August 1964," *American Journalism* 19, no. 3 (2002): 79-80.

The Association of Black College Newspapers: A Network in Action

A black college student journalism association existed during the 1930s and into the 1940s. Scholar Brenna W. Greer said Moss Kendrix (was one of three students) started *Delta Phi Delta Journalism Society*, a professional development and community service organization for black students.³³⁷ Many consider Kendrix not only a former journalist but also one of the founding fathers of public relations (as well as an advertising pioneer because he incorporated realistic images of blacks in national campaigns for Coca Cola). He attended Morehouse College (a black college founded in 1867 in Atlanta, Georgia)³³⁸ and served as the student newspaper's editor in the late 1920s and early 1930s.³³⁹ Prior to the early 1930s, no professional development organization existed for black college students interested in journalism as a career. With Kendrix's assistance, *Delta Phi Delta* established chapters at more than thirty black colleges across the country with the charge of fostering a greater understanding and appreciation for the need of professional black journalists.³⁴⁰

By the late 1930s, Kendrix launched *National Negro Newspaper Week*. Kendrix's initiative, an annual observance designed "to familiarize America with the accomplishments and possibilities of the Negro Press," demonstrated his keen appreciation (even as a recent college graduate) and value of the Black Press.³⁴¹ Kendrix

³³⁷ Brenna W. Greer, "Selling Liberia: Moss H. Kendrix, the Liberian Centennial Commission and the Post-World War II Trade in Black Progress" *Enterprise and Society* 14, no. 2 (June 2013): 303-326.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ Greer, "Selling Liberia: Moss H. Kendrix, the Liberian Centennial Commission and the Post-World War II Trade in Black Progress," 303-326.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 311.

developed publicity events to promote the usefulness of the Black Press, and received high praise from American Black Press editors and writers for his innovative efforts.³⁴²

Recent projects such as the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts (CCAHA) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Newspaper History Project in Nashville, Tennessee, have worked to chronicle the oral history of the black college student press; however, this narrative remains fragmented and lacks context. The purpose of this study is to provide various contextual analyses to the narrative of five black college student press journals in an effort to restore the missing pieces to this critical segment of Black Press history in America.

A Historical Analysis Breeds Familiarity, Credibility, and Clarity

Exploring the commitment to advocacy journalism on black college campuses during the early twentieth century is the purpose of this study. A historical analysis provides the necessary framework to examine the students' writings as well as interpret how their publications intersected with societal and cultural influences from 1930 through 1959. Undoubtedly, the prophetic voices found on the pages of the black college student-run press represent both the *how* and *why* students used journalism to re-imagine their future from marginalization to liberation.

Similar to John Tosh's notion that awareness of self-identity is rooted in the past, this historiography deepens the limited understanding of the black college student-run press and its critical role in the advancement of the Civil Rights Movement, the Black

³⁴² Ibid., 312.

Press, and vitality of black colleges in educating and cultivating leaders.³⁴³ The legacy of the black college press began in the early twentieth century at a moment when escalating tensions between their race's ongoing struggle for equality, and the nation's unwillingness to free blacks from systematic disenfranchisement were palpable. The student editors and writers earnestly believed that they had more to lose by not evoking their voice than by remaining complicit about the unfair treatment of African Americans.

Centers of intellectual discourse the world over, colleges and universities provide academic knowledge and nurture the promise of social change that most-often emerged as worthy and achievable pursuits. For example, in an early twentieth century African university syllabus highlighted social and governmental hypocrisies constructed to portray the image of Africans as inferior to their white European counterparts. The syllabi featured the statement, "the great experiment in state-building in pre-colonial Africa like the Medieval empires of Ghana and Zimbabwe and the record of resistance to white incursions like the rebellion against the Rhodesian settle," and gave credibility to the appropriateness of a using historical analysis in examining the creative and impactful journalism work of the American black college student-run press.³⁴⁴

Silencing the "Big Lie" and Selling the Truth

Moreover, the black college student editors and writers engendered a certain level of naiveté and quasi professionalism that a historical analysis can accurately capture. This

³⁴³ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History* (New York, NY: Longman House, 1984), 1.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

method best illuminates the black college student-run press' purpose in documenting and contextualizing the world for their readers, who were preparing to fully enter a racially polarized society. The black college student editors and writers sought to rescue their historical narrative from a white media defiantly ill-equipped to accurately report on the nuisances of their community.³⁴⁵ The black college press often endured reading biased headlines in the white media, which covered civil unrest as an expression of “tantrum” and not a constitutional right.³⁴⁶ For example, the *Albany Herald*, a white daily newspaper in Albany, Georgia, characterized the growing Civil Rights Movement in the late 1950s as “antidemocratic,” a “Hitlerian tactic of the ‘Big Lie,’ and “flatly declared, ‘The Negroes are lying.’”³⁴⁷ So, the black college editors and writers’ printed their reaction to regular assaults on African Americans. Their interpretations can best be understood through a historiography that traverses the landscape of the development of black college newspapers.

This project is more than an attempt to reconstruct events over a thirty-year period, but rather, to interpret the relevance of the black college press, and how it inspired the next generation of black activists, scholars, and journalists. In addition, a historical analysis peels away yet another layer as to the *why* and *how* early twentieth century black college students reacted to seminal moments such as the Great Depression, World War II, and the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott. Furthermore, this method provides meaningful insight juxtaposed against the reactions from acclaimed African American leaders who,

³⁴⁵ Jeffrey Novick, *The Civil Sphere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 298.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

more often than not, defined the American black experience for the masses.³⁴⁸ “By seeing the world through their eyes and as far as possible judging it by their standards,” this examination adds an underexplored element into the conversation about the expansive reach of the Black Press, and the undiscovered strength of the black college and its press.³⁴⁹ Historians must reveal a compelling narrative that explains ‘why’ students tucked away on Southern black college campuses, surrounded by Jim Crow’s authority responded to the complexities of life with humor, conjecture, indifference, transparency, and hostility via the black college press system.

Themes Provide the Lens to Understand the Black College Student Press

Hence, a historical analysis provides three important benchmarks for this study in that it: (1) “alerts us to the sheer variety of human mentality and achievement,” (2) is “a source of precedent and prediction,” and finally (3) uncovers a link between the events of the early twentieth century and the printed responses of black college student-run newspapers.³⁵⁰ Subsequently, a historical analysis reduces the myths or ignorance surrounding the black college press and creates a more accurate depiction of its intentionality, resourcefulness, and body of work. Tosh said that the purpose of a historical analysis “is to identify trends, analyze causes and consequences – in short to interpret history as a process . . .,” and this study follows in the same tradition.³⁵¹ For instance, he wrote that “historians of the English Revolution approached their work with a view to discovering not only what happened in the Civil War or what it felt like to be a soldier in the New Model Army, but why the event occurred and what changes it brought

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 12-13.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 12.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 12-13.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 19.

about in the nature of English politics and society.”³⁵² This study examines five black colleges on the basis of reoccurring themes of race, politics, and community building. According to Tosh, certain themes “enjoy research priority” mainly because they are essential to the progress and development of society.³⁵³

Since the birth of the United States, race, politics, and community building have not only been socially significant, but have isolated fringe groups -- including African Americans -- from mainstream acceptance and pivotal opportunities.³⁵⁴ An investigation based on these themes has historical precedence. The societal contextual understanding of race as either a barrier or a privilege remained an essential aspect of the American experience for both blacks and whites throughout the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Meanwhile, political currency meant unencumbered access to the American dream of prosperity, education, and independence. Finally, a sense of belonging, to whatever a country holds virtuous, creates a spirit of unity and worthiness of respect, equality, and public admiration. An acceptable practice of interpreting historical research includes identifying and establishing themes as a way to resurrect and explain moments from the past, contextualize the present, and predict the future.³⁵⁵ Thus, such themes provide focus to this study and further underscore its credibility.

A lack of a historical research on the black college student-run press has disadvantaged society when it comes to embracing this slice of American life. The gap in scholarship has muted the sense of urgency that loudly resonated in articles published in Hampton Institute’s *Script* and Southern University’s *Digest* – two student-run

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid., 66.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

newspapers nationally recognized for their often poetic, yet timely emphasis on race, politics, and community building.

The Push and Pull of Historical Analysis, Objectivity, and the Black College Press

No historical analysis is free from scrutiny; G. R. Elton³⁵⁶ adamantly argued that historians could be objective because of their academic training and the growing pool of resources that ensured evenhanded interpretations.³⁵⁷ At the other end of the spectrum, Theodore Zeldin,³⁵⁸ believed readers only get the historian's "personal vision of the past, and the materials out of which they in turn can fashion a personal vision that corresponds to their own aspirations and sympathies."³⁵⁹ While the debate about historical objectivity continues, this researcher used Tosh's safeguards against relying on personal inclinations to determine the outcome of this study. As such, the project structured research questions that gleaned information and made accurate interruptions. Secondly, the historical process of this research analyzed and interpreted the work of the black college press through the lens of the social climate in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s rather than the researcher's personal experiences or understanding. In fact, while the primary sources were not exhaustive, the researcher analyzed all available digital and hardcopy documents at each institution in an effort to reduce the occurrence of bias. Additionally, the breadth and depth of the available primary sources helped the researcher develop a

³⁵⁶ "A strong advocate of the primacy of political and administrative history, Elton was the pre-eminent Tudor historian of his day. He also made very significant contributions to the then current debate on the philosophy of historical practice, as well as having a powerful effect on the profession through, among other things, his presidency of the Royal Historical Society." http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/historians/elton_geoffrey.html.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.

³⁵⁸ "He is probably best known as the author of *An Intimate History of Humanity* which offers a somewhat different perspective on human history by focusing on the evolution of feelings and personal relationships." <http://www.gurteen.com/gurteen/gurteen.nsf/id/theodore-zeldin>.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

more refined sense of context when interpreting and reporting discoveries yet, potentially limited the distortion in the findings.

Interestingly, Peter Novick wrote that “the value of an interpretation is judged by how well it accounts for the facts; if contradicted by the facts, it must be abandoned,” which serves as yet another guiding principle for this researcher.³⁶⁰ More profoundly, the methodology of this historical analysis adheres to the adage that “whatever patterns exist in history, researchers ‘find,’ not ‘make.’”³⁶¹ The fact that the black college newspapers contributed to a swelling campaign of persuasion and influence launched by their mentors in the Black Press to achieve “a more commanding position in the civil sphere of American society” further underscored the saliency of this historical analysis.³⁶² The evolution of the black college student-run press can be authentically investigated through a historical analysis consistent with Jeffrey Alexander’s observations that coverage of race, politics, and community building proved necessary focal points in galvanizing a disheartened and marginalized group in search of social justice.³⁶³ This historical analysis provides critical introspection to their editorial journey as advocates, agitators, and community servants.

Another strength of this historical analysis accounts for Alexander’s theory of cultural trauma – defined as when members of the same group “have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable

³⁶⁰ Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream* (Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 2.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*

³⁶² Jeffrey C. Alexander, *The Civil Sphere* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 294.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 295.

ways.”³⁶⁴ Alexander found that traumatized groups share in the suffering and generate solidarity based on their shared sense of suffering.³⁶⁵ He said the group identifies the cause, and then assumes responsibility and political action to manufacture a paradigm shift.³⁶⁶ Additionally, Ron Eyerman wrote, “slavery was traumatic in retrospect, and formed a ‘primal scene’ that could, potentially, unite all ‘African Americans’ in the United States.”³⁶⁷ Whether or not black college students had endured the cruelty of slavery or held an affinity for Africa, “*slavery* [sic] formed the root of an emergent collective identity.”³⁶⁸ Eyerman and Alexander’s research supports the structure of this project’s historical analysis in that it accounted for the phenomena of cultural trauma and collective identity. This research clearly demonstrates the coverage of racial injustice, political inaccessibility for blacks, and strategic machinations of whites to destroy blacks’ sense of communal pride and refuge. Furthermore, the findings from this study stunningly and powerfully discuss the undeniable impact that the black college and Black Press had on the history of America.

Race, Politics, and Community Building are the Themes that tell the Story

This dissertation is organized based on the aforementioned three themes of race, politics, and community building and exclusively investigated black college student-run newspapers because they serve as a more accurate reflection of how students

³⁶⁴ Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 1.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.* “For trauma is not something naturally existing: it is something constructed by society” much like racial inferiority between blacks and whites in America. 2.

³⁶⁷ Ron Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 60.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

“organically” discussed race, politics, and community building, as opposed to any official university publication.³⁶⁹ While faculty advisors certainly participated in the day-to-day operations of black college student-run newspapers, this researcher’s interviews with historians on their role revealed that in most cases, faculty functioned more as mentors rather than as news gatekeepers. For example, Clark University’s *The Mentor* Faculty Advisor, English Professor Stella Brown described by the editorial staff as “a supporter of student expression,” held the same campus advisor for 15 years of this study’s coverage period.³⁷⁰

Relying heavily on primary sources, the researcher visited the archives of four of the five colleges discussed, and accessed the school’s digital archives and printed copies of authenticated publications from the fifth school, Bennett College. At all repositories, the researcher read for the specific themes of race, politics, and community building. Hence, this research chronicles all publications currently available that may or may not in tandem discuss race, politics, and community building. For example, in the December 1940 issue of the *Bennett Banner*, the student editors and writers discussed race and community but not politics. Conversely, in a March 1931 issue of the *Bennett Banner*, the writers only explored politics. This researcher selected the most poignant examples of race, politics, and community building in each available newspaper to discern any

³⁶⁹ It was not an uncommon practice for black colleges and universities to publish two newspapers. One newspaper was considered the official campus publication and usually covered university accomplishment such as the construction of new buildings, the expansion of academic programs as well as faculty and staff accolades. For the most part, administrators and faculty and staff members wrote all the content. It served more as an external public relations tool that supported or reinforced the university’s goals, objectives and mission. The second newspaper was a student-run publication that had a faculty or staff advisor to help assist the students, however, the news gathering, writing, editing, story placement, layout of the newspapers along with selling advertisements was the responsibility of the student staff. The students usually published content that was centered on capturing the interest of the students and sometimes the ire of the administration.

³⁷⁰ In several issues of *The Mentor*.

important patterns that could be traced back to the black college press's commitment to use their newspapers to rally for justice and awareness.

This study evaluated approximately 68 issues of the *Bennett Banner*; 36 issues of *The Mentor* and *The Panther* (Clark University); 500 issues of the *Hampton Script*; 202 issues of the *Southern University Digest*; and 118 issues of the *Tuskegee Campus Digest* published from 1930 to 1959. Specifically, the researcher examined the front page, feature articles, and first-person editorials/opinion pieces focused race, politics, and community building. For instance, Southern University of Louisiana's *Southern Digest* editorial staff published a race-centered article on the front page above the fold of the May 1945 issue under the headline, "Negroes Mourn the Passing of Our Best Friend." The article discussed the reaction to the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the African American community. In the February 1931 issue of the *Hampton Script*, the student writers and editors published a political opinion piece headlined, "What Price Relief?" that discussed the impact of the economic depression and political leaders lack of initiative to remedy an ailing national economy. And, in the October 1944 issue of Clark University's *Mentor*, the editorial staff wrote about campus leaders being responsible for more than attending meetings; but rather, the need to bolster campus morale by monitoring their actions and attitudes as a means of insuring effective community building.

Regrettably, the newspaper collections proved not as comprehensive as hoped because consecutive copies from certain years were unavailable for this researcher's

consideration.³⁷¹ Archivists believed that the early repositories lost, destroyed, or undervalued the significance of many of the original issues, and consequently, discarded them. In total, the researcher reviewed more than 1,920 articles.

The study includes sources such as recorded interviews from black college archivists and historians. Although, not all of the archivists and historians directly worked on the newspapers included in the study during the 1930s, 1940s, or 1950s, their perspectives added critical knowledge to this account of how black college students articulated themselves and wrestled with the prevailing issues of their day. Additionally, in each chapter, the researcher included extensive information about the college's origins, mission, student population, and academic and social prominence. Consideration was given to each student newspaper's relationship with its intended audience, including the faculty and administration, along with the size of its editorial staff, publication schedule, and circulation methods. When appropriate, the researcher drew comparisons between coverage of events in the professional Black Press and that of the black college newspapers in an effort to further illustrate the similarities and contrasts of the two mediums. Finally, each chapter discusses the articles that appeared in newspapers of this study and ranged between the years of 1930 through 1959. At the beginning of each chapter, when appropriate, discussion of the interviews with archivists and historians provides significant context and a deeper understanding of black student expression.

³⁷¹ The sixteen *Southern Digest* publications housed at the Amistad Research Center on Tulane University in New Orleans included in this study are: October 25, 1932, November 1, 1932, November 15, 1932, February 16, 1933, March 15, 1933, April 1, 1933, April 15, 1933, November 15, 1933, December 1, 1933, December 21, 1933, January 15, 1934, February 1, 1934, February 24, 1934, March 9, 1934, November 8, 1938, January 18, 1939.

CHAPTER II – BENNETT COLLEGE FOR WOMEN: THE BENNETT BANNER

For Country, Culture, and Respect: *The Banner* uses Journalism to Promote Equality

from a Black Feminist Perspective

From 1930 to 1959, *The Bennett Banner* was more than a collection of cake recipes, debutante ball highlights, and light-hearted vignettes consumed with how to snag a husband banter. The newspaper encapsulated a clever approach to hard news coverage, underscored the student editors and writers' abilities to report about complex issues with sweeping consequences, and articulated a discursive perspective about a nation riddled with philosophical flaws. Consequently, these characteristics defined the quality and urgency for a student-run newspaper at Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, North Carolina. In fact, the students' editorials dovetailed into a national movement for racial and gender liberation launched by African American women journalists such as Pauline Hopkins and Josephine St. Ruffin, and continued throughout the first half of the twentieth century with the pen of Ida B. Wells and Charlotta Bass.¹ It was this legacy of black

¹ Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins (1859-1930) was probably best known for her work as an author of four novels including *Contending Forces: A Romance Illustrative of Negro Life North and South* published by the Colored Cooperative Publishing Company. Hopkins did editorial work, nonfiction and fiction writing that focused primarily on the women's role in society, black history, economic justice, and racial discrimination. During much of her life was considered a "preeminent public intellectual." Hopkins is also known for her editorial work with the *Colored American Magazine*, which prior to the rise of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) *Crisis* magazine boosted of any black publication in the early 1900s. During the height of the magazine's engagement with political coverage and raging conflicts between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois, the Tuskegee Machine bought the journal and effectively ended Hopkins' influence and career at the magazine.

<http://www.paulinehopkinsociety.org/>; Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin (1842-1924) was a journalist and civil rights activist born into one of Boston's most prominent African American families. By age 15, she married George Lewis Ruffin – the first African American to graduate from Harvard Law School. From 1890 to 1897 Ruffin served as the editor and publisher of *Woman's Era*, the first newspaper published by and for African American women. She was a noted philanthropist and became active in several social justice causes including the establishment of the Boston Kansas Relief Association (1879) and the Women's Era Club (1894), which advocated for black women. Ruffin considered Booker T. Washington, William Lloyd Garrison, and Susan B. Anthony close friends. Charlotta Amanda Bass (1874-1969) was a native of Sumter, South Carolina and relocated to California in 1910 for health reasons. After the death of the newspaper's founder, Bass took over control of *The California Eagle* in 1912 and served as its publisher

female leadership as well as racial advocacy and equality that inspired Bennett College to publish its inaugural issue of the *Banner* in 1931 as an outlet of student expression.²

So while African Americans struggled to free their voice from centuries of marginalization, the *Banner* editors and writers were cultivating a convincing narrative against discrimination in a racially polarized corner of the South. Equally as important, the publication served as a drum for black consciousness, and a critical lynchpin to poignant conversations surrounding the necessity of political agitation and community uplift among some of the country's emerging black female activists.³ Like their predecessors in the Black Press, this form of alternative journalism was a duty-bound community service, which the *Banner* staff could not detach themselves from emotionally, morally, or ethically. It was this innate connection to the Black Press (which was nonexistent in Greensboro during the 1930s) that influenced their work as well as awakened their passion to use the world as their muse, and journalism as their apparatus for mounting a social revolution. Arguably, the *Banner* understood just by giving their race a voice through journalism did not translate into justice. It was the substance, the research, and the intention behind their work that contributed positively to the ongoing national discourse about race, politics, and community building.

Indeed, the writings and women of the *Banner* were a microcosm of the African American woman's abysmal reality. Trapped in the shadows of "patriarchal oppression of

until 1951. Bass used *The Eagle* to push for reforms such as eliminating derogatory images in D.W. Griffith's film, *Birth of A Nation*; Los Angeles' discriminatory hiring practices; the Klu Klux Klan; police brutality; and restrictive housing covenants. In 1951 Bass retired from the newspaper business. By 1952 she became the first African-American woman to run for national office as the Vice Presidential candidate on the Progressive Party ticket. Streitmatter, Rodger. *Raising Her Voice: African American Women Journalists Who Changed History*. Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1994.

² *The Bennett Banner*, November 1931, 3.

³ Linda Beatrice Brown, interview with author, February 25, 2015.

women” and an inescapable “racialized” nation, African American women used their voice to nurture, protest, assuage, and engender themselves to a crusade for global freedom.⁴ Countless African American women fought for their basic human rights under the flag of Black Feminism, Womanism/Africana Womanism along with Afro-Pragmatic Womanism to express an enduring desire for equality for themselves, but also for black men and black children.⁵ While all three of these theoretical concepts have unique definitions, the terms were used interchangeably, and characteristics of each were routinely identified throughout this project. Dating back to slavery, it was this altruistic vision of justice for themselves as well as their community that rendered the work of black women invaluable to the civil rights movement – especially on Bennett’s campus from 1930 to 1959.⁶ The intersectionality of race and gender for the *Banner* women, like so many of their foremothers, was a reason to demand hastened social change.⁷ More importantly, the conceptualization of the *Banner*’s ideas was fueled by the larger context of the African American women’s struggle. So the *Banner*’s work was certainly not created in a vacuum, but on the shoulders of black women suffragists and activists such as Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Adella Hunt Logan, and Maria W. Stewart – who

⁴ Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “African-American Women’s History and the Metalanguage of Race,” in *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women’s History*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King and Linda Reed (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1995), 1-7.

⁵ Brenda Edgerton-Webster, “The Tale of ‘Two Voices’: An Oral History of Women Communicators from Mississippi Freedom Summer 1964 and a New Black Feminist Concept,” University of Missouri, Columbia, 2007, Dissertation Order No. DA3353499. For the purpose of this study, Black Feminism is when women work collectively to overcome mistreatment based on their race, gender, class and socioeconomic standing. Womanism/Africana Womanism is when women with African heritage work to uplift not only women but their entire community as well. Afro-Pragmatic Womanism is a combination of Black Feminism and Womanism concepts to move black women from the margins of society.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Kimberle Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity, Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991).

aggressively rattled the psyche of white women, politicians, businessmen and lynch mobs – to denounce bigotry for the sake of equality.⁸

It was the *Banner's* editors and writers who chastised their readers in March 1942 for laughing at the “fat BLACK, greasy, grinning character” that white Hollywood routinely exploited as a representation of African Americans at “their lowest, most unattractive level.”⁹ The *Banner* used rhetorical questions prodding readers to more deeply evaluate their role in racial progress. For example, in a March 1942 editorial, the staff asked: “Do you want to be thought of as a perpetually grinning, lazy stooge that speaks in a half-witted dialect? Of course you don’t and yet as long as you laugh at them, the cinema producers will continue to characterize the Negro as unbecoming as possible.”¹⁰ The staff underscored their ideological stance with language that stirred yet convicted their readers to respond to the steady barrage of racial hatred with courage, faith, and a plan of action to overcome their demeaning circumstances.

Remarkably, it was the intensity of the *Banner's* rhetoric that resonated throughout the campus during periods of national uncertainty. For instance, shortly after World War II, the student-led staff wrote in their October 1945 issue that white America’s pursuit of peace would be defined by their “actions rather than sentiment” to move from racial discrimination at home to the ideal that “all men are born free and equal.”¹¹ Without this sobering realization, editor Nancy L. Pinnard wrote that everlasting

⁸ Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, “Discontented Black Feminists: Prelude and Postscript to the Passage of the Nineteenth Amendment,” *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women’s History*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King and Linda Reed (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1995).

⁹ *The Bennett Banner*, March 1942, 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *The Bennett Banner*, October 1945, 2.

peace in America would be elusive.¹² Their editorial approach punctuated the newspaper's commitment to use its pages to transform the way their readers thought, and as a respite from the mainstream media's reliance on stereotypes to define the African American existence.¹³ It also further illustrated how the black college student-run press emulated the professional Black Press by assuming a dual role of community advocate and public accountability system.¹⁴ Without a doubt, the *Banner* was determined to sift through the issues of the day with a spirit of urgency, responsibility, and transparency.

Black Collegian Women Coming Together in Sisterhood and Service

Somewhat removed from the ire of whites in the northeastern corner of “Greensboro South,” African American women gathered from all pockets of the country eager to attain an education as well as garner societal respect.¹⁵ Through the *Banner's* work, it was the staff's intellectual wherewithal to address national, regional, and local issues as well as the legacy of African American women that was on display during the three decades of this study. At one of only two colleges established exclusively to educate black women (Spelman College in Atlanta was the second school), *Banner* editors and writers such as Valena E. Minor,¹⁶ Thelma T. Thomas,¹⁷ and Grace Ellison¹⁸ were crafting articles that used phrases such as “PROUD to be a Negro!” and “Stand up for your rights – and stand by those who do stand up for your rights if you can't stand up for them yourself.”¹⁹ This passage embodied Africana Womanism theorist Clenora

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Roland E. Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.* (Ames: Iowa State, 1989).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Linda Beatrice Brown, interview with author, February 25, 2015.

¹⁶ Editor of the January 1943 issue of *The Banner*.

¹⁷ Editor of the December 1946 issue of *The Banner*.

¹⁸ Reporter for the November 1951 issue of *The Banner*.

¹⁹ *The Bennett Banner*, January 1943, 2.

Hudson-Weems assertion that “the onus of responsibility for the destiny” of black women and her community “rests on her.”²⁰ They covered the impact of legal brawls such as the desegregation of public schools in Greensboro from a perspective that emphasized the determination of black women to use journalism as a catalyst toward racial freedom.²¹ Again, this notion parallels the work of noted journalism historian Jinx C. Broussard, who chronicled how women such as Mary Church Terrell used newspapers to advocate for their civil rights.²² Black women could ill-afford to be passive if the world would shed its racist ways.²³

With each publication, the *Banner* student editors and writers dismantled the assumption that black college women were without an influential voice during the early twentieth century. Apparently, it was the *Banner*'s ability to galvanize around an ambitious agenda, which included coverage of race, politics, and community building to expose that something was awry, reprehensible, and suspicious in a nation bound by Jim Crow and racial intolerance.²⁴ It was their contextualization of presidents, legislation and legislators, education, and black pride that made their work worthy of exploration as well as a significant installment of the instrumental contributions of black collegian women often ignored by historians.

The newspaper at Bennett, which opened in 1873 and transitioned from a co-educational to a women's college in 1926, was committed to covering campus events, and encouraged students to remain engaged in the campus community – an intimate

²⁰ Clenora Hudson-Weems, *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves* (Troy, MI: Bedford Publishers Inc., 1993), 5.

²¹ Brown, interview with author, February 25, 2015.

²² Jinx C. Broussard, *Giving a Voice to the Voiceless: Four Pioneering Black Women Journalists* (New York, : Routledge, 2004).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Brown, interview with author, February 25, 2015.

enclave of 200 students during the 1930s that swelled to approximately 600 by the late 1950s.²⁵ It was the student-run newspaper's mission to be a publication grounded in reality that included editorials about self-reliance, sisterhood, and community building, which extended beyond the campus boundaries of East Washington, Bennett, and Gorrell streets.²⁶ So year after year, the school grew physically and amassed fifty-five acres of land, and this notion of activism was an intrinsic part of Bennett as well as the *Banner's* beginnings.

The Hopes and Dreams of Black Women

To assume Bennett was merely a finishing school for black bourgeois women was a frequent misconception.²⁷ While the college emerged from the tattered hopefulness of “unnamed emancipated slaves,” Bennett persevered because it challenged hypocrisies with not only powerful rhetoric, but with thoughtful actions.²⁸ Furthermore, evidence of student led protests at Bennett occurred from 1930 through 1959 signifying the women's college as a landmark along the unpredictable path to civil rights. For instance, in 1937, a boycott of the Carolina Theater, in Greensboro, persisted for several months because owners were omitting scenes that depicted blacks “on an equal basis” with whites, in favor of films that showed blacks in derogatory roles.²⁹ This local crusade was led by Bennett Belle Frances Jones,³⁰ who rallied her peers to stop this destructive practice.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Linda Beatrice Brown, *The Long Walk: The Story of the Presidency of Willa B. Player at Bennett College* (Virginia: McCain Printing Co., 1998). Bennett's physical address is 900 E. Washington Street and perimeter streets are Bennett and Gorrell.

²⁷ Brown, interview with author, February 25, 2015.

²⁸ Brown, *The Long Walk: The Story of the Presidency of Willa B. Player at Bennett College* (Virginia: McCain Printing Co., 1998).

²⁹ Ibid., 161.

³⁰ After graduating from Bennett in 1939, Frances Jones Bonner graduated from medical in 1943. Jones was the first recipient of the Helen C. Putnam Fellowship at Radcliffe College in advanced study in

Jones's social justice campaign included students handing out "leaflets all over town" to raise awareness, and pressure the owners to acquiesce to their demands of fairly portraying blacks. Eventually, the theater owners relented. This victory for the Bennett students was one of many that illustrated their commitment to racial equality. Even more notable, the coverage of this event in the *Banner* showed the staff's ability to write about the local, regional, and national implications of the protest. Employing a technique of the Black Press, the editors and writers used the momentum from this event to urge students to join the march toward social justice to expand the scale and scope of the burgeoning Modern Civil Rights Movement.³¹ The *Banner's* level of sophistication to traverse from the news value of the boycott to the impact of it on the national movement for racial justice was one nuisance that appeared throughout the sixty-eight issues included in this project. Also similar to the Black Press, the student-run black college press framed topics of racial significance in a compelling manner so, in return, readers would marry their emotional and moral beliefs with the newspaper's ideology – much like the strategic maneuverings of *The Crisis* and *The Negro World* – fortifying a symbiotic relationship between the publication and its readers.

During the thirty years of this study, Bennett was a hub of racial and social enlightenment. Like many other black colleges, Bennett was a safe space to exist without the fear of violent and often deadly white retaliation. For example, in 1940, General Benjamin Oliver Davis Jr., the commander of the celebrated and controversial Tuskegee

Genetics and Mental Health. In addition, she was the first African American physician to train and to be a faculty member at Massachusetts General Hospital. She was also the daughter of Bennett's president David D. Jones

³¹ Charles A. Simmons, *The African American Press: A History of News Coverage During National Crises, with Special Reference to Four Black Newspapers, 1827-1965* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1998).

Airmen, along with his wife visited the campus.³² The influence of these visits appeared on the pages of the student-run newspaper and highlighted Bennett's campus as a destination for black leaders – both African American men and women.

Later, in 1945, Bennett President David D. Jones brought first lady Eleanor Roosevelt to campus where she gave a speech entitled “The Returning Soldier and His Problems.”³³ Also in the 1940s, even though Bennett did not have a journalism department, the school was known for its musical and educational radio broadcasts. On Greensboro's local CBS affiliate, WBIG,³⁴ the college hosted original programming such as “The Negro Goes to War,” which examined the conflict, and its impact on the nation as well as the community.³⁵ This access to varied mass communication channels empowered the *Banner* to think more broadly and disseminate messages with meaningful appeals. In addition, this exposure gave the editors and writers confidence to position themselves as a reliable news source to enrich a voice that generations of black women before them used to elevate their station in life.

By the 1950s, Bennett garnered national attention for hiring its first black woman president. During Willa B. Player's inauguration, in 1956, she said, “At this point in time, there can be no standing still, no compromise, no equivocation. The mission of full democracy must be achieved”³⁶ The call for action from the highest post did not go unnoticed by the *Banner*.

³² Also referred to as the 99th and 332nd Fighter Group of the United States Air Force.

³³ *The Bennett Banner*, March 1945, 1.

³⁴ Currently known as WWBG 1470 AM.

³⁵ *The Bennett Banner*, March 1945, 1

³⁶ Brown, *The Long Walk: The Story of the Presidency of Willa B. Player at Bennett College*, 162.

Another example of Bennett's culture of activism, which permeated the pages of the *Banner*, occurred in 1958 when Player welcomed Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. to campus. Originally invited by the city's National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chapter, the dread of retribution following the Montgomery Bus Boycott resonated so that "not one church, school, or organization, black or white, would allow King," to speak.³⁷ King's managers were on the verge of canceling his appearance, when Player said, "This is a liberal arts school where freedom rings, so Martin Luther King can speak here."³⁸ Prior to King's speech, *Banner* reporters were allowed to interview him and discuss the budding Modern Civil Rights Movement.³⁹ The encounter had a profound effect on the pages of the newspaper.⁴⁰ Consequently, this private meeting with King raised the *Banner's* journalism pedigree as a student outlet capable of reporting about a seminal juncture on the road to eradicating systematic discrimination. King was struggling to gain traction for his race crusade before his stop in Greensboro. Shortly after his Bennett appearance, the Modern Civil Rights Movement became a formidable reality for a country unraveling around the construct of race.⁴¹ Again, moments like these certainly resonated with the *Banner*.

Indeed, there was a physical and philosophical divide between whites and blacks in Greensboro during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Author William H. Chafe wrote that Bennett administrators would walk the tree-lined campus paths, and talked with students about their heritage, and the importance of standing up for equality for themselves and

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 167.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Linda Beatrice Brown, *Belles of Liberty: Gender, Bennett College, and the Civil Rights Movement in Greensboro, North Carolina* (Washington: Women and Wisdom Foundation, Inc., 2013), 11.

⁴⁰ Brown, interview with author, February 25, 2015.

⁴¹ Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," in *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women's History*, 1-7.

their community.⁴² Even though many whites did not know this gendered community of racial solidarity and empowerment, it was the women of Bennett who helped lead as well as sustain the Modern Civil Rights Movement in Greensboro.⁴³ It was Bennett that “exemplified the pride and hope of the community” for blacks in Greensboro.⁴⁴ So appropriately the *Banner* was a central part of any discussion about race, politics, and community building. Naturally it was apropos that the women of the *Banner* were both intellectually and physically invested in the race toward social justice.

Understanding the Inner Workings of the Banner

The *Banner* had a relatively large editorial staff for a college of its size in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Aside from occasional contributors, anywhere from twelve to thirty-six student writers and editors handled the newsgathering, story selection, and production process. The newspaper was published five times during an academic year, and offered annual subscriptions to readers, primarily alumni, ranging from fifty cents to one dollar by the mid-1940s. Although it was printed that a single copy of the newspaper cost ten cents a copy on the masthead, the newspaper was distributed freely throughout campus.⁴⁵

Initially published as a tabloid, the *Banner* eventually evolved into a five-column broadsheet by the late 1930s. On average, the newspaper ranged in size from four to eight pages or longer if the editors and writers published a special edition of the *Banner*. For

⁴² William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 27.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴⁵ *The Bennett Banner*, December 1942, 2. Brown, interview with author, February 25, 2015.

instance, when one of the school's major benefactors Annie Merner Pfeiffer⁴⁶ of New York died, the *Banner* dedicated two pages in the February 1946 issue to discuss her generosity and philanthropic legacy. Increasingly over time, the newspaper was a mixture of traditional journalism with multiple sources, direct and indirect quotes as well as opinion pieces, which typically were anonymously written or penned by the editor-in-chief. Articles were accompanied with the staffer's name and graduation year, unless it was an opinion piece. Teasers placed at the top of the front page on each side of the newspaper's banner rotated each issue and were used to both advertise must-read stories on the interior pages as well as generate action such as "Support your school paper."⁴⁷

Notably, there was concern about censorship if not on Bennett's campus, but among the *Banner's* staff – which was a similar obstacle the Black Press forced. In the February 1945 issue, an editorial headlined "Freedom of Speech and Freedom of the Press," the *Banner* editors and writers showed support for the students at William and Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia.⁴⁸ *Banner* reporter Betty L. Powers agreed with a decision by the student-run newspaper to suspend publication "rather than submit to strict faculty censorship" policy.⁴⁹ In another illustration of the *Banner's* ownership of their publication and right to use it as an authentic tool of expression, an editorial written by William and Mary's *Flat Hat*, the campus newspaper, "expressing a belief in racial assimilation as a future possibility" angered campus administrators. Powers wrote, "Freedom of speech and press is a right guaranteed in both the federal and state

⁴⁶ Annie Merner Pfeiffer (1860-1946) was married to pharmaceutical manufacturer executive Henry Pfeiffer (1857-1939), who in 1901 became the founder of the Pfeiffer Chemical Co. In the early twentieth century, Annie Merner Pfeiffer became president of the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the New York Conference.

⁴⁷ *The Bennett Banner*, October 1937, 1.

⁴⁸ *The Bennett Banner*, February 1945, 2.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

constitutions It is difficult to believe that students would be deprived of liberty and free speech on the very spot where Patrick Henry made his ‘Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death’ speech. The whole affair is reactionary and violates every principle of free speech under a democratic state.”⁵⁰ Powers explained that the *Flat Hat’s* perspective “had been ‘hushed’ too long Liberty views are to be cultivated and nurtured, not stilted.”⁵¹

Routinely the editors and writers implored students to remain committed to the newspaper because it was their vessel of information and communication. In the March 1948 issue, a box placed in the center of page one, was an invitation from the staff to students to use the newspaper as their platform for expression. It read: “*The Bennett Banner* wishes to announce that the April Issue of the paper will be a literary issue Your wholehearted cooperation is needed May we depend on you?”⁵²

Likewise the *Banner* did serve as the official record of the student voice, but also was a place for the students to connect with their school’s history. For instance, on page one of the March 1953 issue, the staff published an article with the headline, “Bennett College Bell is Housed.” The article informed readers that the 257-pound school bell was moved into a new “colonial-style tower.”⁵³ The writers shared details in each paragraph such as for seventy-three years, the bell rang twenty-one times each day to signal when it was appropriate to move to a different class, attend chapel, or signal the dinner hour. Also, inscribed on the bronze bell was a biblical verse, Isaiah 6:1, which ends with “He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² *The Bennett Banner*, March 1948, 1.

⁵³ *The Bennett Banner*, March 1953, 1

openings of the prison to them that are bound.”⁵⁴ The link between this scripture’s appeal to serve and liberate their community from social injustices mirrored Bennett’s mission and the *Banner’s* edict.

Consequently, it was rare to read any issue between 1930 and 1959 that did not include an opinion piece that voiced the *Banner’s* position on campus, regional, and national events. For example, from October 1942 until May 1953, the *Banner* began printing the slogan, “Anything Worth Reading, We Write,” on page two of each issue as a symbol of their commitment to publishing articles that contained profound news value. In addition, the newspaper ran excerpts of articles from other college newspapers. An example was in the April 1946 issue on page three, when paragraphs from the President of Sarah Lawrence College Harold Taylor were published that discussed a new type of college student, who emerged after the World War II. This was a demonstration of the *Banner’s* eagerness to include other vital voices on their pages albeit white voices. It also underscored their position as possibly the only newspaper that the students read so it needed to include information from varying creditable sources.⁵⁵

Bennett College historian, Linda Beatrice Brown said in a 2015 interview that the *Banner* attracted some of the school’s brightest students, who were self-possessed, high academic achievers, and understood the dynamics of the world.⁵⁶ The *Banner* was a teaching tool, Brown explained, and it was “good for your reputation” if you were a staff member.⁵⁷ The newspaper’s goal was to raise the consciousness of the student body, which consisted of women who traveled from places such as New York, Chicago, and

⁵⁴ *The Bennett Banner*, March 1953, 1.

⁵⁵ Brown, interview by author, February 25, 2015.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Philadelphia to attend Bennett.⁵⁸ As a member of the *Banner* staff, in 1958 and 1959, Brown said, they were encouraged to write without filters and inhibitions. Editors and writers generated original story ideas, and led the editorial meetings, Brown added. Support for the *Banner* came from administrators, faculty, staff, and students because “the culture at Bennett was to prepare yourself excellently for work in the world” to elevate blacks, and “be involved in the struggle for justice.”⁵⁹

In a demonstration of his support for the *Banner*, at least twice during this study, Bennett President David D. Jones wrote letters to the newspaper. The first time was in October of 1945 when Jones wrote “Words of Greeting” to incoming students. Jones said, “*The Bennett Banner* has an increasingly fine tradition on this campus. It has been well edited. It has been vigorous in the expression of opinion. It has been, in reality, one of the builders of morale on the college campus.”⁶⁰ For a second time, in November 1948 on page two, Jones appeared in the *Banner* welcoming alumni to campus during homecoming week celebrations. Understanding the reach and pull of the newspaper, Jones wrote, “Through the column of *The Bennett Banner*, it is a joy to welcome you.”⁶¹

There also was evidence that the student body elected the *Banner*’s editors much like student government association officers. For example, in the March 1945 issue, the newspaper published an article congratulating the newly elected campus officers. Included in this list was the *Banner*’s editorial board for the 1945-1946 academic year. This fact underscored the communal value of the student-run newspaper. Interestingly, much like the Black Press and white media, the *Banner* published editorial corrections.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ *The Bennett Banner*, October 1945, 1.

⁶¹ *The Bennett Banner*, November 1948, 2.

On the front page of the April 1945 issue, Black Press journalist Art Carter was mistakenly identified as a correspondent with the *Journal and Guide*. In the following issue, the same photo was published on page four referring to Carter as a “well-known correspondent for the *Baltimore Afro American* newspaper,” to correct their oversight. By the December 1957 issue, the *Banner* began publishing the tagline, “Believing that an Informed Campus is a Key to Democracy,” under its banner. This was another signal that the student editors and writers were committed to their mission of reporting relevant news that would ultimately give their readers permission to recast their reality.

The Banner's Racial Crusade

The discussion of race is not a new phenomenon for black women immersed in the pursuit of racial uplift. Scholar Yvonne Johnson wrote that African American women find themselves in the “unusual position” to be concerned with a myriad of social issues, but none more ominous than racism.⁶² The women of the *Banner* understood this expectation and joined the movement for liberation.

The topic of race appeared in the November 1931 issue of the *Banner*. In a brief, which amounted to four sentences, the editorial staff wrote about two Bennett students who represented their race in the annual Greensboro Armistice Day parade. This write-up also supported the notion that Bennett not only attracted women from different places, but was a viable option for various racial groups as well.⁶³ For example, the writer

⁶² Yvonne Johnson, *The Voices of African American Women: The Use of Narrative and Authorial Voice in the Works of Harriet Jacobs, Zora Neale Hurston, and Alice Walker* (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 1998), 111.

⁶³ *The Bennett Banner*, November 1931, 3.

identified Monie Raiford, as a Mexican, and Marion Miller, as an “American Negro.” The two rode in a float dedicated to the importance of world peace.⁶⁴

The following month, an article covering Langston Hughes’ visit to Bennett was on the front-page of the December 1931 issue. The staff referred to Hughes as an “outstanding Negro poet and author,” but, more importantly, the last paragraph of the article was an indicator of how the paper handled race. Staffers made sure they shared that Hughes encouraged the student newspaper to face and confront problems such as financial instability and prejudice.⁶⁵ Hughes said his greatest hope was for the young Negro to inform not only the world but also the Negro community about the diversity and talent that was a thriving part of the black community.⁶⁶

What Hughes wanted was what black student-run newspapers wanted as well.⁶⁷ These campus publications worked hard to earn the respect of their readers, their peers, and their professors. The *Banner* was the heartbeat of campus life and a trusted source of information. Contrary to the size of the publication, the newspaper gave students a necessary opportunity to investigate complex issues. During the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, unlike their parents, many students at black colleges including Bennett may have been the first to attend college in their families so pondering social issues such as race from an enlightened standpoint was a coveted rite of passage.⁶⁸

Again, race appeared in the *Banner* in the December 1932 issue. The holiday-themed publication carved out a significant amount of space on its editorial page to

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ *The Bennett Banner*, December 1931, 1.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Crystal de Gregory, email message to author, March 23, 2013.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

discuss “Negro intelligence.”⁶⁹ The piece explored how many people in the 1930s, especially in the black community, thought that a well-educated black person was out-of-touch with the plight of their burdened community.⁷⁰ Nathan B. Young, a prominent educator who once held administrative positions at some of the leading black colleges of his time such as Florida A&M College in Tallahassee, visited Bennett and encouraged the students to consider this conundrum and to make sure they remained humble and racially aware throughout their pursuit of educational excellence.⁷¹ Young encouraged the students to remain engaged much like the *Banner* covered the event to remain connected to the community it served and its mission. This urging by Young and the *Banner* was an extension of the belief that African American women are “self-definers” who create a “separate, private reality for herself and her family” free from white distortion.⁷²

Another compelling example of the *Banner*'s approach to covering race appeared in the February 1938 issue. On page two, an editorial entitled “On Negro History Week” asked the students not be satisfied with celebrating the accomplishments of their race in one week, but to carry that same enthusiasm throughout the year. The staff gave suggestions such as shopping at black-owned businesses, writing radio stations to request that more black artists' music be played, and joining the NAACP to celebrate black history instead of attending a week's worth of events that merely talk about what blacks accomplished.⁷³ For the editors and writers of the *Banner*, Black History Week was symbolic of the care and concern a black woman showed toward her family. Regardless

⁶⁹ *The Bennett Banner*, December 1932, 2.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Hudson-Weems, *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves*, 57.

⁷³ *The Bennett Banner*, February 1938, 2.

of her reality, “the greatest concern for the Africana woman has always been her family.”⁷⁴ The *Banner* was demonstrating these familial characteristics of Africana Womanism theory in their attention to Black History Week.

On the front page of the March 1945 issue, under the headline “Statistics Reveal Negro Laborer’s Gains in Industry During Present War – Both Slight and Temporary,” *Banner* reporter Dorothy W. Walker discussed how blacks made noticeable employment gains with increased production needs to fight the war, but those were short-lived. Although, the more pronounced problem was that blacks lacked the skill set to obtain jobs to positively impact their long-term success.⁷⁵ Walker was able to navigate through the jargon to clearly inform readers about preparedness. Moreover, in the Africana Womanism tradition, this article further demonstrated the black woman’s concern for community over self-preservation.⁷⁶

In the April 1945 issue, a column on page two headlined the “Inquiring Reporter,” the *Banner* staff asked this question: “What should Negroes do to crystalize gains made in employment during the war?” The question received seven responses that ranged in perspective. Bennett student Cassandra Moore wrote that blacks should build on their skills, and join “progressive groups” such as the NAACP “to secure economic freedom.”⁷⁷ Another response such as the one by student Janet White was for blacks to become members of labor unions to protect their rights as workers.⁷⁸ This support of black organizations was vital to the forward progress of the African American

⁷⁴ Hudson-Weems, *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves*, 60.

⁷⁵ *The Bennett Banner*, March 1945, 1, 4.

⁷⁶ Hudson-Weems, *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves*, 60.

⁷⁷ *The Bennett Banner*, April 1945, 2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

community levied by the *Banner* was reminiscent of the black women clubs that Patricia Hill Collins wrote about in *Black Feminist Thought*.⁷⁹ The *Banner*'s ability to draw from Feminists' traditions of focusing on unity from the past to contextualize present day needs of their community was seen throughout this study.

Only six months later in the October 1945 issue of the newspaper, the "Inquiring Reporter" column (on page two) served as a place to discuss race. Aside from labor issues, the editors and writers knew a post- World War II America was rife with social injustice that negatively impacted blacks. In the column, the staff asked students if they favored establishing an NAACP chapter on Bennett's campus to help address ongoing concerns about racial violence and inequalities. Edith Ike, a member of Bennett's class of 1946, said a chapter on the campus was necessary to train "future leaders of our race," but also to insure students had "a clear understanding of the various problems being faced now" so they can help solve them. Likewise, class of 1948 student Ruth Sydnor wrote that an NAACP chapter should be in place for training leaders, but more importantly, it would be a reminder of the concern students should have in uplifting their race.⁸⁰ In addition, Sydnor said it would give much-needed insight into what "the association has done for my race, what it intends to do, and exactly how it functions."⁸¹ The interplay of racial progress and black solidarity was a reoccurring thread pulled throughout not only this issue, but also the hundreds of *Banner* articles analyzed. This ideology reflected scholar Stephanie J. Shaw's research about "a historical legacy of collective

⁷⁹ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

⁸⁰ *The Bennett Banner*, October 1945, 2.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

consciousness and mutual associations” and this piece showed how the *Banner* internalized and acted on this concept.⁸²

Racial firsts landed on the front page of the *Banner* in December 1945. A former Bennett faculty member, George Streater, became the first black reporter at *The New York Times*.⁸³ Prior to joining the *Times*, Streater was the managing editor of the *Crisis*, the NAACP’s publication once edited by W.E.B. Du Bois, as well as a labor organizer, and a college professor.⁸⁴ In the article, Streater encouraged students to avoid the “hoity-toity stuff that stacks up on the Negro college campus,” and instead seek a “view of the very confused and difficult world, a view not found in text books.”⁸⁵ Streater’s concept was emblematic of the *Banner*’s news coverage with an intention to remove the veils of ignorance, and circumvent white deception created by institutionalized racism. Also, this notion presented an alternative view that was rooted in a truth only black women could recount because of shared experiences.⁸⁶

Similarly, in an opinion piece that appeared on page two of the same issue, the *Banner* staff wrote that America’s existing “way of life” full of racial contradictions, discrimination and cruelty would hinder world peace. Under the headline “Minorities – A Challenge to American Democracy” the staff wrote, “Minority treatment exposes the paradox of America’s democratic practices.”⁸⁷ Emphatically, the student editors and writers expressed their concern about the lack of movement toward racial equality.

⁸² Stephanie J. Shaw “Black Club Women and the Creation of the National Association of Colored Women, in *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women’s History*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King and Linda Reed (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1995), 434.

⁸³ *The Bennett Banner*, December 1945, 1.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

Towards the end of the editorial, the staff wrote, “Racial discrimination is wrong, it causes widespread dissent among groups, it creates unpleasantness, and yet ‘white America’ persists in retaining this ‘poor excuse’ of culture, SEPARATION will NEVER solve the problem.”⁸⁸ Drawing from the tenets of Africana Womanism theory coined by scholar Clenora Hudson-Weems, the *Banner* believed all people – black women and men – are valuable and “totally disregarding or dismissing the other” could result in racial suicide as well as hamper societal growth.⁸⁹

In the March 1946 issue, the *Banner*’s editorial board voiced their concern about how America’s poor record of racial equality was impacting opportunities for sustainable growth. On page two, the opening line: “Democracy has reached the river of destruction!” The author of the piece, staffer Sylvia Rock, believed foreign countries such as Russia were surpassing the United States because America’s “position in racial matters at home” was diminishing the country's integrity abroad.⁹⁰ In the November 1947 issue of the *Banner*, the editors and writers used the “Inquiring Reporter” column to discuss the significance of President Harry Truman’s Freedom Train⁹¹ as a way to encourage Americans to reflect and rededicate themselves to the country's founding principles.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Hudson-Weems, *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves*, 67.

⁹⁰ *The Bennett Banner*, March 1946, 2.

⁹¹ President Harry Truman thought the Freedom Train was an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of American citizenship at a time when the nation was finding a new and central role in world affairs. The 1947 - 1949 Freedom Train was an opportunity for Americans to reflect on a decade of pre-war economic Depression. Some in the federal government supported President Truman and believed Americans should pause and reflect, to experience a "rededication" to the principles that founded their country. Since President Truman loved trains and used the "whistle stop" campaign train, he believed a train epitomized this icon of the electoral process, freedom, and national pride. Attorney General Tom Clark and his staff proposed a train that would travel to communities in every state of the nation, taking with it dozens of "documents of liberty." The result, they hoped, would enable Americans to rediscover for themselves just how hard-won their freedoms were. Clearly, they hoped to enable personal reconciliations with the still-fresh sacrifices and human costs of war, and to impart a sense of meaning and worth to those sacrifices.

While Bennett student Madeline Perkins wrote that the Truman's Freedom Train campaign "serves as a reminder to those who have forgotten that we are all one in the sight of God, brothers under the skin," others such as Patricia Duckett said the train had "no significance of any progress in men's relations because of the fact that segregation and discrimination" were still the law of the land.⁹² It was this insistence for respect and recognition that aligned the *Banner's* work with black suffragists, Black Feminists, Womanists/Africana Womanists, and Afro-Pragmatic Womanists.⁹³ So once again, discussions about race dominated the *Banner's* editorial pages, and the editors and writers embraced their privilege as storytellers, researchers, and stakeholders to contextualize a world enveloped by discrimination.

On the editorial page of the January 1953 issue, the *Banner* editors and writers discussed dismantling the "separate but equal" educational systems, and rallied students to be prepared to change the world. The anonymous writer of the opinion piece said, "I have heard the opinions of many people who say the time just isn't right for integration. May I ask, 'when does the time become right for man to have an equal opportunity for an education?'"⁹⁴ The writer continued by urging students to not be fearful that integration would lead to fewer jobs for black teachers, but to equip themselves "mentally, spiritually, and culturally" to "fit into any situation with poise and dignity."⁹⁵

Just a month later, in the February 1953 issue, in a page two editorial headlined "What Tomorrow?", staff reporter Amanda Benwick wrote, "I am more convinced that

⁹² *The Bennett Banner*, November 1947, 2.

⁹³ Edgerton-Webster, "The Tale of 'Two Voices': An Oral History of Women Communicators from Mississippi Freedom Summer 1964 and a New Black Feminist Concept."

⁹⁴ *The Bennett Banner*, January 1953, 2.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

segregation and discrimination, along with color prejudice, race prejudice, and religious prejudice are pure evil.” Benwick said once racial injustices were abolished, “There will be no race hatred in our world today nor tomorrow.”⁹⁶ At this point, the *Banner* editors and writers including Benwick were exhibiting classic characteristics of Black Feminists such as bell hooks who ardently believed African American women needed to be “truly visionary” to advocate for change.⁹⁷ This vision was anchored in a “concrete reality while simultaneously imagining possibilities beyond that reality.”⁹⁸ And this pursuit of shaping a world that respected their worth was what the women of the *Banner* dedicated their pages to for three decades.

In the midst of articles about an essay contest winner and an annual dance, race was featured on the front page of the February 1955 issue of the *Banner*. In an article headlined, “The Negro and His Contributions,” staff reporter Mildred Mallettee wrote: “The history of the Negro has for several decades been a mystery to non-Negroes.”⁹⁹ She highlighted several books such as “The Story of the American Negro,” and “The History of the Negro Race in America” that Bennett students should read to develop a better understanding about their race, but more importantly, books that whites should read to appreciate the significant contributions African Americans have made to the nation.¹⁰⁰ The *Banner* staff pushed the boundaries to explore race on various levels to enhance their audiences’ appreciation of what was at stake if the fight for racial freedom was not consistently waged.

⁹⁶ *The Bennett Banner*, February 1953, 2.

⁹⁷ bell hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody*, 110.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *The Bennett Banner*, February 1955, 1.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1, 4.

Moreover, the historic moment of the Little Rock Nine was not lost on the pages of the *Banner*. In October 1957 “Inquiring Reporter” column, the staff posed the question: “What is your opinion of the Arkansas situation?” Bennett freshman Charlotte Pickering wrote that the students showed bravery, and set a memorable example for those “who may be faced with the same situation.”¹⁰¹ Similarly, Bennett junior Hiawatha Foster said, it would “go down in history as an ugly moment . . . a southern governor who was too ignorant to realize the integrity of the judicial decision of the United States government.”¹⁰² Foster agreed with President Eisenhower’s decision to send federal troops to protect the Little Rock Nine as well as the Central High community.¹⁰³ However, there was diversity of thought on this important topic of the day. Bennett students like Peggy Alexander and Winifred Lee disagreed with the decision to integrate the schools in Arkansas.¹⁰⁴ Lee wrote: “NO, the individual attention you get is much better than that which you would get at a large school and you can secure a family atmosphere” in a school similar to Bennett.¹⁰⁵ These *Banner* writings segued into scholar Richard Digby-Junger’s assertion that the Black Press did not fit into one homogenous category. The staff’s diversity is not only what made the *Banner* provocative but highly credible.¹⁰⁶ It was their bond of “genuine sisterhood,” which allowed the *Banner* to showcase differing opinions in an effort to educate, understand,

¹⁰¹ *The Bennett Banner*, October 1957, 4.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Richard Digby-Junger, “The Guardian, Crisis, Messenger, and Negro World: The Early-20th-Century Black Radical Press,” *Howard Journal of Communications* 9 (1988).

and unite their voices for the explicit purpose of propelling the movement onward to social justice.¹⁰⁷

National developments in the area of race were recorded in the November 1957 issue of the newspaper. On page three under the headline “Rights Group Named,” the staff wrote three paragraphs about the Civil Rights Commission and the newly appointed head, retired United States Supreme Court Justice, Stanley F. Reed.¹⁰⁸ Also, the brief mentioned that the commission would meet for the first time in December.¹⁰⁹ Yet, this was another example of how the editors and writers worked to keep their readership informed about racial progress on a national level.

Finally, the visit of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. to Bennett’s campus was front page, above the fold news in the February 1958 issue of the *Banner*. Under the headline, “Montgomery Pastor Emphasizes Additional Responsibilities of ‘New Order,’” the staff wrote that King saw the rancor from the Montgomery bus boycotts as not “signs of retrogression,” but “these protests represent the usual pains that accompany birth or growth.”¹¹⁰ The student writers said to overcome the racial struggles African Americans faced “means added responsibility and new challenges.”¹¹¹ At the bottom center of page one, a photograph of King with students was accompanied by this cutline, “PRESS CONFERENCE – Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., of Montgomery, Alabama, was interviewed by members of *The Bennett Banner* staff during a recent visit to the

¹⁰⁷ Hudson-Weems, *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves*, 65.

¹⁰⁸ *The Bennett Banner*, November 1957, 3.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *The Bennett Banner*, February 1958, 1.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

school.”¹¹² This image was symbolic of the *Banner*’s role on Bennett’s campus. The student-run publication was at the forefront of issues relevant to its readers’ quality of life, and race was at the top of this list. The *Banner*’s concentration on race remained consistent with that of the Black Vanguard of their time, which included the Black Press. In “*Race, Writing, and Difference*” scholars “present race as the ‘ultimate trope of difference’ – as artificially and arbitrarily contrived to produce and maintain relations of power and subordination.”¹¹³ It was with this clarity and awareness that the women of the *Banner* reported on race for thirty years.

Presidents, Wars, and Bilbo: The Banner on Politics

During the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s politics was a familiar theme on the pages of the *Banner*. Both Yvonne Wells and Zora Neale Hurston’s perspective summarized the *Banner*’s political acumen as “nonlinear ways of thinking about the world.”¹¹⁴ African American women stood in the creases of ongoing political struggles in hopes of rewriting legislation and policies to equalize the social landscape for African Americans. An example of this can be found in the December 1931 issue of the newspaper on page two. In a column headlined “Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men,” the lead included a list of the crises that faced both black men and women such as the economic depression, unemployment, hunger, racial and religious intolerance, and the looming threat of war. The staff writers recognized that the desires of the world were great, and encouraged

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Henry Louis Gates Jr., ed., “*Race, Writing, and Difference*” (Illinois: University of Chicago Press Journals, 1992).

¹¹⁴ Elsa Barkley Brown, “What Has Happened Here”: The Politics of Difference in Women’s History and Feminist Politics,” in *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women’s History*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King and Linda Reed (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1995), 40.

political leaders to act responsibly aligning with an Africana Womanism perspective of humanity.¹¹⁵ The *Banner's* concern was for their community, not merely themselves.

During the United States Presidential Election of 1932, the *Banner* wrote a front-page column in the October issue about the value and necessity of voting. The headline read “Straw Vote Election Clouds Gather at Bennett,” however, on the pages of the newspaper, a different sort of campaign emerged. In this article, the staff’s goal was to “arouse” an interest within the student body about how political parties worked along with the value and functionality of the voting process.¹¹⁶ The newspaper along with the Social Science Club shared ownership of a campus-wide mock election to promote political activism a month before the actual presidential election. Bennett students could register on October 24 and then vote on October 31.¹¹⁷

The follow-up story was equally as intentional in stirring political activism. For example, in “Straw Vote Election Clouds Disperse,” another front-page story, although brief in size, was impactful because of its approach and messaging. One hundred and twenty six students and faculty members cast their vote on campus during the mock election: the Socialists won with eighty-one votes, followed by the Democrats, the Communists and the Republicans came in fourth place with twelve votes.¹¹⁸ Days later, Franklin D. Roosevelt swept the election. The *Banner's* analysis of this civic exercise gave both students and faculty an opportunity to be “alive” politically and ponder “the evils of the present economic order.”¹¹⁹ The staff-written article ended its report with this

¹¹⁵ *The Bennett Banner*, December 1931, 2.

¹¹⁶ *The Bennett Banner*, October 1932, 1.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *The Bennett Banner*, November 1932, 1.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

final sentence: “Election clouds, therefore, may disperse, but interest in political conditions will be all the more stimulated.”¹²⁰ The *Banner* was part of the community and positioned itself as a source of counsel, knowledge, and wisdom.

In a letter-to-the-editor, a student identified only by initials and graduating class wrote under the headline “The Cup of Public Fickleness.” The writer responded to the moodiness of Americans. While Roosevelt was victorious and popular, she wrote, that no one should expect this spirit of euphoria to endure and this president would drink from the “cup of public fickleness to the dregs.” The tone of the article was cynical and foreboding about the evasiveness of the American dream for not only all people, but for her people – black people: “But that I say is public fancy, ever fickle, ever desirous of change, ever evanescent.”¹²¹ Furthermore, the *Banner*’s preoccupation with voting comes a decade after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.¹²² Voting for women was arguably still in its infancy, and imminent hurdles for black women attempting to cast their ballots were even more daunting than their white counterparts. So the *Banner* editors and writers’ awareness shaped their political coverage as well as their campus activism.

The tone of another staff editorial in the December 1932 issue provides an example of how the *Banner* pushed its readers to engage in politics with a critical eye, and to become accustomed to an advocacy press. In the December 1932 issue of the *Banner*, writers discussed the economic depression that ravished the country and whittled away at the employment rate. About a month after the presidential election, the *Banner*

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Terborg-Penn, “Discontented Black Feminists: Prelude and Postscript to the Passage of the Nineteenth Amendment,” 487.

thought it was time to put the victory into perspective and keep the bevy of political problems top-of-mind. But they also used the column as an opportunity to underscore nuance about topics that mainstream daily newspapers overlooked: “Until the present the only answer to unemployment in the United States has been local and federal relief – little more or nothing less than a ‘dole’... to have fallen into a rut of unfortunate capitalistic policies is no reason for staying there.”¹²³ In the same issue on page three, the *Banner* wrote a story about how the U.S. should adopt a plan of unemployment insurance and extend this benefit to Americans no matter the person’s profession.¹²⁴ Inclusiveness as a government decree was the *Banner*’s stance, which displayed vestiges of Black Feminism, Womanism/Africana Womanism, and Afro-Pragmatic Womanism theories.

As World War II entered its fourth month, the December 1939 issue of the *Banner* used a section entitled “What’s NEW in the NEWS” to keep their readers informed about important developments. In the column, the staff reported on “Lives – 28 American lives were lost on the steamer Athena” and how the employment rate had “increased and optimistic experts forecast a business boom to the 1929 level.”¹²⁵

Throughout the years of the war, the *Banner* remained vigilant and reported on stories that kept their readers informed and empowered to become global citizens. The student editors and writers made numerous appeals to their readers to become engaged in supporting war efforts. An example was found in the March 1942 issue. In response to numerous reports that Americans were sharing information about machinery being built in factories, the staff encouraged students to be careful with their words because it may

¹²³ *The Bennett Banner*, December 1932, 2.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹²⁵ *The Bennett Banner*, December 1939, 3.

jeopardize the country's chance to win the war. Under the headline, "Don't Talk – Act!" the staff asked this question: "Have you asked yourself what you might do as a student?" to stop this trend. The newspaper warned students to ". . . remember that secrets of war may be revealed and disclosed in a very few words. And so let us refrain from discussing and describing equipment, materials and jobs and be aware at all times that there are many who are anxious to know what America is doing." The writers ended the column with another call to "DON'T TALK – ACT!" to underscore the need for activism on all fronts. This consistent call for community mobilization by the *Banner* was akin to hooks' assertion that "Feminists are made, not born."¹²⁶ The *Banner* women believed that their readers did not become politically astute because of privilege, but through "choice and action."¹²⁷

While the war dominated *Banner* headlines, there was other news on the political landscape that captured the staff's attention. In 1943, one of those concerns was the Hill-Thomas Bill, which proposed allotting millions of dollars in federal funds to education.¹²⁸ Needless to say, the bill faced opposition and was sent back to the Education and Labor Committee, but the *Banner* believed the debate merited articles to create awareness among their readers. Under the headline "Opinion: Do You Favor Passing the Federal Aid to Education Bill?," staffer Roberta Favours supported the bill because "No Negro can have any doubt as to the benefits that were to be derived from the passing of the . . ."¹²⁹ Favours discussed how the funding would help Southern schools in Mississippi and

¹²⁶ bell hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody*, 7.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ *The Bennett Banner*, December 1943, 2.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Tennessee that face overcrowding and substandard pay for teachers.¹³⁰ In addition, Favors had confidence in the bill and what it could mean to the black community because the NAACP worked closely to draft it.¹³¹ She believed that fear was used to stop the bill from passing. Favors wrote: “To the average southerner federal control suggests social equality, a tiding which threatens to disturb the ‘status quo’ of the pattern of race relations in the South.”¹³²

Conversely, her classmate Mary Wagstaff wrote, in the same issue, that “No one can deny that benefits will be derived from a Federal Emergency appropriation for education,” but would only further “contribute to the perpetuation of ‘Jim Crowism’ in Southern schools and the maintenance of the needless ‘dual’ school system on an unequal basis.”¹³³ Wagstaff believed the Federal government needed to include a provision that appropriated more money to Southern black schools to “equalize the education.”¹³⁴ She continued, “Equalization of educational opportunity is a step further in the direction of a democracy which we hear so much about. If we are to ever reach it, we must first make the steps.”¹³⁵ This sentiment echoed scholar Clenora Hudson-Weems’ notion of black women assuming the herculean tasks of uplifting her community.¹³⁶

Also concerns about women being drafted into the military to win World War II were front-page news. In the January 1945 issue of the *Banner*, staff writer Rosemond Hogans discussed how President Roosevelt urged Congress to enact legislation to “provide for the induction of nurses into the armed forces.” Hogans said that if this

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Hudson-Weems, *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves*.

legislation passed, women could be called to serve to fill these jobs. Consequently, on page two of the same issue, the editorial board encouraged their readers to remain “war consciousness.”¹³⁷

A month later, sophomore Ethel R. Johnson wrote about a senatorial policy that could “cast shadow of future of American thinking.” On the front page of the *Banner*, in the February 1945 issue, Johnson’s article began with this line, “Will the thinking in this country after the WAR be liberal or reactionary?” Johnson discussed how the delay in appointing Henry Wallace, “a liberal and always a champion of the rights of the common man,” as Secretary of Commerce would adversely impact jobs, and racial progress for blacks.¹³⁸ She also said the pending appointment of Aubrey Williams to lead the Rural Electrification Administration was politically important to blacks’ journey to social equality.¹³⁹ However, the appointment was sidetracked by political attacks from “the race-baiting Senator Bilbo of Mississippi, who labeled Williams as a Communist because of his liberal views on racial relations and because he completely subscribes to the ‘fair employment practices act’ and the opening of cafeterias and wash rooms in the government buildings to Negroes and whites alike.”¹⁴⁰ Johnson said that the mere fact that Bilbo considered Williams as a Communist “is an accredited method in congressional circles of filing off progressive thinking.”¹⁴¹ In a measure to push their readers to be politically astute, Johnson closed the piece with, “As citizens, we must keep

¹³⁷ *The Bennett Banner*, January 1945, 2.

¹³⁸ *The Bennett Banner*, February 1945, 1.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

our minds open and with our voices, we must see that those who represent us in the Halls of Congress keep their minds open.”¹⁴²

Consequently, 1945 proved to be both a notable and disappointing year for black women politically. President Theodore Roosevelt “made good his promise to Mary Mcleod Bethune,” who was the singular national mouthpiece for black women during this decade.¹⁴³ In 1945, “outstanding” federal appointments were given to four African American women, yet the political forecast for black women was increasingly “bleak.”¹⁴⁴ Black women were pushing against an onslaught of prejudice, but tried to maintain their paltry political gains. This history of black women and politics was apparent throughout the countless articles in the *Banner*.

Revisiting the effects of war on the Bennett community, also on the front-page on the February 1945 issue, the newspaper staff wrote an article under the headline, “War Comes to Bennett.” On one of the coldest days of the year, according to the *Banner*, there was not enough coal to heat the campus.¹⁴⁵ “This is the first time that the war has been brought home on Bennett’s campus, but it will not be the last time,” the staff continued.¹⁴⁶ The writers wrote that a shortage of their campus needs should be expected, but encouraged students to respond to it with a positive outlook and do “just as we did when there was no coal – button up our coats and take it!”¹⁴⁷ The contextualization of a seminal moment in the country’s history displayed the *Banner*’s breadth and depth when it came to connecting issues with the relevancy of everyday life.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Terborg-Penn, “Discontented Black Feminists: Prelude and Postscript to the Passage of the Nineteenth Amendment,” 501.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 1.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Also, the *Banner* recognized the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt on page two of the April 1945 issue. The writer referred to him as a “world citizen” and “an energetic champion of world peace and international brotherhood” even though his political stance on racial equality was not always flawless.¹⁴⁸ Also, on the same page just below the Roosevelt editorial, the *Banner* wrote a piece under this headline, “Decide Now” that asked readers to give careful consideration to who they will elect and what type of citizen they will be when political decisions are reached that could alter the trajectory of the race. Staff writer, Doris Lowery ended the article by imparting a sense of urgency to remain engaged: “We, as Negro women, cannot afford to set ourselves apart from this great molding Indeed, this is the hour for the great decision.”¹⁴⁹

On the front-page of the October 1945 issue of the *Banner*, under the headline “The Unpredictable Future of the New Atomic Energy,” reporter Miriam McTeer wanted the readers to consider how this source can be used to help America and not have the reverse affect.¹⁵⁰ In the December 1945 issue of the *Banner* on the front-page, staff writer Ellen K. McChester discussed the controversy surrounding a Congressional debate to combine certain branches of the “United States Armed Forces” such as the Navy, Marines, and Army. In the article, McChester used quotes from President Eisenhower, who agreed that a merger would help the country secure peace.¹⁵¹ This story was another lucid demonstration of the *Banner* taking a complex national issue and reporting the most relevant details for the reader. In addition, this served as another approach by the black student-run press of rallying students to remain engaged in national issues for the sake of

¹⁴⁸ *The Bennett Banner*, April 1945, 2.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *The Bennett Banner*, October 1945, 1.

¹⁵¹ *The Bennett Banner*, December 1945, 1.

racial progress. McChester ended her article with this reminder, “Let us hope that the decision is reached unselfishly; that it takes into consideration the right to equality and justice of all men”¹⁵²

A year later, the *Banner*'s Lucille Brown was attacking the racial manipulation of Mississippi Senator Theodore G. Bilbo on the front-page of their December 1946 issue. Under the headline, “Bilbo at the Crossroads,” Brown wrote about how only a few months ago the senator was endorsed by the Democratic Party of Mississippi to run for a third term, and now “The Man” is on “shaky ground.”¹⁵³ The writer said a special committee was investigating Bilbo for “using intimidation and discrimination against Negroes at the polls.”¹⁵⁴ Brown reported the “Civil Rights Congress” was leading a national effort to unseat Bilbo, and would present a petition with one million signatures of people who wish to see him ousted.¹⁵⁵ In typical *Banner* fashion, Brown closed the article with a call to action for the readership: “You too can help to get rid of Bilbo. The Southern Conference of Human Welfare has a petition to oust Bilbo in circulation on our campus. When it comes your way, please sign it. Every name on this paper means a little more pressure on ‘The Man’” to leave Congress.¹⁵⁶

Also by the mid-1940s, the *Banner* introduced on page two a column entitled “Sylvia Views the News,” which was a summary of looming political issues of the day. For example, in the November 1947 issue, Sylvia Rock asked the United States to remain conciliatory with foreign countries and not inciting a World War III. In the February

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁵³ *The Bennett Banner*, December 1946, 1.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

1948 issue, Rock advocated that students not only remain engaged in national politics, but to be certain their voice could be heard. In the March 1948 issue, Rock wrote, “Let us keep awake and be really useful citizens” as well as be prepared for the upcoming presidential election.

The lead story on the front-page of the *Banner* was accompanied by this headline, “Eisenhower and Republicans Custodians of America’s Future: Big Job Confronts Victor at Home and Abroad.” The staff written article announced the winner of the presidential elections and shared his qualifications to be the country’s next leader, and how “For twenty years the nation has been ruled by the Democrats. Did history finally catch up with the Democrats? Without a doubt!”

Hence, political coverage in the *Banner* was not about choosing sides, but enlightenment as to why one side of the argument – whether Democrat or Republican – was advantageous for black women and their community. It was also evident that the editors and writers were committed to understanding the prevailing issues of the day. Equally apparent was that the student editors and writers were unafraid to use their voice along with politics to improve their community’s plight in America.

Brick by Brick: The Banner on Community Building

Uplifting African American womanhood meant advancing the black community.¹⁵⁷ During the first and second waves of the Feminist Movement, black women toiled to increase their visibility as race champions.¹⁵⁸ The call for leadership and loyalty to the African American community was a reoccurring theme throughout the

¹⁵⁷ Ula Taylor, “The Historical Evolution of Black Feminist Theory and Praxis,” *Journal of Black Studies* 29, no. 2 (November 1998): 239.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Banner. In the November 1931 issue on the front-page, an editorial about Bishop H. Lester Smith of Chattanooga, a Methodist Episcopal minister touring North Carolina, made a stop on Bennett's campus to discuss leadership.¹⁵⁹ At the end of the column, the writers reminded their readers of this point: "Bennett is one of the institutions which is attempting to furnish women leaders. It can only be accomplished with the moral, financial, and spiritual support of the people in North Carolina and elsewhere."¹⁶⁰ The voices of influence – the student editors and writers – undergirded the *Banner's* yearning for communal solidarity.

The *Banner* wrote about building a sense of community and responsibility, which translated into how campus clubs and organizations should operate to better facilitate student involvement and a life-long habit of leadership. For example, on page three of the November 1931 issue, the staff wrote about the proliferation of existing and new social and academic clubs: "There are too many clubs and not enough activity and competition; poor leadership and disinterested membership with no definitely organized program. A college of 200 students has no need for so many petty organizations. They only tend to monopolize valuable time that could be used effectively otherwise."¹⁶¹ The rancor about clubs and their inability to fulfill their purpose to serve and uplift the community was fodder for the *Banner* during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Additionally, the critical role that clubs played historically in the lives of black women made this comment by the *Banner* even more compelling. Since the inception of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), black women clubs were primarily designed to campaign for

¹⁵⁹ *The Bennett Banner*, November 1931, 1.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

social justice.¹⁶² So the idea that organizations on a black women's college campus existed without communal purpose both contradicted and mirrored the legacy of African American women clubs.¹⁶³ At times, black women's clubs operated with intense focus on the racial struggle. Conversely, at other moments, the members were consumed by middle-class distractions such as social gatherings, leisurely pursuits, and the desire to gather with black women who shared identical social status.¹⁶⁴ Thus, evidence that the *Banner* used their voices to express genuine disgust with club leaders' laissez-faire approach to finding meaningful work evoked the familiar ridicule of stalwarts such as Ida B. Wells and Maria W. Stewart in the Black Press.

Aside from student-run club activities, the *Banner* used its influence to urge readers to support organizations like the YWCA. Bennett enjoyed a close relationship with the YWCA during the timeframe of this study. Throughout the investigation of the *Banner*, the staff wrote about how students should continually be engaged with this organization. In the February 1932 issue, in an editorial entitled "Criteria," the staff writers discussed how "decent" educational institutions such as Bennett are not excused from making the world a better place. "Students can go out in the community, cheer the weary worker or hungry soul and breathe a wholesome atmosphere that may permeate the campus, the community, the city, the state, the country, the world."¹⁶⁵ The headline

¹⁶² Shaw, "Black Club Women and the Creation of the National Association of Colored Women," 434.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *The Bennett Banner*, February 1932, 2.

“Criteria” was written because the *Banner* encouraged its readers to use enthusiasm, love, fidelity, and integrity as the criteria to improve society.¹⁶⁶

By October 1932, the *Banner* used the college’s history to prod its readers into action. On page two of this issue, the headline read: “For What Bennett Stands.” While the staff writers wrote that the purpose of the college was to assist “girls” successfully transition into being a productive woman prepared to assume a leadership position anywhere in the world, the reporters also wrote that in order to assume leadership roles, students must “become useful, responsible young women” and serve their community.¹⁶⁷ It is important to note that the *Banner* women – especially during the 1950s – were contemporaries of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) leaders such as Ruby Doris Smith-Robinson, “who sought to define her womanhood” as a community organizer and national civil rights leader.¹⁶⁸ The *Banner* editors and writers possessed the same spirit of advocacy and inclusiveness to not simply “cultivate a separate female sphere” for change, but a collective social transformation for all African Americans.

Due to acrimonious perceptions surrounding race, the *Banner* seemed to believe that the strengthening of the community could only happen with transparent discourse about the obligation of each black student to overcome stereotypes and shift the American perception about the vitality of the black community. For example, an editorial penned in February 1938 about how “Negro History Week” was not enough time to celebrate and value the numerous contributions of blacks, the *Banner* staff wrote: “It is

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ *The Bennett Banner*, October 1932, 2.

¹⁶⁸ Cynthia Griggs Fleming, “Black Women Activists and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee: The Case of Ruby Doris Smith Robinson” in *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women’s History*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King and Linda Reed (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1995), 562.

not enough to point pride fully once a year to individual Negroes who have achieved success nor to reveal once a year in statistics concerning the progress of the Negro race. We must do more than talk once a year.... We must join their ranks and support them with action....”¹⁶⁹ It was essential for the *Banner* women to create continual awareness around segregation because their world at Bennett was isolated from such repulsive racial injustices.¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the eventual reality of racial “confrontation was inevitable,” so it was the editors and writers responsibility to both inform and prepare their audience for the indignities awaiting them if change did not arrive swiftly.¹⁷¹

A guest editorial from Bennett student Rosalind Shaw also explored community building in the same February 1938 issue of the *Banner*. Shaw implored students to take their spring semester seriously and devote themselves to not only mastering their studies, but to live fully and prepare for the “complex tasks” awaiting them in the world. It was this sentiment of community building that guided the *Banner* staff. It was this notion of personal accountability that transferred into community building. The *Banner* believed if each student worked to recognize their role in the world, society would flourish because of their influence.

In the March 1942 issue, a letter to the editor urged students to contribute more to build their country into a place where everyone could succeed. The author wrote, “Do you think that Bennett College is doing all it can to aid in the National Defense cause? I believe a great deal more could be done along this line.”¹⁷² Aside from giving examples

¹⁶⁹ *The Bennett Banner*, February 1938, 2.

¹⁷⁰ Fleming, “Black Women Activists and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee: The Case of Ruby Doris Smith Robinson,” 563.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *The Bennett Banner*, March 1942, 2.

about what worked on other campuses, the student ended with “Why can’t the Bennett girls, think of the men in camps in some similar manner?”¹⁷³ This is another example of Africana Womanism manifesting on the pages of the *Banner*. Community was paramount to the success of African Americans.

In an opinion piece written by the *Banner’s* editor-in-chief, Valena E. Minor, headlined “Through the Eyes of a New America,” she insisted that students “. . . stand up for your rights – and stand by those who do stand up for your rights if you can’t stand up for them yourself. Let there be unity within the race . . . and then be PROUD to be a Negro!”¹⁷⁴ In an effort to build community, Minor shared her personal racial philosophy, “I’m proud that I’m a Negro . . . I see with the eyes of a new America. An America where ‘equality’ is not a black word on a white page but a black race living in harmony with a white race – for the greatest good to be obtained for all.”¹⁷⁵ In Minor’s farewell column in the May 1943 issue of the *Banner*, she wrote about the positive aspects of being a student at Bennett as well as the editor of the student-run newspaper. However, her final paragraph included this message, “Bye now, kids – catch the torch thrown to you by the class of ’43 – and light the way for others to follow in the Bennett tradition. I’m happy to have had the privilege of editing your paper.”¹⁷⁶

Under community building, personal responsibility was a reoccurring theme in the *Banner*. In the December 1943 issue, an editorial under the headline, “Responsibility” ran on page two. The staff wrote, “Your opportunities to serve here are but stepping

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ *The Bennett Banner*, January 1943, 2.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ *The Bennett Banner*, May 1943, 2.

stones. If you do these well now, you will emerge with more strength and vigor for the days ahead. One only learns to do by doing.”¹⁷⁷

In an “A Plea for Liberalism” editorial, *Banner* writer Gwen Alexander insisted that students not be discouraged by the overwhelming conservative nature of society.¹⁷⁸ Alexander wrote that students should join groups such as the Inter-Collegiate Commission as well as the Southern Conference of Human Welfare to build community.¹⁷⁹ She closed with this thought: “I have mentioned only a few of the organizations which might stimulate and help to maintain liberal thinking on this campus. Let’s join some of them and help to stem the tide of conservatism which threatens to engulf us!”¹⁸⁰

In February 1947, *Banner* editor-in-chief Thelma T. Thomas wrote: “Look out beyond you” in an opinion piece under the headline “We in Our Self-Centered Worlds” to remind readers of their responsibility to their race.¹⁸¹ In a strident tone, Thomas said, “I mean the majority of the students here at Bennett. I grant you that some of us may know what the world is doing but there are so many of us who either don’t know or have that ‘it doesn’t affect me’ attitude.”¹⁸² Thomas continued and reminded readers of a better life that awaited them, but without the effort this renewed life will not be realized.¹⁸³ She closed with this sense of urgency, “We complain because we are fooled, discriminated against, deprived of opportunities – well today you can get the things you want, but you

¹⁷⁷ *The Bennett Banner*, December 1943, 2.

¹⁷⁸ *The Bennett Banner*, December 1946, 2.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *The Bennett Banner*, February 1947, 2.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

won't get them by letting the other fellow to do the work."¹⁸⁴ By the March 1948 issue, spring was a reason for the editorial board to challenge the Bennett students to rededicate themselves to achieving excellence. "Spring has once again returned to the campus and with it that old familiar ailment – spring fever," the staff wrote to encourage class attendance because it contributed to a healthy campus life.¹⁸⁵

The sentiment of building community extended well-beyond Bennett's campus. In a letter written to the Lillian Murphy, the editor of the *Banner* in December 1948, the Associated Collegiate Press Convention chastised her for not attending an annual meeting.¹⁸⁶ The five authors of the letter were from historically black colleges who believed their presence at this predominantly white conference was symbolic of the vitality and purpose of the black student-run press. Editors from Morgan State, West Virginia, Morehouse, Wilberforce, and Kentucky State asked Murphy, "Why were you not present? Your lack of participation in this great convention led to quite a quandary among the delegation. Probably we should not have been, but the Negro editors were greatly embarrassed. How could we help but be?"¹⁸⁷ The group explained how Murphy missed job opportunities, but more importantly, neglected representing the student-run black college press. In addition, the editors shared with Murphy how as a group they discussed the significance of the black college press affiliating with organization such as the ACP to improve the quality of their work and to receive national recognition.¹⁸⁸ It was also decided at this gathering that "an organization of Negro College journalists

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ *The Bennett Banner*, March 1948, 2.

¹⁸⁶ *The Bennett Banner*, December 1948, 2

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

would be a desirable means of creating better newspapers in Negro schools and simulating interest in good journalism.”¹⁸⁹

In the November 1949 issue of “Editorially Speaking,” the *Banner* staff urged students to stop complaining and build the community they want to experience.¹⁹⁰ The editorial was designed to force the reader to consider: “The opportunities given here at Bennett to serve as a leader or a follower offer valuable experience in any area of life after college days are over. Complaints do nothing more except intensify grievances.”¹⁹¹ The editors and writers reminded students to not be delusional in their thinking about progress. Change can come with the proper level of commitment, engagement, and thoughtful leaders, according to the writer of this piece. In an effort to underscore the value of a strong and active campus community, the editorial closed with “Since most of us feel that we have reached a desirable level of maturity then let’s illustrate it by our actions, retrospections, and attitudes.”¹⁹²

In another attempt to jar students into being responsible for building a stronger and prepared race, the *Banner* editors and writers published an editorial under the headline “Quantity or Quality?”¹⁹³ Based on an article in the *New York Times* magazine that discussed the pitfalls to receiving a quality education from an American college, the *Banner* in the February 1955 issue asked their readers to not be satisfied with “getting

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ *The Bennett Banner*, November 1949, 2.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ *The Bennett Banner*, February 1955, 2.

by” but to excel to better prepare themselves as well as the race for access to increased opportunities.¹⁹⁴

In the same issue of the *Banner*, a second editorial “Shall I Become a Teacher?”, the editor-in-chief Yvonne Ireland wrote about her student teaching experience to encourage self-reflection.¹⁹⁵ She wrote that becoming a teacher simply “to earn a living” is comparable to “cheating students because you will not give your best”¹⁹⁶ In black communities across the nation, Ireland wrote, black teachers are needed who are well educated and eager to educate students who have been denied racial equality. She closed by encouraging introspection: “I sincerely urge each graduating senior who will receive a teaching certificate to not teach if you feel that you cannot or will not attempt to meet the . . . qualifications.”¹⁹⁷

The November 1955 issue brought with it calls for more responsibility among the student body. In an editorial with the headline “It’s Your Responsibility, Too!” The editors and writers reminded their readers that, “The leader is never infallible! It is up to you as a member of the organization to come out of the chair, assert yourself, and let your potentialities be known so that they may be utilized”¹⁹⁸

As a way to draw from one of Bennett’s longest serving presidents, David D. Jones, the *Banner* wrote an editorial in their January-February 1956 issue that praised his leadership and anticipated the rewards of his legacy. Writer Emily Montgomery said, “His influence and inspiration were far-reaching, and the world is a better place because

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ *The Bennett Banner*, November 1955, 2.

he lived.”¹⁹⁹ Directly beneath this editorial ran another piece with the headline “What Kind of School Spirit is This?”²⁰⁰ The *Banner* questioned the students’ commitment to the Endowment Drive as well as their school pride. The freshmen class had raised \$129.19 toward the fund, which was the largest amount of any class.²⁰¹ The editors and writers used rhetorical questions to garner their readership’s attention: “When you wish to compare schools, compare Bennett with some other private institutions. How many serve three meals a day seven days a week? How many have well-organized campuses with such beautiful, uniform buildings? Take a look at this and you’ll see that the freshmen do have good sense.”²⁰²

In the February 1957 issue, sophomore Barbara Campbell penned an editorial about “Living Up To Standards,” as a vehicle to appeal to the readers’ sense of communal pride. Campbell used this notion of the “Bennett Way of Life” to encourage students to take care of the physical campus along with the “unbroken green.”²⁰³ Campbell wrote, “The next time you cross the campus, admire its general beauty. Then glance at the small things that mar it – scattered paper, trampled grass near the edges of the walk, the unsightly path near the Administration Building – and resolve to do your part to make the ‘unbroken green’ a ‘living reality’ in every aspect of your college life.”²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹ *The Bennett Banner*, January-February 1956, 2.

²⁰⁰ *The Bennett Banner*, November 1955, 2.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *The Bennett Banner*, February 1957, 2. The unbroken green refers to the open spaces on campus that are full of grass and lined by trees.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

In another strongly worded editorial, the *Banner*'s Deloris Tonkins took on student apathy and how it can destroy campus solidarity.²⁰⁵ She wrote in the March 1957 issue an editorial with the headline, "What Are We, Students?" where she prodded students to become engaged.²⁰⁶ In probably one of the lengthiest editorials the newspaper published throughout this study, Tonkins said, "Did it never occur to you that YOU, each student, is very, very important in this whole setup? You make a college! You can make this THE COLLEGE, OUR COLLEGE! You make college a place of enjoyment for yourself and of enticement for others."²⁰⁷ Tonkins closed with "For on this campus, one is dependent on another to a very great extent. Therefore, my concern is for you and your concern is for me."²⁰⁸ Thinking critically and acting assertively were cornerstones of Feminism, Womanism/Africana Womanism, and Afro-Pragmatic Womanism, and all concepts were woven throughout this editorial and numerous others in the *Banner*.

In the May 1958 issue of the *Banner*, the editorial staff published, "Facing the Challenge" as a reminder to the graduating seniors to become "the modelers, patterns, and creators of what the mass of men strive to attain."²⁰⁹ Additionally, the editors and writers asked the graduates to never forget their purpose and community along the way to achievement: "As you seek to find a place for yourself in the world, you add your voice to those seeking a solution to today's problems. But as a member of an oppressed people, you carry the added responsibility of building a place in the new society for those of your

²⁰⁵ *The Bennett Banner*, March 1957, 2.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *The Bennett Banner*, May 1958, 2.

race less fortunate than you.”²¹⁰ Also, the staff made the connection between the seniors’ past, present, and future with this closing line: “May we – Bennett, your family, your race – always be proud that you were nurtured within this institution.”²¹¹ Particularly during the 1950s, Bennett collegians along with legions of African American women were being scrutinized in the mainstream media as well as in the Black Press for “not doing enough” to liberate their race.²¹² In 1950, an article authored by Roi Ottley, “criticized African American women in practically every area of life.”²¹³ He charged that black women were “shallow dilettantes” obsessed with “embracing the vulgar trappings of middle-class life,” and “too few Negro women contribute to the race fight. Beyond one or two national organizations and sororities, they do not even organize for their own rights as women.”²¹⁴ Emerging from this generation was the patriarchal mandate that “young African American women . . . could and should do it all.”²¹⁵ So amid visceral verbal assaults and a deficient socio-economic standing, black women worked feverously to be recognized as competent, relevant, and vital organs to their community and country. This tenor of editorial was in direct response to misguided marginalization black women faced at the hands of white and black men.

Even in the late 1950s, the *Banner* was championing teamwork to move toward racial equality. In an editorial in the October 1958 issue, the staff shared their outlook on racial progress: “It has been stated that ‘people are united only on their discontent.’

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Fleming, “Black Women Activists and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee: The Case of Ruby Doris Smith Robinson,” 565.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 566.

Evidently the Americans have not yet become discontented enough.”²¹⁶ As a way to recap the need for unity and equality, the author wrote, “Regardless to the age at which man lives, I sincerely believe that whatever the future holds for our world must be team work . . . or else.”²¹⁷

The Banner's Truth is Their Legacy

The *Banner* was driven to empower their readers through the student newspaper. So the work of countless African American women toward social justices did not end with Mary Church Terrell, Anna Cooper, or Amanda Berry Smith. It was a younger generation whose names and faces may not have carried national recognition, but their journalism acumen was a coveted gift recognized on Bennett’s campus. The push and pull between African American women with their black men and whitewashed country was highlighted through the tonality on the pages of the *Banner*. Their approach to newsgathering and writing was reflective of their passion and candor about the palpable issues taunting the black community. In addition, the amount of real estate the publication gave to race, politics, and community building varied and indicated what was more of a concern for their readership and the staff, who ultimately made the editorial decisions. The newspaper served in an advocacy role traditionally seen in the professional Black Press and supported the causes of blacks by aggressively arguing for the civil, social, and basic human rights of their people.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ *The Bennett Banner*, October 1958, 2.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ Jinx Coleman Broussard, “Saviors or Scalawags: The Mississippi Black Press’s Contrasting Coverage of Civil rights Workers and Freedom Summer, June – August 1964,” *American Journalism*, 19 no. 3 (Summer 2002): 63-85.

From the newspaper's emphasis, the editors and writers strove to distance themselves from a life of domestication in favor of one that reflected all the dimensions of black women including genuine empathy for her community, her sisters in the struggle, and her country.²¹⁹ While "for women, in all the columns, books and articles by experts telling women their role was to seek fulfillment as wives and mothers," the black women of the *Banner* had other intentions to shatter this stereotype of womanhood and replace it with one that was defined with intellectual dexterity, critical thinking, and mental agility that no longer relegated them to menial jobs and forgotten corners in history.²²⁰ Betty Friedan wrote in the *Feminine Mystique* "over and over women heard in voice of tradition and of Freudian sophistication that they could desire no greater destiny than to glory in their own femininity."²²¹ However, the women of the *Banner* altered that voice by adding their salient perspectives concerning race, politics, and community building to stymie the course of racial hatred.

Through articles and editorials, the *Banner* covered politics and community building primarily throughout this period. The publication tried to adhere to the traditional morays of journalism, separating conjecture from objective writing. The theme of leadership and community building were intertwined in the pages of this publication.

Despite the student-run newspaper's limited experience with formal journalism training, the publication was passionate about its mission to provide life-changing news for their peers from 1930 to 1959. It was clear that the *Banner* embraced its role with maturity, purpose, vigor, and a level of integrity that allowed the writers and editors to

²¹⁹ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1983), 15.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

earn the trust of its readership. Moreover, the *Banner's* connection to the Black Press was apparent through a similar pattern of coverage, but more importantly because of the newspaper's commitment to advocating for racial equality on all fronts.

CHAPTER III – CLARK UNIVERSITY: THE MENTOR AND THE PANTHER

This is Not a Moment, but a Movement: *The Mentor*, and later *The Panther*, Utilized its

Pages as an Alternative Channel of Student Expression

The relationship between the Clark University *Mentor* (later renamed *The Panther*) and national Black Greek-letter organizations was inexplicably intertwined.¹ For more than thirty years, the student editors and writers assumed leadership posts on the *Mentor* as well as in the country's first Black Greek-letter organizations such as Alpha Kappa Alpha and Delta Sigma Theta sororities and Alpha Phi Alpha and Omega Psi Phi fraternities – all chartered their earliest chapters on Clark's campus in the first half of the twentieth century.² Arguably between 1930 to 1959, the writings in Clark's student-run journal centered on voting rights, job opportunities, and fair housing as part of an escalating national campaign for civil rights launched, in part, by national Black Greek-letter organizations. The swath of African American sorority and fraternal founders, presidents, and members who possessed the leadership acumen of Myra Davis Hemmings, vision of Charles H. Wesley, and determination of *Mentor* Editor-in-Chief William E. Thompson led the charge toward intellectual greatness and embodied the hope of changing the mainstream culture's perspective ever closer to racial equality.³

¹ James P. Brawley, *The Clark College Legacy: An Interpretive History of Relevant Education 1869-1975* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), 174-177.

² Ibid. A collective assessment by the author of the *Mentor* and *Panther* issues reviewed for this study.

³ Myra Davis Hemmings was a founder and first president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Hemmings was a member of Howard University's class of 1913. In addition, she was considered to have the strongest leadership skill set out of the sorority's twenty-two founders; Paula Giddings, *In Search of Sisterhood: Delta Sigma Theta and the Challenge of the Black Sorority Movement* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1988), 33-35. From 1931-1940, Charles Wesley was the 14th General President of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. He was the longest serving president since the organization's inception in 1906 on the campus of Cornell University; Alpha Phi Alpha, "General Presidents" <http://www.apa1906.net/general-presidents> (accessed January 11, 2016). William E. Thompson was the

Understanding the relationship between the *Mentor* and Black Greek-letter organizations as significant to the work of Clark's student-run journal means exploring the void these groups were designed to fill.⁴ Born out of segregation from mainstream universities and their organizations, black fraternities and sororities aimed to catapult members of their embattled race from the fringes of society into the American forefront as exceptional leaders and scholars. In addition, these groups gave their time and finances to help heal the residual devastation from centuries of slavery, decades of Jim Crow laws, and contemporary racial apprehensions disguised as liberal socialization that enveloped the rest of the country.⁵ Much like the birth of African American colleges, these Black Greek-letter organizations emerged as a way for African Americans to use their intellectual capital to create a parallel universe (which included blacks "establishing their own businesses, churches, and professional organizations") for themselves and community until racial equality was achieved.⁶ The promise of camaraderie and existential uplift made these social agencies "a blessing to black students experiencing isolation and social ostracism at predominantly white colleges and universities" and "beneficial at the Negro Institutions."⁷ In addition, a steady stream of national awareness from the expansive Black Greek-letter organizational network, which stretched from Howard University in Washington, D.C. to the University of California in Los Angeles,

editor-in-chief of the Clark University student-run journal *The Mentor* during the 1944-45 academic year. He was also a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity; *The Mentor*, October 1944, 2.

⁴ Jessica Harris and Vernon C. Mitchell Jr., "A Narrative Critique of Black Greek-Letter Organizations and Social Action," in *Black Greek-Letter Organizations in the 21st Century: Our Fight Has Just Begun*, ed. Gregory Parks (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 143-164.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Charles E. Coulter, *Take Up the Black Man's Burden: Kansas City's African American Communities, 1865-1939* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 103, 108.

⁷ Andre McKenzie, "Fraters: Black Greek-Letter Fraternities at Four Historically Black Colleges, 1920-1960," Columbia University, 1986, Dissertation Order No. 8620386

profoundly shaped the *Mentor's* contextualization of the world.⁸ The social and intellectual wealth of Black Greek-letter organizations' missions, resources, and network empowered the members of these groups on Clark's campus to, in turn, assume editorial roles that harmonized their voice in concert with other national civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).⁹

More importantly, as the students eagerly joined Black Greek-letter organizations in an effort to give back to their splintered communities, they often found a collective strength and "new" voice to advance their individual agendas.¹⁰ Grounded in their lifetime pledge to serve, the *Mentor* editors and writers not only emulated the advocacy role of the Black Press, but the values (ethos, pathos and logos) of their Black Greek-letter organizations. As a result, the campus and community readers of the *Mentor* not only learned the student editors and writers' personal perspectives, but also received the ideology of at least four of the country's most prestigious Black Greek-letter organizations.¹¹ Many of the Black Vanguard, including suffragist Nellie N. Quander (Alpha Kappa Alpha), journalist Mary Church Terrell (Delta Sigma Theta); historian and journalist Carter G. Woodson (Omega Psi Phi), and activist Reverend Martin L. King Jr.

⁸ Lawrence C. Ross Jr., *The Divine Nine: The History of African American Fraternities and Sororities* (New York: Kensington Publishing Corp., 2000).

⁹ Walter M. Kimbrough, "Self-Assessment, Participation, and Value of Leadership Skills, Activities, and Experiences for Black Students Relative to Their Membership in Historically Black Fraternities and Sororities," *Journal of Negro Education* 64, no. 1 (1995): 63-74.

¹⁰ Harris and Mitchell, "A Narrative Critique of Black Greek-Letter Organizations and Social Action," 143-164.

¹¹ In 1906, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. (Alpha) considered the "first and finest" was founded on the campus of Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. In 1908, the first Black Greek-letter organization for women is Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (AKA) was founded on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C. Three years later in 1911, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. (Omegas or Ques) became the second Black Greek-letter fraternity and established its first chapter at Howard University. Then in 1913, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. chartered its inaugural chapter at Howard University becoming the second sorority specifically for black women.

(Alpha Phi Alpha) held membership in these groups.¹² The arrival of Black Greek-letter organizations (and the residual effects) early in Clark's history propelled the development and level of professionalism of its student-run journal, which in turn, clearly distinguishes it from other schools in this study. In fact, many schools viewed black fraternal groups as an academic distraction.¹³ For example, Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, North Carolina, did not welcome Black Greek-letter organizations until the early 1980s; Hampton and Tuskegee institutes (later renamed Hampton University and Tuskegee University) allowed Black Greek-letter organizations on campus in the late 1940s - after students editors and writers used their news pages to campaign for them to be allowed on campus.¹⁴ While, Black Greek-letter organizations established chapters in the mid-1930s on the campus of Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, this was still more than a decade after Omega Psi Phi Fraternity chartered Beta Psi chapter on Clark's campus in 1921.¹⁵

Conversely because of the Black Greek-letter organization's selective and secretive membership intake process, many in the black community regarded these groups as elitist, self-serving, barbaric, and an unnecessary imitation of white fraternal

¹² Stephanie Evans, "The Vision of Virtuous Women: The Twenty Pearls of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority" in *Black Greek-Letter Organizations in the 21st Century: Our Fight Has Just Begun*, ed. Gregory Parks (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 57-58; Stefan Bradley, "The First and Finest: The Founders of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity" in *Black Greek-Letter Organizations in the 21st Century: Our Fight Has Just Begun*, ed. Gregory Parks (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 19-39; Andre McKenzie, "Fraters: Black Greek-Letter Fraternities at Four Historically Black Colleges, 1920-1960," 109; Giddings, *In Search of Sisterhood: Delta Sigma Theta and the Challenge of the Black Sorority Movement*, 84.

¹³ Walter M. Kimbrough, *Black Greek 101: the Culture, Customs, and Challenges of Black Fraternities and Sororities* (Maryland: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003).

¹⁴ Gathered from the researcher's archival visits to Clark University, Hampton University, Southern University, and Tuskegee Institute. The information about Bennett College for Women was gathered through an interview with the school's historian Linda Beatrice Brown WHEN.

¹⁵ Brawley, *The Clark College Legacy: An Interpretive History of Relevant Education 1869-1975*, 174-177. Information about Southern University's Black Greek-letter Organizations gathered through both the school and sororities and fraternities archives.

life.¹⁶ Admittedly, Black Greek-letter organizations sifted through the student body for the intellectually and socioeconomically elite.¹⁷ While non-members proved cynical and sometimes held pure disdain for Black Greek-letter organizations, Clark's fraternities and sororities remained committed to developing a reputation of accomplishment and contribution to the intellectual, economic and civic uplift of African Americans. During the first half of the twentieth century, these fraternal organizations collectively worked through the *Mentor* to demonstrate that they were more than elite black social clubs, but necessary voices in a muted community.

For example, the members of Black Greek-letter organizations on Clark's campus often used the *Mentor* as a double edged-sword. At the national level, they used the publication to hold President Theodore Roosevelt responsible for the sputtering demise of his ballyhooed New Deal that systematically became unattainable for African Americans from all walks of life. Introspectively, they used the journal to advocate to their academic peers throughout the country to embrace the privilege of academic rigor and not view it as a cultural burden. The Black Greek-letter organizations students' natural transition into leadership roles on the *Mentor* smacked of W.E.B. Du Bois' concept of the *Talented Tenth* that postulated blacks equipped with higher education and leadership training should take responsibility for social reform and function as the mouthpiece for their race.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Kimbrough, *Black Greek 101: the Culture, Customs, and Challenges of Black Fraternities and Sororities*; Lawrence Otis Graham, *Our Kind of People: Inside America's Black Upper Class* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999), 86.

¹⁸ W.E.B. DuBois, *The Talented Tenth* (1903: repr., California: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 17.

The student editors and writers used the journal to heighten the call for justice and sharpen their skill set as leaders in the midst of social chaos; they used the *Mentor* to refine their arguments for equality and solidarity.¹⁹ Decades before the Modern Civil Rights Movement, members of these black sororities and fraternities on Clark’s campus also marched, attended rallies, and wrote letters to elected politicians about their moral obligation to advocate for full citizenship and fair treatment of African Americans.²⁰ They consistently brought their personal exposures and the prestige of their national Black Greek-letter organizations to the *Mentor* – cementing the student-run journal’s credibility as a viable and well versed news organ.

Also, through their intimate association with the machinations of national Black Greek-letter organizations, *Mentor* students formed partnerships with and held congruent memberships in numerous activist-driven groups like the NAACP, National Council of Negro Women (NACW), and the Urban League.²¹ For example, Clark junior and social science student William E. Thompson, the editor-in-chief of the October 1944 issue, worked with the *Mentor* his freshmen year and served in a number of staff positions.²² In addition, Thompson had “membership in Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, [Young Men’s Christian Association] Y.M.C.A., N.A.A.C.P., Clark Players, Social Science Club, and Student Council” and during the summer breaks, received an appointment to join the

¹⁹ Kimbrough, “Self-Assessment, Participation, and Value of Leadership Skills, Activities, and Experiences for Black Students Relative to Their Membership in Historically Black Fraternities and Sororities,” 63-74.

²⁰ Brawley, *The Clark College Legacy: An Interpretive History of Relevant Education 1869-1975*, 174-177.

²¹ Walter M. Kimbrough and Philo A. Hutcheson, “The Impact of Student Membership in Black Greek-Letter Organizations on Black Students’ Involved in Collegiate Activities and Their Development of Leadership Skills,” *Journal of Negro Education* 67, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 96-105; Kimbrough, “Self-Assessment, Participation, and Value of Leadership Skills, Activities, and Experiences for Black Students Relative to Their Membership in Historically Black Fraternities and Sororities,” 63-74.

²² *The Mentor*, October 1944, 2.

editorial board of MOTIVE, “a Methodist Student publication.”²³ This distinct pattern of civic-minded students working on the journal began before Thompson’s tenure as noted in the November 1938 issue. A column headlined “WHO’S WHO ON THE MENTOR STAFF,” demonstrated the staff secretary’s lengthy leadership record: “Ella E. Jackson, Atlanta, Ga.; staff secretary; Senior; secretary, Student Peace Organization, Athletic Association, and Forensic Society; asst. secretary, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Pan Hellenic Council; treasurer, Business Forum and Student Council, member, Y.W.C.A., and Social Science Club.”²⁴ Certainly, these Black Greek-letter organizations also contributed “positively to [overall] collegiate student involvement, be it in other student organizations or in the holding of formal leadership positions generally.”²⁵ Not only was it nationally commonplace “that Black Greeks were involved in other activities and organizations outside of their fraternities and sororities,” but often a requirement as part of the selection process.²⁶ This precept proved no different at Clark University and can be traced back to the work and mentorship of the *Mentor*’s editors and writers from 1930-1959.²⁷

Indeed, membership in these exclusive and quasi-secret Black Greek-letter organizations served as a unique space for leadership development and “as a platform to learn and practice skills” needed for the formalization of the burgeoning civil rights

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *The Mentor*, November 1938, 12.

²⁵ Kimbrough and Hutcheson, “The Impact of Student Membership in Black Greek-Letter Organizations on Black Students’ Involved in Collegiate Activities and Their Development of Leadership Skills,” 96-105.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Brawley, *The Clark College Legacy: An Interpretive History of Relevant Education 1869-1975*, 124, 160.

movements.²⁸ As such, student editors and writers attended their respective Black Greek-letter organizations' regional conferences and national conventions to align themselves with others who had the equivalent commitment to sisterhood, brotherhood, and social uplift.²⁹ In fact, at these regional and national gatherings, speakers such as Mary McLeod Bethune – a member of Delta Sigma Theta – proved living examples of ways blacks could clear a path to freedom and harness inclusiveness in some of the nation's most prominent and largely white circles.³⁰ The student editors and writers had a coveted perch to hear persuasive oratories about activism, civility, leadership and their rightful place as reformers.³¹ Additionally, as they learned methods of executing organizational leadership skills, service-delivery systems, and research evaluation and documentation at these national assemblies, they brought back to campus those competencies and applied them to their respective leadership roles at the school newspaper and other student organizations.

Primed to engage their school administration as allies and assume the role of campus ambassadors charged with raising the standards,³² many Clark students shared membership in the same Black Greek-letter organizations as their professors and administrators and sought unity, self-efficacy, cooperation, and mutual respect as

²⁸ John P. Dugan, "Exploring Relationships Between Fraternity and Sorority Membership and Socially Responsible Leadership," *Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity Advisors* 3, no 2 (August 2008): 16.

²⁹ Tamara L. Brown, Gregory Parks and Clarenda M. Phillips, *African American Fraternities and Sororities: The Legacy and the Vision* (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 2005).

³⁰ Giddings, *In Search of Sisterhood: Delta Sigma Theta and the Challenge of the Black Sorority Movement*, 16.

³¹ Harris and Mitchell, "A Narrative Critique of Black Greek-Letter Organizations and Social Action," 143-164.

³² *Ibid.*

important cornerstones of their relationships.³³ The fact that young women and men of the *Mentor* held dual roles as students and the “sisters” and “brothers” of an unbreakable bond to the University’s president, deans, and professors,³⁴ provided for an unique and uncommon relationship of synergy between administrators and student journalists that was not evident at the other universities considered in this study. For instance, the University’s second and third presidents – Matthew S. Davage and James P. Brawley respectively – were members of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, and in 1927 helped charter Clark’s undergraduate chapter of the organization.³⁵ Brawley believed that this bond of brotherhood between students and professors/administrators elevated both the quality of teaching and student leadership.³⁶ The residual of this unique relationship certainly found its way onto the pages of the *Mentor* as demonstrated in student’s ability to articulate topics with the same clarity and respect as had been demonstrated in the fraternal meetings. For example, the *Mentor*’s rhetoric read more even-handed compared to the radical tone of the Hampton’s student-run *Script*. Evidently, the *Mentor* editors and writers’ duplicitous roles as campus leaders and familial ties with faculty and administrators added more thoughtful depth and texture to the work of the journal.³⁷ Instead of publishing one-dimensional diatribes, the *Mentor* incorporated voices that gave their readers a reason to be reflective, yet restless for positive change.

³³ McKenzie, “Fraters: Black Greek-Letter Fraternities at Four Historically Black Colleges, 1920-1960,”

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Brawley, *The Clark College Legacy: An Interpretive History of Relevant Education 1869-1975*, 174-177.

³⁶ Ibid; David Hackett, “The Greeks” *The Crisis* 92, no. 10 (December 1985): 45-47, 59-62.

³⁷ McKenzie, “Fraters: Black Greek-Letter Fraternities at Four Historically Black Colleges, 1920-1960”; Brawley, *The Clark College Legacy: An Interpretive History of Relevant Education 1869-1975*, 174-177.

Scholars including Walter M. Kimbrough, Andre McKenzie, Susan Marcus-Mendoza, and Dary T. Erwin have noted that students engaged in “campus organizations are more action-oriented.”³⁸ In addition, they all agreed “that such participation relates directly to higher levels of both cognitive and leadership development,” and further contributes to the position that national Black Greek-letter organizations profoundly influenced the undeniable professionalism of the student-run journal on Clark’s campus.³⁹ While rife with “organizational and problem-solving skills,” many members of the *Mentor* “believed that forming and joining” sororities and fraternities “could be beneficial to them both socially and developmentally.”⁴⁰ In turn, this practice spurred Black Greek-letter organizations members to join the student-run journal as yet another creative space to share their voice on prevailing issues of their time.

On the national front, members of Black Greek-letter organizations undeniably escalated the “Counterfraternal” and “Black Counterpublic” movements that rapidly unfolded across the country in the first half of the twentieth century.⁴¹ Stakeholders in the Black Intelligentsia, black sororities and fraternities labored to gain unfettered access to “the public sphere for political action” and societal respect.⁴² Counterhegemonic by design, Black Greek-letter organizations usurped the power of the “dominant culture”⁴³ and refused let white standards define them as academically, emotionally, and physically

³⁸ Kimbrough, “Self-Assessment, Participation, and Value of Leadership Skills, Activities, and Experiences for Black Students Relative to Their Membership in Historically Black Fraternities and Sororities,” 63-64.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 63-65.

⁴¹ Deborah Elizabeth Whaley, *Disciplining Women: Alpha Kappa Alpha, Black Counterpublics, and the Cultural Politics of Black Sororities* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010), 6.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 6-7.

inferior citizens.⁴⁴ To black college women and men, these groups proved a gateway to “reinsert themselves into the channels of public discourse.”⁴⁵ The Black Greek-letter organizations’ civic-engagement, communal benevolence, and focus on fellowship validated the members’ voice in the “cultural and counterpublic sphere.”⁴⁶ Marginalized African Americans understood the political imperative to create “parallel discursive arenas where those excluded from dominant discourses, invent and circulate counterdiscourses” that form “oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs.”⁴⁷ The pages of the *Mentor* underscored the staff’s insights on social responsibility, a flattering emulation of the Black Press, and the overwhelming necessity for black college student-run newspapers to work with ancillary national and campus groups in the struggle for racial equality. Indeed, to the Clark University student editors and writers, the *Mentor* was a pivotal conduit of the liberation movement. Hence, their writings proved not just about a moment in their lives, but also a critical step in the ongoing fight for freedom.

The Mentor, The Panther and Clark Grow Together

After opening in 1869, Clark University awarded its first degree in 1880, and became a destination for blacks in the South and across the country.⁴⁸ In 1940, Clark joined three other schools (Morehouse, Spelman, and Morris Brown colleges) and formed

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Michael C. Dawson, “A Black Counterpublic? Economic Earthquakes, Racial Agenda(s), and Black Politics,” in *The Black Public Sphere*, ed. Black Public Sphere Collective (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 204.

⁴⁶ Whaley, *Disciplining Women: Alpha Kappa Alpha, Black Counterpublics, and the Cultural Politics of Black Sororities*, 118.

⁴⁷ Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” in *The Phantom Public Sphere*, ed. Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1993), 14.

⁴⁸ Brawley, *The Clark College Legacy: An Interpretive History of Relevant Education 1869-1975*; Rodney T. Cohen, *The Black Colleges of Atlanta* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), 7-10.

the Atlanta University System, which was an agreement between the institutions to share resources, and ultimately strengthen the opportunities for blacks to receive the best higher education possible.⁴⁹ In doing so, Clark relocated to a new campus, embraced a new name, and welcomed a new president. James P. Brawley. An energetic Brawley attracted faculty, engaged in the civil rights movement such as activist Whitney Young, Jr. – the first dean of Clark’s School of Social Work.⁵⁰

Clark University published its first student-run newspaper (*The Elevator*) in 1890 and the school’s alumni immediately voiced their concern to the trustees about the “suppression of sentiments of students” in “. . . editorials of the College Paper, *The Elevator*.”⁵¹ A few years later, *The Elevator* became *The Courier*⁵² and by October 1898, the students nominated and faculty approved an editorial board for *The Courier*.⁵³ The newspaper quickly became a recognizable and respected part of the University’s ascent to notoriety. During the 1922-23 academic year Clark’s president Harry A. King offered one dollar to any student who came up with a better name for the student newspaper.⁵⁴ Willie Ruth Grissette suggested the *Mentor* and won the prize.⁵⁵ So, from approximately 1922 to 1945, the student-run publication was known as the *Mentor*.⁵⁶ It contained several forms of student expression including first-person editorials, multi-sourced articles, campus gossip, and letters-to-the-editor. By 1945, the student editors and writers along with their

⁴⁹ Ibid., 132.

⁵⁰ Clark Atlanta University, “CAU: History” www.cau.org (accessed January 11, 2015). Whitney M. Young Jr. is credited with expanding the Urban League into civil rights force before he assumed the head post in 1961. Young also headed Georgia's NACCP activities while he work as a dean at Clark University.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

faculty advisor believed the publication should undergo yet another series of changes to improve the quality as well as strengthen its connection to the campus community.⁵⁷ As a result, the newspaper was renamed *The Panther* -- after the college's mascot.⁵⁸ Additionally, it changed from a two-column "magazine" format into a five-column broadsheet. Years later, the *Mentor* became the alumni publication.⁵⁹

While the school constructed a competitive academic experience for its coeducational student body, the *Mentor* developed into *the* must-read journal for students eager to immerse themselves into college life. Moreover, its coverage beyond the standard homecoming events and freshmen week rituals helped students prepare for the transition from college life to a professional world fueled by racial ignorance and intolerance. A guide for Clark students on the "new Negro" journey, which included intellectual development, leadership training, and permission to use their voice to demand racial equality, political responsiveness, and communal loyalty,⁶⁰ the staff's strength as wordsmiths and unbiased interpreters of news events demonstrated the journalistic caliber of the students who edited and wrote for the campus newspaper. While administrators admitted that "Negro students" faced a "multiplicity of disadvantages," their charge as educators remained to equip students with knowledge and tactics that would circumvent and dismantle institutional racism.⁶¹

Part of Clark's approach to preparing its students was to use journalism as a tool to battle racism and thrive in a hostile world. The December 1931 issue of the *Mentor*

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 174-177.

⁶¹ Ibid.

revealed that all news reporters were “enrolled in . . . Elementary Journalism conducted by Editor-in-Chief” Lucius L. Jones, Jr.⁶² Again, this underscored the notion that student journalism on Clark’s campus proved a vital instrument in training black leaders to not only formally express their thoughts, but to serve as a guiding voice in their community.

Starting in the 1950-1951 academic year, the English Department added the following journalism courses to its offerings: “(1) Writers Workshop; (2) Introduction to Journalism; (3) Article Writing; (4) The Media of Mass Communications; and (5) Editorial Techniques.”⁶³ This cutting-edge curriculum change at an HBCU (where traditional curriculum design focused on vocations and teaching) highlights the fact that Clark’s administrators understood the communal value of journalism, the pass-along value of newspapers, and the power of training student writers to articulate salient social perspectives. President Brawley’s leadership lasted into the 1950s and included a surge in enrollment (from approximately 200 students during the 1930s to a little over 600 students by the late 1950s).⁶⁴

A symbol of sacrifice, hope, and triumph, like many other black colleges, the school attracted African Americans motivated to free themselves from marginalization. The college’s motto “Culture for Service” also meant “Education for Usefulness and Service to Mankind.”⁶⁵ Once more, this illustrated the school’s commitment to racial uplift and deepened this study’s research about the significance of the *Mentor* – later renamed the *Panther* to black college press history. Brawley viewed the student

⁶² *The Mentor*, December 1931, 2.

⁶³ Clark College Student Catalog 1950-51.

⁶⁴ McKenzie, “Fraters: Black Greek-Letter Fraternities at Four Historically Black Colleges, 1920-1960”; Brawley, *The Clark College Legacy: An Interpretive History of Relevant Education 1869-1975*, 174-177.

⁶⁵ Brawley, *The Clark College Legacy: An Interpretive History of Relevant Education 1869-1975*.

newspaper on Clark's campus as a representation of student expression,⁶⁶ "There has been no symbol of greater importance in the Clark College tradition than the student paper."⁶⁷

Brawley used the pages of the *Mentor* to reach students on various topics, thus accentuating its essentiality to life at Clark. In the October 1944 issue of the journal, on the front-page in the left bottom corner, Brawley welcomed "all new students into the warm fellowship of our family circle." He also strongly encouraged them to fill their days at Clark "with compelling interests and worthwhile activities."⁶⁸ He ended the piece with encouragement to the students to routinely investment in their progress at Clark: "A successful college career is achieved day by day."⁶⁹ Because of the unique relationship brotherhood/sisterhood experienced by *Mentor* student staffers and the university administration/faculty, a measure of accountability proved greater at Clark than the other colleges in this study. Again, this notion draws from the existing pool of research from scholars such as Walter Kimbrough who believed Black Greek-letter organizations empowered collegians to lead and use their voice to champion truth.⁷⁰

As evidenced in numerous examples of public self-assessment, the failings and victories of the journal often became the story. For example, in a column written by Editor-in-Chief Ellihu Norris, "For a Bigger and Better Mentor," he admonished students for not submitting quality work to the university's official student publication of record:

⁶⁶ Brawley, *The Clark College Legacy: An Interpretive History of Relevant Education 1869-1975*, 217.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *The Mentor*, October 1944, 1.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Kimbrough and Hutcheson, "The Impact of Student Membership in Black Greek-Letter Organizations on Black Students' Involved in Collegiate Activities and Their Development of Leadership Skills," 5.

“In order to have and maintain the high type of college journal of which it has been our pleasure to boast, it is necessary to have men who know what to do and how to do it.”⁷¹ This editorial personified W.E.B. Du Bois’ concept of the *Talented Tenth* residing at the helm of a black revolution, but also holding each other accountable.⁷² In the March 1934 issue, on page two in the right bottom corner of the page, the editors and writers asked their readers for forgiveness because the journal had not followed its publishing cycle of once a month, as promised. The staff wrote, “There are many reasons that might be given for the failure of the *Mentor* to keep up to its promise . . . Chief among them . . . would come the lethargy of the staff, including the editor . . .”⁷³

Additional moments of self-assessment in the *Mentor* include when the staff wrote an “It Is Finished” column to celebrate the conclusion of a productive year. Underscoring their commitment to using the publication as a vehicle of advocacy and information to the community, the students wrote, “Yes, the work has been hard at times and we have become tired and discouraged . . . Thus, these discouragements have served only to make us love the work and appreciate the lessons . . . from undertaking the project. As a result, we have striven to present a worthwhile piece of college journalistic effort for the year.”⁷⁴ Other instances of celebrated victories include, the *Mentor*’s acknowledgement of staffers who successfully became professional journalists post-graduation. For example, in the spring 1936 issue, the journal announced on page sixteen that former *Mentor* Editor-in-Chief Lucius L. Jones had been promoted to “Managing

⁷¹ *The Mentor*, March 1933, 2.

⁷² DuBois, *The Talented Tenth*, 17.

⁷³ *The Mentor*, March 1934, 2.

⁷⁴ *The Mentor*, May 1940, 26.

Editor of the *Atlanta Daily World*, the only Negro daily newspaper in the world.”⁷⁵ Of course, the direct influence of the *Atlanta Daily World* on the *Mentor* cannot be overstated. Having the region’s most prolific black newspaper only miles away from campus where students could see local examples of excellent journalism, get advice, and engage in rewarding internships, certainly paved a road for several *Mentor* staffers to move into professional positions as editors and writers. This symbiotic relationship between the Black Press and the black college student-run press, helped students at Clark University draw inspiration from the *Atlanta Daily World* and become nascent journalists committed to racial advocacy.

During the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, other messages to readers included the ongoing willingness to attainment of knowledge and learn its application to the real world. As a publication at a black college, the *Mentor* deliberately covered relevant campus events *and* reminded its readership to be “thankful” for their education. It was the *Mentor*’s belief that students should use what they learned to benefit the people around them since people, African Americans in particular, literally and figuratively depended on the Black Press and black college press to help marginalized people “find a way or make one.”⁷⁶ The tonality of the publication was exemplified in the March 1933 edition of the “Men and Events” section. Staff writer Edward Lloyd Simon responded to an accusation that the *Mentor* was not the voice of the student body. Simon wrote, “It is the wish of the staff to make this paper reflect as nearly as possible the thoughts of the student body at large. This is the students’ medium for presentation of their thoughts

⁷⁵ *The Mentor*, Spring Issue 1936,16.

⁷⁶ Clark Atlanta University “CAU: History” www.cau.edu (accessed June 12, 2015).

along any line and all articles will be printed that are in any way representative of student thought.” Dedicated to independent thinking, Simon and the other student writers/editors pushed their peers to strive for the same intellectual independence and academic achievement.

Additionally, the *Mentor* believed that its readers should always use their voice and student-run journal as both a medium for agitation and to praise the good deeds in their community. For instance, in the December 1938 issue, the staff wrote a column headlined “ARE YOU *MENTOR* CONSCIOUS?” in an effort to stimulate more engagement with the campus’ only student-driven publication. The staff wrote: “Are you aware that the *Mentor* is the voice of the students of Clark University?...Then why not use your voice? Of course we not only want you to read the *Mentor*, anyone can read it; we want you to write also.”⁷⁷ This passage embodied Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Brother W.E.B. Du Bois’ 1903 assertion that “the college educated Negro: He is, as he ought to be, the group leader, the man who sets the ideals of the community where he lives, directs its thoughts and leads its social movements.”⁷⁸ No doubt, these words from Du Bois moved *Mentor* staff members to encourage students toward leadership through the pages of its journal.⁷⁹

Throughout the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, the *Mentor* had a staff of approximately fourteen to thirty-two student editors and writers. While many of the articles had accompanying student bylines, a collective of students typically wrote the opinion pieces via the editorial board. Every so often, a formal, black and white headshot of an editorial

⁷⁷ *The Mentor*, December 1938, 2.

⁷⁸ McKenzie, “Fraters: Black Greek-Letter Fraternities at Four Historically Black Colleges, 1920-1960,” 105.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

writer appeared with columns that staffers individually authored. For example, in the December 1931 issue, on page two, associate editor Thomas P. Williams wrote a “Christmas Wishes” column, and his headshot accompanied the piece. Williams celebrated the work of the college student press: “Student opinion plays an important role in the administration of a school. We congratulate the student publications of the nation on the part they have played in the life of their respective institutions.”⁸⁰ Aside from the traditional editorial positions such as Sports or Features editor, the *Mentor* also had Exchange Editors dedicated to selecting columns and articles from other college newspapers to re-run in the Clark newspaper.⁸¹

Other points of interest in the monthly publication included its annual subscription fee at fifteen cents per issue or one dollar per year. Symbolic of the *Mentor*'s approach to reporting the news and the relationship it fostered with its readers, the Latin phrase “Scientia sola liberare potest” appeared in the staff box of each issue starting with the October 1934 publication. Loosely translated, this expression means knowledge is unique and free. At the top of the *Mentor*'s staff boxes, the phrase “A Journal of Negro Life” defined the motivation of the paper. The *Mentor* focused on the issues that shaped the “Negro” experience;⁸² however, starting in the mid-1940s, the staff began printing its mission as an affirmation of the newspaper's commitment and also as part of their public accountability system. The three sentences read: “A promoter of school spirit by encouraging projects and efforts among student groups and individual students. A medium through which an opportunity is provided for students to obtain experience in

⁸⁰ *The Mentor*, December 1931, 2.

⁸¹ *The Mentor*, December 1946, 2.

⁸² *The Mentor*, December 1931, 2.

newsgathering, reporting, book-reviewing, editorial, and creative writing. An instrument for fostering friendly and constructive criticism of campus activities.”⁸³ Also, during this timeframe, the staff printed the moniker: “Voice of the Students, Mouthpiece of the College” as a way to fully illustrate its value as an outlet of worthy expression.⁸⁴

The *Mentor* also embraced some of the popular tenants of journalism with its layout and design, but strayed away from that concept when it came to reporting the news. Often articles incorporated a subjective opinion or moderately chastising tonality. The student editors and writers also used teasers on the front-page to ask readers to support a cause such as contributing to the Christmas Seals campaign to stop the spread of Tuberculosis, or carried the school’s seal with the newspaper’s moniker of “Voice of the Students, Mouthpiece of the College.”⁸⁵

Typically the length of the *Mentor* ranged from twelve to twenty-four pages, and remained in a tabloid format until the staff transformed the publication, in 1945, into a broadsheet. Prior to this decision, the exterior of the *Mentor* actually looked more like a magazine than traditional newspaper. Completely covering the front-page of each issue was a student drawing of a familiar campus scene linked to the monthly theme of the journal. For example, on the January-February 1935 issue, the cover featured a drawing of a male and female student returning to campus. The well-groomed students in the drawing carried suitcases and complimented the theme of the issue -- the beginning of the spring semester. Additionally, the staff occasionally published special editions -- usually longer in length, and focused on one theme. For instance each May, the *Mentor*

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 1.

staff published a commencement issue of senior reflections, post-graduation plans and updates, as well as alumni news. By the 1940s, students from Atlanta University Center colleges such as Morehouse and Spelman wrote for the *Mentor*. For example, in the November 1945 issue, the *Mentor* listed “charming” Cynthia Perry, a sophomore “studying art at Spelman College” as the Art Editor.⁸⁶ The *Mentor*, and later the *Panther*, published during the academic year – on a September to May or October to June timeline. The *Mentor* had similar intentions as *The Bennett Banner* of championing academic achievement, community building, and personal responsibility.

In this chapter due to the paucity of available sources, the *Mentor* was the primary focus with about six issues from the *Panther* available for the researcher’s consideration.

On Matters of Race both the Mentor and Panther Speak

In the March 1933 issue, race became the catalyst behind a column with the headline “Vassar College.”⁸⁷ Written by Leroy McNeil, a staff writer, the piece was structured to provoke action, to espouse critical judgment, and to spark readers to think about the misconceptions surrounding racial differences. In 1934, Vassar did not admit blacks and that practice drew the ire of the *Mentor*. McNeil referred to Vassar as “the last frontier of the inconceivable bigoted racial discriminators of enlightened Americans.” He applauded administrators at Bryn Mawr, Radcliffe, Smith, and Mt. Holyoke colleges because they reversed admissions policies that excluded blacks. McNeil ended his editorial with a stern reprimand for Vassar to reconsider its stance on race: “. . . ’til the day you awaken from your lethargy and find ethical profits from the admittance of your colored sisters,” the author believed others should pressure Vassar to change their

⁸⁶ *The Mentor*, November 1945, 2.

⁸⁷ *The Mentor*, March 1933, 2.

ideology. This column ran in the “Mentorials” section, which was the *Mentor’s* editorial page for much of the time during this study.

The underpinnings of race could also be found in poetry that occasionally filled the pages of the *Mentor*. In the same issue, March 1934, Edgar Clark wrote a poem entitled “To a Vanishing Race.” It was only five lines and consisted of nineteen words, but the message of the long-suffering life of the “Negro” was evident in the first three lines: “Black Man, Black Man, Long years come on a-pace....”⁸⁸ The usefulness of poetry on the pages of the Black Press was a constant presence so the fact that the *Mentor* used it as tool to discuss race was not a new phenomenon. Langston Hughes, initiated into Omega Psi Phi Fraternity (late 1920s) at Lincoln University in Philadelphia, gained prominence in the 1920s “as an emerging Negro writer” and “published a book of poems.”⁸⁹ His notoriety and connection to Black Greek-letter organizations had a cascading effect on African American collegians to use an effective platform to inform and entertain.⁹⁰ The *Mentor* embraced the approach of their Greek “brothers” and “sisters” to capture the attention of their peers.

In the October 1934 issue, the *Mentor’s* disposition to enlighten its readers about race was demonstrated again: “Are you interested in making the world a better place in which to live?” was the first sentence of an article that encouraged students to attend an interracial forum.⁹¹ The *Mentor* believed meetings such as this one helped students to have “an appreciation and understanding of the Negro as an integral unit in

⁸⁸ *The Mentor*, March 1934, 2.

⁸⁹ McKenzie, “Fraters: Black Greek-Letter Fraternities at Four Historically Black Colleges, 1920-1960,” 20.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *The Mentor*, March 1934, 2.

civilization.”⁹² This editorial served as an extension of Marjorie H. Parker’s concept that Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority was a cooperative “of women of courage and capacity, united by their acceptance of common values and their work toward common goals” and deserved admiration as well as protection.⁹³ The *Mentor*’s editors and writers believed that their work was paramount to advancing their race. Their work deserved a prominent and respected place on the march to civil rights.

On the pages of the January-February 1935 issue of the *Mentor*, the importance of Negro History Week was the focal point. Staff writer Jimmie Turner wrote about the responsibility of students to remain at the forefront in celebrating this moment of racial pride. “To us it is of great interest because we are Negroes and because we have a right to investigate our past,” he said.⁹⁴ Turner laid out a rather compelling argument about the importance of remembering the past, understanding how the past influences the present, and how there was an effort to “minimize the achievements of Negroes in any field which would be creditable and to vilify him whenever possible.”⁹⁵ Simon wraps up his editorial with a call to action to its readers: “Let each of us then resolve to read one book of Negro History, per month. Let us draw out of it not only information, but pride and glory for our past....”⁹⁶ The *Mentor* was inspired by “fiery” messages from black luminaries such as Carter G. Woodson, who “bemoaned the Negro’s neglect of his history and called upon the organization, and college men generally” to respond to gaping communal needs.⁹⁷

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Marjorie H. Parker, *Alpha Kappa Alpha in the Eye of the Beholder* (Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.), 1.

⁹⁴ *The Mentor*, January-February 1935, 370.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ McKenzie, “Fratres: Black Greek-Letter Fraternities at Four Historically Black Colleges, 1920-1960,” 109.

During in 1920 Ninth Annual Grand Conclave of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, he urged his “brothers” to initiate a national campaign and from this diatribe came the “Negro History and Literature Week” (later know as Negro History Week then Black History Month).⁹⁸ So as the Black Greek-letter organizations questioned their role in the march toward racial justice, the tradition continued with the *Mentor* asking their readers to find their purpose and serve.

In a section entitled “THE FRESHMAN SPEAKS” of the October 1940 issue of the *Mentor*, writer Charles Gibbs reminded readers of “the grim fact that Negro youth of this period are faced with cruel and unreasonable barriers,” but encouraged them to take their educational experience at Clark seriously.⁹⁹ In his column headlined “WHY WE CAME TO CLARK,” Gibbs told readers that to overcome racial injustice, students should become “a well-rounded personality” and develop a “good manner, Christian character, efficiency in work, usefulness to society . . .” as well as a penchant for civic responsibility.¹⁰⁰

Race was also discussed as a way to unify society in the *Mentor*. In a three-paragraph editorial under the headline “RACE RELATIONS,” the staff wrote about Race Relations Day, which was designated as a time to financially to support “Negro education” at schools like Clark.¹⁰¹ The staff wrote, “On this day we remind ourselves and our fellow-man that we are of one God and one religion, and that we, regardless of race or creed, there should be a closer relation between us and our fellow-man.” The

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ *The Mentor*, October 1940, 4.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ *The Mentor*, Spring 1941, 2.

sentiment was that a discussion about race could draw people to work toward a shared goal such as racial equality.

Also with the end of World War II, the *Mentor* focused its discussion about racial harmony in a democracy. In the October 1945 issue, the staff wrote, “The immediate problem of winning permanent peace since V-J Day has been definitely retarded because of the presence of black and white racial prejudice and antagonism.”¹⁰² The opinion piece was one of most strongly worded by the journal during this study’s timeframe. The staff believed that the country should temper celebrations of the victory aboard until it could face the devastation of racial discrimination. They considered “Racial prejudice – a sinister force which eventually grows into total racial segregation . . . How poor an example we are to the German Herrenvolk or Master Race promulgators whom we propose to re-educate for life in a new and ‘better’ world?” Without question, the student editors and writers served as agitators in this issue. The *Mentor’s* editors and writers were sensitive to war primarily because in the Black Greek-letter organizations’ history, membership significantly fluctuated especially in fraternities and job opportunities for blacks eroded.¹⁰³ In addition, wars presented unique challenges for an already beleaguered black community. The push and pull between the lack of jobs, societal isolation, porous educational systems, and paltry finances only became exacerbated by war. The *Mentor* could not ignore the racial implications of this quagmire.

Indeed, by the April 1955 issue, Editor-in-Chief Harold C. Wardlaw crafted an opinion piece that challenged readers to respect the work and necessity of the

¹⁰² *The Panther*, October 1945, 2.

¹⁰³ McKenzie, “Fraters: Black Greek-Letter Fraternities at Four Historically Black Colleges, 1920-1960.”

professional Black Press. Wardlaw believed that the calls for African Americans to fully integrate into society would compromise the Black Press's role; however, he believed it would still be the best source for news about the black community. Under the headline "ONE THING'S CERTAIN . . . THE REST IS LIES," he wrote, "That the Negro press has been effective in the fight for the 'inalienable rights' of minority groups is a fact. The rest – ?"¹⁰⁴ He prodded readers to not abandon the black press because "it publishes Negro news to the exclusion of other nationally important news dispatches. But by the same token, has not the White press all but excluded the Negro from its limelight?"¹⁰⁵ He continued, "That 'we don't need a Negro press' is just an empty chant."¹⁰⁶ Although Wardlaw acknowledged the "limitations, short comings, and sensationalism, the Negro press is, nevertheless, satisfactory for its purpose. Were the Negro press to be abolished this day, imagine what a shock we would receive."¹⁰⁷ Certainly, Wardlaw's account of the achievements and value of the Black Press proved similar to the *Mentor* and *Panther's* existence. Clark's student press kept racial equality on the horizon to combat the negative images of blacks and encourage activism much like their counterparts in the Black Press and their "sisters" and "brothers" in black Greekdom. For the *Mentor* and the *Panther*, racial uplift and injustice mattered.

Political Perspectives from the Student Editors and Writers

Similar to their black college peers at Bennett, Clark's *Mentor* wrote about the implications and expectations that came with the election of President Roosevelt. With so many questions whirling and countless blacks awaiting positive change, the students at

¹⁰⁴ *The Panther*, April 1955, 2.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

the *Mentor* remained hopeful. In the “Men and Events” section of the March 1933 issue of the journal, Edward Lloyd Simon wrote, “Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, has started his term of office with the same zest and power exhibited by this well-known cousin, Theodore Roosevelt.” Simon knew that Clark students wondered how the journal would add context to this issue. This moment represented a shift in the nation’s progress and the *Mentor* knew its readers needed the appropriate context: “We trust that he will be as successful as his kinsman, who first used the “big stick.”¹⁰⁸ The *Mentor* followed the tenacity of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. In 1930, the sorority sent a questionnaire to its membership to capture their sentiments on several issues including military expenditures.¹⁰⁹ The sorority used the responses to craft policy suggestions that would move the race closer to equality. Delta mounted a campaign to demand that “that the federal government abandon its own discriminatory policies as well as use its powers to redress racial injustice.”¹¹⁰ Similarly the *Mentor* measured the awareness on campus to develop editorials that would impart both facts and activism tactics. At the same time, student editors and writers earnestly worked to keep readers connected by canvassing for their thoughts to shape the contents of the journal.

In the same issue, the staff discussed the activity of Cuban students in pressuring the government to adhere to Democratic principles. On the same page, addressing the economic situations of their time, students wrote, “This is a period of depression, not only in America, but the world over.”¹¹¹ This comment served as an indicator that

¹⁰⁸ *The Mentor*, March 1933, 6.

¹⁰⁹ Giddings, *In Search of Sisterhood: Delta Sigma Theta and the Challenge of the Black Sorority Movement*, 126.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *The Mentor*, March 1933, 6.

students remained aware of events miles away from their campus as well as those closer to home. The hopefulness, insight and candor continued throughout the March 1933 issue with a poem entitled “To a Vanishing Race.” It was five short lines – five words or less on each line – but packed with deeper meaning: “Black Man, Black Man, Long years come on a-pace; How long will you keep The Blackness of your Race?”

In the April 1935 issue of the *Mentor*, the editors and writers celebrated student-led political activism on campus. Under the headline “CLARK STUDENTS WIRE SENATOR GEORGE CONCERNING ANTI-LYNCHING BILL,” the staff published the letter and wrote a short paragraph that detailed the significance of the students’ decision to persuade their Congressman to rethink his stance on important legislation.¹¹² They wrote, “A forward step toward an active interest among our Negro college youths of today, in the legislative activities now taking place at our Nation’s Capitol . . . when the political and social science students of Clark University wired Senator Walter F. George, senior Senator from Georgia, requesting his favor toward the passage of the Wagner-Costigan Anti-Lynching Bill, now pending in Congress.”¹¹³ The *Mentor* staff ended the article with a call to action: “These wide awake . . . political science students at Clark University . . . greatly sense the need of a more direct interest on the part of the Negro in the making of Laws”¹¹⁴ They implored their readers to “send similar telegrams”¹¹⁵ Likewise, in the 1930s, Delta Sigma Theta’s Vigilance Committee

¹¹² *The Mentor*, April 1935, 381.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

insisted that a “Federal Anti-Lynch Law be passed in the Congress.”¹¹⁶ So the emulation continued in the *Mentor* of the Black Press and the Black Greek-letter organizations leadership savvy. The Delta’s Vigilance Committee turned their outrage toward social injustice to a letter writing campaign aimed at the Secretary of War Patrick Hurley, “which said that Negro soldiers fought and died the same as whites.”¹¹⁷ So a continuum of this leadership style could be experienced in the *Mentor*.

Consequently, by the December 1936 issue, the *Mentor* staff urged its readers to focus their attention again on national affairs. In “A CHALLENGE TO THE STUDENT BODY,” writer Clarence J. Weeks wrote, “As youths we should be primarily concerned with our National affairs and those of the world.”¹¹⁸ He said that not only would the students be “faced with the problems of world peace,” but that many could be drafted for the war.¹¹⁹ Weeks’ called for a deeper level of commitment and service from the student body and several of the publication’s editors and writers echoed this sentiment on numerous occasions. Consistent with the perception of Black Greek-letter organizations on Clark’s campus, the interconnectivity between racial progress and war participation continued steadfast during the 1940s, “Negro participation in the war and in defense efforts was seen by many black Americans as aiding in their quest for full citizenship.”¹²⁰ By this time, Clark’s Black Greek-letter organization ranks grew to include Kappa Alpha Psi and Phi Beta Sigma fraternities along with Zeta Phi Beta and Sigma Gamma Rho

¹¹⁶ Giddings, *In Search of Sisterhood: Delta Sigma Theta and the Challenge of the Black Sorority Movement*, 127.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *The Mentor*, December 1936, 4.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ McKenzie, “Fraters: Black Greek-Letter Fraternities at Four Historically Black Colleges, 1920-1960,” 129.

sororities with a synergistic focus of scholarship, community uplift, and fellowship.¹²¹ In return, this truly magnified these organizations sway on the *Mentor* as well as increased the number of staff students with Black Greek ties.

Yet again, the “Mentorials” addressed the theme of democracy in the November 1942 issue. The staff wrote in “Education – A Nation’s Strength - “Education is the main stem of democracy.”¹²² They warned readers to not allow the war to lessen their desire as advocates for their country: “Students of Clark, the world awaits the educated individual to heal it of its sickness. Our responsibility becomes greater each day. . . . Democracy is our goal but there is no democracy without education.” Throughout the article, the writers reminded the readers of their role in a functioning democracy: “By strengthening the nation with our education pursuits the victory cannot be lost nor the nation fail to exist.” Politically, the *Mentor* and the *Panther* remained astute on local, regional, national, and global, and labored to influence its readers to take the same stand.

At Clark and Beyond, a Thriving Community Remained a Must

At Clark during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s Greek-lettered sororities and fraternities proved integral to building community pride and reinforcing personal responsibility, self-improvement, and prompted political change. The *Mentor* included them in their mission for a more aware and involved student body. In the “Feature Articles” section, staff writer J.H. Julian offered a suggestion to the organizations and the

¹²¹ In 1911 Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity (Kappas) chartered its inaugural chapter at Indiana University. The organization did not establish a chapter at Clark until 1948. In 1937, both Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity (Sigmas), founded in 1914 at Howard University, and Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority (G-Rhos), founded in 1920, chartered chapters at Clark. Zeta Phi Beta Sorority (Zetas), founded in 1920, established a chapter on Clark’s campus in the early 1930s.

¹²² *The Mentor*, November 1942, 2.

administration to create a more streamlined “pledging”¹²³ process. “It seems that Clark has fallen into the background in this matter. In other schools around the country many different systems of pledging are being used, all of which aim for the uniformity in the methods of pledging.” The history of the membership intake process of Black Greek-letter organizations is littered with charges of “barbarian treatment” especially during “Hell Week,” which on most black campus included paddling, physical tasks, and harassment as a way to humble initiates and prepare them for the arduous road of professional and social attainment ahead.¹²⁴ In contrast, Clark’s campus and its Black Greek-letter organizations’ hazing antics remained more “mental” and involved “outlandish stunts” not brutality.¹²⁵ The *Mentor* used the fraternity/sorority pledge process as a microcosm to explore community issues and controversial topics that merited attention. Since Black Greek-letter organizations proved the heartbeat of Clark’s campus, the *Mentor* demonstrated transparency on all fronts including the very organizations that defined their work.

Without a doubt, the *Mentor* believed in promoting awareness of self and community. This belief guided most, if not all of its editorials and articles when it came to discussions about community responsibility. For instance, in the May 1930 issue, staff writer Rubye Louise Taylor chastised readers for not being the type of person that would inspire others to do their best. In “WHAT WE HAVE BEEN MAKES US WHAT WE ARE,” she wrote, “We are not preparing to live, we are living now” to encourage readers

¹²³ The pledging process includes a period were a candidate for membership participates in activities that prepare them for full membership.

¹²⁴ McKenzie, “Fraters: Black Greek-Letter Fraternities at Four Historically Black Colleges, 1920-1960,”

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 23

that their community needs their engagement to advance.¹²⁶ She used phrases such as “clean conscience,” “blinded by our defective knowledge of moral obligation,” and “broken bodies, and wrecked souls” to express her frustration with the lack of urgency students showed toward being their best self at all times.¹²⁷ She concluded with this thought: “May we as young people; remember that to live to the best that is in us each hour of the day is a sacred and solemn obligation which binds us to our Creator.”¹²⁸ Not only were the Black Greek-letter organizations on Clark’s campus founded to create a place for like-minded intellectuals, they also were based on Christian principles.¹²⁹ Their public chants, songs, and rituals referenced God. So evidence that the *Mentor* made spiritual appeals to inform and persuade their readers remained consistent with their cultural and fraternal experience.¹³⁰

The narrative of obligation and social responsibility was apparent throughout all of the Clark publications used for this study. In an article penned by Edward Lloyd Simon, he reminded students that the monetary price of attending Clark does not cover the true value of a college education: “We owe the institution more than we have paid it in money.”¹³¹ Simon goes on to pose rhetorical questions to nudge readers into re-evaluating their perception about how to “repay” an institution that has given “you so much,” “If this debt cannot be measured in terms of money, how than can it be paid?”¹³² Simon’s request was for students to immerse themselves in all the school has to offer

¹²⁶ *The Mentor*, May 1930, 2.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Giddings, *In Search of Sisterhood: Delta Sigma Theta and the Challenge of the Black Sorority Movement*.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *The Mentor*, March 1933, 5.

¹³² *Ibid.*

while they were on campus and after graduation. This approach to the news also symbolized their focus to print more than hard news or breaking news articles, but lifestyle editorials that discussed personal accountability.

In the “Voice of the Students” section of the March 1933 issue, Frankie R. Neal wrote an open letter to students in the spirit of community building. “We feel that you realize the fact that *The Mentor* cannot be a success unless each student feels it his responsibility to cooperate wholeheartedly with the staff,” she said.¹³³ Neal urged students to exhibit “more enthusiastically and with more zeal” to represent their community with a strong sense of pride.¹³⁴

Another Clark student, Elizabeth Adams, wrote with similar fervor on the same topic as Neal. Adams wondered if most students knew they simply existed during their college years instead of pursuing more ambitious goals. She also knew that everyone would not appreciate her directness and reminded them not to “. . . become vexed with me. It’s only one thought, ole dear.”¹³⁵ This is another example of how students were passionate about their opinions enough to not only get it published in the newspaper, but to attach their name to the article.

Again, traditional journalism style was not always paramount to the *Mentor* staff. An example of this break from tradition was the *Mentor*’s publication of short poems that spoke to the spirit of building community and awareness about the importance of understanding the opportunity to redefine the country. Alton Theresa Young discussed in a poem entitled “Tis Not Cloth, But Lives” that caused him to be more reflective about

¹³³ *The Mentor*, March 1933, 8.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

the opportunity a college life and about the purpose behind his life. The poem's ends with this line "We should know, 'tis not cloth we're weaving, But 'tis lives."¹³⁶ Young believed his peers missed a key opening to "climb out of the rut of mediocrity."¹³⁷ This article was a microcosm of the larger struggle for blacks during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. While by many accounts, racism raged on, however, black college student-run newspapers did not want apathy to consume their peers. The staff used their editorial clout to remind readers that excuses were not acceptable despite the deplorable conditions of a divided nation.

Understanding that their readers had a choice, and community means establishing reciprocal relationships, in the October 1934 issue, the *Mentor* wrote an open letter that ran under the headline "Appreciation." In the column, "the 1934 – 1935 staff of the *Mentor* joins with gracious thanks for the appreciated privilege of bringing to you the official periodical."¹³⁸ The staff demonstrated that they embraced their role to provide accurate information and not simply tell stories, but stirred a certain sense of "doing." In the November 1934 issue, the *Mentor* shared not only the names but also a brief description of each person who worked on the staff from the editor-in-chief to the secretary as a way to create transparency and foster an open, mutually beneficial relationship with its readership. It was also a behavior akin to Black Greek-letter organizations, which celebrated their founders, national, regional, and local officers

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *The Mentor*, October 1934, 1.

because they symbolized the quintessential member – academically inclined, influential and strategically connected, and destined to lead.¹³⁹

The *Mentor* promoted a sense of community and worked to instill self-esteem and confidence in its readers. The newspaper believed this attribute was its purpose as evidenced on page 370 of the January-February 1935. Staff writer Lena Perryman explains that “sensitive students” miss out on life-changing opportunities because they are too fearful to venture out of their comfortable and familiar routines.¹⁴⁰ She described them as “self-made failures” and “easy prey for every sharper who discovers them.”¹⁴¹ The *Mentor* was a publication that felt called to speak with clarity and assertiveness, but in the spirit of “love and respect” for its peers and race.¹⁴² Indeed, this was a noteworthy aspect of how they nurtured and molded community.

A similar insistent tone that readers develop a heart for building their community at Clark appeared in the “Mentorials” section of the December 1935 issue. Associate Editor Alice Durham encouraged students to stop “Drifting” in her editorial that discussed the negative impact a drifter has on the community where they work and live: “As an appeal to the manhood and womanhood that represent Clark University, as a spur to your latent initiative, as an incentive to your pent up ambitions, desires, and ideals” to invest in the community, which is depending on “your success” to bring about change, she wrote.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Marjorie H. Parker, *Alpha Kappa Alpha Through the Years 1908-1988* (Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, 1990). 1-3; Walter M. Kimbrough, *Black Greek 101: the Culture, Customs, and Challenges of Black Fraternities and Sororities*.

¹⁴⁰ *The Mentor*, January-February 1935, 370.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² A collective assessment by the researcher from *The Mentors* investigated during this study.

¹⁴³ *The Mentor*, December 1935, 2.

As a way to stir enthusiasm for college life into its readers, one of the *Mentor's* Society Editors, Robert Gordon wrote in an editorial published in the February 1937 journal that students should re-evaluate their attitudes toward higher education. Gordon believed it was time for "intense reflection" on the part of students who thought it was better to complain about deficiencies in their environment instead of acknowledge their potential role in remedying the situation.¹⁴⁴ He reviled the notion that some students' indifference to their shortcomings on campus as well as within the black community, would poorly serve them. He wrote, "There are too many of us who 'don't care just so I get mine' . . . So if we are to make our institutions one big family . . . we must now 'arise or be forever fallen.'"¹⁴⁵ Such strongly worded prose did not depart from the legacy of Delta Sigma Theta's Mary Church Terrell, who in 1913 led her "sisters," "in their first public act as an organization: marching down Washington D.C.'s Pennsylvania Avenue (with the Delta banner aloft) in the famous woman suffrage demonstration on the eve of Woodrow Wilson's inauguration."¹⁴⁶ Consistently borrowing from the past by the *Mentor's* editors and writers attributed to their broadened and enriched perspective because of their membership in Black Greek-letter organizations.

A new academic year ushered in similar sentiments of community building and social responsibility. On the *Mentor's* editorial page in the November 1937 issue, editor-in-chief N. Gilbert Denson wrote in "THE UNDERGRAD CARRIES ON!" that students should value their time in college because it is "a sacred trust."¹⁴⁷ For Denson as well as

¹⁴⁴ *The Mentor*, February 1937, 2.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Giddings, *In Search of Sisterhood: Delta Sigma Theta and the Challenge of the Black Sorority Movement*, 15.

¹⁴⁷ *The Mentor*, November 1937, 2.

the rest of the staff, the *Mentor* was a place to remind readers of their privilege and the work left to accomplish on behalf of their race, community, and society. He wrote, “We are bound to devote ourselves to the attainment of all the necessary requirements of a thorough, fundamental college education. From this obligation nothing can absolve us.”¹⁴⁸

A month later, the cry for community unity remained a fixture on the pages of the *Mentor*. Strife between campus organizations drained student morale. Again, Editor-in-Chief N. Gilbert Denson discussed the need for all students to rethink their role in elevating the campus to a higher level to honor the “years of toil, untold sacrifice” of their predecessors, faculty, and founders.¹⁴⁹ He urged readers to not lower the high standards and wrote, “. . . if we do not want to become mere puppets shifted about in the paw of unguided destiny . . . if we want to guard and develop our priceless heritage; there is but one alternative . . . We must move forward . . . TOGETHER!”¹⁵⁰ It was natural for the *Mentor* to criticize this organizational turmoil because it reflected the competitive nature the Black Greeks on Clark’s campus. Brawley wrote that the Greeks often tried to outdo each other with the quality of their community service projects. For example, each Black Greek-letter organization was assigned a Sunday to host chapel service. And as the academic year progressed, each chapel service grew more and more elaborate as the Black Greek-letter organizations outperformed each other in order to secure campus bragging rights. Considered the most influential organizations on campus, their harmony

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ *The Mentor*, December 1937, 2.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

or dissention reverberated throughout “the yard”¹⁵¹ and such a lashing by the *Mentor* reflected this tenuous dynamic.

Traditions and special occasions at Clark served as an opportunity for the *Mentor* to implore readers to think about being a vibrant part of their community. In the Spring 1941 issue, Editor-in-Chief Otis B. Cowan wrote an opinion piece about the college’s Founder’s Day events.¹⁵² He used the words from a banner Harvard University’s freshmen class used to celebrate their arrival to campus to evoke the same emotions of students at Clark. Cowan said the Harvard freshmen exclaimed, “This University has waited 300 years for us.”¹⁵³ He then wrote, “Clark College has waited for us 69 years. . . . They were the Makers of dreams – dreams that speak through this institution and through us.”¹⁵⁴ As the editorial continued, Cowan said that the college’s founders entrusted them with building a stronger legacy of service: “Let us be worthy of the trust placed in us . . . by those who preceded . . . and work enthusiastically and diligently toward building a greater Clark . . . and subsequently rendering more worthwhile service.”¹⁵⁵

In the same issue, Editor-in-Chief Otis B. Cowan in his editorial “THE NEW CLARK” noted the move to the new West Atlanta campus. In the November 1941 issue, the responsibility of the students to preserve the climate of community at Clark resonated on the editorial page. Cowan wrote, “New occasions teach new duties. . . A large number of men and women – friends and alumni of Clark – believed in Clark and we must do our

¹⁵¹ Whaley, *Disciplining Women: Alpha Kappa Alpha, Black Counterpublics, and the Cultural Politics of Black Sororities*, 13-28.

¹⁵² *The Mentor*, Spring 1941, 2.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

utmost to deserve their confidence.”¹⁵⁶ Finally, in the April 1955 issue of the *Panther*, the staff asked this question: “Are You Holding Empty Honors?” The staff wrote, “*The Panther* desires to counsel the student leaders not to be only office seekers and name builders with a singularity of purpose: honor. Responsibility and honor are brothers; they go hand in hand, the *Panther* humbly offers.”¹⁵⁷ They pushed this notion of leadership and responsibility being a relationship between two equal parts and not separate entities.

With the Mentor and Panther, the Movement Flourished

Du Bois believed that “the Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men . . .”¹⁵⁸ The sororities and fraternities on Clark’s campus agreed that this was their calling – to be the voice of their race through leadership and service and the *Mentor* proved an extension of this duty-bound service. The coverage of race, politics, and community building demonstrated the distinctive quality of campus leadership at Clark. The Black Greek-letter organizations’ emerged after Du Bois’ 1905 Niagara Movement.¹⁵⁹ Their platform for “freedom of speech and criticism . . . the abolition of all distinctions based on race, the recognition of the basic principles of human brotherhood . . .” inspired the black college student editors and writers at Clark to use their journal to

¹⁵⁶ *The Mentor*, November 1941, 2.

¹⁵⁷ *The Panther*, April 1955, 2.

¹⁵⁸ Du Bois, *Talented Tenth*, 54.

¹⁵⁹ McKenzie, “Fraters: Black Greek-Letter Fraternities at Four Historically Black Colleges, 1920-1960,” 106-107.

stoke everlasting communal empowerment by joining a multi-faceted national movement to equality.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER IV – HAMPTON INSTITUTE: THE HAMPTON SCRIPT

We are Nobody's Fools: The Radicalization of *The Script* to

Advance Black Intellectual Discourse

From the deeply rooted conservative spirit of Hampton Institute (Hampton University) sprung a radical and emboldened student voice during the first half of the twentieth century. In the 1930s, Hampton students bemoaned their government's callousness for leaving blacks unprotected and disenfranchised from the American dream of equality.¹ Likewise in the 1940s, this same chorus of voices launched visceral harangues when their classmates exchanged academic excellence for mediocrity.² Then in the 1950s, Hampton students' voices chided school officials when they neglected promises to create an environment that fostered inclusion and transparency.³ Yet, beyond the student acrimony lie the historical underpinnings that made this atmosphere on Hampton's campus worthy of exploration. The mere suggestion of black resistance festering at the very school which cemented Booker T. Washington's black accommodation philosophy as a path to liberation produced fractures in previous accounts of how Hampton students responded to racial prejudice, political incompetence, and communal apathy.⁴ Much like the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *Chicago Defender*, the *Script* often departed from the genteel approach adopted by many in the Black Press and the black college student-run press for a radicalized voice.⁵ Their approach to news

¹ *The Hampton Script*, December 6, 1933, 2.; January 27, 1940, 2.

² *The Hampton Script*, May 25, 1940, 2.

³ *The Hampton Script*, December 16, 1950, 1; *The Hampton Script*, February 22, 1930, 2; *The Hampton Script*, December 4, 1957, 1.

⁴ William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, Teaching for Social Justice 6 (New York: Teaching College Press, 2001).

⁵ Richard Digby-Junger, "The Guardian, Crisis, Messenger, and Negro World: The Early-20th-Century Black Radical Press," *Howard Journal of Communications* 9 (1988): 263-264.

coverage straddled the divide between sensationalism techniques used to increase readership, and pragmatic diligence favored by other black publications to sell their ideology in the name of progress.⁶

The editors and writers of the *Hampton Script* – the student-run newspaper at Hampton, a black college in Virginia – immersed themselves in the fight for racial justice, political rancor, and community uplift as well as societal imperfections.⁷ The *Script* women and men exposed a current of discontent, which was regularly disregarded in exchange for optimistic narratives about black cooperation, industriousness, and “boot straps” success stories that overshadowed the school’s diverse and thorny history.⁸ So while the sprawling campus situated along the Virginia Peninsula near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay was physically separated from neighboring communities, the editorial staff was intimately connected with their responsibility to write about topics that gave their readers a reason to be introspective, convicted, and unsettled about their marginalized American existence.⁹ This profound understanding by the *Script* allowed them to use journalism to cultivate a distinctive voice, which advocated for the unchained freedom of their race.¹⁰

Undoubtedly through the *Script*, the student editors and writers were able to establish an independent outlet to consistently share their commentaries, which frequently ran counter to black luminaries such as Hampton alumnus Washington and civil rights activist A. Philip Randolph about the posture blacks should assume to end

⁶ LaShawn Harris, “Marvel Cooke: Investigative Journalist, Communist and Black Radical Subject” *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 6, no. 2 (2012): 102.

⁷ An evaluation made by the researcher after reviewing all available newspapers from 1930-1959.

⁸ Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*.

⁹ Robert Francis Engs, *Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 70-85.

¹⁰ Pamela Foster, email message to author, March 25, 2013.

segregation.¹¹ Even though discussions about race, politics, and community building were multifaceted, the ability of the *Script*'s editorial staff to research and articulate the saliency of these issues was exceptionally noteworthy. Compared to the other schools analyzed in this study, the *Script* was consistent in their approach to use the pen to provoke a response from their readers. Borrowing from the Black Press, their ideology was similar to *Defender* publisher and Hampton alumnus Robert S. Abbott's 1914 comment about the seduction of the press: "With one drop of ink, we make millions think."¹² So the *Script*'s articles were layered with meaning, and a certain sense of confidence that continually emulated the writings of black activists and journalists such as Ella Baker and Marvel Cooke – whose widely celebrated 1935 article "*The Bronx Slave Market*" became a must-read because it chronicled the plight of African American "domestics" during the Great Depression in New York. Baker and Cooke's courage, intellect, and persistence continually positioned them as reference points for the *Script* as they covered their world with the same intensity.¹³

Hampton had one of the most comprehensive archival collections of the five black college student-run newspapers included in this study. Between 1930 and 1959, the *Script* published more than thirteen hundred editions of the student-run newspaper – all of which were analyzed by the researcher. The newspaper varied in length from four to sixteen pages depending on the time of year. For instance, in the Christmas issues a smattering of color on the front-page was present, but the publication primarily printed

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Digby-Junger, "The Guardian, Crisis, Messenger, and Negro World: The Early-20th-Century Black Radical Press," 264.

¹³ Harris, "Marvel Cooke: Investigative Journalist, Communist and Black Radical Subject," 91.

issues in black and white.¹⁴ In another effort to add visual appeal to the *Script*, photographs were liberally used in the early editions throughout the late 1950s, and were accompanied by descriptive cutlines as well as photo credits. The structure of the newspaper followed a traditional four to five column format, with headlines as well as a banner identifying the publication as the *Script*. Bylines were used sporadically to link stories to staff writers; however, it was not uncommon for the *Script* to use initials of the editors and writers at the end of articles and opinion pieces. As a way to infuse an alternative perspective into its editorial content, frequently the *Script* published articles from white college student-run newspapers such as Vassar College's *Miscellany News*, in Poughkeepsie, New York, and the *Flat Hat* at Virginia's College of William and Mary.¹⁵

Positions such as editor-in-chief, business and advertising managers along with associate and section editors, reporters, and copy editors were a part of the *Script*'s infrastructure to gather as well as produce news. Conversely, there were no standing columns that specifically addressed race, and community building, but space was dedicated to the coverage of world news, which usually included political banter, war updates, and partisan activities. Meanwhile, treatment of these themes changed along with editorial board appointments. On the other hand, what did not change was the visibility of race, politics, and community building, and the staff's commitment to drawing attention to these topics by crafting provocative headlines, gathering accurate facts, and securing the most appropriate article placement. So while the physical appearance and the makeup of the staff resembled a traditional American newsroom, the editorial content was irreverent and strikingly mature at a time when black intellect and

¹⁴ *The Hampton Script*, December 15, 1951, 1; *The Hampton Script*, December 16, 1950, 1.

¹⁵ *The Hampton Script*, December 4, 1957, 2.

achievement were banished to the margins of society.¹⁶ In the tradition of *The Crisis* and *The Negro World*, the *Script* promoted a more aggressive approach to solving “The Negro Problem.”¹⁷ The *Script* offered new possibilities and opportunities for their readers to re-imagine their reality.¹⁸

Collectively, these facts validate the *Script*'s historical significance in chronicling happenings on Hampton's campus, and contextualizing society for hundreds of black students who found their way to Virginia for an education, and a chance to distance themselves from the humiliation of slavery and dehumanizing effects of Jim Crow.¹⁹ Washington was one of those students who figuratively and literally walked hundreds of miles to latch onto the fruitful promise of a Hampton education.²⁰ Routinely, coverage of race, politics, and community building was published on the *Script*'s front-page or in the editorial pages, and readers knew where to consistently find relevant issues. In addition, prominent placement of this study's themes in the *Script* helped readers recognize their urgency. It was a strategic effort by the black college press to emulate the physical format of the Black Press as well as the white mainstream media because audiences were trained how and where to find the day's most pressing news.²¹ Adherence to this model gave them credibility to carve out a niche for student expression that became invaluable to the Hampton experience.

¹⁶ bell hooks, *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Massachusetts: South End Press, 1981): 3.

¹⁷ Digby-Junger, “The Guardian, Crisis, Messenger, and Negro World: The Early-20th-Century Black Radical Press,” 264.

¹⁸ Pamela Foster, email message to author, March 25, 2013.

¹⁹ Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography* (New York: Doubleday-Page, 1901).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Digby-Junger, “The Guardian, Crisis, Messenger, and Negro World: The Early-20th-Century Black Radical Press,” 264.

In the end, it was their strident tonality that garnered the *Script* many national honors such as the 1938-1939 Goffney Plaque awarded by the Colored Intercollegiate Press Association, but also a coveted reputation on campus as an unapologetic truth-teller.²² They exercised wit and authored clever vignettes to not simply inform, but also challenge the campus' psyche on issues such as how the Depression left blacks vulnerable to "suffering more than any of his brothers."²³ In the fall of 1956, it was their sophistication as writers that allowed the *Script's* editor-in-chief to travel to Cornell University in New York to attend a national Intercollegiate Press gathering.²⁴ A personal invitation from Cornell's president Dean W. Malott brought Hampton's English major Rodney M. Isaacs to a predominantly white conference "to further increase interest in and understanding of national political campaigns" and "emphasized the students stake in the country's future."²⁵ Remarkably, this type of national exposure coupled with the investment of Hampton's faculty, staff, and students elevated the *Script's* editorial content and unfettered the newspaper from the school's legacy of conservatism. Also these events were similar to the strategic maneuverings of the Black Vanguard's Mary McLeod Bethune, who found her way into President Theodore Roosevelt's "Black Kitchen Cabinet" to lobby for her race. Consistently, the rhythm of the newspaper never appeared lacking in its mission to evoke discussions that drove positive action. Between 1930 and 1959, it was not uncommon for the *Script* to hold the school's administration

²² The Goffney Plaque was named after a Washington, D.C. journalist. It was given annually by the Colored Intercollegiate Press Association (CIPA) to recognize and celebrate exceptional work of black college newspapers. This was Hampton's first time receiving the award. Others black colleges in the CIPA were Virginia State, Virginia Union University, and Winston-Salem Teachers College, source: *The Hampton Script*, May 20, 1939, 1.

²³ *The Hampton Script*, March 30, 1935, 2.

²⁴ *The Hampton Script*, October 19, 1956, 1.

²⁵ Ibid.

accountable for ignoring pivotal campus improvements such as upgrading the cafeteria, and regularly criticize their peers for lack of ingenuity, foresight, and action when it came to matters of racial pride, political engagement, and infractions against community solidarity.²⁶

Even more evident on the pages of the *Script* was how the history of the school influenced the student editors and writers to find their voice to inspire racial equality, political awareness, and the need for an informed black community. Founded in 1863 by General Samuel Armstrong as a place to enliven the black spirit through education and industrial skills, Hampton became both a beacon of opportunity and a symbol of black marginalization for African Americans.²⁷ While many scholars such as William Watkins have denounced Armstrong as a white leader who systematically controlled black progress by offering an industrial education paid for through the students' manual labor, Armstrong believed his intentions were misunderstood.²⁸ On the contrary, Armstrong said he wanted blacks to develop "industrious habits of self-discipline, which he thought most freedmen sorely lacked."²⁹ Armstrong insisted that this attitude of self-reliance and focus on training "hands and head together" rather than one at the sake of the other was more expensive and valuable to moving the South forward – both economically and socially.³⁰ Arguably, even though the editors and writers may have disagreed with Armstrong's white patriarchal ideology about how blacks should be fully integrated into

²⁶ Gathered by the researcher through analysis of the more than thirteen hundred editions of the *Script* reviewed for this study.

²⁷ Engs, *Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited*, 80.

²⁸ Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

society, this spirit of self-accountability, discipline, and industriousness was palpable throughout the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s in the *Script*.

From its inception on May 12, 1928, the *Script* was focused on student engagement, community progress, and leadership. Organized by Hampton student Cecil T. Lewis, the *Script*'s mission: to create an "audible voice" to air grievances, diffuse ignorance, and encourage public discourse about relevant issues to solve nagging problems that ranged from an ineffective student council to the vicious effect of the controversial "Scottsboro Boys" verdict.³¹ To establish the *Script*, Lewis wrote twelve principles to guide the student-run newspaper. Lewis' principles included fostering "freedom of expression," and each staff editorial that followed embraced training "students to express their thoughts in healthy, wholesome, and constructive ways," and enlarging the "vision and inspire new spirit."³² The allegiance to Lewis' principles demonstrated how the *Script* student editors and writers saw their role as an extension of the Black Press' legacy of activism and advocacy.³³ It was not by happenstance that the *Script's* writings were filled with passionate rhetoric; it was a characteristic of how they approached their role as agitators, informers, and peacemakers.³⁴ In fact, the staff wrote in an October 4, 1941 editorial headlined, "It's Our Policy Too!" that "the very moment that the *Hampton Script* fails to serve its true purpose it becomes a 'tinkling cymbol' and unworthy of the trust that has been placed in it."³⁵ In this editorial and others, the student

³¹ *The Hampton Script*, October 4, 1941, 4.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Roland E. Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.* (Iowa: Iowa State, 1989), 24.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *The Hampton Script*, October 4, 1941, 2.

staff illustrated a keen awareness of how essential it was for them to operate with impeccable integrity.

Also aside from injecting fervor into their writings and editorial decision-making, it was paramount that the *Script* present “. . . facts and interpretations of facts rather than denunciations and one-sided advocacies.”³⁶ It was this repeated acknowledgement of duty that cultivated the *Script*'s role as a campus leader. The student writers and editors' ability to cover multiple topics with the same urgency and maturity was continually on display throughout this study. Although they published lighthearted news such as organizational happenings, the newspaper was not relegated as a place for gossip or pettiness. For example, in the same October 4, 1941 editorial, the staff wrote: “We as young intelligent college Negroes cannot afford to waste our time at such bickerings.”³⁷ Almost intuitively, the students believed their time on the *Script* was an “apprenticeship,” and their work was essential “practice” and preparation for life beyond the Chesapeake Bay.³⁸

For the student editors and writers, “a better *Hampton Script*” meant “a better community and even a better world.”³⁹ So the newspaper took an aggressive approach to covering the news because their voice traveled the campus. Consider what the staff wrote in an October 6, 1945 editorial under the headline “A Statement of Policy.”⁴⁰ Particularly in the editorial columns of the *Script*, it was their responsibility to “constructively criticize that which we deem unjust and antagonistic to the welfare of the institution or

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ *The Hampton Script*, October 6, 1945, 2.

humanity. Likewise, we shall praise, editorially, strides taken in the direction of a greater Hampton, a more democratic America, and a more humane world.”⁴¹ It was this type of advocacy that propelled the *Script* forward as one of the leading newspapers in the black college press during the period of this study. The clarity of their vision similar to those in the Black Press such as Abbott defined this exploration as more than a cursory investigation, but a historic link as to how the black college press was able to develop leaders and readership to accelerate the march toward freedom.

In 1940, their commitment to civil rights and love of their “home by the sea,” the *Script* wrote a front-page tribute in honor of Abbott when he died.⁴² The *Script* remembered him as “a man who “struggled for the advancement of the Negro people.”⁴³ It was their acute sense of knowing where to draw their inspiration from, and the best way to honor the life of someone admirable such as Abbott to continue pressing for black equality. The *Script* considered Abbott “above reproach, one who could not be intimidated, bribed, or persuaded to sacrifice his principles”⁴⁴ The same should be said about the *Script*. The staff stood steadfast in the belief that their work was necessary and contributed to the greater good of their community. Additionally, the *Script* ignited a desire within its student editors and writers to pursue a career in journalism, and more specifically in the Black Press. The intimate connection their work had to their ancestors’ struggles and realities was undeniable.

Building Their Newspaper with People and Talents

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Nikitta A. Foston, “Hampton University: Education for Life in the New Century” *Ebony* 58, no 11 (September 2003), 62.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ *The Hampton Script*, March 9, 1940, 1.

In 1930, the *Script*, which was printed on campus, published newspapers bi-monthly during the school year.⁴⁵ However by the 1940s, it evolved into a bi-weekly publication, and it was not unusual for the *Script* to hit newsstands on Saturdays instead of a weekday.⁴⁶ The increased production could be attributed to the publication's popularity and effectiveness as a learning tool for students. Annual subscriptions were available for one dollar, and single copies could be purchased for six cents.⁴⁷ Essentially, the rates helped the staff increase the size of the newspaper so it could "fulfill a bigger role in Hampton student life."⁴⁸ Nevertheless, black college historians such as Crystal de Gregory and Pamela Foster agreed that copies were freely given to the student body, faculty, and staff, which comprised the majority of the newspaper's readership. The notion of assigning a price to the newspaper was more of a way to emphasize its value to the community.⁴⁹ Another way the *Script* added credibility to their product during the 1940s was to become a member of the Associated Collegiate Press (ACP) – a group founded in 1921 to help college newspapers, both black and white, fortified their storytelling skills and the overall quality of their publication.⁵⁰ It was through this vehicle that the *Script* elevated itself as a nationally recognizable college newspaper. So by May 25, 1946, the *Script* received accolades from the ACP as a "First-Class-Excellent" rating for its ability to produce a newspaper filled with "interesting, informative editorial columns" that showed "sincere interest in the vital topics of" their day.⁵¹ This was front-page news because it symbolized the publication's ascent, and validated their efforts to be

⁴⁵ Typically, a school year started in late August and went through mid-May.

⁴⁶ *The Hampton Script*, February 10, 1940, 1.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ *The Hampton Script*, May 28, 1932, 2.

⁴⁹ Pamela Foster, email message to author, March 25, 2013.

⁵⁰ *The Hampton Script*, October, 6, 1945, 2.

⁵¹ *The Hampton Script*, May 25, 1946, 1.

their campus's conscience. Furthermore, this highlighted the *Script's* dexterity to take radical stands yet not isolate themselves from mainstream honors.

Similar to the *Bennett Banner*, there was evidence that the student body elected certain editorial positions such as editor-in-chief and managing editor. So included on the ballot to elect a student government president was a place to elect the newspaper's top editors, who in return, selected reporters, copy editors, and business managers. The fact that the editor-in-chief was elected through a campus-wide process highlighted the importance of the *Script's* leadership, visibility, and reach. For instance, following the annual campus-wide election in the May 25, 1940 issue, the staff wrote a short paragraph about the incoming editor, Charles King. Along with a black and white photograph, "Mr. King is a junior in the School of Education. He is a co-chairman of the "Y", well known debater, and member of several other organizations on the campus."⁵² A few years later, in the February 20, 1943 issue on the front page, the *Script* announced its first woman editor-in-chief following the spring semester elections. The fact that the newspaper knew to publish this information on the front page showed their understanding of how to treat defining moments, and how to exert a clear voice to delineate the import of these events. Also, it emphasized how they contextualized these moments to enhance their readers' appreciation for progress as a race and community.

In total, the staff ranged from twelve to thirty students who covered all aspects of publishing a newspaper.⁵³ Students campaigned for their positions by working on the *Script*, and proving that they were willing to support the legacy and mission the newspaper. Indeed, the *Script* was a student organization with its own designated space

⁵² *The Hampton Script*, May 25, 1940, 8.

⁵³ An approximation from the researcher.

on campus. It had student officers, a mission, editorial meetings, produced a product, and received money from the University to function. The *Script* had a tangible heritage of *duty-bound* service, however, this did not quail speculation about the *Script's* editorial autonomy.⁵⁴

Let Freedom Ring

Without a doubt, part of the newspaper's mantra centered on preserving the publication as a "medium of free expression."⁵⁵ In numerous issues of the *Script*, the staff championed editorial freedom, and defended themselves against accusations that their voice was not independent. To underscore this point in the November 21, 1942 issue, the *Script* used this quote from a *New York Times* article to assuage any doubt: "Mental narrowness, intolerance, zeal to choke somebody else's belief or theory are out of place in an institution of learning. A university should be a sanctuary of intellectual freedom . . ."⁵⁶ In fact, the *Script* refused to be coerced by Hampton's administration, faculty, or students and ridiculed anyone who thought to the contrary. For example, in the November 23, 1937 issue of the *Script*, the staff penned an editorial headlined "The Hue and Cry." The editors and writers were insulted by results from a campus student survey that revealed the *Script* showed "definite signs of being controlled by the administration."⁵⁷ Their response to this accusation was swift and straightforward: "All of which, we daresay, merely goes to show that when people think audibly they give incontrovertible evidence of stupidity."⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ *The Hampton Script*, November 21, 1942, 2.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ *The Hampton Script*, November 23, 1937, 2.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Similarly in an October 1, 1938 editorial, the *Script* celebrated the newspaper's history and editorial freedom. The staff wrote about the mission of the *Script*, and the their commitment to delivering uncensored relevant news that was fair-handed: "Finally, we'd like it plainly understood that although this paper will not be subject to censorship or control of the administration, it does not intend to haggle or fuss with those in authority merely to be antagonistic."⁵⁹ Ultimately, the *Script* editors and writers were determined to "build, not destroy . . . love, not hate . . . join hands, not pull apart."⁶⁰ The repetitive editorials about independence can be linked to the charges lodged against the Black Press in the early twentieth century. Historically, the Black Press was accused of being part of the "Tuskegee Machine" or an extension of government propaganda laden campaigns. So a logical measure for the black college press was to espouse their freedom and that they were not under any "obligation to print what is desired by any source."⁶¹ This was one reason why the *Script* rarely recognized their faculty advisor.

Out of the hundreds of issues reviewed, a reference to a faculty advisory occurred approximately five times.⁶² The appearance of overt or subtle input from any adult in a perceived position of power compromised the strength of their work. The *Script*'s rationale followed historian Edward Blum's "analysis of W.E.B. Du Bois 'to speak, move, and dwell in a variety of circles without being pigeonholed into a certain camp or controlled by a specific . . . hierarchy.'"⁶³ The *Script* fought against aligning themselves with one group in an effort to protect their voice, and when necessary take a radical stand.

⁵⁹ *The Hampton Script*, October 1, 1938, 2.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *The Hampton Script*, October 6, 1945, 2.

⁶² The researcher counted.

⁶³ Harris, "Marvel Cooke: Investigative Journalist, Communist and Black Radical Subject," 94.

While the *Script* welcomed feedback, the final decision as to what would run in the newspaper was a right they were unwilling to relinquish. For instance, in an editorial headlined “The Policy of the Script,” the editors and writers acknowledged “No newspaper has pleased everybody at any time, and the *Script* is no exception.”⁶⁴ In spite of this, the *Script* was “practically free from censorship” and it was not their policy to “cover up or smear sweet veneer on conditions that are in sad need of repair, but it does ask that the criticisms coming in for publication be fair.”⁶⁵ Their clarity in purpose made their work powerful. Their singular allegiance was to accurately share the news. It was “the most important thing to the *Script*.” Admittedly, the newspaper epitomized “an experiment” in black college journalism; however, it quickly became a legitimate branch of the school’s culture.⁶⁶

The Script Connects with Their Readers

Undoubtedly, the *Script* yearned for engagement with its readers as a way to make sure it was serving their needs. In the May 28, 1938 issue of the newspaper, the editorial staff wrote a piece headlined “Finale.” It was common practice in the *Script* as well as the other newspapers included in this study to allow the outgoing staff – primarily the editor-in-chief – to reflect on their experience. Also in this article, the *Script*’s editors and writers believed that in exchange for their hard work on the newspapers they “asked only for the interest and cooperation of the student body – and by cooperation we don’t mean

⁶⁴ *The Hampton Script*, March 14, 1931, 2.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *The Hampton Script*, May 28, 1932, 2.

all bouquets, but brickbats as well.”⁶⁷ This highlighted their understanding that service to the campus would be useless without the investiture of their readers. This reciprocal relationship rang throughout black communities during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s via the Black Press and the black college press. This relationship also played an intricate part in the black student press’ ability to publish relevant articles. The *Script’s* honesty on issues such as student apathy, and racial ignorance often rattled its readers. For example, the *Script* was “extremely critical of shallow thinking.”⁶⁸ The staff’s faithfulness to “be vigilant” in their “effort to stimulate thought and action” was inescapable.⁶⁹ They firmly believed “education without intelligence will not carry us to our goal” of dismantling racial binaries.⁷⁰

In response to a Hampton alumnus, who wrote the newspaper condemning its radical tone, the staff responded with sarcasm and exerted forcefulness to punctuate their position: “You decry that fact that we don’t limit ourselves to printing mere class and club happenings Naturally you see nothing for the students to complain about for you are not here to see anything, and all you read in other papers are glowing accounts of Hampton’s progress We’re not being radical just truthful.”⁷¹

The expectation that student editors and writers were committed to advocating for truth and justice was an heirloom left behind from numerous Black Press publications as well as from influential voices in the black community like Boris E. Nelson, the acting director of Hampton’s Department of Public Relations. During the *Script’s* annual

⁶⁷ *The Hampton Script*, May 28, 1938, 2.

⁶⁸ *The Hampton Script*, October 5, 1946, 2.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *The Hampton Script*, October 24, 1942, 2.

banquet to celebrate their achievements in April of 1956, Nelson told the student staff that it was their “duty” to “report the truth objectively and clearly, to speak out against social and political injustices”⁷² Nelson compared the black college press to the Black Press throughout his address, and urged the *Script* to remain inquisitive, reasonably skeptical, and racial crusaders.⁷³ In addition, he said their work was “of greater importance now than ever before since the commercial press” had “become subservient to the deception of advertisers.”⁷⁴ This convincing rhetoric drove the students to unearth stories that lived up to the lofty expectations of their community. The gravity of their responsibility to write from not only their first-person remembrances, but the collective experiences of their race at times was a daunting undertaking, yet necessary to continue a national campaign toward equality.⁷⁵

The *Script* was part of a movement that not only reflected the work of the Black Press, but also was a testament to black newspapers’ credibility during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. The black college student-run press was the training ground to fine-tune communal communication that was essential to blacks during slavery through the 1950s. So while not journalistically polished, the black college student-run press including the *Script* embodied the black community’s continual march toward improving their social standing. A reflection of this spirit can be read in a December 18, 1958 editorial headlined “Let’s Stop Squawking And Pitch In.” The student editors and writers said, “As the *Script* continues to improve, it will continue to make mistakes The wheels of progress grind slowly, always, but they will grind faster if you push WITH us instead

⁷² *The Hampton Script*, April 27, 1956, 1.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Crystal de Gregory, email message to the author, April 9, 2013.

of AGAINST us!”⁷⁶ It was this vacillation between the students that symbolized the *Script*'s maturity as well as dedication to serving the needs of its community using journalism, and a radical voice as their style of protest to social injustice.

While more pressing issues such as race, politics, and community building frequently appeared on the pages of the *Script*, the student editors and writers were involved with other decisions such as deciding the school's mascot. In the May 6, 1933 issue of the *Script* on the front page, the staff published a story headlined “Pirates Wins in *Script* Poll.” The story told readers that the moniker Pirates bested Seaside and Ironmen.⁷⁷ This further demonstrated the significant role Hampton's student newspaper played in shaping public opinion as well as contributed to lasting characteristics of the school that were often undocumented by historians.

Like most black colleges during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, there was not a formal journalism program at Hampton.⁷⁸ In the November 15, 1941 issue, the *Script* wrote an article that a new journalism instructor Thelma Rea Thurston, formerly of the *Kansas City Call*, a black newspaper in Missouri, would join the faculty to teach news writing and public relations as well as help with the *Script*.⁷⁹ According to the *Script*, this was “the first time in the history of the school that a regular instructor has been employed in this capacity.”⁸⁰ The president rarely used the *Script*, but he did at pivotal junctures in the school's history.

⁷⁶ *The Hampton Script*, December 18, 1958, 2.

⁷⁷ *The Hampton Script*, May 6, 1933, 2.

⁷⁸ Pamela Foster, email message to author, March 25, 2013.

⁷⁹ *The Hampton Script*, November 15, 1941, 2-3. CHECK

⁸⁰ *The Hampton Script*, November 15, 1941, 2.

During the school's ninetieth anniversary, Hampton's first African American president Alonzo G. Moron wrote a column welcoming new students, and encouraged them to use the *Script* "to get some experience in gathering news and editing a newspaper."⁸¹ He reiterated that student editors and writers authentically generated the editorial content of the *Script*. Indeed, the president's words helped explain the newspaper's willingness to push the boundaries in its coverage of newsworthy events on and off campus. In addition, the editorial staff had heightened expectations of journalists outside of their newsroom. For example in the fall of 1957, the *Script* severed ties with the *Newport News Times-Herald* after they determined the daily newspaper was falsely reporting news about their president and school. Their decision was front-page news. The *Script* allowed the *Times-Herald* to use its pictures, but ended that relationship believing "this small action on the part of the *Script* is a step in the right direction toward erasing any subjugations of people of other races."⁸²

The *Script's* perceptive ability of what was wise emerged throughout the three decades covered in this project. By the 1950s, the attitude on Hampton's campus evolved into a "deeply political" environment and included "radically divergent notions," which strayed from the school's legacy of civility, moderation, and accommodation.⁸³ Scholar Hoda M. Zaki said "conservative" forces on Hampton's campus pushed to silence a growing progressive voice for racial change, yet the *Script* surged forward despite these obstacles.⁸⁴ The editors and writers' ability to stand up for their race during a time when

⁸¹ *The Hampton Script*, October 5, 1957, 2.

⁸² Ibid, CHECK

⁸³ Hoda M. Zaki, *Civil Rights and Politics at Hampton Institute: The Legacy of Alonzo G. Moron* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007): 2.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

most blacks were ostracized, threatened with violence, and routinely ignored further offers insight into how the *Script* used journalism to empower, and educate the community they served.

Race as a Tipping Point in the Script

The *Script's* writings about race gained noticeable momentum from 1930 to 1959. Initially, the editorial decisions surrounding race were less opinionated and focused on historical facts such as “Negro Health Week” or “Negro History Week Celebrations.”⁸⁵ However by 1932, national issues pushed the *Script* into taking a more personal stance against racial injustice. In an editorial headlined, “Will the Supreme Court Uphold Alabama Justice,” the *Script* took on the Scottsboro case with an assertive pen. The staff wrote, “To the American Negro who knows the attitude of southern justice no other decision was expected. We have learned to realize that southern justice is made to fit the occasion and the race to which it is to be applied. . . .”⁸⁶ The editors and writers used facts from the case to articulate their position. Their understanding of how to apply research to support their perspective was evident. More importantly, the editorial demonstrated the *Script's* willingness to cover timely topics that were often controversial and divisive.

Under the canopy of race, the topic of lynching was common fodder for the Black College Press, and the *Script* was no exception. An editorial about an annual meeting of the Central Council of the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching implored readers to adopt the group’s motto: “A Lynchless South in 1933” to

⁸⁵ *The Hampton Script*, April 5, 1930, 1; *The Hampton Script*, January 31, 1931, 1.

⁸⁶ *The Hampton Script*, April 9 1932, 2.

demand change.⁸⁷ The *Script* reported that this “well-meaning” group of white women from all corners of the South “glowed with pride over the fact that only six lynchings had occurred in the United States in 1932,” which was the lowest number in more than fifty years.⁸⁸ However, the *Script* used this moment to emphasize that eradicating lynchings was only a symptom to a more profound problem that haunted African Americans. Through this column, the student editors and writers challenged the work of stalwarts in the Black Press such as Ida B. Wells to express an opposing opinion, which voiced the need to stop more than this one violent behavior against blacks. The liberation that blacks needed, according to the *Script*, did not begin or end with lynchings. It was “the limb of a mighty tree of prejudice which through insidious ways engenders in the minds of men a disregard for a black man’s life.”⁸⁹ Their word choice was forceful and determined to get the reader’s attention as well as gain the respect of their peers on campus.

The *Script* offered commentary about racial progress that was progressive in its approach. In an editorial, which ran without a headline in the February 11, 1933 issue, the staff told their readers that much of the “Negro” story has been unwritten “because Negro publishing companies are yet to gain prominence. We cannot yet expect to see our names in an American History this is not our own work.”⁹⁰ Still, the *Script* did not stop there with its assessment of how to amplify the conversation, understanding, and behaviors around race. Like most black colleges, “Negro History Week” was a topic that allowed

⁸⁷ *The Hampton Script*, December 3, 1932, 2.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *The Hampton Script*, February 11, 1933, 2.

the editors and writers to investigate if black progress was a reality or an empty assurance.⁹¹

In addition, the editorial board questioned Hampton's commitment to racial progress. They wrote the "sad true plight of the Hampton student body" was that no "Negro History" courses were offered in the curricula; however, it was not an excuse to remain racially ignorant or indifferent.⁹² The *Script* inserted their voice to advocate for more resources to tell the "True Story" of blacks.⁹³ Their quest for truthfulness led them to wage intellectual battles on the pages of their newspaper. Also, it was their intention to hold Hamptonians accountable when it came to addressing racial injustices. In their minds, black leaders educated at Hampton such Booker T. Washington should be used as inspiration or a red herring as they pressed toward racial equality.

There was an impatient quality to the *Script's* writings on race. In a March 11, 1933 editorial, the staff wrote "America is not a melting pot of races, nationalities, creeds, or of anything else. If it were there would be no race problems to vex us, . . . no Black Belts . . ." as a way of displaying their frustration, but stirring introspection among its readers.⁹⁴ Aside from introspection, the *Script* wanted to provoke disdain in an effort to get their readers to respond to the escalating needs of the black community. In an October 20, 1933 editorial, the staff referred to prejudice as a "deplorable evil" that had been "gnawing at the vitals of civilization, generation after generation from the very dawn of history down to this present day."⁹⁵ It was this fiery rhetoric that established the

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ *The Hampton Script*, March 11, 1933, 2.

⁹⁵ *The Hampton Script*, October 20, 1933, 2.

Script as a collection of black students dedicated to using this important resource to leave a lasting imprint on racial discussions.

The *Script* also used contests to stir discussions about race. Throughout the study, the “Know the Negro” contests were a reoccurring activity designed to stimulate interest in black history. The contest stemmed from a partnership between the *Script* and the Society for the Study of Negro History (SSNH), a campus club dedicated to educating students about their ancestry.⁹⁶ Some of the questions included “Name eight (8) of Henry O. Tanner’s paintings. Who was the highest-ranking Negro graduate of West Point before the World War and served in the World War? When was Tuskegee founded? Who were the first teachers?”⁹⁷ Students were encouraged to participate for a chance to win monetary prizes such as seven dollars and fifty cents for first place, two dollars and fifty cents for second place, and copy of Benjamin Brawley’s book “Negro Builders and Heroes” for the third place winner.⁹⁸ This contest was not only a test in knowledge, but also the reader’s willingness to research and find the information about their history. Using a contest approach was consistent with the *Script*’s insistence that readers not take a passive role in news consumption, but actively wrestle with the prevailing issues of their day. They wanted their audience to become part of an enlightened community prepared to change their destiny from disenfranchisement to empowerment. Similar to activist Ella Baker’s time at Shaw University in North Carolina, she believed black youth

⁹⁶ *The Hampton Script*, November 6, 1937, 2.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

should be awakened and accept the “noble challenge” of “salvaging justice.”⁹⁹ So did the *Script*.

Frequent campus visits from black leaders such as Mary McCloud Bethune were covered on the front-page as a demonstration of the staff keeping racial equality in the forefront of the *Script*.¹⁰⁰ From time to time editorials that reminded readers of their station in life were written to not oppress, but to uplift. For example, in the May 14, 1938 issue of the *Script*, the editors and writers penned a column for the graduating seniors headlined “Design for Living.” The editorial was full of advice and cautioned graduates that “Because you are a Negro you have to be better than the white man to get equal recognition. That is the iron law of the industry.”¹⁰¹ It was this straightforward, often considered radical approach to sorting through the complex issues of race that made the *Script* an example of one type of journalism happening on a black college campus.

By 1940, the *Script* made connections between racial headway that did not resemble blacks being hired for jobs or getting access to better housing opportunities in Virginia. In a front-page story on March 9, 1940, *Script* editors and writers marked a historic first when the state accepted “Carry Me Back to Ole Virginny” written by James A. Bland, a “Negro, as its official State Song.” Editorial decisions such as this one concerning race positioned the *Script* as a resource for relevant information about blacks ascent from poverty to prominent positions in white America. The *Script* was driven to amplify these achievements because that was their duty to serve as informants – advocates. Their “all or nothing” approach to covering race and demanding equal

⁹⁹ Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2003): 45.

¹⁰⁰ *The Hampton Script*, February 12, 1938, 1.

¹⁰¹ *The Hampton Script*, May 14, 1938, 2.

citizenship in a deeply segregated America vividly played out on the editorial pages. It was their courage to write columns such as “Tolerance is not enough” that showcased their grit when it came to covering race, and articulating the need for racial integration.¹⁰²

The *Script* frowned upon racial hypocrisy especially within black organizations. In its, March 15, 1947 edition, it was not surprising that the student editors and writers questioned why Hampton, a school founded to uplift and educate blacks, had never had a black president. Had this achievement not occurred because of the school’s feeble attempt to find a qualified black candidate? Or was it a fear of disappointment because a black person was incapable of such an important task? Either way, the *Script* did man-on-the-street interviews to poll the student body. This column was the beginning a series of articles written by the *Script* that juxtaposed race and leadership. It was astute of the editorial board to publicly wonder if Hampton was perpetuating racial stereotypes by not hiring a black president to lead black students to success. Without hesitation, the *Script* pushed the board of trustees to reflect on the mixed messages they were sending to students, faculty, staff, but also to the nation because of their failure to demonstrate racial progress in the school’s top post. The *Script* supported integration on all levels so the mere fact that Hampton’s trustees did not hire its first black president, Alonzo G. Moron, until 1949 was disturbing, and a significant relief for an editorial staff that used its voice to promote black leadership as well as accountability at the highest levels.¹⁰³

When civil rights activist Reverend Martin L. King, Jr. visited Hampton in the fall of 1956, the *Script* applauded his “magnificent lecture at Ogden Hall” about ending segregation; however, their editorial focused on his use of the phrase the “New Negro” to

¹⁰² *The Hampton Script*, October 4, 1941, 4.

¹⁰³ *The Hampton Script*, October 22, 1954, 2.

further explore racial progress, solidarity, and equality. The *Script* made certain that King's message of racial activism and responsibility was not lost in his oratorical skills. The staff knew the phrase was being associated with blacks who looked exactly like them – young, “well-educated, economically secure, acceptably smart in dress and speech, and completely unafraid of white rule.”¹⁰⁴ Yet, the *Script* reminded its readers that “New Negroes” should “realize that action must precede the acquisition of equality.”¹⁰⁵ The editorial staff summarized their point by taking a discussion on race to interject a better understanding of an “unyielding desire and deep seeded determination to improve the status of the American Negro – an unyielding desire and deep seated determination that will not be denied.”¹⁰⁶ So in editorial moments such as this one, the *Script* displayed a unique ability to find a novel, but important angle to draw the reader's consideration to a detail of the story that may be disregarded. It was their finesse with not only words, but with how to write about a topic that assigned value to defining moments during a twenty-nine year span. The *Script* used the words from King's 1955 address to the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) Mass Meeting: “On so many occasions, Negroes have been intimidated and humiliated and impressed – oppressed – because of the sheer fact that they were Negroes,” to radically motivate their actions.¹⁰⁷

Also in matters of race, groups such as the NAACP were often mentioned and thanked for their efforts to free blacks from discrimination. This practice on the pages of the *Script* was another intentional habit to engage their readers with not only the

¹⁰⁴ *The Hampton Script*, October 19, 1956, 2.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *A Call to Conscience: The Landmark Speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. Clayborne Carson and Kris Shepard (New York: Warner Books, 2001): 7.

organizations, but with matters surrounding race. Publicly showing gratitude was an example of what other Hampton students should do especially with groups that dedicated their efforts to racial equality. In an editorial in the December 5, 1953 edition of the *Script*, the black student editors and writers said, “One would be hard put to find in the annals of folk-lore a champion to match the NAACP.” It was the *Script’s* belief that leadership within the race was crucial to winning the fight against segregation. So they used language that articulated meaning as well as conjured strong imagines to change behavior. For example, the editorial ended with this call to action, “let’s put our shoulders to the wheel and help push,” which was a clear indicator of the staff’s expertise to turn a phrase laced with substance. Scholar Bynum Thomas wrote beginning in the 1930s that black youth desired to get involved with the movement for equality.¹⁰⁸ The NAACP Youth Movement was a collective of young people who “longed for a more egalitarian society at home and abroad.”¹⁰⁹ The NAACP had chapters on college campuses and youth councils in approximately thirty states as an extension of their mission to bring about racial uplift. As youth, the *Script* editors and writers were influenced by this call to work for “progressive social change.”¹¹⁰

While race was certainly not the only theme that captured the *Script’s* attention, it became a focal point mainly because of racial issues facing African Americans, but also because the newspaper’s mission was to prepare students to serve their race. Their approach was refreshing, but definitely reflected the honesty of those in the Black Press who came before or served during their days at Hampton.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Bynum, *NAACP Youth and the Fight for Black Freedom, 1936-1965* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013), 1.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Court Rulings and Lynchings

When it came to slashing the price of food to stimulate the national economy, the *Script* said the government should stop overproducing goods out of greed rather than necessity.¹¹¹ When the United States Senate failed to pass an anti-lynch bill because of “filler-bustering their heads off,” the *Script* insisted that the Congressmen not leave their chambers until they had done right by the American Negro, who was systematically abandoned, humiliated, and oppressed by their government.¹¹² This was the tenor of the political writing in the *Script* – forceful and decisive.

The assumption that the black college press was disinterested in the political process was inaccurate. The *Script* worked to keep Hampton students informed and engaged with their government. For instance, the United States Supreme Court’s decision about the “Scottsboro Boys” in Alabama provided a window for the *Script* to explain how a true democracy should translate to racial equality for all.¹¹³ The editors and writers described how politicians were extensions of racial injustice on numerous occasions in the *Script*. During the 1930s, it was this intense awareness that allowed the editors and writers to declare that the judges, who ruled in favor of the two white women, and against seven black boys, perpetuated racial hatred. The court’s decision to convict the “Scottsboro Boys” was based on fear, not evidence: “It is difficult to understand how a man who calls himself representing real justice can allow his prejudice to overcome him .

¹¹¹ *The Hampton Script*, January 27, 1940, 2.

¹¹² *Ibid.*: *The Hampton Script*, December 6, 1933, 2.

¹¹³ *The Hampton Script*, April 22, 1933, 1 and 3.

...¹¹⁴ Statements such as this one reminded readers that blacks faced discrimination in every aspect of American life including its political system.

Often political editorials ended with pleas for morality and justice for African Americans. The *Script* editors and writers were emotionally involved in their work, and rarely hesitated to show their personal investment: “The case will undoubtedly go back to the Supreme Court. Let us hope that these men who stand for things that are just will forget about color, creed, nationality, and all other prejudices and will free these boys whose lives have so long been in danger.”¹¹⁵ This type of editorial writing spoke to the *Script*’s leadership style, which was to make sure they could freely speak their minds because they were “unencumbered in terms of either traditions or debts.”¹¹⁶

Like many African Americans, the *Script* believed in the restorative luster of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal. Historians such as Joe William Trotter Jr. argued that most blacks failed to benefit from the federal programs and “got what they called a ‘raw deal’ rather than a ‘new deal’.”¹¹⁷ Also often on its editorial pages during the 1930s, the staff wrote about how the president’s plan would boost employment for blacks and reduce the excess throughout the country. Extending beyond following the story line of the national media, the coverage at the *Script* drew its readers to national political themes that supported their vision of racial equality. For example, when “First Lady” Eleanor Roosevelt visited Hampton’s campus to celebrate the school’s seventieth anniversary in the spring of 1938, the *Script* published excerpts from her speech on its

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ *The Hampton Script*, December 6, 1933, 2.

¹¹⁶ Paula F. Pfeffer, A. *Philip Randolph, Pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 44.

¹¹⁷ Harris, “Marvel Cooke: Investigative Journalist, Communist and Black Radical Subject,” 108.

front-page that highlighted their ideology on key political issues such as fair housing and racial injustice.

In the April 30, 1938 issue, the editorial staff published sentences that reinforced, informed, and engaged readers with the political process: “Our nation is a democratic one and a democracy requires from every individual far more intelligent citizenship than does any other form of government. . . . You will find that everything that you do is tied up with local, state, or national government.”¹¹⁸ Their political leanings and tone were certainly based on advocating for racial equality.

Since the college years were a time for students to become registered voters, the *Script*'s efforts to engage readers was a public service to their race. They used phrases such as “deserves our support” to emphasize that an informed black vote used correctly and regularly carried influence that could change the fate of their people.¹¹⁹ Indeed, the *Script* noted the migration of blacks from the Republican Party to the Democratic ticket. Their writings were crafted to prod readers to “become fully acquainted with the political situation” in America.¹²⁰ On the contrary, while the *Script* espoused political involvement, they routinely held the government to a higher standard than the other schools in the study. They warned readers that “blind loyalty” could lead to irreversible harm to their race, and the country's future. Politically, the *Script* believed that “Negroes, even when bound in shackles of slavery” knew “no other call except that of America”¹²¹ To a fault, blacks remained loyal and wanton to be included in America's democracy, and the *Script* used every opportunity to warn its readers that eagerness to be included

¹¹⁸ *The Hampton Script*, April 30, 1938, 1.

¹¹⁹ *The Hampton Script*, October 24, 1936, 2.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *The Hampton Script*, December 17, 1941, 2.

without a plan to gain political equality would only leave blacks at the mercy of whites. In a December 17, 1941 editorial, the *Script* staff wrote, “Those who are familiar with the Negro know well that it is not necessary to ask the Negro for his loyalty. Black men of this country know no other fatherland.”¹²²

In the 1940s, when the country entered World War II, the *Script*'s editorial board analyzed the federal government's motivation, and African Americans' response to being excluded from the privilege to defend their country. Nine days after President Harry S. Truman announced that the country was at war against Japan, the “Negro” wanted to join the armed forces to protect America that held “the Negro a prisoner for more than three hundred years. Yet, when arms have actually been taken up against America,” did not “hesitate a moment to strike for its safety.”¹²³ Blacks were enamored with World War II because they viewed “their fate as inextricably connected with the fate of darker peoples throughout the world.”¹²⁴ The Black Press was equally as attentive to the “international aspects of the struggle for freedom.”¹²⁵ So the *Script*'s dalliance into politics was part of their emulation of the Black Press.

The *Script*'s ability to weave historical accounts of their race along with the current political situation elevated their publication. The newspaper remained aware of white politicians who poured themselves into demoralizing blacks. Men like “Talmadge of Georgia, Bilbo of Mississippi and others of their caliber who are nothing but saboteurs

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), 587.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

of American Democracy” frequently caught the venom of the editorial board.¹²⁶ And even though white ignorance led to racial hatred, the *Script* knew complacency by blacks was not the answer to progress.

After thirteen weeks at war, in a February 27, 1942 editorial, the staff chastised their readers for being oblivious about a “bitter struggle of freedom” that whirled around them. For the *Script*, World War II was similar to blacks battle for equality. The notion that Hampton students lacked a sense of urgency was equivalent to lacking the fortitude to fight the racial battles at home. This ardent reaction by the *Script* may have been nurtured by the work of the Black Press and the Double V Campaign. However, either way, the zeal in which the *Script* rallied to bring awareness to international politics was admirable. Their approach was reminiscent of Mildred Brown’s *Omaha Star* newspaper. Brown, like many other owners, publishers, and editors of black newspapers embraced the Double V Campaign as another way to demand social change and foster black cohesiveness.¹²⁷

In an effort to make the war relevant to Hampton students, the *Script* wrote editorials that explained the wars impact on higher education. For instance, the school reduced the time to earn a degree from four years to three years. This was an answer to the nation’s call for Americans to move into the workforce. The *Script* disagreed with the school’s approach and quoted a University of North Carolina professor to illustrate their point: “In times of emergency it is not the function of sound education to change it aims but rather to serve as a stabilizing influence and to emphasize more strongly permanent

¹²⁶ CHECK.

¹²⁷ Amy Helene Forss, *Black Print with a White Carnation: Mildred Brown and the Omaha Star Newspaper 1938-1989* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 83.

values in human life.”¹²⁸ The *Script* prepared the campus for an influx of World War II veterans, who used their G.I. Bill to earn a college degree.¹²⁹ The staff wrote in a January 26, 1946 editorial that Hampton had the largest number of veterans of any other Virginia college, and with this distinction came a responsibility to give them respect and encouragement. It was this continuous stream of editorials that not only made the *Script* a political resource, but a well versed voice of logical discourse. Much like Patrick Washburn’s analysis of the influence of the Black Press during World War II, the *Script* found the same ways to remain relevant.¹³⁰

Although the black college student-run newspaper enjoyed being candid because it allowed them to exercise freedom of speech as well as exhibit youthful energy. When President Roosevelt died in the spring of 1945, the *Script*’s first sentence read: “Franklin D. Roosevelt is dead, and with this passing the little people lost a great champion.”¹³¹ In one line, the staff captured both their affection for Roosevelt and their fears for life without his leadership – even if flawed. Still, by the end of the brief editorial, they had thrown their support behind the “new Commander-in-chief.”¹³² This was indeed a display of the *Script*’s intentions to initially engage with their reader one place, and travel with them to a less familiar place.

The *Script* despised the poll tax and viewed it as a political strategy to “sabotage the peace” in America.¹³³ The students believed “a free vote” was “the concern of all” not

¹²⁸ *The Hampton Script*, April 17, 1942, 2.

¹²⁹ *The Hampton Script*, January 26, 1946, 2.

¹³⁰ Patrick S. Washburn, “J. Edgar Hoover and The Black Press in World War II,” *Journalism History* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 27.

¹³¹ *The Hampton Script*, April 28, 1945, 2.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *The Hampton Script*, January 12, 1946, 2.

just blacks if the country would achieve racial equality.¹³⁴ The staff's approach to this complex issue in their January 12, 1946 editorial was to not simply make their analysis about blacks, but to discuss how partisan politics was "ripping the heart out of the President's" intentions to unify the nation. It was these sweeping statements that made the *Script* authoritative in tone. It was their understanding that if they shied away from making lofty proclamations their voice would become irrelevant to the conversation surrounding politics on campus. This presence-of-mind was what inspired them to write this sentence: "Until every American Citizen has a free vote, no American citizen is wholly free and we cannot have a wholly democratic nation."¹³⁵ The grandeur of this thought process was illustrative of their significance on Hampton's campus and to other black colleges such as Tuskegee Institute's student published *Digest*, which frequently referenced the *Script* as a mentor – a leader. In addition, other editorials they implored the Federal government to step in and disband a group of Southern Congressmen who stood in the way of repealing the voting tax law. It was through their insistence to rally around an issue that they remained watchful in hopes of bringing about systematic change. The editors and writers knew the "mere dissolution of poll tax laws, it would seem, must be backed by Federal strength"¹³⁶

Regularly, in places such as the "National News Spotlight," "Your World," "The World Today," or the "Capital to Campus" were regular columns starting in the 1940s where *Script* readers could find political news. In these columns, readers learned about military preparedness, the work of the United Nations, occupational opportunities to

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ *The Hampton Script*, March 13, 1948, 2.

advance the government and country, and foreign policy. The *Script's* interest in politics was certainly not surprising because of the issues the country faced during this study. However, their enthusiasm to go beyond the expected to present their readers with a reason to challenge their government was noteworthy. After all, on a black college campus, intellectual discussions should be abundant. But on this black campus in Virginia, their reality was tempered by a conservative and docile heritage that celebrated obedience, hard work, and accommodatism. So the fact that they were able to contextualize politics in this fashion for their readers was profound in the black college student-run press.

Without Our Community We are Nothing

The *Script* believed their community – the black community – needed to be nurtured and reflective to overcome the suffering left behind by slavery and Jim Crow. The editors and writers' connection to what made the black community both unique and frustrating was an inevitability on the pages of the *Script* during this study. The editorials focused on developing a robust, independent, informed, and confident African American community were numerous and characteristically divergent from other themes analyzed by the researcher. Many of the columns designed to elevate a sense of community on Hampton's campus and beyond mirrored familiar advice that had been handed down from one generation to another such as an industrious work ethic to "honor thy mother and father."¹³⁷ Still, what made it more than a cliché was the *Script's* attention to subtle details that only their college audience would appreciate. These details usually were

¹³⁷ *The Hampton Script*, May 19, 1934, 2.

packaged in emotionally charged rhetorical phrases that evoked a sense of responsibility. For instance, the staff wrote an editorial in the February 9, 1935 issue about the state's Separation Law, which forbid blacks and whites from sharing public spaces including watching a movie in the same theater. While this was a symptom of the times, the *Script* explored ways the "Negro" could change this law.

Instead of focusing on one singular act of watching a movie for personal entertainment, the *Script* advocated that the more urgent need was to dismantle laws that crippled the progress of their community. They wrote, "The Negro too often does not think in terms of racial benefit his sole idea is to satisfy his own selfish whims."¹³⁸ So the usage of words such as "selfish" and "whim" immediately triggered a familiarity making the editorial more impactful. For instance, consider Pan-Africanist and Jamaican moralist Marcus Garvey, who knew how to use "the church as an organizational base in the service of political empowerment and instilling race pride."¹³⁹ Part of Garvey's success with this method was tapping into familiar rhetoric to galvanize support, conjure goodwill, and build community. The *Script* used this proven technique to woe readers.

The newspaper rallied readers to possess convictions that moved them past apathy into action. During the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, the black community needed leaders that were divisive and committed to racial upliftment. However, before this could occur, the *Script* knew African Americans beginning in their college years needed a strong awareness of their role in this movement. For example, in an editorial in the October 15, 1938 edition, the staff wrote, "No one respects a weak-kneed coward. . . . Let us open our

¹³⁸ *The Hampton Script*, February 9, 1935, 2.

¹³⁹ Robert Michael Franklin, *Liberating Visions: Human Fulfillment and Social Justice in African-American Thought* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990), 68.

minds; and let us think for ourselves and stand firmly for right. But above all, let us cultivate convictions and then let us stick by them.”¹⁴⁰ It was in the editorial headlined “Let Us Have Convictions” that the *Script* again resonated a voice of self-accountability that contributed to a healthy black community.¹⁴¹ Or even in an editorial headlined “Shall We House Clean?” it became more evident that the student editors and writers searched for ways to agitate for progress.¹⁴²

The *Script* turned campus murmurings about the poor relationship between faculty and students into an opportunity to call for “some extensive housecleaning.”¹⁴³ The staff published seven ways that their readers could purge themselves of indifference, and move closer to respecting others in their community as well as “learn to be men and women – nothing less, morally (not perfect) straight, be more objective and less subjective, more intellectually and logically inclined and less emotional and sentimental in arriving at conclusions” all were steps on the list that needed to be taken before significant progress in community building could be realized.¹⁴⁴ This was their vision that came to life ever issue on the pages of the *Script*.

During this study, many headlines in the *Script* acted as a clarion call for introspection. Their goal to use the power of personal awareness to contribute to a stronger community was apparent. In an editorial published in the May 25, 1940 issue, the headline read “Is There One Among You.” This was both a tribute and challenge to the graduating class. The editors and writers said they hoped the seniors realized their

¹⁴⁰ *The Hampton Script*, October 15, 1938, 2.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *The Hampton Script*, November 5, 1938, 2.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

“goal in life is not attained with the grasping of” a diploma, but that the black community needed them to “continue to strive forward.”¹⁴⁵ The presence of this revelation in the *Script* made it a place to find communal inspiration and a clear sense of being a part of the solution to black apathy. A line can be traced from this notion to Du Bois’ concept of a “just society,” which coalesced around two constructs: “faith in the democratic republic and a commitment to welfare state, socialist economic principles.”¹⁴⁶ Within Du Bois’ vision included authentic community – a concept the *Script* worked to create during the first half of the twentieth century.

Since Hampton was a community that valued scholarship first, it was not uncommon for the *Script* to take issue with the lack of seriousness in the classroom. Indeed, it was the newspaper’s belief that a learning environment filled with students who were indifferent about their work was a threat to the strength of their community. Not only did scholar and civil rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois’ belief that the blacks needed leadership from the “*Talented Tenth*” enrolled in black colleges, but the *Script* also subscribed to this notion as well. They voiced frustration when evidence surfaced that academic achievement was lagging behind party going. The editors and writers asked readers to re-examine their college aspirations in an editorial in the March 4, 1944 issue of the *Script*. To illustrate their point, the staff wrote, “With approximately 90 students on the honor roll out of 886 enrolled something is DEFINITELY wrong!”¹⁴⁷ It was this level of honesty that propelled the *Script* as a campus leader. It was this approach that allowed their readers to develop trust that the *Script* actually served as a voice for the community.

¹⁴⁵ *The Hampton Script*, May 25, 1940, 2.

¹⁴⁶ Franklin, *Liberating Visions: Human Fulfillment and Social Justice in African-American Thought*, 69.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Frequently, the editorials mimicked the tone of a letter to a friend in need of hearing the truth from a reliable source. In a February 11, 1950 editorial, the headline read like a warning and a salutation: “With My Soap Box in My Hand: This is the beginning of a blinding love between you and me, or a repudiation of my philosophy by you. I Believe in Love.” *Script* Managing Editor Walter S. S. Smith wrote that he saw himself as “a spectator.”¹⁴⁸ Instead of engaging in his community, he was “willing to watch and criticize but do nothing to remedy the situation.” Smith said he believed whatever was happening on Hampton’s campus or in the black community was beyond his “power as one unimportant human being.” The *Script*’s tactics to employ frank personal reflections to inspire readers to be more than mere spectators, but active participants in the outcome of their race’s fight for equality was prominent. By the late 1950s, the *Script* was using the same tactics to force its readers to consider the vitality of the community before their personal needs. For the student editors and writers, it was mainly about their readers taking responsibility for themselves, and in return taking responsibility for their community like so many before them had done.

Awareness of Self and Objection to Foolery

While the *Script* was a hands-on learning laboratory, it was also an intellectual respite from the traditional trappings of college life such as parties and idle gossip. It was the student editors and writers’ resolve to embrace their role as community scribes and leaders that defined the work of the *Script*. Without their commitment to serve their campus, students may have missed the important lessons of the world on race, politics,

¹⁴⁸ *The Hampton Script*, February 11, 1950, 2.

and community building. Through their work, the black student college press was a force in telling the stories of their people that led to their ultimate liberation.

Stuart Hall's analysis of dominant, negotiated, and oppositional readings was a factor in the work of the *Script*.¹⁴⁹ Instead of looking at the world from the perspective that is "preferred" by dominant culture (white people or in the case of the newspaper the administration, faculty, staff, alums, and the Black Vanguard), the *Script* often took a negotiated and oppositional approach to discern what was important and necessary to achieve racial equality - for their research and experiences.¹⁵⁰ From Hall's negotiated lens, the *Script*'s writers kept elements from the prescribed or accepted views and added their unique insight.¹⁵¹ For example, when the *Script* wrote about supporting their school they agreed with their administrators or the dominant position on campus on one hand, but they differed dramatically on the approach calling for the administration to do more financially to help students remain at Hampton in response.¹⁵² At other moments, the *Script* took an oppositional view to the government's approach to solving poverty or the students' approach to leadership. The editors and writers opposed complacency and rejected the white notion that blacks were inferior and unworthy of their basic human civil rights.

Through the research of scholar Carol Boyce Davies, the *Script* exhibited characteristics of a "radical black subject," a person or collective that rebuffs the

¹⁴⁹ Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding" in *Media Studies, A Reader*, ed. Sue Thornham, Caroline Bassett, and Paul Marris (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 34.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵²

normalization of oppressive circumstances.¹⁵³ They refuse the status quo and will not be “passive people” or “maintain exploitative systems” such as discrimination.¹⁵⁴ Davies said the “radical black subject” labor “in a movement geared toward dismantling that oppression status.”¹⁵⁵ So while the *Script* did not faithfully denounce imperialism or capitalism, they wholeheartedly believed in a fair and democratic society that recognized and respected blacks as full citizens. The newspaper was referred to as radical when they deliberately decided not to blindly agree with the dominant voice. The *Script* was labeled radical when the editors and writers remained committed to their voice against the stream of conformity that was ever-present on Hampton’s campus. An analysis of the *Script* over a thirty year period, showed not only the power of the black college student-run press but the mite of the “younger generation of political activists and intellectuals were not ‘willing to place their future in the hands of white’” people.¹⁵⁶ Instead, this generation clung to “liberation ideologies and strategies that emphasize self-respect and determination, black militancy, economic nationalism, and race solidarity.”¹⁵⁷ The *Script* embodied all of these touch points.

With tangible evidence that coverage of race, politics, and community building were tantamount to preparing Hampton students to become leaders in a mounting civil rights campaign, this exploration of the *Script* adds to the existing pool of research about the fertility of the black college press. The *Script*’s editorial posture exuded not only confidence, but also an assertiveness that they would not be fooled by pointless oratories

¹⁵³ Harris, “Marvel Cooke: Investigative Journalist, Communist and Black Radical Subject,” 95.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

or frivolous distractions. What mattered most to the staff was that they used their platform as place to foster social change. And although the *Script* did not have the full moxy of Abbott's *Defender*, it did have a trail of impactful work. Abbott once said, "with the exception of the Bible, no publication was more influential among the Negro." The *Script* insisted that their work be a defining chapter in any Hampton student's experience.

CHAPTER V- SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY &
AGRICULTURAL & MECHANICAL COLLEGE: THE CAMPUS DIGEST

Tilling the Soil for Change: *The Digest* Adopts a Balanced Approach

When the Rest of the World goes Topsy-Turvy

In the early twentieth century, African Americans “fled as if under a spell or a high fever” from ramshackle southern farms to northern Metropolises filled with whispers of hope for a better life.¹ Countless blacks believed racial freedom would only come by migrating North to urban centers such as Philadelphia and Chicago.² Yet, in spite of this seemingly collective sojourn to prosperity and respect, thousands of blacks remained behind in search of a college education as a path to liberation. Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in Scotlandville (a Baton Rouge neighborhood), Louisiana, became a destination for blacks battered by racial intolerance, and inspired by a chance to climb out of desperation into the American dream of equality.³ So during steady streams of the Great Migration, the student-run *Southern University Digest* chronicled an alternative portrayal of the deep South as a useful training ground for competent black leaders, scholars, activists, and patriots.

While sociologist E. Franklin Frazier wrote that thousands of blacks had abandoned their cultural sensibilities and communal networks in “small towns and rural districts of the South” for the promise of “greener pastures” in the North, a resurgent

¹ Emmett J. Scott, *Negro Migration During the War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1920), 44; Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration* (New York: Random House, 2010), 8.

² Ibid.

³ Like most black institutions in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, the first courses offered were on the pre-college level. By 1914, Southern outgrew its limited course offerings as well as its New Orleans campus and moved to Scott’s Bluff overlooking the Mississippi River in Scotlandville.

group of blacks found their way into classrooms at Southern University and inserted their voice into the pages of the *Digest*.⁴ The student editors and writers' displeasure with blanket racial discrimination, systemic political neglect – which impeded African Americans from securing enough influence to change their plight, and the dangers of a divided black community were expressed through first-person editorials and multiple sourced articles. Consider an editorial in the May 1, 1950 issue headlined “Where Were You?” when the *Digest* staff demanded that readers evaluate their personal conduct and attitudes toward community uplift: “We yell at the top of our voices about voting power and political bargaining being denied us in national and local affairs; yet we do not manifest enough interest to participate in affairs that affect our immediate surroundings. Don't you think that this is a little contrary to ideals with we strive for?”⁵ The student editors and writers' maturity and persistence amplified the absence of basic civil rights for the black community, which was a reoccurring topic throughout this nearly thirty-year study. The *Digest's* work was reminiscent of researcher Roland E. Wolseley's notion that the Black Press, hence the black college student-run press, exerted their power as a civic leader by pouring into their publications personal pleas to push readers pass apathy into activism.⁶

The *Digest* showed an appreciation for a cannon established by the Black Press to advocate for racial empowerment. For example in the March 22, 1943 issue of the student-run newspaper, the staff wrote an editorial headlined “The Negro Press.” The student editors and writers praised the Black Press for being the “fountain-head of the

⁴ Joe William Trotter Jr., *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender* (Indiana University Press, 1991), 12.

⁵ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, May 1, 1950.

⁶ Roland E. Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 2nd ed. (Iowa State University Press, 1990).

American Negro's struggle for recognition"⁷ However, the *Digest* tempered their praise with criticism as a way to demonstrate their ability to be objective: "Admittedly, the press is sensational in its tone, and oftentimes inaccurate in its reports, this perhaps being largely due to the training or lack of training of its members." The *Digest* longed to be seen as a dependable, accurate, and balanced news source so they resisted some of the less flattering tendencies, which tainted the work of their mentors in the Black Press. But in the final analysis, the *Digest* wrote that although the Black Press was not without shortcomings, its existence was a necessary and an effective instrument to galvanize African Americans in their fight for racial respect and recognition.

Notably, the *Digest* attracted attention from the Black Press because of its school's unique position in black college circles. These interactions garnered headlines and served as motivation for the black college student-run press on Southern's campus to discover their voice with the expressed purpose of accelerating the momentum toward racial freedom. On the April 12, 1946 front-page, the *Digest* featured *Pittsburgh Courier* columnist Ted Le Berthon's discussion about the African American struggle for social justice, and prodded Christians to re-evaluate their beliefs: "Any person who believes in or practices discrimination and segregation is violating the principles of Christianity."

A month later, the *Digest* staff had dinner with celebrated "Negro journalist" Roy Wilkins – "a young and dynamic editor of the *Crisis* magazine."⁸ Wilkins spoke to the students about his journalism career and the value of the Black Press in the movement concerning racial equality.⁹ Conversely, when the *Digest* could not interact face-to-face,

⁷ "Editorials," *The Southern University Digest*, March 22, 1943.

⁸ "Wilkins Highlights Digest Banquet," *The Southern University Digest*, May 15, 1946.

⁹ Ibid.

they ran syndicated articles tethered to the success of black journalists – which further indicated the black college student-run press’s connection to as well as admiration and emulation of the black press. For example, in the February 3, 1950 issue, a front-page article about black journalist Marvel Cooke’s appointment as “the first Negro woman to work as a full-fledged writer on a daily newspaper” underscored that the *Digest* was an extension of a larger tapestry of black editors and writers, who vigorously supported the public validation of African American achievement. Also, the significance of Cooke’s position as a reporter on the *New York Daily* was magnified because she was “not confined to Negro news,” and her responsibilities were equal to that of her white male co-workers.¹⁰ Quite eloquently, the *Digest* realized Cooke’s professional achievement was a shared milestone for the Black Press, the black college student-run press, and the African American community at large. So reflective of existing scholarship, the *Digest* understood communal achievement and knowledge could never be legislated away by the caustic existence of Jim Crow.¹¹ Once knowledge spread, it became the inspiration for another generation of African Americans to recast their destiny.¹² The *Digest* exhibited this concept of communal sharing through their story selection, newsgathering, and reporting. Additionally, the editors and writers’ unique ability to communicate what may have been perceived as a singular feat into a communal victory deserving of recognition symbolized the under-researched sophistication of the black college student-run press.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Theresa Perry, Claude Steele, and Asa Hilliard III, *Young, Gifted, and Black: Promoting High Achievement Among African-American Students* (Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2003), 14.

¹² Ibid.

Indeed, the *Digest* joined an intentional movement to promote black success and racial solidarity on the pages of its newspaper from 1930 to 1959.¹³

Southern was Louisiana's first land-grant or taxpayer-funded institution established under the Morrill Act of 1890, which required "separate schools for the two races" This distinction as "the first" gave the *Digest* a convincing reason to motivate their readers to attain a higher level of enlightenment as well as a deeper awareness of self and community.¹⁴ Another first for Southern was its designation as a "regional defense training center for blacks in the South."¹⁵ Considered a financial windfall for Southern, the center (established by the U.S. Department of War in October 1941) became an invaluable communal morale booster for African Americans in Louisiana and along the nation's Southern corridor.¹⁶ Consequently, the school's contributions during wartime reflected its duplicitous role as an American patriot and race champion, committed to improving economic and social opportunities for many blacks languishing in the South.¹⁷ The U.S. Office of Education believed "higher education and citizenship intersected during" a "national crisis."¹⁸ Thousands of Southern students enrolled in courses such as welding, mechanic arts, and radio and tool engineering.¹⁹ Rarely were African Americans viewed as being both patriotic and racially proud during the twentieth century. So the *Digest* became another platform to share yet another layer of Southern's distinction.

¹³ Determined by the researcher.

¹⁴ Dwight Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Evolution of the Negro College*, (New York, NY: AMS Press Inc., 1934), 150-154.

¹⁵ Marcus S. Cox, *Segregated Soldiers: Military Training at Historically Black Colleges in the Jim Crow South* (Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 31.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 31 and 34.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

During the first half of the twentieth century, Southern University's second president Felton G. Clark negotiated a philosophical tightrope to consistently engage the Black Vanguard, the Black Press along with federal and state agencies to promote the school's curriculum and secure funding was unprecedented in this region of the country.²⁰ Clark's national celebrity and charisma as an educator empowered Southernites including the *Digest* editors and writers to risks using their voice to benefit their country, region, school, and community. Likewise, Clark's vision to continually position the school for "Negro defense training programs" demonstrated African Americans' willingness to be loyal patriots – even to a country that habitually treated them as inferior and undeserving citizens. In return, Southern's military arrangement brought economic advantages and political might to the heart of a mostly rural, significantly marginalized, and forgotten black community.²¹

With this as their canvas, the *Digest* toiled to separate themselves from the perception of being an agriculturally focused school, and aptly positioned themselves as critical thinkers, campus agitators, civil rights crusaders, and political watchdogs. Beginning in the 1940s during World War II, president Clark received letters from and wrote letters to Southern servicemen who were prematurely torn away from their academic careers to protect their country.²² These personal exchanges printed on the editorial pages of the *Digest* allowed students to experience an intimate conversation between "family" – a practice commandeered from the Black Press.²³ Wolesley wrote how the Black Press retained a personal tone because many of their readers had no place

²⁰ Ibid, 30 and 32.

²¹ Ibid., 30-31.

²² Wolesley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 2nd ed., 115.

²³ Ibid.

else to turn to be heard and validated but their own publications.²⁴ Indeed, the Black Press along with the black college student-run press gave more beneficial insight than “a church or club” which “may provide a haven, but such institutions are not often prepared to advise on such practical matters” including race and politics.²⁵ But “the paper can crusade for its readers, for he knows many personally” and shared some of the same encounters, and aspirations.²⁶ A spirit of advocacy was linked to the origins of the black college student-run press and became part of the fabric of the *Digest*.

The *Digest* allowed president Clark to have a reoccurring column, starting in 1955, to discuss campus life and the vitality of the university’s military training program, which came under the suspicious gaze of students (including the *Digest*) dating back to the height of World War II.²⁷ The *Digest* created space for all campus voices to increase communication between administration and the student body. Inclusiveness and diversity tied back to Richard Digby-Junger’s theory that the Black Press did not fit into one homogenous category.²⁸ However, a well-established and often unspoken hierarchy existed which granted space to black leaders or writers who had earned the privilege through their community service, stature, or proven intellect to write dissenting viewpoints.²⁹ Undeniably, the *Digest*’s behavior remained consistent with this practice.

Beginning in the 1930s, the *Digest* printed “the voice of the students and mouthpiece of the alumni” at the top of the front page of every edition.³⁰ Equally as

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 41.

²⁸ Richard Digby-Junger, “The Guardian, Crisis, Messenger, and Negro World: The Early-20th-Century Black Radical Press,” *Howard Journal of Communications* 9 (1988): 265.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ This was the newspaper’s motto that appeared in its staff box throughout the thirty-year study.

notable was how the official student-run newspaper of Southern University, a historically black institution founded in 1880, encouraged its readers to take part in campus activities to become fuller and useful citizens.³¹ Extending beyond local news coverage, the editorial staff urged students to develop an awareness about polarizing national issues such as racial ignorance, political gerrymandering, and collective unity that demanded their energized leadership.

By 1932, the *Digest* filled its pages with articles about club and sporting events along with faculty accomplishments and student profiles. However, the newspaper insisted that the co-educational student body live with purpose and elevate not just their position in life, but the black community with the knowledge and skills they gained from their time at Southern.³² Examples of the editors and writers' determination to inform, and provoke a reaction from their readers can be found throughout each issue. For instance, an unnamed staffer wrote in the November 15, 1932, issue, of the *Digest*: "A moral life is not attained by merely conforming to the conventional rules of society because you are expected to obey them. It is gained through the ability to recognize the right in an act and the striving to do that act because it is right, and not because you are told it is right."³³ This quote remained consistent with the philosophical proclivity of advocacy and accountability, both commonplace attributes on the pages of the Black Press – the harbinger of the black college student-run press.

In fact, the Black Press encouraged disenfranchised Southerners to flee north as a respite from racial hatred. Robert S. Abbott's *Chicago Defender* cajoled blacks into

³¹ "Editorials," *The Southern University Digest*, October 1932.

³² "Editorials," *The Southern University Digest*, November 15, 1932.

³³ *Ibid.*

finding their worthiness north of the Mason Dixon line.³⁴ Not only did students turn to “their own press for the details about the vast majority of events occurring in their ranks,” they undoubtedly relied on their campus publication to interpret and provide contextualization on varying wrinkles of their lives.³⁵ The *Digest* staff intended that their newspaper serve as a moral, social, and educational compass for their readers. The *Digest’s* purpose ran parallel to the ideology of Robert Vann Lee and William Alexander Scott that leadership during the race’s darkest hour emerged from the pages of the Black Press.³⁶

Not surprisingly, the history of Southern explained the *Digest’s* commitment to writing about their racial and political struggles and the call to promote a strong sense of community engagement. Southern, initially established in New Orleans and later relocated to Baton Rouge, evolved into an African American reservoir of culture and tradition.³⁷ Founded in response to the efforts of black political leaders such as former governor P. B. S. Pinchback,³⁸ T. T. Allain, Erick J. Gilmore, and Henry Demas, Southern was an alternative for those families who could not afford to attend private black institutions and were not allowed admission into predominately white

³⁴

³⁵ Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 2nd ed., 198-199.

³⁶ John S. Abbott was the founder, owner and publisher of the *Chicago Defender*. Robert Vann Lee was the owner and publisher of the *Pittsburgh Courier*. And William Alexander Scott was the founder, owner and publisher of the *Atlanta Daily World*. All three publications were read by countless African Americans in the first half of the twentieth century.

³⁷ Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed, www.blackpast.org/aah/southern-university-1880-0 (accessed March 19, 2013).

³⁸ Pinckney Benton Stewart Pinchback, the son of a Mississippi white planter and a freed slave, became active in Republican Party politics in Louisiana as a delegate in the Republican state convention of 1867 and to the Constitutional Convention of 1868. Pinchback became Lieutenant Governor under Henry Clay Warmoth when Oscar Dunn died. After Warmoth was impeached, Pinchback became Governor. He held office for only 35 days, but ten acts of the Legislature became law during that time.

universities.³⁹ So inclusion and activism were inherent virtues of Southern's early years, and consequently, the student-run *Digest* mirrored these same altruistic values.

The mission of the *Digest* was "to keep one abreast of events affecting the school the faculty, and the student body."⁴⁰ More importantly, the editors and writers believed the student-run newspaper was representative of a true democracy in part because they attracted and published divergent voices that discussed race, politics, and community building to usher in a season of awareness.⁴¹ The *Digest* believed they were a "selected staff operating as an instrument of information" presented in a manner to challenge their readers' thoughts and behaviors.⁴² Indeed, the *Digest* considered each issue a vital caveat of their readers' daily lives.⁴³ This concept of a communal mouthpiece was characteristic of the Black Press, the black college student-run press, and specifically the *Digest*.

In an effort to expand their journalism acumen, in March 1951 the *Digest* staff traveled to New Orleans and visited one of the city's white daily newspapers – the *Times Picayune*. On December 7, 1944, the *Digest* served as host to a group of journalism students from Louisiana State University (LSU) – the state's white school, which for many years of this study refused to admit blacks out of staunch opposition to integration. Consequently, the *Digest* attended several American College Press (ACP) conferences and became a member of the group to learn and heighten their visibility as an indispensable communication channel. During the 1950s, the newspaper continued to

³⁹ Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed, www.blackpast.org/aah/southern-university-1880-0 (accessed March 19, 2013).

⁴⁰ "Editorials," *The Southern University Digest*, November 1, 1948.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

build on their affiliations, and joined the Intercollegiate Press along with Associated Negro Press (ANP) to expand their network and journalism savvy.⁴⁴

By April 1952 and again in March 1953, the *Digest* sponsored a “Press Conference,” which included writing, news coverage, and networking seminars. So the exchange of ideas demonstrated what journalism historian Patrick Washburn referred to as the Black Press’s commitment to improve their skills to better advocate for their people. The student editors and writers’ vision to emphasize community and rally its readers around the most pressing issues crippling African Americans in their pursuit of freedom was an integral part of the *Digest*. Adding more contextual analysis to the *Digest*, the editors and writers welcomed voices from other black colleges such as the *Lincoln Clarion* at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, and two schools in this study – the *Hampton Script* and *Bennett Banner*.⁴⁵ In the “Exchange Column,” *Digest* readers learned about how Lincoln was the only “Negro school represented” at a two-day Association of American Law Schools, and military peacetime efforts by Bennett students.⁴⁶ The interconnectivity between the black college student-run newspapers was on full display in the *Digest*. Even more profound, making room for the exchange of ideas symbolized communal sharing as well as a pooling of resources to work toward a common goal similar to the impetus of the National Negro Publishers Association (NNPA founded in 1940 and later renamed the National Newspapers Publishers Association). With the urging of the *Chicago Defender*’s John Sengstacke, NNPA formed to present a consistently unified, accurate, and multidimensional voice of the

⁴⁴ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, April 7, 1951.

⁴⁵ “Exchange,” *The Southern University Digest*, January 1946.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

black community.⁴⁷ The black college student-run press adopted the same mantra of corraling their collective power to build momentum for social crusades on their varying campuses. They combined efforts to strengthen a chorus of voices that fostered solidarity and brought about tangible change on campus as well as in the black community.

The *Digest* began publishing in 1924 as a way to channel student expression and empower students to use their voice as a drum for equality. Throughout a forty-eight year window, from 1914 until 1959, the school's enrollment swelled from 47 to approximately 6,000 students.⁴⁸ Southern's modest beginnings and rapid expansion embodied the evolution of the *Digest*. The newspaper's focus, mission, and reach on the 500-acre campus rapidly multiplied because of the students' desire to wrap saliency around notions of self-reliance and community stewardship.⁴⁹

Additionally, examining the student-run press at Southern during this study's window was relevant because of the university's proximity to New Orleans, an ethnically diverse, bustling waterfront city that had one of the largest concentrations of blacks, nearly five million living within five hundred miles of the campus during the early twentieth century.⁵⁰ With certainty, Southern served as a hub to assist thousands of African Americans receive an education to advance their position in society. The *Digest* functioned as a knowledgeable and active voice in this process. Admittedly, even though the Great Migration lured some of the brightest African Americans from the South, in places such as Monroe, Louisiana, when one person elected to head north another person

⁴⁷ <http://nnpa.org/about-us/> accessed Feb. 6, 2016.

⁴⁸ Determined by the researcher's review of numbers editions of *The Southern University Digest*.

⁴⁹ "Editorials," *The Southern University Digest*, October 1932.

⁵⁰ Dwight Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Evolution of the Negro College*, (New York, NY: AMS Press Inc., 1934), 192.

who remained behind moved into greater prominence to fill the void.⁵¹ So on the campus of Southern, the residual effect of the Great Migration left vestiges of hope – which became evident by the quality of work found on the pages of the *Digest*.

The Southern Digest: "Rooting " for the Home Team

The researcher evaluated approximately two hundred and two issues of the *Digest* published from 1930 to 1959. This study explored the offerings of each publication including the front page, feature articles and editorials. The infrastructure of the *Digest* staff resembled that of the Black Press. The *Digest's* staff fluctuated between seventeen and eighty-five student editors and writers throughout the 1930s. The newspaper was reproduced by the university's on-campus printing department from October to June and sometimes into August, which coincided with Southern's academic year.⁵² Along with its slogan, "Voice of the Students, Mouthpiece of the Alumni," the *Digest* published its mission statement in every issue: "A promoter of school spirit An instrument for reducing friction A medium through which an opportunity is provided for students . . ." ⁵³ Consistent with the Black Press, adopting a credo or platform was a promise to their readers to deliver meaningful, uncensored content.⁵⁴

Interestingly, the *Digest*, a bimonthly publication, was not free. A one-year subscription cost one dollar and fifty cents.⁵⁵ The cost for a single-copy was ten cents. It

⁵¹ Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, 441.

⁵² Information gathered by the author from the newspaper's masthead.

⁵³ "Editorials," *The Southern University Digest*, November 1, 1932. The entire statement read: "A promoter of school spirit by encouraging projects, efforts, and findings among student groups and individuals. An instrument for reducing friction and fostering friendly rivalry on the campus, and in all activities involving Southern University students or graduates. A medium through which an opportunity is provided for students to obtain some experience in news-gathering, reporting, book reviewing, editorial writing, and soliciting advertising."

⁵⁴ Wolesley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 2nd ed., 207.

⁵⁵ "Editorials," *The Southern University Digest*, November 1, 1932.

was payable in advance, through the mail, or with a visit to the campus newsroom. However, as a Southern student, a “services fee” built into each student’s tuition bill covered the printing and subscription costs of the newspaper.⁵⁶ Keeping with the tradition of the Black Press, the *Digest* delivered newspapers to subscribers and made single-copy sales available at designated locations on campus. On average, the publication ran four to six pages with approximately six to twelve articles of varying lengths on each page. Occasionally, a special homecoming edition was produced with eight to ten pages of content. The *Digest* began as a tabloid, but by the late 1930s published as a broadsheet complete with photographs, headlines, and specific news sections such as Sports, book reviews along with a page, most often, dedicated to the news briefs about Black Greek-letter sororities and fraternities as well as academic and civic-minded clubs.

An important characteristic that distinguished the *Digest* from other black college newspapers on campuses such as Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, North Carolina, and Clark University in Atlanta, Georgia, was its adherence to traditional journalism tenants when gathering and reporting the news. The *Digest* reserved its opinions or first-person accounts for the editorial section and included one to three editorials per issue that discussed the themes of this study: race, politics and community building. Nonetheless, the *Digest’s* stance was not always serious. In each issue, the staff published vignettes about amusing occurrences on and off campus such as this one headlined “Force of Habit,” “Do you want gas? asked the dentist, as he placed the patient in the chair. Yes, said the man. About five gallons and take a look at the oil will you.”⁵⁷

⁵⁶

⁵⁷ “Force of Habit,” *The Southern University Digest*, October 25, 1932.

Although a designated *Digest* staff member wrote most of the stories or the staff collectively authored editorials, the newspaper frequently used the Chicago-based Associated Negro Press or ANP (the first nationally syndicated news service founded in 1919 and distributed articles to black publications) to fill its pages with pertinent national news about racial progress, political observations and community happenings.⁵⁸ Much like their mentors in the Black Press, the *Digest* knew their readership's desired information that covered a vast swath of topics across the United States. The *Digest's* responsibility to unearth creative and credible ways to deliver the full scale and scope of news was a valued characteristic. Unlike the white college student press, which sometimes faced "heavy censorship by the university president,"⁵⁹ the *Digest* declared its independence from the administration's influence in nearly every issue. This tactic kept in stride with the showmanship of the Black Press that proudly boasted that their dissenting voice was the only authentic voice within a community desperate for truth, knowledge, opportunities, and respect.⁶⁰

Reports for the Digest: "Great Historian Stirs Audience to Race Pride"

On the front-page of the November 1, 1932 issue in the right bottom corner, a ANP wire story with the headline "Negro Worshipers Welcome White Minister in Knoxville" begins the conversation about race in the *Digest*.⁶¹ The article's placement on

⁵⁸ Lawrence D. Hogan, *Black National News Service: The Associated Negro Press and Claude Barnett, 1919-1945*, (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984).

⁵⁹ Aimee Edmondson and Earnest L. Perry, "To the Detriment of the Institution: the Missouri Student's Fight to Desegregate the University of Missouri," *American Journalism* 27, no. 4 (Fall 2010): 108.

⁶⁰ Patrick S. Washburn, *The African American Newspaper Voice of Freedom* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2006), 8.

⁶¹ "Editorials," *The Southern University Digest*, November 1, 1932.

the front-page was representative of how the *Digest* staff assigned value to race: it mattered.

Even though race often received a cursory mentions, it was not until February 1933 when another article about race served as an indicator of the staff's resolve to cover stories that aligned with the prevailing issues of their time. The article entitled "Great Historian Stirs Audience to Race Pride," covered Carter G. Woodson's visit to campus on February 12, 1933.⁶² The *Digest* published excerpts from Woodson's speech, but their choices were telling of a deep-seated belief that the student-run newspaper needed to be at the forefront of discussions about race on a black campus. Pamela Foster, black college student-run press historian, believed the short-term purpose of the newspapers was to chronicle campus life, and to simultaneously highlight and contextualize the world's vents from a student's point of view.⁶³ In the long-term, the black college press hoped to craft the social and cultural view of black colleges and black people as competent and worthy so readers would have an elevated opinion of them. These assertions were vivid in the *Digest*.

Also evident, the *Digest's* evolving agenda to disseminate information that forced its readers to take personal inventory about their perceptions concerning race. For example, regarding the "Negro" in history, the *Digest* included these words from Woodson's talk: "After the Reconstruction Period when the Negro was elevated to office, he thought this was going to last forever and failed to build an economic structure for himself."⁶⁴ So at a time when the climate in America was laden with contention, the

⁶² Ibid., February 16, 1933.

⁶³ Pamela Foster, email message to author, March 25, 2013.

⁶⁴ "Editorials," *The Southern University Digest*, February 16, 1933.

Digest printed passages that forced students to think even more critically about race and personal responsibility. The emphasis in the black college student-run press was identical to the Black Press. They introduced creative story angles, and added conjecture to underscore weighty topics with pressing concern to their readers.⁶⁵

On the other hand, the newspaper rallied around other matters of race that not only forced readers to appreciate the sacrifices of their ancestors, but also to find the benevolence in other races as well. On page two of the same February 16, 1932 issue, instead of dedicating their editorial to National Negro History Week, the *Digest* wrote about “outstanding Americans” and “America’s most illustrious statesmen” Abraham Lincoln and George Washington.⁶⁶ The column discussed how the sacrifices of these two men made the world a better place for everyone, including the students on Southern’s campus. The *Digest* credited Washington with leading the country through its infancy and Lincoln with freeing “our people” to pursue their dreams. This example articulated author Charles A. Simmons’s description of Percy Greene’s ideology, which called for the Black Press to be more introspective and inclusive instead of serving as a reservoir of entrenched resentment.⁶⁷

Nonetheless, a year later in the February 1, 1934 issue, the *Digest* wrote about Negro History Week urging “every Negro boy or girl, man or woman” to participate in the week-long celebration and “strive to make it greater than preceding ones.”⁶⁸ The editorial shared with readers that the future of the race depended on the productivity of

⁶⁵ Wolesley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 2nd ed., 200.

⁶⁶ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, February 16, 1933.

⁶⁷ Charles A. Simmons, *The African American Press: A History of News Coverage During National Crises, with Special Reference to Four Black Newspapers, 1827-1965* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1998), 64.

⁶⁸ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, February 1, 1934.

black youth. Part of the appeal used to accentuate this point was folded into this sentence, “the Negro during the last four hundred years has been handicapped by oppression that he has not been able to develop the best in him....”⁶⁹ The closing sentences of the editorial encouraged readers to accept the challenge presented by Negro History Week, and to consume knowledge so they can embrace the responsibility they have “for every member of this great human group....”⁷⁰ The *Digest* deliberately nurtured a spirit of not only racial pride, but racial responsibility.

In the January 18, 1939 issue, the *Digest* under the headline “Negro Progress” wrote an even more reflective piece about race. As the Southern community welcomed a new calendar year, the *Digest* wrote about the accomplishments of African Americans and questioned if these milestones were being recognized globally. The writers discussed how blacks such as singer Marian Anderson were celebrated the previous year for their talent. The crescendo in the editorial was the *Digest*’s disappointment that the Anti-Lynch Bill failed to receive approval from Congress.⁷¹ “Even though the attempt was not rewarded in terms of the passage of such a bill, it did reveal what potential power in politics rest in the Negro race and what concentrated, unified efforts may do.”⁷² Albeit this example has racial, political, and community building implications, at its core festered racial hatred, and the dangers of white ignorance was the catalyst for this editorial.

For this reason, the reaction of W.E.B. Du Bois concerning the need to discuss race in the 1930s justified the *Digest*’s commitment to find room for the topic in its

⁶⁹ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, February 1, 1934.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

publication. In Du Bois' assessment, "the American Negro problem is and must be the center of the Negro university You are teaching American Negroes in 1933, and they are the subjects of a caste system in the Republic of the United States of American and their life problem is primarily this problem of caste."⁷³ Du Bois believed this understanding was the foundation that every black university should build upon and apparently so did the *Digest*.⁷⁴

Southern President Felton F. Clark epitomized African American leadership in Louisiana. Frequently, Clark was recognized on the pages of the *Digest*, including in the April 18, 1942 issue. A front-page article heralded Clark's achievement as the "only Negro in Louisiana listed in the 1942 edition of Who's Who in America" He was among two-hundred and forty three whites to earn this coveted distinction.⁷⁵ The *Digest's* treatment of this news was similar to scholar Asa G. Hilliard's belief that communal achievement must be shared to uplift the race.⁷⁶

The *Digest* editors and writers intimately knew the challenges that haunted their race. They articulated this struggle in a March 1946 editorial headlined "We Can! We Will! We Must!" Staff writer Dolly Amy McPlerson used a personal connection to engage readers as well as convict them to do more than lament about racial prejudice, but to change the trajectory of their people with a clear call to action. McPlerson wrote, "Let us solemnly pledge to remain in the battle of 'equality for all.' Let us solemnly promise to put our best foot forward in attempting to eliminate segregation, prejudice, inequality,

⁷³ W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques 1906-1960*, ed. Herbert Aptheker, (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), 92.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ "Southern Ranks Sixth With First Enrollment Above 1000," *The Southern University Digest*, April 18, 1942.

⁷⁶ Perry, Steele, and Hilliard, *Young, Gifted, and Black: Promoting High Achievement Among African-American Students*, 14.

insecurity, and ill-treated from the face of the earth.”⁷⁷ Racial equality required a personal commitment, and the *Digest* insisted readers join the struggle with a pledge to see liberation through to deliverance. Like so many in the Black Press such as William Alexander Scott’s *The Atlanta Daily World*, the *Digest* actively recruited crusaders with their penchant for keeping racial disparity on a short, omnipresent agenda.

Race continued to remain in the forefront well into the 1940s because of comments from black luminaries such as Du Bois. On the front-page of the May 15, 1946 issue, the *Digest* wrote about how “Du Bois Compliments Southern.” He referred to the school as one of the “best equipped schools in the South.” Du Bois continued, “Their cultural (the state schools) and educational standards are not as high. But these schools represent the future of higher education for Negroes in the South The private Negro college is losing support.” The *Digest* believed receiving a compliment from the highly esteemed black educator, sociologist, scholar, and leader signaled Southern’s importance in the crusade for racial equality and shaping the main talking points on race.

Interestingly, a year later, Du Bois visited the campus and spoke to an audience of more than fourteen hundred Southernites at an annual University Convocation. His speech was entitled, “The Negro and the United Nations” underscoring how his influence on race was just as pronounced in rural Louisiana.⁷⁸

Shattering racial barriers continued to be an ongoing crusade for the *Digest* staff. In the April 7, 1951 issue on the front-page, staff writer Katherleen E. Greenup penned an article about an interracial group of students representing Southern and Louisiana State University (LSU), who voluntarily created a pseudo think tank to help erase segregation.

⁷⁷ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, March 1946.

⁷⁸ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, March 13, 1947.

A month later in a May 8, 1951 editorial, the conversation about segregation persisted. A staff editorial under the headline “Will We Be Ready?” discussed “when the walls of segregation are finally broken and all are finally cleared away, will we be ready to accept our full responsibility without apologies of any sort?” The *Digest* knew African Americans had paid a hefty price socially, psychologically, and economically at the hands of segregation, but believed freedom would come so blacks must be prepared to elevate their race by equipping themselves with a competitive education: “If we are sightseers during our stay here at Southern, then we would not be ready, for we will not be able to measure up to the world standards.”⁷⁹

By 1952, the *Digest* wrote about a controversial U.S. Supreme Court decision against segregation on railroad cars.⁸⁰ The editors and writers were drawn to the details of this ruling. Knowledgeable about the disappointing history of how African Americans were routinely betrayed by their government that should be designed to protect them, but ultimately left them vulnerable to unrestrained bigotry. The staff wrote, “No one who has ever ridden a Jim Crow coach has escaped the stigma of inferiority, which the condition imposes.” The bitter sting of segregation was familiar to the *Digest* and they were unafraid to explore its lingering wounds: “Undoubtedly, the railroads will continue the segregation of passengers as long as they can circumvent the law But whatever the recourse, segregation is nearing its end. The Supreme Court did not even dignify this decision on the railroads with a written opinion. Time marches on!”⁸¹ Akin to this approach were the bold proclamations made by activists and journalists such as Marcus

⁷⁹ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, May 8, 1951.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, November 15, 1952.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Garvey about the frailties of systematic racial segregation. Yet again, Negro History Week landed on the front-page in the mid-1950s with the same messages of pride, activism, and support. Under a banner headline “S.U. Celebrates Negro History Week,” the staff outlined a litany of campus events and encouraged readers to remember how “Negro History Week was a special celebration held each year throughout America emphasizing the Negro’s contribution to American culture.”⁸²

The rise of Reverend Martin L. King Jr. was not absent from the pages of the *Digest*. In the November 2, 1956 issue, the staff published an Associated Press (AP) article about how black leaders suspended the Montgomery Bus Boycott. In the subsequent issue, the *Digest* published a front-page article with a photo of King urging “the Negro” to be prepared for the new world because segregation would not always be the law of the land.⁸³ Finally, the *Digest* published an article from the Associated Negro Press (ANP) wire with the headline “Will the Negro Ever Attain Real Freedom?”⁸⁴ “To the Negro, equality means going to any restaurant to eat, attending any movie, working any job, starting any business, writing for any newspaper, going to any school.” But the *Digest* wanted their readers to know racial equality meant far more than bragging rights. The *Digest* toiled to help their readers fully understand that racial justice superseded the superficial accessories of consumerism. Complete racial freedom was the ultimate prize.

Another "Negro Congressman" Gets Into Politics and So Does the Digest

In evaluating the November 15, 1932 issue of the *Digest*, on the front-page under the headline “Another Negro Congressman,” the staff marked the anticipated election of

⁸² Ibid., February 19, 1955.

⁸³ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, December 1, 1956.

⁸⁴ Ibid., October 10, 1959.

another black politician. Congressman Oscar De Priest was soon to be joined by “Mahoney of Detroit, Michigan,” in the “lower house.”⁸⁵ The article discussed the political movement in Illinois, New York, and Ohio as well as Indiana, and how blacks were presented with an opportunity to represent their constituents. Fittingly, the *Digest* staff ended the article with another demonstration of their understanding of the political landscape, and their potential to positively impact the black experience in America. Much like their exodus from the South to the North and West in the first half of the twentieth century, more and more blacks were leaving the Republican Party to become registered Democrats. Feeling isolated and ignored by white Republicans, African Americans let their political affiliation and votes express their disapproval with systematic neglect. The *Digest* took note of this dramatic shift: “The unusual thing about the two Indiana Representatives is that they were elected on the Democratic ticket.”⁸⁶

More importantly, this political shift conjured parallel images of the Great Migration when hordes of African Americans “traveled through the backwaters of Mississippi, the hills and valleys of Tennessee, the tobacco fields of Kentucky, and the farmlands of Illinois.”⁸⁷ Blacks’ desperation intensified so profoundly that they often risked “life and limb in an attempt to exchange the peonage of the South for the promise of freedom and opportunity in the North.”⁸⁸ Yet, in the shadows of this movement, sat Southern and its student-run newspaper offering an alternative perspective of the

⁸⁵ Ibid., November 15, 1932.

⁸⁶ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, November 15, 1932.

⁸⁷ Rachel L. Emanuel and Alexander P. Tureaud Jr., *A More Noble Cause: A.P. Tureaud and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2011), 24.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

intellectual capabilities of African Americans who remained in the South out of obligation, fear, or failed attempts to leave.

Several months later, at the height of the country's political season, the students wrote in the March 15, 1933 issue about a mock inauguration for the U.S. president.⁸⁹ A political science class participated in an exercise on the day preceding Franklin D. Roosevelt's inauguration in Washington, D.C. Under the guidance of their professor, the students carried out every phase of this time honored American ritual with meticulous reverence and detail, according to the *Digest*.⁹⁰ All of this was done in an effort to illustrate how someone becomes the country's chief executive and, perhaps, as a gesture of inclusion for students who were historically disconnected from this part of American tradition. Again, the *Digest* earned its reputation as an invaluable resource by exposing their readers to aspects of Americana that were always out of reach for blacks.

Another factor that may have influenced the *Digest's* coverage was its relationship with and proximity to the Crescent City.⁹¹ Since New Orleans was home of the "first Negro daily newspaper, La Tribune de la Nouvelle-Orleans or the New Orleans Tribune," a rich history of advocacy journalism had not only preceded the *Digest*, but paved the way for the student-run newspaper to cover politics with an assertive and intentional tone.⁹² The hope of helping students – some native New Orleanians –

⁸⁹ "Editorials," *The Southern University Digest*, March 15, 1933.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, March 15, 1933.

⁹¹ A moniker commonly associated with New Orleans because of it is shaped like a crescent moon.

⁹² Armistead S. Pride and Clint C. Wilson II, *A History of The Black Press* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1997), 74.

understand the political movement afoot during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s required their informed participation.⁹³

The *Digest* also covered Armistice Day on page two of the November 15, 1933 issue. The headline read, “Armistice Day Recalls Events of Fifteen Years Ago.” The story that followed was a reflective piece about how the day was remembered by students across Southern’s campus in small, informal groups.⁹⁴ One of the more striking sentences of the editorial arrived near the end when the staff wrote, “. . . students today think only casually over the last war, but they are constantly reminded of the present economic strife and the war against its devastation.”⁹⁵ The *Digest* encouraged their readers to appreciate the sacrifice of African Americans, who suffered “the hazards of war across the seas” in the name of patriotism, and black salvation.⁹⁶

While the nature of war was political, the editorial staff explained that point and honored the legacy of those who had died for their freedom to attend Southern. Similar to a speech Du Bois gave before an organization for “Negro Land Grant College Presidents” in 1935, where he “outlined a brilliant plan for the wedding of scholarship to action,” the *Digest* outlined a provocative message on its pages that hastened readers to respond to the world, and the myriad of problems with actions anchored in useful knowledge.⁹⁷

Interestingly, the *Digest* rarely overlooked the slightest political maneuverings, which included mentioning the death of the headwaiter for the U.S. House of

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, November 15, 1933.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Allen B. Ballard, *The Education of Black Folk: The Afro-American Struggle for Knowledge in White America*, (New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1973), 19.

Representatives restaurant in Washington, D.C.⁹⁸ In the February 21, 1934 issue of the *Digest* on the front-page, a brief article written by the ANP mentioned Herbert Green, who served for several years as a waiter and adored by many in Congress including U.S. Vice President John Nance Garner when he served as speaker of the House of Representatives. Nearly nine months later in the December 21, 1933 issue of the *Digest*, the staff wrote an editorial that addressed the political twists and turns raging in the world. The students believed they had weathered a year full of one turbulent episode after another: “Wars have been predicted and many strikes, have prevailed, and many other disastrous happenings, but with the true spirit of America we have withstood them.”⁹⁹ The political contributions were meaningful and gave an indication that the *Digest* was interested in all areas of the black community.

During wartime, the *Digest* used its editorial space to warn readers of “Posterity Problems.” In a January 26, 1942 staff editorial, the staff tracked how the president requested millions and millions of dollars “to carry the war to the enemy.” However, the students knew that with such a hefty price tag came a repayment plan at their expense: “One dreads to think of the conditions of the United States after World War number two, and we who finish and make a mere \$15 per week will have to give a portion in payment of the current expense.” In this instance, the *Digest* employed an experienced voice to alert its readers of the reverberating affects of war.

A month later, an editorial entitled “A Great Trio” celebrated the contributions of “three great Americans whose lives were dedicated to America and democratic ideals.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, February 21, 1934.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, December 31, 1933.

¹⁰⁰ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, February 29, 1942.

To the *Digest*, George Washington, Frederick Douglass, and Abraham Lincoln were freedom fighters and deserved recognition for their foresight, which unshackled the American psyche from years of morale incompetence.¹⁰¹ Once more, the staff considered Washington the “father of our country” who freed “a young nation from the yoke of British oppression”¹⁰² They then celebrated Douglass for his “relentless fight for the abolition of the institutions of slavery,” which made him an enduring stalwart in the crusade for social justice.¹⁰³ Again, they considered Lincoln a champion “for the rights of the poor man and his noble deeds crowned him as the greatest American yet.”¹⁰⁴ But in the end for the *Digest*, this public recognition was about praising “True Democracy.”¹⁰⁵ Similar to the Black Press, the *Digest* wanted to “witness a new birth of freedom.”¹⁰⁶ In fact, the *Digest* was the only newspaper in the study that mentioned and openly professed support of the *Pittsburgh Courier’s* Double V Campaign. On the “Society” page in the April 18, 1942 issue complete with photographs and the headline “Double ‘V’ For Victory At Southern,” the *Digest* joined their mentors in the Black Press, who vigorously advocated for racial victory abroad and at home. Two oversized Vs with students pictured inside reinforced what scholar Patrick Washburn coined as one of the most sweeping national campaigns to both unite the Black Press and uniformly bind the African American community around an urgent cause to shift the racial paradigm.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Patrick S. Washburn, “J. Edgar Hoover and The Black Press in World War II,” *Journalism History* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 27.

In another display of support for Southern students fighting in World War II, the *Digest* ran teasers on the front-page encouraging readers to “Buy United States Defense Bonds” starting in 1942 through 1945.¹⁰⁸ Collectively, the *Digest* actively sustained and discussed the merits of the country’s military actions because all of it was germane to the livelihood of the campus community. Although a spirit of military cooperation was pervasive throughout Southern, student morale remained fragile during the war years, and the *Digest* was there to chronicle this persistent undercurrent. In the April 2, 1943 issue, Co-Editor in Chief Otis Hicks reminded readers that even though Southern was a military center, this designation did not shield the school from the worry that accompanied war. Hicks wrote, “First, academic morale has suffered under the uncertainty of college tenure; academic enthusiasm of college men has diminished due to the fact that they are liable to be drafted any moment. Thus, the prevailing social atmosphere has not only affected male students but has created a kind of mental unrest even among women, inasmuch as they must part with classmates and friends.”¹⁰⁹ Yet, Hicks explained the duality of his premise of how student morale was lifted “by the willingness of men to adopt social justice.” Hicks implored readers to consider their classmates’ valor to devote their lives to the betterment of their nation and race as a reason to remain encouraged. Psychologist and scholar Joseph L. White referred to this concept as the extended family model, which was “seen as an outgrowth of African patterns of family and community life that survived in American.”¹¹⁰ The *Digest’s* care for their community can be traced back to the Mid-Atlantic passage. Wade Nobles and John Blassingame said from the

¹⁰⁸ Verified through the researcher’s analysis of all available *Digests*.

¹⁰⁹ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, April 2, 1943.

¹¹⁰ Joseph L. White, *The Psychology of Blacks: an Afro-American Perspective* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1984), 65.

“sale to the initial slave owners a well-developed pattern of kinship, exogamous mating, and communal values, emphasizing collective survival, mutual aid, cooperation, mutual solidarity, interdependence and responsibility for others” was innate to the black community.¹¹¹ So it was not surprising the *Digest* advocated for its servicemen, and race as if they were biologically related instead of kindred spirits.

The *Digest* believed the “new Southern” was “born during this wartime period.” Positioned as a political issue, “The Essence of Democracy” written by Ruth Taylor shared the staff’s “interpretation of the moral code contained in the original Constitution and in the Bill of Rights has necessitated amendments, has called for change.” Democracy through voting was a privilege that Southern students should use: “Democracy is not a melting pot in which one group can expect the other to do all the melting. It demands personal responsibility, personal self restraint on the part of its followers.”¹¹²

Political action was the impetus of the *Digest*’s work in the July 25, 1946 issue. In an editorial headlined “The Ballot” written by Warren G. Eames urged blacks to vote to keep the likes of political miscreants such as the Mississippi Senator Theodore Bilbo at bay: “We are beginning to sense here in the south what it means to one who has no vote; nothing but the lowest wage jobs, denial of education of your own choice, travel with smoke and cinders in your eyes.” The 1946 presidential election was fast approaching, and this editorial primed students for their role as leaders and political activists: “Negro voting in Louisiana this fall will take on a new life. So let all of us of age reach up, hold

¹¹¹ Wade Nobles, “Africanity: Its Role in Black Families,” *The Black Scholar*, June 1974, 10-17; John Blassingame, *The Slave Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).

¹¹² “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, November 1, 1944.

our heads high and breathe a breath of this new life. For it the Negro makes full use of the ballot as was intended in the Fifteenth Amendment to the constitution, then stinging injustices and vexing discriminations would be corrected.”¹¹³

In the October 24, 1950, the staff shared “The Facts About Deferments” to help arm students with secondary plans if they were tapped to serve by Uncle Sam. And by the January 12, 1951 issue, the draft made a splash on the front-page because male enrollment decreased by 10 to 50 percent. The *Digest* cried foul when they heard news of the proposed plan to exempt “only the smartest college students from the draft.”¹¹⁴ They argued that “a fair draft law” would not include grades.¹¹⁵ The staff believed measuring intelligence was a “dangerous fallacy” and the “‘HEAVIEST’ students academically, is all too often ‘lightest’ in practical situations.”¹¹⁶ More pointedly, since public universities were viewed as having an inferior education compared to their private school counterparts, the *Digest* took exception to academics being the only “criteria for deferment” because it was yet another indicator of “unjust and lopsided” laws that penalized blacks for the systematic deprivation they experienced at the whim of whites. This type of heavy-handedness was not new to black editors and writers in the first half of the twentieth century. When white southerners tried to stymie the tide of African Americans migrating northward, the resourcefulness of the *Chicago Defender* proved too great. *Defender* agents “resorted to folding copies” of its newspaper “into bundles of

¹¹³ Ibid., July 25, 1946.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., January 12, 1951.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

merchandise.”¹¹⁷ This type of ingenuity employed by the Black Press, which involved alternative paths to repel white interference found its way into the *Digest*.

By the spring of 1952, the *Digest* turned their attention to the presidential contest. On the editorial page under the headline “Helpful Hints on Presidential Race” the newspaper brought students on a historical journey. The editors and writers discussed the work of past presidents such as William H. Harrison, James Buchanan, John Adams, and Andrew Jackson as a lens into what candidate would be the best leader for Americans as well as African Americans. A year later in the May 20, 1953 issue, staff writer Helen Nervis took on the Korean War. She lamented about the financial extravagance as well as the personal toll endured by thousands of Americans, who welcomed home sick and wounded soldiers.¹¹⁸ More importantly, Nervis charged in “Gentlemen May Cry ‘Peace, Peace’; But There is No Peace” that America impeded peace because of its antiquated political approach, hypocritical stance, and dubious British ally: “Hundreds are losing their lives with the threat of another Hiroshima or Nagasaki ever before us. The flame of peace burns but dimly.”¹¹⁹

So when the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its decision that segregated schools were against the law, the *Digest* contextualized it as seminal moment – which had defined their very existence at Southern. Referring to the Dred Scott Decision of 1856, the desegregation of public schools was just as significant to society and in particular African Americans. The editors and writers quickly began thinking of ways to

¹¹⁷ James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 44.

¹¹⁸ Helen Nervis, “Gentlemen May Cry ‘Peace, Peace’; But There is No Peace,” *The Southern University Digest*, May 20, 1953.

¹¹⁹ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, May 20, 1953.

rebuff attacks on the legislation. The main strategy subscribed to their readers was to “forget the past and look to the future and think not in terms of a united north or a united south, but, in terms of a United States of America under one form of government, one flag and one God. This is the only answer to our problem.”¹²⁰ Undergirding “The Great Answer” editorial was the notion that Southern was a military training center so patriotism was an intrinsic part of the school and the *Digest’s* pathology to freedom.¹²¹

Using political activism as a binary, the *Digest* penned an editorial “Voting is Your Duty” as a motivator to prod students to use the ballot box as a weapon to dismantle racial discrimination.¹²² In the November 2, 1956 issue, the *Digest* framed voting as a duty-bound service designed to uplift their race, and country. Tied to this presidential election was a statewide contest to decide if Louisiana’s constitution (at the time the longest in the country) should be retooled.¹²³ However, this proposition did not come without trepidation from critics who said Louisiana Governor Eddie Long sought to alter the constitution “to make it easier to raise taxes in the state.”¹²⁴ Interestingly, the *Digest* was not distracted by the minutia on the actual ballot, but more passionate about the readers’ overall commitment to educate themselves, and be an active and formidable electorate. The *Digest* believed election participation signaled respect to their ancestors, who fought and died for the right to vote. Needless to say, this was another place for their voice to be heard on a larger stage.

The Digest takes on Community Building

¹²⁰ Ibid., May 31, 1954.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid., November 2, 1956.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

The *Digest's* motivation to propel its readership into a strong sense of communal responsibility was evident throughout the study. The official student-run newspaper dedicated a significant amount of space on its pages to discuss the richness of learning, the need for forward-thinking adults, and the dominant expectation that students should connect to a deeper more spiritual purpose for their lives. Staff writers continuously visited the topic of building a genuine communal bond by contributing their talents to cultural and academic development. The *Digest* did not recoil from making sure the students knew that they had an essential role to play in fostering community. Consider an example of this effort to build community found in the October 23, 1932, issue, of the *Digest*: “The instructor can no more inject knowledge into a mind which is full of preconceived ideas, than a sculptor can mold a figure successfully from dried up clay.”¹²⁵

To its good fortune, the *Digest's* ability to use metaphors to connect with their audience was effective and a technique the newspaper used repeatedly to reinforce important thematic messages. An example can be found in the March 15, 1933 issue of the *Digest* under the headline “To Our President.” The staff applauded the work of the university’s founding president, Joseph S. Clark (President Felton Clark’s father). A metaphor used to illustrate the point about appreciating Clark’s work was to “Live as intelligent and moral beings. Then you will be giving our President flowers whose beauty and fragrance he can enjoy. Flowers that will have immortal loveliness.”¹²⁶

In an editorial that ran without a headline in the November 15, 1932 issue, the *Digest* wrote about morality: “social environment should be of the highest type to achieve

¹²⁵ Ibid., October 23, 1932.

¹²⁶ Ibid., March 15, 1933.

a highly developed moral nature.”¹²⁷ The approach of the *Digest* was to persuade readers to consider improving individually with hopes of attaining a higher standard of living, fueled by achievement that would positively impact their community. In a similar vein, the *Digest* used provocative language to instigate action on the part of the readership. The most compelling example of this approach could be read in the April 1, 1933, issue, of the *Digest*. The headline was “Notice! – What Others Are Thinking! Are Our Young Men Asleep!” The editorial took the male students to task for being disorganized and poorly focused when it came to community service. “The only organizations which scored a plus mark for the young men are the fraternities. They actually produce positive results credited only to the men who make up their memberships.”¹²⁸

The *Digest* was not only strident in tonality, but also genuinely inquisitive. In some of its editorials, the staff asked the readers to ponder their community’s fate through rhetorical questions. The technique was an attempt to create a sense of communal dialogue.¹²⁹ In the January 15, 1934 issue, the staff wrote a column asking the question: “Why the ‘B’ Class Negro college?”¹³⁰ The editorial was in direct response to black colleges receiving a ‘B’ rating by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (SACSS) accrediting agency. The students believed that the outcome of these mediocre ratings should motivate, but not distract from the mission of the university. “In

¹²⁷ Ibid., November 15, 1932.

¹²⁸ Ibid., April 1, 1933.

¹²⁹ Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

¹³⁰ Ratings were given by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (SACSS) to black colleges. A subcommittee referred to as the “Committee on Approval of Negro Schools” was responsible to specifically evaluate black colleges. This evaluation process began in September 1930. The effort was led by Dr. Arthur H. Wright, who “rigidly applied the standards of the association and at the end of the year rated only one school as fully accredited, but submitted also a ‘B’ class of colleges whose work was acceptable quality but which failed to fully meet the standards as specified by the association” (*The Evolution of the Negro College*, 184).

the final analysis, the ‘B’ rating gives these colleges the stimulus to strive to seek the rating of ‘A’”¹³¹ During these moments, the *Digest* interpreted complex situations and allowed their readers enough room to critically reflect on profound issues.

On another occasion, *Digest* staff writer James Merrick penned uplifting editorials that urged readers to commemorate their unique opportunity to learn because they “represent the ‘cream’ of the State of Louisiana”¹³² Also, the *Digest* wrote an editorial that commemorated the University’s twentieth anniversary. In the March 9, 1934 issue, the staff reviewed the institution’s accomplishments and used this column as another opportunity to boost students’ self-esteem, campus morale, and sincere appreciation for the moment: “Southern University is ever increasing the number of farsighted, honest and capable citizens into modern American civilization.”¹³³

To create vivid images, the *Digest* used metaphors to relate to their readers. This approach also served as a way to make their writings more accessible especially since the editors and writers were aggressively demanding their readers be introspective, self-deprecating, and publically accountable in order to build an aware and cohesive community. For instance, in an editorial in the March 1946 issue headlined “How Are You Growing?” the *Digest* discussed how trees on campus lost their stately manicured appearance “yet they appear to the human eyes as beautiful.” So to underscore the moral of the story, staff writer Roy B. Moss asked readers “How are you growing? Are you only a parasite hanging like moss from a tree and living on the work of others? Are you growing from those things that are placed in your hands only, and not concerned with

¹³¹ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, January 15, 1934.

¹³² *Ibid.*, February 21, 1934.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, March 9, 1934.

reaching out to grasp the chances in the many student activities that are open to you and financed with your own money to develop growth in responsibility and leadership.” Moss continued to ask rhetorical questions in an effort to prod readers to think and make the necessary adjustments to contribute more positively to communal uplift.

Staff writer Louis L. Eames was deeply concerned with unity and mutual understanding between students. In his April 17, 1946 editorial he wrote: “Our leaders tell us that unity is the only means by which we can solve the many problems which confront us today.” Eames drew from the well-worn example of how the military relied on their allies to win wars: “Wake-up Southern! Time is marching on. Let us bring our social organizations together and form one strong body.” In the “Let Us Unite and Understand Each Other,” the *Digest* embraced their role as campus agitator and unifier. More profoundly, the student-run newspaper viewed the school as “a living symbol of the hopes and vision of inspired Negroes.”

The editors and writers believed centralized leadership was paramount to building community at Southern. So in a November 12, 1946 editorial, under the headline “Cooperate With Your Student Council,” the *Digest* staff celebrated the organizing of a Southern Student Association and asked readers to “stand behind it one-hundred percent strong in all of its endeavors The whole can only advance as far as all of its parts.” This was reminiscent of black women’s clubs consolidating under one umbrella to magnify their resources and power.¹³⁴ Additionally, it was a reminder of how leaders in the Black Press organized in 1941 to launch a syndicated news service to populate the

¹³⁴ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2008) 10.

pages of their newspapers across the country with relevant information to African American life and development.¹³⁵

Being observant was part of the *Digest's* job. Staff writer and United States Army Serviceman E. Tone Releford wondered in a February 27, 1948 editorial "Has Southern Slipped?" In 1942, he was called into service but when he returned, Releford hardly recognized the Southern he once attended: "We will not blame the war for all of our faults. . . . We are too careless with our conduct on the campus and also off campus where we are known as students. . . . Look at some of Southern's students of past and look at yourself. . . ." This theme of community building continued in the March 4, 1949 issue. In an editorial headlined "We Thought You Ought to Know," the writers chastised students for not respecting each other or their campus: "The young ladies and the young men should try to build themselves into redefined and respectable men and women so that men of all races can look up to them and give a smile instead of a frown." Poor class attendance became a nagging concern for the *Digest* as well. The newspaper staff believed that each student must serve in a role for the community to operate efficiently.

In a May 1, 1950 editorial, the *Digest* put the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the students: "You cannot hope for progress along any line unless more interest is manifested. You cannot depend upon your roommate to act for you, for he or she may have decided to relax in the dormitory too." The *Digest* wanted students to stop meandering through life expecting redemption without attending class, organizational meetings, and finding a way to fill voids in the community caused by white hatred and black apathy. The staff ended the editorial with a strident tone to insure that readers

¹³⁵ <http://nnpa.org/about-us/> accessed Feb. 6, 2016.

realized they were a part of a duty-bound service to themselves and their race: “It is your duty, and if you shirk it, you are only proving to yourself that you are not worthy of the things that are being fought for to benefit you.”

The *Digest* saw student apathy as an obstacle to Southern’s community. This notion was articulated in a December 6, 1950 editorial, which challenged student-leaders to not accept a position if they refused to accept the responsibilities that came along with the post. Approximately a year later, the *Digest* dared its readers to stop waiting to act for the good of the community. In an August 9, 1951 editorial, the staff witnessed their peers skirting responsibility. But the *Digest* reminded them “Man’s progress is measured by the progress of his thoughts. He can be no greater than his vision.”¹³⁶ Along with cautioning students not to cheat on exams, the *Digest* warned students about disrespecting their campus by traipsing across the lawn instead of staying on the sidewalks: “The care of the campus is in our hands. Are we going to continually abuse what is ours – that which is left up to us to protect and care for? . . . Is the Southern University student mindful enough to accept this great responsibility of trust?”

The Digest Forever the Advocate: "Remember, it is not how much you do, but how well you do it."

The *Digest* remained passionate about the saliency of race, politics, and community building. The student-run newspaper proved its value with each issue by using journalism skills to cover campus news, but used a deeper intellectual fortitude to understand complex issues that impacted students. The *Digest* had an obvious motivation to empower its readers through the student newspaper. In addition, the amount of space it

¹³⁶ “Editorials,” *The Southern University Digest*, August 9, 1951.

devoted to race, politics and community building varied and gave a better indication what was more of a concern for their readership and the staff that ultimately made the editorial decisions. Southern's black student press served in an advocacy role traditionally seen in the black press and supported the social issues most germane to blacks by aggressively arguing for the civil, social and basic human rights for their people.¹³⁷

The *Digest*, devoted much of its print to race and community building, but spent slightly more time encouraging students to invest their time, talents and energy on campus activities and in their world community. It reflected the style of mainstream journalism and reserved its opinion primarily for the editorial page, a notable characteristic during a time when advocacy journalism was not only popular, but also expected to give personal commentary on the news.

Despite the student-run newspaper staff's limited experience with formal journalism courses, the *Digest* was committed to its mission to provide life-changing news from 1930 to 1959. It was clear that the *Digest* embraced its role with maturity, purposeful vigor, and a level of honesty and integrity that allowed it to earn the trust of their readership and permission to "preach" about what was necessary to navigate during and beyond some of the nation's most difficult times.

¹³⁷ Jinx Broussard, "Saviors or Scalawags: The Mississippi Black Press's Contrasting Coverage of Civil rights Workers and Freedom Summer, June – August 1964," *American Journalism*, 19, no. 3 (Summer 2002): 63-85.

CHAPTER VI - TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE: THE CAMPUS DIGEST

Caught in the Shadows: The Struggle to Honor, Shoulder, and Escape the Legacy of

Booker T. Washington's Influence on the Pages of *The Campus Digest*

Cradled in the vast shadow of leader, educator, and “constructionalist” Booker T. Washington, the student editors and writers of the *Campus Digest* struggled to independently renew the spirit of their race, educate their classmates about the necessity of community solidarity, and distinguish themselves as capable leaders.¹ During the first half of the twentieth century, the black student-run press at Tuskegee Institute (later renamed Tuskegee University) in rural Alabama explored their voice in ways that respected Washington’s “deferential and conciliatory” leanings, as well as stoked their desire to be viewed as autonomous thinkers who challenged the efficacy of white approval to liberate blacks from years of oppressive hatred, ignorance, and enslavement.² Indeed, the students were working to distance themselves from an entrenched psychology that engulfed Tuskegee’s campus from the time Washington arrived and lingered well past his death.

The pervasive reach of the Tuskegee Machine, “an intricate, nationwide web of institutions in the black community that were conducted, dominated, or strongly influenced from the little town in the deep South where Washington had his base” – could not be underestimated even after Washington died in 1915 – more than fifteen years after this study took place.³ Washington and his “lieutenants” such as Charles

¹ David H. Jackson, Jr., *A Chief Lieutenant of the Tuskegee Machine: Charles Banks of Mississippi* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), xiii. Constructionalists work to change their reality by taking control of their destiny politically, educationally, and economically in spite racism.

² *Ibid.*, xii and 43.

³ *Ibid.*, xi.

Banks in Mississippi were considered heavy-handed, conniving, ruthless, and intolerable in their pursuits to control the path African Americans journeyed toward equality.⁴ The Tuskegee network was a tightly orchestrated network, which often operated covertly in small rustic communities in the South similar to Banks' Mound Bayou in Mississippi to larger Northern urban hubs such as New York. Some scholars such as David H. Jackson, Jr. said the "Tuskegee Machine" employed a "black survival strategy" – that masked Washington and his devoted followers true intentions, which were to placate and manipulate whites to achieve racial equality.⁵ These facts along with legendary accounts about Washington's linear vision, political power, and ability to dole out punitive consequences for those who ran counter to his ideology were passed down like family heirlooms on Tuskegee's campus.⁶ This narrative influenced the temperature, behavior, and attitudes of the students, including those who worked on the *Campus Digest* years after Washington's ascent to national prominence and subsequent death.⁷

Remnants of Washington's philosophical beliefs emerged in the *Campus Digest* throughout the study. For example, in a 1939 editorial headlined "Our Problems are Mutual," the *Campus Digest* staff wrote that an effort to ingratiate themselves with the administration was seemingly effective even though no tangible results were reported: "We are being made to feel that after all we are an integral part of this school community and as such we should have a voice in its administration."⁸ This feeling or sentimentality was reminiscent of Washington's numerous campaigns to pull blacks into the ranks of

⁴ Ibid., xii.

⁵ Ibid., 46.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ "Editorials," *The Campus Digest*, January 14, 1939, 2.

respectable citizenry by touting self-reliance, and cooperation through peaceful gestures not overt agitation, and defiance.⁹ Admittedly, these gestures were window dressing because actual results never immediately materialized. To some naysayers like civil rights champion W.E.B. Du Bois, Washington interactions were exaggerated steps in a complicated and prolonged sojourn toward liberation.

When Washington arrived in Tuskegee, Alabama, on June 14, 1881, the state-funded school was in organizational disarray.¹⁰ Scholar Addie Louise Joyner Butler said Washington “came to Tuskegee with very definite views on education and its relationship to race progress, views born of his training and life experiences.”¹¹ As a former slave, Washington was committed to an industrial education driven by a white patriarchal infrastructure.¹² Washington’s behavior was an extension of what Herbert G. Gutman referred to as “paternalist and racial ideology” that “allowed owners to credit such (compliant) behavior to their own example and effective domination.”¹³ Hence, this line of reasoning allowed Washington to remain in control and maintain a defining characteristic of his movement, which was a slow, methodical approach to freedom. So being connected to Tuskegee signaled an acceptance – even in part – to this pathology.

In addition, this mindset appeared on the pages of the *Campus Digest* in a November 28, 1936 editorial headlined “Onward and Upward.” Staff writer Walter B. Trout turned away from a radical tone found in other corners of the black student-run press, and drew from the themes of their charismatic and celebrated leader of eradicating

⁹ Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (1901; repr., New York: Dover Publications, 1995).

¹⁰ Addie Louise Joyner Butler, *The Distinctive Black College: Talladega, Tuskegee and Morehouse* (New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1977), 57.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Washington, *Up From Slavery*.

¹³ Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom 1750-1925* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 292.

literacy, the vitality of owning property, and improving their agricultural and professional standings as a gateway to independence: “The question that naturally arises from conditions which confronts the Negro is a complex one. How are we to reach the mass of Negroes yet uneducated? It is true that they are a retarding factor in the progress of the races as a whole.”¹⁴ The *Campus Digest* used their voice to urge readers to find solutions to persistent problems that blocked African Americans from their destiny of freedom. Much like Washington, the *Campus Digest* believed there were racial atrocities yet, the real enemy was black apathy, misplaced aggression, and lack of a formal education.

The *Campus Digest* began in 1924 as a class project in Tuskegee’s Division of Printing.¹⁵ In line with the tradition of the Black Press, the *Campus Digest* adopted a credo and printed it in the early editions of the publication. It read: “The Campus Digest stands for 1. Better understanding and more effective co-operation between Students and the Faculty; 2. A high standard of scholarship, sportsmanship, and school spirit; 3. Development of good citizenship through increasing student’s participation in the Student Recommendatory Government; and 4. A higher standard in the Literary Societies and a Tuskegee Debating Team.”¹⁶ Apparent through this statement was the *Campus Digest*’s commitment to community building as well as one of Washington’s cardinal values: a literate and disciplined African American citizenry. Since newspaper’s founding, the *Campus Digest* believed these characteristics were a powerful repellent against discrimination. Routinely in the “Editorially Speaking” section of the *Campus Digest*, the staff cemented their relevancy as well as their call to be the voice of the students; “...this

¹⁴ Walter B. Trout, “Onward and Upward,” *The Campus Digest*, November 28, 1936, 2.

¹⁵ “Editorials,” *The Campus Digest*, January 3, 1927, 2.

¹⁶ Ibid.

paper and particularly this column should be representative of the students. It should not be written with any selfish motive in view or with the aim of expressing personal feelings.”¹⁷ However, at the same time, the student editors and writers were well aware of the challenges to not only attract student readers, but to present information in a compelling manner to alter actions and thoughts: “In our editorials an effort is made to bring to light many basic weaknesses in our program that affect the students in general, and to recognize worthy moves and comment on them with the hope that they will be continued.”¹⁸ So under the *Campus Digest* banner ran: “The Voice of the Tuskegee Student” and the student editors and writers tried to live up to this moniker.

Evidence of the *Campus Digest* as a respected platform to foster student leadership was published in the January 3, 1927 issue under the headline “Digest Under New Management.” While seniors were responsible for the management of the publication, it transitioned to juniors, and eventually in the 1930s the editor-in-chief became a campus-wide elected position. On average, the editorial staff ranged in size from twelve to twenty staffers who occupied roles such as make-up and contributing editors, reporter, cartoonist, as well as circulation and business managers. Adhering to the time-honored journalism tenants, the *Campus Digest* included sections such as sports, photographs with stories, some byline pieces, first-person and sourced articles, and featured reoccurring special sections such as the “Chaplain’s Corner.”

Like many other publications in the black college student-run press, the *Campus Digest* joined a collegiate organization to add to its credibility, increase the newspaper's visibility, and sharpen their burgeoning journalism skill set. It was front-page news when

¹⁷ “It’s Worth The While,” *The Campus Digest*, February 11, 1939, 2.

¹⁸ “The Role of Editorials,” *The Campus Digest*, February 25, 1939, 2.

the *Campus Digest* was admitted into Delta Phi Delta Journalistic Society (Zeta Chapter) – founded in 1937 for the black college student-run press by three Morehouse College (Atlanta) students including Moss H. Kendrix.¹⁹ Tuskegee became the sixth chapter established on a black college campus. Delta Phi Delta encouraged students to embrace journalism as a viable career and instrument to exercise their voice around issue such as racial awareness, community solidarity, and political savvy.²⁰ The creation of this organization was an extension of the Black Press’s legacy of championing journalism as an outlet of expression, and an effective clarion in galvanizing African Americans around a shared goal of racial uplift.²¹ Also by the April 30, 1954, the *Campus Digest* joined the Intercollegiate Press after Delta Phi Delta Journalistic Society shuttered.

Consistent with Washington’s rhetoric on race matters, the *Campus Digest* attacked the Black Press for its sensationalist tongue and subjective reporting style. In a November 16, 1940 piece, the Digest believed prominent members of the Black Press employed tactics they described as “disgraceful”: “Our National Negro weeklies conducted itself during the presidential campaign.” Under the headline of “The Negro Press,” the *Campus Digest* singled out the *Pittsburgh Courier’s* actions as “nauseating” because “no publication anywhere did as much wailing and protesting as did that paper with Colonel B. O. Davis, Sr. wasn’t promoted along with the other one hundred-odd white colonels.”²² In similar Washington-esque fashion, the *Campus Digest* believed it was a shameful ploy for a “deserving” Colonel Davis to receive a promotion based on the

¹⁹ “Campus Digest Joins Honorary Society,” *The Campus Digest*, March 25, 1939, 1.

²⁰ Ibid.; Brenna W. Greer, “Selling Liberia: Moss H. Kendrix, the Liberian Centennial Commission and the Post-World War II Trade in Black Progress,” 303-326.

²¹ Ibid.

²² “The Negro Press,” *The Campus Digest*, November 16, 1940, 2.

acrimony stirred by a wanton the Black Press instead of his "time" to be recognized. To the *Campus Digest* as well as their beloved former president, the role of the Black Press was not to use its pages to pedal their "own petty fancies." Consequently, the students said it was up to professional organizations such as Delta Phi Delta "to train men and women to go out into the world and cure the ills of our so-called Negro Press."²³ Again, even fifteen years after Washington's death, his agenda of cooperation was palpable in the *Campus Digest*.

So even though they relished their editorial freedom, the *Campus Digest's* voice took on a familiar historical cadence, which defined the Tuskegee experience. Those from the Booker T. Washington school of thought desired racial freedom, but also adopted an approach that held blacks to a higher standard than whites – who systematically sabotaged their crusade for freedom. So whether this style of coverage was designed to earnestly promote racial cooperation, pacify, or manipulate whites, it was certainly a familiar ploy in the Black Press and from Washington's arsenal. For instance, *Jackson Advocate* (Mississippi) Editor Percy Green delighted in his conservative voice.²⁴ He embraced Washington's teachings of "black self-help . . . coupled with interracial cooperation" and staunchly opposed "the work of more radical or progressive black activists such as William E. B. Du Bois, A. Philip Randolph, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, or Monroe Trotter."²⁵ So the *Campus Digest* was not immune to or alone in this spirit of conservatism because of its connection to Washington and some prominent examples in

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Jinx C. Broussard, "Saviors or Scalawags: The Mississippi Black Press's Contrasting Coverage of Civil Rights Workers and Freedom Summer, June-August 1964," *American Journalism* 19, no. 3 (Summer 2002): 65.

²⁵ Julius E. Thompson. *Percy Greene and the Jackson Advocate: The Lift and Times of a Radical Conservative Black Newspaperman 1897-1977* (Jefferson, NC: Mcfarland and Company, 1994), 35-36.

the Black Press. More importantly, it was their courage to spew conservative positions when most of their peers in the black student-run press used their newspapers to rant about white privilege, ignorance, and disrespect.²⁶

In fact, when the *Campus Digest* engaged with members of the Black Press, they were typically conservative voices, who vehemently disagreed philosophically with many in the Black Vanguard including W.E.B. Du Bois, and Reverend Martin L. King Jr.²⁷ For instance, throughout the thirty year window of this project, the *Campus Digest* mentioned and featured one black journalist. On the front page of the December 13, 1941 issue, the staff penned an article welcoming George S. Schuyler – a *Pittsburgh Courier* columnist and business manager for *The Crisis* – and his perspectives to campus about the perils of propaganda. Schuyler was a well-known black conservative journalist and followed the doctrine of the Tuskegee Machine – self-sufficiency, accountability as well as the need to downplay race in the name of securing equality.²⁸ Scholar Oscar R. Williams said Schuyler represented the complexities that raged surrounding race in the first half of the twentieth century, and revealed a slice of African American intellectual history that the *Campus Digest* fervently represented in Tuskegee, Alabama.²⁹ On one hand, the student editors and writers reflected a desire to assimilate, seamlessly contribute to the economy in the South without attracting the wrath of whites. On the other hand, the *Campus Digest* wanted their dignity, an independent voice, and separation from the weight associated with Washington's legacy.

²⁶ Juan Williams and Dwayne Ashley, *I'll Find a Way or Make One: A Tribute to Historically Black Colleges and Universities* (New York: Amistad Publishing, 2004)

²⁷ Blackpast.org, "Schuyler, George (1895-1977)", <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/schuyler-george-1895-1977> (accessed February 19, 2016).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Interestingly, when Washington arrived in Tuskegee, there was a smattering of students but under his leadership, enrollment grew from a few hundred in the 1930s, to approximately fourteen hundred in the 1940s, and to more than two thousand students in the 1950s.³⁰ The men and women of the *Campus Digest* knew their work enlightened a population of black collegians in search of a better life. In an April 18, 1942 editorial, the staff discussed the word freedom and instead of them crying out against their oppressors, they turned an analytical lens toward the basic meaning of the word to help show dimensions their audience needed to contextualize their voice in the world.³¹ The staff wanted their readers to “feel that *The Campus Digest* is his paper.”³² So as the newspaper evolved, they sponsored a “Journalism Institute” themed “Journalism . . . A Molder of Public Opinion” as a way to garner more interest in the craft, and showcase their writing as well as reporting acumen.³³ This sentimentality was consistent with their mentors in the Black Press who understood the symbiotic relationship between the newspaper and its readers. The newspaper cost five cents per single copy, fifty cents for an annual subscription, and seventy-five cents per year for delivery through the duration of this study.³⁴

The publication of the *Campus Digest* was somewhat erratic. Sometimes the newspaper was produced weekly, bimonthly, or once a month. And while student staff members were listed on the masthead, not much was known about their classification, hometown, and year of graduation. The students worked with an advisor to produce the

³⁰ “Enrollment Shows Increase This Year,” *The Campus Digest*, October 18, 1941, 1; November 16, 1951

³¹ “What is Freedom?” *The Campus Digest*, April 18, 1942, 2.

³² “The Campus Digest,” *The Campus Digest*, November 3, 1944, 2.

³³ “Digest Staff Sponsors Journalism Institute,” *The Campus Digest*, April 27, 1946, 2.

³⁴ Gathered by the researcher during review of each issue involved in the study.

newspaper yet, it was unclear of the actual role this person played. However, by the 1940s the editor-in-chief was elected much like the student government association president. In the May 16, 1944 student body election article, a picture of the editor-in-chief ran along with Miss Tuskegee and Miss N.A.A.C.P This was an indicator of the prestige and level of leadership associated with the *Campus Digest*. In addition, the student-run newspaper also selected a “queen” during homecoming. So along with Miss Freshman and Miss Canterbury Club, Miss Digest was featured on the same page – another signal of the *Campus Digest’s* visibility and involvement in varying aspects of the Tuskegee community.³⁵

Without a doubt, the *Campus Digest* editors and writers were thoughtful about their decisions. In an April 8, 1955 editorial, the students pondered “What Shall We Print?” Writer Leahmon Reid discussed how journalism occupied a defining role “in shaping public opinion.”³⁶ The *Campus Digest’s* preoccupation with public opinion was well founded. Author and journalist Walter Lippmann wrote about the velocity of public opinion and its power over dismantling stereotypes: “The systems of stereotypes may be the core of our personal tradition, the defenses of our position in society.”³⁷ The staff understood why they needed to amplify their voice to influence conversations around race, politics, and community building.

Conversely, the newspaper grew impatient with a contrite audience: “The Digest staff spends long hours selecting and writing articles that might interest its readers – a problem that can never be entirely solved, and you, the readers, return to it nothing but

³⁵ *The Campus Digest*, November 4, 1955, 3.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, April 8, 1955, 2.

³⁷ Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1922), 63.

worthless unconstructive criticism.”³⁸ The shrill commentary from the *Campus Digest* was an extension of the tactics used by their mentors in the Black Press as well as Tuskegee patriarch Booker T. Washington. Indeed, the public intellectual skirmishes between Washington and scholar Du Bois over education and the path to liberation definitely shaped the *Campus Digest’s* editorial content during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s.³⁹ Probably even more profound was the fact that Du Bois continued to be a dissenting voice to Washington’s ideology even after the Tuskegee president died. In part, scholars believed subconsciously the students adopted a familiar stance to protect his legacy while Du Bois had several more years to wage a campaign against Washington’s message of self-help and blind racial cooperation.

Also looming over the rural campus was mounting suspicion about the controversial, governmental-led Tuskegee Study, an experiment involving hundreds of impoverished, bamboozled and illiterate African American men suffering from untreated cases of syphilis.⁴⁰ Although the white-controlled U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) administered the program, the name of it came from Tuskegee Institute – considered the seat of Macon County in Alabama.⁴¹ The school loaned its medical facilities to the government to conduct the study, which began in 1932 and lasted throughout the duration of this study.⁴² In addition, other black colleges “as well as local black doctors also

³⁸ *The Campus Digest*, April 8, 1955, 2.

³⁹ Jacqueline M. Moore, *Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, and the Struggle for Racial Uplift* (Maryland: Scholarly Resources Books, 2003).

⁴⁰ James H. Jones, *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment* (New York: The Free Press, 1981), 4-5.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Facts about the Tuskegee Experiment derived from <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/bhmtuskegee1.html> (accessed February 19, 2016).

participated. Black nurse, Eunice Rivers, was a central figure in the experiment.”⁴³ The lapse in morality by the government and judgment by blacks and Tuskegee haunted their legacy. Beyond their connection to Washington, scholar Cathy Caruth described the *Campus Digest*’s reaction to news surrounding race and politics as seemingly optimistic because of their overwhelming desire to believe the best outcome was always the intent despite evidence to the contrary.⁴⁴ However, they reserved their harshest criticism for failed attempts at building a sense of authentic community. Caruth believed the *Campus Digest* may have suffered from revisionist history because of their race’s traumatic past riddled with hatred: “the historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all.”⁴⁵ The *Campus Digest*’s voice was complex because of their school’s unique place in history. Shrouded by stories of secrecy, abuse of power, and a disregard for the inherent value of black lives, the *Campus Digest*’s writings were influenced by a intricate and contradictory narrative.

Between Race and Happiness

In September 1935 when boxing great Joe Louis landed a knockout punch against Max Baer, it was front-page news for the *Campus Digest*. Celebrated under this headline: “Joe Louis Scores Double Victory,” this story laid the foundation for the *Campus Digest*’s race coverage. It was striking, surprising, and impactful. It followed the conservative temperament of not only Washington, but also his mentor and teacher General Samuel Armstrong – the founder of Hampton Institute in Virginia who

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 11.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 17.

recommended as well as persuaded Washington to accept the job as Tuskegee's principal.⁴⁶ Armstrong believed blacks needed rigorous hourly structure, strict discipline and swift consequences as well as detailed oversight to become viable citizens.⁴⁷ So this patriarchal rhythm drove the campus as well as its student-run newspaper.

As an extension of Washington's self-help doctrine, a December 7, 1935 editorial outlined "some of the main reasons why so many Negroes are not progressive in business." The final of the four reasons included "the lack of racial cooperation."⁴⁸ The student editors and writers emphatically believed that "one of the best ways to gain racial cooperation is through education right here in college."⁴⁹ The staff credited Washington with this advice and carried this theme throughout their editorial. National headlines about desegregation captured the attention of the Tuskegee editors and writers. In "Editorially Speaking," the staff broke the news about an impending aviation program that would be housed on Tuskegee's campus, yet the benefits would be shared with African Americans across the country.⁵⁰ The *Campus Digest* believed an aviation program was "a worthwhile first step" in the struggle for racial equality.⁵¹ A few months later, splashed across the front-page was a story about the approval of the Air Pilot Training Program, which was another celebration of racial achievement but without the acrimony displayed by the *Pittsburgh Courier* during the presidential election.⁵²

⁴⁶ William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, Teaching for Social Justice 6 (New York: Teaching College Press, 2001).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ *The Campus Digest*, December 7, 1935, 2.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ "Aviation at Tuskegee," *The Campus Digest*, May 20, 1939, 2.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² "Tuskegee Approved For Air Pilot Training Program," *The Campus Digest*, October 25, 1939,

The *Campus Digest* insisted that their readers know their history. In a February 14, 1940 editorial, the editors and writers believed a “celebration of Negro History Week” was “A Worthy Cause.” This demonstration of reverence for the accomplishments of their black predecessors was notable and remained consistent with the *Campus Digest*’s ideology that racial uplift included public recognition. In the March 27, 1940 issue, race was discussed prominently in the “Editorially Speaking” section. In December 1938, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Lloyd Gaines, a qualified black man who was denied admission into the University of Missouri Law School because of the color of his skin.⁵³ Capturing the momentum of the Lloyd Gaines versus Missouri case, the editors and writers focused on how this decision impacted African Americans in Alabama. The *Campus Digest* wrote about talks among state educators and political leaders to establish a graduate program at the Alabama State College, a black school in Montgomery. In addition, Tuskegee could receive “a new \$60,000 vocational agriculture and home economics building.”⁵⁴ However, far beyond the material outcomes from these talks, was the substance in the editorial. So even after been situated in one of poorest counties (Macon County) in Alabama and virtually ignored by government officials and community leaders for generations, in 1940 the *Campus Digest* showed sympathy for the white decision-makers and the dismal record of whites in the South: “We realize what the southern states are fighting against, and we sympathize with the leaders in these states for their lot is not an easy one in face of the deeply imbedded prejudices which are in the mores and customs of the southland.”⁵⁵

⁵³ “A Supreme Triumph, Then Into the Shadows,” *The New York Times*, July 11, 2009.

⁵⁴ “Alabama and the Gaines Decision,” *The Campus Digest*, March 27, 1940, 2.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Evident in this issue and several others was a steady current of white empathy. The writings were rooted in politeness, appropriate expectations, and unconditional patience rather than being penned with the intent to agitate to demand immediate change. These tendencies found in the Black Press and *Campus Digest* were labeled by many in the Black Vanguard as perplexing at best. Often, Washington was referred to as an “Uncle Tom” because of his accommodating disposition toward whites and interracial interactions.⁵⁶ However, scholar August Meier said Washington’s ideology was contradictory.⁵⁷ His public persona as a white accommodationist was consistent: “that through thrift, industry, and Christian character Negroes would eventually attain their constitutional rights.” But privately he exhibited elements of white resistance, according to Meier’s research. Much like the *Campus Digest* writings, which could be interpreted in the same manner – hypocritical and confounding at times.

On the same page, the *Campus Digest* staff wrote an editorial under the headline “Interracial Relations in America.”⁵⁸ The crux of the piece hinged on how a new year revived discussions about race. The students used the recent resignation of Hampton Institute’s president as an entry point into a discussion about race: “We do feel that the selection of a president for this important school for the training of the Negro youth should be based on the available material, overlooking nothing, and certainly not placing an inferior man into this position because of his race.”⁵⁹ Although the close relationship between Hampton Institute (later renamed Hampton University in Virginia) and

⁵⁶ *Uncle Tom or New Negro?: African Americans Reflect on Booker T. Washington and Up From Slavery 100 Years Later*, ed. Rebecca Carroll (New York: Harlem Moon, 2006) 94-105.

⁵⁷ August Meier, *Negro Thought in America 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1966), 103.

⁵⁸ “Interracial Relations in America,” *The Campus Digest*, March 27, 1940, 2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Tuskegee was well known, what has been under researched is how their relationship and belief in moderate to restrained discussions about race deeply influenced the students – generation after generation, issue after issue. So even when the students had opportunities to test their own assertions about race and challenge the status quo on the pages of their newspaper, they followed the path well traveled by those who lead their school – from Booker T. Washington to Robert R. Moton to Frederick D. Patterson to Luther H. Foster, Jr.⁶⁰

News about Tuskegee being approved as a site for the “first all Negro pursuit squadron training base,” was the lead story on the front-page of the February 14, 1941 issue. These men enlisted in this inaugural squadron would go on to form the famed Tuskegee Airmen. Clearly, the *Campus Digest* exhibited racial pride especially when it came to tangible accomplishments. Nevertheless, the student editors and writers struggled to strike a consistent even-handedness between racial advocacy and accountability. Oftentimes, the *Campus Digest* preferred to use their voice to unabashedly hold blacks publicly accountable for their fate, and not blindly advocate for African American liberation.

Unlike their counterparts in the black college student-run press at places included in this study such as Bennett, Clark, and Southern, the *Campus Digest* staff viewed racial problems as “an infringement of majority right” not just African Americans.⁶¹ In a November 15, 1941 editorial, the staff believed: “Any attack upon the rights of a minority

⁶⁰ These four men served as principal/president of Tuskegee: Booker T. Washington, 1881-1915; Robert Russa Moton, 1915-1935; Frederick Douglass Patterson, 1935-1953; and Luther Hilton Foster, Jr., 1953-1981. “Legacy of Leadership,” Tuskegee University, http://www.tuskegee.edu/about_us/legacy_of_leadership.aspx (accessed February 22, 2016).

⁶¹ “The Right of the Minority,” *The Campus Digest*, November 15, 1941, 2.

whittles away the rights of all. . . . In this country we do NOT have the rights of minorities, OR majorities. We HAVE the privilege of choice by the majority; the obligation of cooperation by the minority. The rights belong to all, on complete equality and with differentiation, for that is the democratic way of life.” Staff writer Ruth Taylor still laid the onus of patience and affability on racial matters at the feet of African Americans, who had weathered hundreds of years of mental, emotional, and physical abuse.⁶²

With all the government attention thrust upon Tuskegee due to its historical relevance as well as pioneering faculty, discussion of race and war were not surprising vents. Still, the aggressive tenor in a November 3, 1944 editorial with the headline “Negro Students in a World at War” was an anomaly on the pages of the *Campus Digest*. The student editors and writers chastised the military for allowing blacks to go unrecognized for their contributions. They winced at the fact that African Americans were not receiving their basic constitutional rights. Without directly mentioning the *Pittsburgh Courier’s* Double V Campaign, they assailed U.S. leaders for failing to act to create a racially equal landscape for the same men and women who sacrificed themselves in the name of protecting America.

At that very moment, it was as if the *Campus Digest* had an epiphany about race and its suffocating grasp on the black community as well as society: “Americans are now learning the lesson the hard way . . . a hard and bitter way. We are learning that descent and honest race relationships are no longer a matter of individual integrity, but a question

⁶² Ibid.

involving our collective honor as a nation.”⁶³ This was a powerful about-face for a student-run publication that had been conciliatory and self-deprecating for most of this study. Subsequently, on the same page the *Campus Digest* published an editorial with the headline, “I am an American,” and challenged the notion that blacks were inferior and un-American because of the color of their skin.⁶⁴ The uncanny optimism that peppered the pages in previous issues had vanished. The editors and writers expressed that “Yet deep down in my American soil, I feel that I must have faith in the impossible.” It was a candid and unique glimpse into the fears of the *Campus Digest* during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s.

Finally in the January 31, 1956 issue of the *Campus Digest*, discussions about students rejecting the idea that race should determine sporting contest. Georgia Tech was scheduled to play Pittsburgh, but the state of Georgia threatened to cancel the game because the opposing team had one “Negro” player.⁶⁵ In the end, the Georgia Tech students fought to play the game much to the chagrin of state politicians and bigots. The *Campus Digest* wrote, “From this experience, it would appear to me the younger people are fed up with the incessant emphasis on the race problem and find football a more serious subject.”⁶⁶

Perhaps it was the constant focus on race that persuaded the students on the *Campus Digest* to downplay its significance in the first half of this study. In addition, it was the evolution of black college students into more seasoned critical and independent thinkers on a rural campus that was on display. Either way, the students found their voice

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ R. P. Smith, “Student Revolts Important!” *The Campus Digest*, January 31, 1956, 2.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

to discuss race and take a position that may have been unpopular or familiar in an effort to uncover their views.

Political Shenanigans in The Campus Digest

In the *Campus Digest*, political news traversed the globe. In a January 9, 1937 editorial, “Shall History Repeat Itself,” the staff wrote about Germany’s reputation and actions that “drew the United States into the war.” The *Campus Digest* recognized how newspapers were an instrumental part of American democracy. After reading an editorial in the white daily newspaper the *Montgomery Advertiser*, the staff fixated on this sentence: “The *Advertiser* for once is not willing to see a handful of police officers bring grief to our citizens by wantonly abusing and humiliating people of color (only because people of color do not vote their strength in our elections).”⁶⁷ The editors and writers believed “half of the South’s problems” coalesced around a disinterested and disenfranchised electorate.⁶⁸ Not only did the *Campus Digest* agree with the power of voting, they urged their readers to use the ballot box to advocate for social changes: “The extent to which certain members of society are deprived of the ballot determines the extent to which democracy is given to ten per cent of the population we might say that we have gone one-tenth of the way toward democracy.”⁶⁹

Politics and race intersected on the pages of the *Campus Digest*. On the front-page of the November 2, 1940 *Campus Digest*, the editors and writers published a wire article about President Theodore Roosevelt naming the “first Negro Army General in U.S. History.” It was the news that Col. Benjamin O. Davis Sr. received a much-deserved

⁶⁷ “Editorially Speaking,” *The Campus Digest*, May 4, 1940, 2.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

promotion.⁷⁰ This discussion was both racially and politically motivated. The newspaper circled back to the power of voting to a black citizen. In a March 1, 1941 issue on the editorial page, the staff discussed the punitive effects of the poll tax especially on sharecroppers. They pushed their readers to remain engaged in every aspect of the political process while in college: “The Negro must first show that he can and will cooperate in issues of politics vital to the race before he can gain that recognition from other races which he has so long, striven to get.”⁷¹ The *Campus Digest*’s assertion ran parallel to Washington making the connection between the student-run newspaper and the legendary Tuskegee president noteworthy. Washington said it was “proper that Negroes would have to measure up to American standards of morality and material prosperity if they were to succeed in the Social Darwinist race of life.”⁷²

The student editors and writers visited the war to awaken readers’ interest in their civic responsibilities. In the January 17, 1942 issue, the *Campus Digest* staff published a reprint of an editorial with excerpts from President Roosevelt’s address asking all Americans to do their part in securing a victory for America. The student editors and writers interpreted this call to action as a reason to forgive the political and racial atrocities of the past that kept blacks sequestered from the American dream of equality: “In this crisis he has asked us all to do our part. We will not forsake him. Although our nation is still infested with Talmadges and others, we will try now to forget any wrongs

⁷⁰ “Roosevelt Names First Negro Army General in U.S. History,” *The Campus Digest*, November 2, 1940, 2.

⁷¹ “The Southern College Student and the Ballot,” *The Campus Digest*, March 1, 1941, 2.

⁷² Meier, *Negro Thought in America 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington*, 103.

that have been inflicted upon us.”⁷³ This stance was similar to others in the Black Press, who wrangled with the government over discriminatory practices such as Mildred Brown of the *Omaha Star Newspaper* yet decided to support the war as a means of racial solidarity, economic growth, and a gateway to demand equality aboard and at home.⁷⁴

The *Campus Digest* knew their audience. They often referred to them as descendants of poor sharecroppers and “working people in the South,” and found themselves advocating for their fair treatment in political matters. In a March 14, 1942 editorial headlined “Votes for Soldiers,” the editors and writers argued that requiring a poll tax for black military men was un-American: “A boy from Alabama or Tennessee is not required to pay \$1.50 before he is allowed to man a gun or fly a plane against what he considers to be his enemy. A boy in Alabama still has to pay \$1.50 every year if he wants to vote for the men he wants to represent him in his government.”⁷⁵ According to journalism historian Patrick Washburn, similar rhetoric could be found on the pages of the Black Press during World War II when blacks were asked to make significant sacrifices in the name of patriotism.⁷⁶ The fact that the *Campus Digest* joined the chorus of black voices who cried for respect and recognition during wartime shows the connection between the student-run newspaper and the Black Press. Although the *Campus Digest* staff opted to follow the teachings of Washington and did not frequently agree with the lion share of their mentors in the Black Press, they did follow their lead on certain issues. World War II was one of those issues. For the *Campus Digest*, the war

⁷³ <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/government-politics/eugene-talmadge-1884-1946>

⁷⁴ Amy Helene Forss, *Black Print with a White Carnation: Mildred Brown and the Omaha Star Newspaper 1938-1989* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 83.

⁷⁵ “Votes for Soldiers,” *The Campus Digest*, March 14, 1942, 2.

⁷⁶ Patrick S. Washburn, “J. Edgar Hoover and The Black Press in World War II,” *Journalism History* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1986).

symbolized the contradictory position African Americans found themselves in throughout this study.

Since Tuskegee was the epicenter of a first of its kind military aviation program, the concern for African Americans coupled with unconditional support for the war stirred a renewed urgency for the *Campus Digest* when it came to racial freedom. An editorial that featured excerpts from author, attorney, and political operative Wendell Wilkie's book "One World" that pushed the country toward equality: "As long as we compromise with a double standard of democracy for white and colored Americans, as we have done for nearly three and one-quarter centuries, we are compromising the basic principles upon which this country is founded" ⁷⁷ The political musings of the *Campus Digest* may have focused on the poll tax and military equality, but their perspectives in this arena showcased a maturing voice. And following Washington's lead who once said: "I do not favor the Negro's giving up anything which is fundamental and which has been guaranteed to him by the Constitution It is not best for him to relinquish his rights; nor would his doing so be best for the Southern white man." ⁷⁸ The *Campus Digest* agreed.

Without Community, We are Merely Existing

The student editors and writers were baptized in a doctrine of self-help, personal accountability, and to exhibit an enduring spirit of cooperation. It was difficult to be a Tuskegee student during the first half of the twentieth century and not embody Booker T. Washington's attitude and standards to hold blacks responsible for their destiny. This

⁷⁷ "Freedom is an Indivisible Word," *The Campus Digest*, February 5, 1944, 2.

⁷⁸ Meier, *Negro Thought in America 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington*, 109.

same temperament spilled into the pages of the *Campus Digest*, especially in matters of community building.

In a November 24, 1938 editorial, the staff charged their readers with having “a passive attitude” about the issues ailing the African American community including sleeping in class. The *Campus Digest* viewed these lackadaisical behaviors as detrimental to communal progress: “We say to each student, wake up, and wake up your fellow students.”⁷⁹ A commonly held theory among black leaders was the race’s future rested with its youth.⁸⁰ In an editorial under the headline, “The Future of Youth” the staff wrote. “We need only to open our eyes to see that there is a great need for leadership.” Certainly leadership was not a singular problem for African Americans, particularly in the rural South, but it was an obstacle the *Campus Digest* identified that impeded building a stronger community.

The *Campus Digest* recognized early on that community problems were being served up daily. They asked students not be overwhelmed by the magnitude of communal needs, but to find solace in their abilities to lead and the benefit their service would bring to the black community: “Racial injustice, crime, and poverty date back before the birth of Christ (For reference we ask that you read your Bible).”⁸¹ More strikingly, the editors and writers used this platform to rally their readers to their feet: “As youth we are undaunted by fears of anything that might be labeled “problem.”⁸² This assertion connected with the infusion of energy and ideas that youth brought to the fight for justice.

⁷⁹ “Observant,” *The Campus Digest*,” November 24, 1938, 2.

⁸⁰ NAACP article

⁸¹ “Problems vs. Progress,” *The Campus Digest*, November 15, 1941, 2.

⁸² Ibid.

In a rather scathing editorial summarizing Tuskegee's culture, the *Campus Digest* resorted to name calling to capture their readers' attention about habits that were draining the community of its promise. In a December 13, 1941 editorial, the staffers said "the average Tuskegee student doesn't know what culture is, has never had any, and doesn't want any." At its core, the *Campus Digest* wanted the students to "realize that the most important benefits of education are the habits and attitudes" acquired "during our four years in college, rather than the soon-forgotten material we learn from books."⁸³ This chastising was similar to Rebecca Stiles Taylor's tone in the *Chicago Defender*.⁸⁴ Unencumbered by social graces and empowered by outrage, the *Campus Digest* used their words to engage their readers' conscious to bring about change. So similar to Booker T. Washington's philosophical rival W.E.B. Du Bois, the student editors and writers referred to the concept of the *Talented Tenth* to promote a heightened sense of self-awareness and community responsibility: "We, who are college trained, are destined to become leaders of our race. If we leave college as uncouth, socially and culturally, as when we entered, then those four years of effort and those hundreds of dollars consumed have been in vain."⁸⁵ Most prophetic was that the *Campus Digest* reprinted this editorial from a previous issue because student behavior remained stagnant and, in return, stalled community uplift. Like the Black Press, the *Campus Digest* became an unapologetic public accountability system: "We cannot blame other races for discriminating against us, when we cannot prove ourselves competent to enjoy and appreciate those social privileges that we are denied."

⁸³ "Culture and Our Student Body," *The Campus Digest*, December 13, 1941, 2.

⁸⁴ Caryl Cooper, "Selling Negro Women to Negro Women and to the World: Rebecca Stiles Taylor and the Chicago Defender, 1939-1945," *Journalism History* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2014): 242.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

In an attempt to quell dissent within the Tuskegee community as well as the black community-at-large, the *Campus Digest* wrote an editorial with the headline “Our Common Objective” to convince students to focus on their similarities instead of dwelling on the aspects that separate them from peace. In the October 2, 1942 issue, the student editors and writers said: “Let’s talk about our common objective – not the differences which those alien agitators within our borders are trying to stress.” The *Campus Digest* was alluding to the rancor caused by the likes of Civil Rights activists such as A. Philip Randolph who asserted that only by the might of like-minded crusaders would the battle for racial freedom be won.⁸⁶

Thinking about the concept of building global community, the *Campus Digest* believed being tolerant of racial and cultural differences was not enough to bring about respect.⁸⁷ From the student editors and writers’ perspective, America’s claim to be a melting pot should be reinforced with true understanding as well as acceptance, and not simply an act of suffering through a state of coexistence.⁸⁸ In the October 17, 1942 editorial, the staff wrote: “Mutual understanding means mutual trust – the belief in and knowledge of each other that is the great unifying force which can weld us into a nation invincible to attack” It was this analysis by the *Campus Digest* that underscored their maturity and similarities to their mentors in the Black Press. There was a level of awareness that positioned the *Campus Digest* as a student-run newspaper determined to honor their past with a unique perspective on the present needs of blacks to build a vibrant community. For example, towards the end of the editorial, the student editors and

⁸⁶ Paula F. Pfeffer, *A. Philip Randolph, Pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 44.

⁸⁷ “Tolerance Is Not Enough,” *The Campus Digest*, October 17, 1942, 2.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

writers' words drew from history to explain their present-day reality: "The *Campus Digest* wishes to remind the business men of this community that in 1900 Booker T. Washington founded the National Negro Business League (NNBL). The purpose of this league was to promote efficiency among Negro business men in this country. Dr. Washington realized that the opportunities which would be available to young Negroes would depend a great deal upon the successful development of Negro businesses."⁸⁹ The collective economic vulnerability of the community was far too great to be left to the strength of a divided race. Washington fully believed that the pipeline to respect and acceptance for African Americans was to show their worth through hard work, and the creation of a sustainable, independent revenue stream that contributed to the South and the nation's economy.⁹⁰ The *Campus Digest* understood this inescapable detail in building a resilient black community.

Tuskegee's student-run newspaper took their understanding of issues plaguing the future of African Americans, and applied it to the dangers of unchecked campus failings. In a March 10, 1951 editorial with the headline "Our Weak Student Body," the *Campus Digest* wrote that the Tuskegee community could only thrive with "more convincing leadership." Additionally, the staff writer Robert Thurman believed that a muted student voice did not "secure the things we need by not being able to voice ourselves as one gigantic group."⁹¹ The fractured Tuskegee community was a microcosm of a larger black community that was struggling to find itself during three decades (1930s, 1940s, and 1950s) of tremendous social unrest, and African Americans were working to find their

⁸⁹ "Negro Business," *The Campus Digest*, November 11, 1947, 2.

⁹⁰ Raymond W. Smock, *Booker T. Washington: Black Leadership in the Age of Jim Crow* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2009).

⁹¹ Robert Thurman, "Our Weak Student Body," *The Campus Digest*, March 10, 1951, 2.

voice. But much like their mentors in the Black Press, the *Campus Digest* used their voice to correct fissures that blocked unity: “As College students, we lack initiative, spirit of cooperation, resourcefulness, and above all – leadership.”⁹²

In a December 15, 1954 editorial calling for students to stretch themselves beyond mundane activities such as talking too much, squandering spare time on mindless pursuits, and sacrificing scholarly reading for daydreaming.⁹³ College life, according to the *Campus Digest*, was not a time for complacency.⁹⁴ The staff believed it was a time to explore their privilege and duty to their race. In a December 17, 1956 editorial they shared with their readers that college was absolutely “no plateau for complacency, for we leave here to lead a world of bullets, ballots, and backwardness.”⁹⁵

Borrowing from their forefather Booker T. Washington, community building within a fractured race was paramount to repairing brokenness lingering from the past, kept alive by the Jim Crow South, and elevating blacks out of the fringes of society.⁹⁶ The *Campus Digest* was unafraid to take risks with their voice, which held those attending Tuskegee between 1930 to 1959 responsible for their role in leading and healing their community.

Conservative Campus Digest Discovered an Irreverent Voice

The *Campus Digest* was not immune to influences from their school’s past and present-day reality. The tone of the newspaper mirrored the beliefs of their famed organizer and former president, Booker T. Washington. In part, the *Campus Digest’s*

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ “Broaden Yourself,” *The Campus Digest*, December 15, 1954, 2.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ “College and Complacency,” *The Campus Digest*, December 17, 1956, 2.

⁹⁶ Raymond W. Smock, *Booker T. Washington: Black Leadership in the Age of Jim Crow*.

rural seclusion contributed significantly to their adherence to the Tuskegee Machine doctrine of self-reliance, agriculture or industrial education and careers as well as shying away from serving as agitators on matters of race. The student-run newspaper used their voice more assertively in discussions surrounding politics. Their sentiments about political shortcomings were directed to students and the politicians who often legislatively controlled the fate of African Americans. Even more pronounced was the voice of the *Campus Digest* on matters of community building. Historically, this position remained consistent with Washington's ideology that blacks were responsible for their fate by exhibiting a cooperative spirit and harnessing a strong work ethic. While their connection to the Black Press was evident, unlike the other student-run newspapers in the study, the *Campus Digest* acquiesced to white pressure that swirled around the campus to be patient, understanding, and forgiving when it came to freeing themselves from oppression.

CHAPTER VII - CONCLUSION

Unequivocally, journalism historians have ignored the prolific legacy of the black college press. While scholars have explored the offerings of white college newspapers, the black college press has been disproportionately neglected, essentially muting the prophetic contributions of hundreds of African American student journalists who used their voices to advocate for social justice, communal solidarity, and outline an America that included them as worthy citizens. On the early twentieth century black college campus, student-run newspapers were considered to have the same appeal as a bricks and mortar gathering place to discuss an array of topics, which enhanced the collective knowledge of black communities.

This study merely begins to introduce the importance of such an understudied chapter of the Black Press, African Americans, and United States history. For the first time, the unique voices, conflicted perspectives, and colorful as well as humorous introspections of black college student editors and writers are finally being heard concerning the merits of World War II, the usefulness and expansive reach of the professional Black Press, and the suffocating venom of a Jim Crow South. Their remembrances, perspectives, and curiosities provide much-needed texture to the African American struggle for respect and recognition. In addition, this research provides a glimpse into the occurrences on black college campuses that were often tucked away from whites, assumed to be inescapably inferior, and undeserving of recognition or acclaim.

Equally as notable is the timeframe of this study: 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Scholar Lorraine Ahearn characterized the relationship between African Americans and

the mass media in the 1930s as a "crystallized moment of poignant contrast. . . between aspiration and harsh reality. In cinema, Lena Horne broke racial barriers just as Hattie McDaniel was acclaimed for her performances as a cheerful slave; FDR's New Deal passed, but left out domestic workers and sharecroppers."¹ So as African Americans faced escalating threats, they turned to their newspapers to make sense of it all. In the first half of the twentieth century, many newspapers in the black college press were publishing their inaugural issues with edicts of advocacy such as the one published in the *Bennett Banner* as the country wrestled with "assigning" a place for countless marginalized African American citizens. The newspapers on black college campuses began as a training laboratory for future journalists, strategic and critical thinkers, and unashamed dreamers. For blacks, who were routinely abandoned by their government, forsaken by their white, religiously-bond masters and liberal supporters, as well as divided from within by federally approved medical experiments on *Tuskegee Institute's* campus, black colleges viewed newspapering as a way to equip their students with a beneficial expertise, which could never be taken away from them. It was also a skill that, if properly used, could liberate their race from oppressive stereotypes and unrestrained bigotry.

Likewise, journalism was the instrument of choice for hundreds of black college students including those who attended *Clark University* searching for opportunities to express themselves, along with comfort and convict their readers. On a black college campus, the student-run newspaper was the threshold into not only a career in journalism

¹ Lorraine Ahearn, "When Hollywood Crossed the Color Line: Jime Crow Movie Censors and Black Audience Resistance in Greensboro, North Carolina, 1937-1938" in *African Americans in the History of Mass Communication: A Reader* ed. Naeemah Clark (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2014), 90.

with the Black Press or the gateway to owning a newspaper like Robert Abbott, but a greater sense of the sobering responsibility they had to themselves and their community. Consider the engine powering the black college student-run press on *Hampton Institute's* campus was fueled by youthful altruism, and an irrepressible desire to contribute positively to the needs of their besieged race. The five schools in the study shared numerous similarities and stark contrasts; however, this project demonstrates how all of their editorial decisions nurtured an escalating movement on black college campuses to demand social equity. The work of the black college student-run press served as an undeniable pipeline into building and sustaining the Modern Day Civil Rights Movement before the effort received a formal label.

While the notion of the black college press, as a legitimate extension of the Black Press is a new concept posited by this researcher, evidence of the inherent connection can be traced to the inception of these student-run publications. The number of black journalists, who routinely visited black college campuses including *Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College*, and how those interactions awakened students from a malaise of indifference and intimidation into a belief that their voices mattered and deserved to be heard along with the Black Vanguard can be attributed to the work of the Black Press. Sociologist John L. White has written extensively about the communal ties that bind African Americans to communicate with as well as protect and uplift each other. The black college press exhibited a heightened sense of duty bound community service when it came to publishing meaningful editorial decisions that would leave evidence of their network's might and enduring value. During the leanest of times at black colleges, African American student editors and writers huddled in closet sized

newsrooms, shared classroom space, and physically and philosophically reinvented themselves to produce worldly views rooted in facts, and penned with passion. From this exploration, the black college press avoided what scholar Carter G. Woodson referred to as "estrangement from the masses, the very people upon whom they must eventually count for carrying out a program of progress."² Their work kept them connected to the struggle outside of their campus.

Even though racism was occasionally documented on the pages of the white student press, it was never a consistent focal point. Yet, the black college press like their mentors in the Black Press made it their mission to expose the frailties of their world and, at the same time, they worked to show themselves as well-versed journalists, who could persuade readers to question their roles and responsibilities as well as re-imagine their place in society. Politically, African Americans had long been abandoned by racially insensitive legislation, endured steep poll taxes, and were on the receiving end of targeted campaigns laced with vile diatribes to keep them oppressed socioeconomically and emotionally by the likes of Mississippi Senator Theodore Bilbo or Georgia Governor Eugene Talmadge. But usually, the African American voices that spoke against this systematic disenfranchisement were named Mary Church Terrell, W.E.B. Du Bois, or Robert S. Abbott, not the nameless women and men enrolled at black college campuses in the South. Pleas for communal solidarity usually rang from the pulpits of African American Baptist churches, and off the tongues of storefront preachers – some unknown and others on their ascent to become the leading voice of the Modern Day Civil Rights Movement like Reverend Martin L. King, Jr.. However, the steady call for an end to

² Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* repr. (New York, NY: Eworld, Inc. 2012), 52.

pettiness in the African American community was also being heard across black college campuses and led by student journalists, similar to those at *Hampton*. Quite literally, black college editors and writers were educating and empowering their classmates about the residual underpinnings of racial hatred, political gerrymandering, and communal disarray that would certainly sabotage any chance of unadulterated freedom. So the work of the black college student-run press was helping to build a consensus, an informed electorate energized to bring about lasting change.

What also emerged in the study was the professional Black Press being the actual and figurative mentors to students leading the black college press. While the relationship may not have been formalized, it was demonstrated by not only face-to-face interaction but also the consistent emulation of their mentors' work, disposition, and skill set. The fact that the black college press students embraced the role of advocacy and underscored their investment in their own struggle for liberation. In addition, this study dismantles the myth that African Americans were disinterested or intellectually incapable of navigating ways to educate and galvanize around a common cause. Scholar Ray Stannard Baker wrote in his classic book that at the turn of the century, "a large part of the South still believes that the Negro was created to serve the white man, and for no other purpose."³ The reservoir of their work aptly proves the fallacy of this assertion reinforced for decades in a jaundiced white media. Their tireless, and often selfless efforts were evidence of them sharpening their editing, writing, and communication skills for later use. Consequently, working on their student-run publications further allowed them to hone interpersonal communication, time management, and leadership skills, which

³ Ray Stannard Baker, *Following the Color Line, an Account of Negro Citizenship, in the American Democracy* repr. 1908 (New York, NY: Forgotten Books, 2012), 295.

translated into other careers – not exclusively journalism centric industries, but skills that lent themselves to law, science, and education.

The work in the black student-run newspapers meant an elevated status on campus. Their professors, administrators, and peers considered them knowledgeable as well as competent leaders. So the prestige from the experience was a confidence booster in an imbalanced world. And while the black college press endured numerous attempts – similar to their mentors in the Black Press – to be censored by their campus administration, alumni, and classmates, the experience gave them an intimate understanding of why editorial freedom amounted to a potent currency when their race still had not firmly secured their basic civil rights without fearing retaliation. Joining the ranks of the black college press gave the students practice to fight for their beliefs on a larger, more treacherous stage.

The historians interviewed for this project adamantly agreed that the black college press embodied the best of what black youth had to offer in the racial uplift movement. Their eagerness and abilities positioned African Americans as teachable, reliable, and credible thinkers. To a varying degree, the student-run newspaper elevated the school's reputation and became a recruiting tool. The publications were tangible evidence to potential students as well as alumnus that the school's curriculum was thriving and designed to bring success. Since the black college editors and writers were primarily advocates, it might be assumed that they were blind supporters of the status quo; however, they were mature enough to disagree with messages from the Black Press, Black Vanguard, NAACP, and even legends such as Booker T. Washington. Indeed, all their editorial decisions were not synchronized. Their opinions reflected a spirit of seeing

the world from an uninhibited lens not jaded by the world's caustic morality. It is unclear where the student editors and writers from *Bennett, Clark, Hampton, Southern, and Tuskegee* landed after their service on the newspaper. But what is clear is the power their work served as an important channel to learning about their world, the richness of the black college experience, their people, and unmasking of their voice.

This study had limitations. It did not include schools from other regions of the country so the findings represent partial reactions to the project's themes: race, politics, and community building. Finally, gender was omitted from the study, but the exploration into how African American women were covered by the black college press as well as the leadership roles they assumed in the black college press is a worthy project.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Ahearn, Lorraine. "When Hollywood Crossed the Color Line: Jim Crow Movie Censors and Black Audience Resistance in Greensboro, North Carolina, 1937-1938," in *African Americans in the History of Mass Communication*, ed. Naeemah Clark. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2014. 90-107.
- Alexander, Jeffrey C. *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- _____. *The Civil Sphere*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 17.
- Baker, Ray Stannard. *Following the Color Line, an Account of Negro Citizenship, In the American Democracy*. New York, NY: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1908. 292-307.
- Ballard, Allen B. *The Education of Black Folk: The Afro-American Struggle for Knowledge in White America*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1973.
- Bell, Gregory S. *Uncle Tom or New Negro?: African Americans Reflect on Booker T. Washington and Up From Slavery 100 Years Later*. ed. Rebecca Carroll. New York, NY: Harlem Moon, 2006) 94-105.
- Bilbo, Theodore G. *Take Your Choice: Separation or Mongrelization*. Poplarville, MS: Dream House Publishing Co., 1947.
- Blassingame, John. *The Slave Community*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1972.
- Bradley, Stefan. "The First and Finest: The Founders of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity" in *Black Greek-Letter Organizations in the 21st Century: Our Fight Has Just Begun*, ed. Gregory Parks. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2008.
- Brawley, James P. *The Clark College Legacy: An Interpretive History of Relevant Education 1869-1975*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Broussard, Jinx C. *Giving a Voice to the Voiceless: Four Pioneering Black Women Journalists*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2004.

- Brown, Elsa Barkley. "What Has Happened Here": The Politics of Difference in Women's History and Feminist Politics," in *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women's History*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King and Linda Reed. Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1995.
- Brown, Linda Beatrice. *The Long Walk: The Story of the Presidency of Willa B. Player at Bennett College*. Virginia: McCain Printing Co., 1998.
- _____. *Belles of Liberty: Gender, Bennett College, and the Civil Rights Movement in Greensboro, North Carolina*. Greensboro, NC: Women and Wisdom Press, 2013.
- Brown, Tamara L., Gregory Parks, and Clarenda M. Phillips. *African American Fraternities and Sororities: The Legacy and the Vision*. Lexington: University of Kentucky, 2005.
- Bynum, Thomas. *NAACP Youth and the Fight for Black Freedom, 1936-1965*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Chafe, William H. *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Chateauvert, Melinda. *Marching Together: Women of the Sleeping Car Porters*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998.
- Carson, Clayborne, and Kris Shepard, ed. *A Call to Conscience: The Landmark Speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York, NY: Warner Books, 2001.
- Cohen, Lizabeth. *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Collier-Thomas, Bettye, and V.P. Franklin. *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights – Black Power Movement*. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2001.
- Coulter, Charles E. *Take Up the Black Man's Burden: Kansas City's African American Communities, 1865-1939*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006.
- Cox, Marcus S. *Segregated Soldiers: Military Training at Historically Black Colleges in the Jim Crow South*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013.
- Dann, Martin E. ed., *The Black Press 1827-1890: The Quest for National Identity*. New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1971.

- Dawson, Michael C. "A Black Counterpublic? Economic Earthquakes, Racial Agenda(s), and Black Politics," in *The Black Public Sphere*, ed. Black Public Sphere Collective. Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- DuBois, W.E.B. *The Talented Tenth*. 1903: repr., California: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013.
- _____. *Black Reconstruction in America*. 1935: repr., New York, NY: Free Press, 1998.
- Emanuel, Rachel L., and Alexander P. Tureaud Jr. *A More Noble Cause: A.P. Tureaud and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Louisiana*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2011.
- Engs, Robert Francis. *Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999.
- Evans, Stephanie. "The Vision of Virtuous Women: The Twenty Pearls of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority" in *Black Greek-Letter Organizations in the 21st Century: Our Fight Has Just Begun*, ed. Gregory Parks. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2008.
- Eyerman, Ron. *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Forss, Amy Helene. *Black Print with a White Carnation: Mildred Brown and the Omaha Star Newspaper 1938-1989*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013.
- Franklin, John Hope. *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947.
- Franklin, Robert Michael. *Liberating Visions: Human Fulfillment and Social Justice in African-American Thought*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1990.
- Fraser, Nancy. "Rethinking the Public Sphere," in *The Phantom Public Sphere*," ed. Bruce Robbins. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1993.
- Frazier, E. Franklin. *Black Bourgeoisie: The Rise of a New Middle Class in the United States*. New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1957.
- Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1983.
- Gaines, Kevin K. *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

- Gasman, Marybeth. *Envisioning Black Colleges: A History of the United Negro College Fund*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007.
- Gates Jr., Henry Louis. ed. "Race," *Writings, and Difference*. Illinois: University of Chicago Press Journals, 1992.
- Giddings, Paula. *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*. New York, NY: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1984.
 _____. *In Search of Sisterhood: Delta Sigma Theta and the Challenge of the Black Sorority Movement*. 1988, repr. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006.
- Graham, Lawrence Otis. *Our Kind of People: Inside America's Black Upper Class*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999.
- Griggs Fleming, Cynthia. "Black Women Activists and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee: The Case of Ruby Doris Smith Robinson" in *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women's History*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King and Linda Reed. Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1995.
- Grossman, James R. *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration*. Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Gurin, Patricia, and Edgar Epps. *Black Consciousness, Identity, and Achievement: A Study of Students in Historically Black Colleges*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1975.
- Gutman, Herbert G. *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom 1750-1925*. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1976.
- Hall, Stuart. "Encoding/Decoding" in *Media Studies, A Reader*, ed. Sue Thornham, Caroline Bassett, and Paul Marris. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2009.
- Harlan, Louis. preface to *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Harris, Jessica, and Vernon C. Mitchell Jr. "A Narrative Critique of Black Greek-Letter Organizations and Social Action," in *Black Greek-Letter Organizations in the 21st Century: Our Fight Has Just Begun*, ed. Gregory Parks. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2008.
- Havighurst, Walter. *The Miami Years 1809-1984*. New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1984.

- Hill Collins, Patricia. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2008.
- Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," in *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women's History*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King and Linda Reed. Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1995.
- Hogan, Lawrence D. *Black National News Service: The Associated Negro Press and Claude Barnett, 1919-1945*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984.
- Holmes, Dwight Oliver Wendell. *The Evolution of the Negro College*. New York, NY: AMS Press Inc., 1934.
- hooks, bell. *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1981.
- _____. *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000.
- Hudson-Weems, Clenora. *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves*. Troy, MI: Bedford Publishers Inc., 1993.
- Jackson, Jr., David H. *A Chief Lieutenant of the Tuskegee Machine: Charles Banks of Mississippi*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002.
- Johnson, Yvonne. *The Voices of African American Women: The Use of Narrative and Authorial Voice in the Works of Harriet Jacobs, Zora Neale Hurston, and Alice Walker*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 1998.
- Jones, James H. *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment*. New York, NY: Free Press, 1981.
- Joyner Butler, Addie Louise. *The Distinctive Black College: Talladega, Tuskegee and Morehouse*. New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1977.
- Kennedy, David M. *Freedom From Fear*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Kimbrough, Walter M. *Black Greek 101: the Culture, Customs, and Challenges of Black Fraternities and Sororities*. Maryland: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003.
- Lawson, Steven F. *Black Ballots: Voting Rights in the South, 1944-1969*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1999.

- Levenstein, Lisa. *A Movement Without Marches*. North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
- Lippmann, Walter. *Public Opinion*. New York, NY: Free Press Paperbacks, 1922.
- Marks, Carole. *Farewell, We're Good and Gone: The Great Black Migration*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1989.
- Mayberry, B. D. *A Century of Agriculture in the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and Tuskegee University – 1890-1990*. New York, NY: Vantage Press, Inc., 1991.
- McHenry, Elizabeth. *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002.
- McKible, Adam. *The Black Press*, ed. Todd Vogel. New Jersey: Rutgers University, 2001.
- McQuail, Denis. *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory* 6th ed. New York, NY: Sage Publications, 2010.
- Meier, August. *Negro Thought in America 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966.
- Moore, Jacqueline M. *Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, and the Struggle for Racial Uplift*. Lanham, MD: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 2003.
- Mott, Frank Luther. *American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 260 years: 1690-1950 Revised Edition*. New York, NY: MacMillan Co., 1950.
- Negt, Oskar, and Kluge, Alexander. *Public Sphere and Experience—Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- Novick, Jeffrey. *The Civil Sphere*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Novick, Peter. *That Noble Dream*. Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Parker, Marjorie H. *Alpha Kappa Alpha in the Eye of the Beholder*. Chicago, IL: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., 1979.
- _____. *Alpha Kappa Alpha Through the Years 1908-1988*. Chicago, IL: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., 1990.

- Parks, Gregory S. *Black Greek-Letter Organizations in the Twenty-first Century: Our Fight Has Just Begun*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008.
- Payne, Charles M. *I've Got The Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*. Oakland: University of California Press, 1996.
- Penn, I. Garland. *The Afro-American Press and Its Editors*. Springfield, MA: Willey and Co., 1891.
- Perry, Theresa, Claude Steele, and Asa Hilliard III. *Young, Gifted, and Black: Promoting High Achievement Among African-American Students*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2003.
- Pfeffer, Paula F. A. *Philip Randolph, Pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990.
- Piven, Frances Fox, and Cloward, Richard A. *Regulating the Poor: the Functions of Public Welfare*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1993.
- Potter, Vilma Raskin. *Afro-American Publications and Editors, 1827-1946*. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1993.
- Pride, Armistead, and Clint C. Wilson II. *A History of The Black Press*. Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1997.
- Ransby, Barbara. *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2003.
- Rhodes, Jane. *Mary Ann Shadd Cary: The Black Press and Protest in the Nineteenth Century*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.
- Ross Jr., Lawrence C. *The Divine Nine: The History of African American Fraternities and Sororities*. New York, NY: Kensington Publishing Corp., 2000.
- Schudson, Micheal. *The Power of News*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Scott, Emmett J. *Negro Migration During the War*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1920.
- Simmons, Charles A. *The African American Press: A History of News Coverage During National Crises, with Special Reference to Four Black Newspapers, 1827-1965*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 1998.

- Shaw, Stephanie J. "Black Club Women and the Creation of the National Association of Colored Women, in *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women's History*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King and Linda Reed. Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1995.
- Smock, Raymond W. *Booker T. Washington: Black Leadership in the Age of Jim Crow*. Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2009.
- Squires, Catherine. "Black Audiences, Past and Present: Commonsense Media Critics and Activists" in *Say it Loud!*, ed. Robin R. Means Coleman. New York, NY: Routledge, 2002.
- _____. *African Americans and the Media*. Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2009.
- Streitmatter, Rodger. *Raising Her Voice: African American Women Journalists Who Changed History*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994.
- Suggs, Henry Lewis. ed., *The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983.
- Terborg-Penn, Rosalyn. "Discontented Black Feminists: Prelude and Postscript to the Passage of the Nineteenth Amendment," *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women's History*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King and Linda Reed. Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1995.
- Thompson, Daniel C. *Private Black Colleges at the Crossroads*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1973.
- Thompson, Julius E. *Percy Greene and the Jackson Advocate: The Lift and Times of a Radical Conservative Black Newspaperman 1897-1977*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 1994.
- Tosh, John. *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History*. New York, NY: Longman House, 1984.
- Tripp, Bernell. *Origins of The Black Press: New York, 1827-1847*. Northport, AL: Vision Press, 1992.
- Trotter Jr., Joe William. *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Tushnet, Mark. *Making Civil Rights Law: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court, 1936-1961*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994.

- Walden, Daniel. *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Crisis Writings*. Connecticut: Fawcett Premier Book, 1972.
- Whaley, Deborah Elizabeth. *Disciplining Women: Alpha Kappa Alpha, Black Counterpublics, and the Cultural Politics of Black Sororities*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010.
- Warner, Michael. *Publics and Counter Publics*. New York, NY: Zone Books, 2002.
- Washburn, Patrick S. *The African American Newspaper Voice of Freedom*. Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2006.
- Washington, Booker T. *Up From Slavery*. 1901; repr., New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1995.
- Watkins, William H. *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*. New York, NY: Teaching College Press, 2001.
- White, Joseph L. *The Psychology of Blacks: an Afro-American Perspective*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1984.
- White, Walter. *A Man Called White: The Autobiography of Walter White*. New York, NY: Viking, 1948.
- Whiting, Albert N. *Guardians of The Flame: Historically Black Colleges Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 1991.
- Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. New York, NY: Random House, 2010.
- Williams, Juan, and Ashley, Dwayne Ashley. *I'll Find a Way or Make One: A Tribute to Historically Black Colleges and Universities*. New York, NY: Amistad Publishing, 2004.
- Wilson, Clint C. *Black Journalists in Paradox: Historical Perspectives and Current Dilemmas*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991.
- Wolseley, Ronald E. *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 2nd ed. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990.
- Woodson, Carter G. *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861: A History of the Education of the Colored People of the United States from the Beginning of Slavery to the Civil War*. Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, Inc., 1919.

_____. *The Mis-Education of the Negro*. New York, NY: EWorld, Inc., 1933.

Zaki, Hoda M. *Civil Rights and Politics at Hampton Institute: The Legacy of Alonzo G. Moron*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007.

Scholarly Articles

Abbott, Allan. "High-School Journalism." *School Review* 18, no. 10 (December 1910): 657-658.

Allen, Walter R., Joseph O. Jewell, Kimberly A. Griffin, and De'Sha S. Wolf. "Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Honoring the Past, Engaging the Present, Touching the Future." *Journal of Negro Education* 76, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 263-280, 521-522, 524-527.

Allen, Richard L., and William T. Bielby. "Blacks' Relationship with the Print Media." *Journalism Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (Autumn 1979): 488-545.

Amana, Harry. "The Art of Propaganda: Charles Alston's World War II Editorial Cartoons for the Office of War Information and The Black Press." *American Journalism* 21, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 79.

Barnett, Barbara. "Feminists Shaping news: A Framing Analysis of News Releases from the National Organization for Women." *Journal of Public Relations Research* 17, no. 4 (2005): 341-362.

Baron, Robert C., and Samuel Scinta. "1950-1960 Peace and Prosperity: 1957 Eisenhower Sends Troops to Little Rock, Arkansas." *Millennium 2000 – 20th Century America: Key Events in History* (1996): 74-75.

Baylor, Tim. "Media Framing of Movement Protest: The Case of American Indian Protests." *Social Science Journal* 33, no 3 (1996): 241.

Broussard, Jinx C. "Saviors or Scalawags: The Mississippi Black Press's Contrasting Coverage of Civil Rights Workers and Freedom Summer, June-August 1964." *American Journalism* 19, no. 3 (Summer 2002): 65.

_____. "Mary Church Terrell: A Black Woman Journalist and Activist Seeks to Elevate Her Race." *American Journalism* 19, no. 4 (Fall 2002): 13.

_____, and Cooley, Skye Chance. "Ebony's Era Bell Thompson Travels the World to Tell the Story." *American Journalism* 26, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 7.

Brown II, M. Christopher. "The Declining Significance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Relevance, Reputation, and Reality in Obamamerica." *Journal of Negro Education* 82, no. 1 (2013): 3-19.

- Cain, Timothy Reese. "Of Tempests, Laughing Horses, and Sacred Cows: Controlling College Student Presses between the World Wars." *American Journalism* 29, no. 3 (2012): 19.
- Carroll, Brian. "Early Twentieth-Century Heroes: Coverage of Negro League Baseball in the Pittsburgh Courier and the Chicago Defender." *Journalism History* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 39-40.
- Clement, Arthur J., and Lidsky, Arthur J. "The Danger of History Slipping Away." *Society for College and University Planning*, (April – June 2011): 149-158.
- Cooper, Caryl. "Selling Negro Women to Negro Women and to the World: Rebecca Stiles Taylor and the Chicago Defender, 1939-1945." *Journalism History* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2014): 242.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity, Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991).
- Desantis, Alan D. "A Forgotten Leader." *Journalism History* 23, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 63.
- Digby-Junger, Richard. "The Guardian, Crisis, Messenger, and Negro World: The Early-20th-Century Black Radical Press." *Howard Journal of Communications* 9 (1988): 265.
- Drake, Robert. "Jesse Who?: Race, the Southern Press, and the 1936 Olympic Games." *American Journalism* 28, no. 4 (Fall 2011): 84-85.
- Dugan, John P. "Exploring Relationships Between Fraternity and Sorority Membership and Socially Responsible Leadership." *Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity Advisors* 3, no 2 (August 2008): 16.
- Edmondson, Aimee, and Earnest L. Perry. "To the Detriment of the Institution: The Missouri Student's Fight to Desegregate the University of Missouri." *American Journalism* 27, no. 4 (Fall 2010): 105-131.
- Ellis, Mark. "American's Black Press: 1914-1918." *History Today* 41, no. 9 (1991): 24.
- Entman, Robert. "Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (Autumn 1993): 51-58.
- Esters, Lorenzo L., and Terrell L. Strayhorn. "Demystifying the Contributions of Public Land-Grant Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Voice of HBCU Presidents." *Negro Educational Review* 64, nos. 1-4 (2013): 120.

- Foston, Nikitta A. "Hampton University: Education for Life in the New Century." *Ebony* 58, no 11 (September 2003): 62.
- Gallon, Kim "How Much Can You Read About Interracial Love and Sex Without Getting Sore?" *Journalism History* 39, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 104.
- Gildersleeve, Shanna. "The Struggle for Justice: How the Media Convicted and Freed the Scottsboro Boys 1931-1937." *The Atlanta Review of Journalism History* 8 (September 2009).
- Greer, Brenna W. "Selling Liberia: Moss H. Kendrix, the Liberian Centennial Commission and the Post-World War II Trade in Black Progress." *Bulletin of the GHI* 51 (Fall 2012): 303-326.
- Harper, Brian E. "African American Access to Higher Education: The Evolving Role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities." *American Academic* 3.
- Harris, LaShawn. "Marvel Cooke: Investigative Journalist, Communist and Black Radical Subject." *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 6, no. 2 (2012): 102.
- Hudson, Berkley. "The Mississippi Negro Farmer, His Mule, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt: Racial Portrayals of Sylvester Harris in the Black and White 1930s." *Journalism History* 32, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 201.
- Iorio, Sharon H., and Huxman, Susan S. "Media Coverage of Political Issues and the Framing of Personal Concerns." *Journal of Communication* 46, no 4 (1996): 97-115.
- Jeter, Phillip. "Journalism and Mass Communication Education at HBCUS: History and Current Issues." *Education* (Fall 2002): 200-204.
- Jewell, J.O. "To Set an Example: The Tradition of Diversity at Historically Black Colleges and Universities." *Urban Education*, 37, (2002): 7-21.
- Kimbrough, Walter M. "Self-Assessment, Participation, and Value of Leadership Skills, Activities, and Experiences for Black Students Relative to Their Membership in Historically Black Fraternities and Sororities." *Journal of Negro Education* 64, no. 1 (1995): 63-74.
- _____, and Hutcheson, Philo A. "The Impact of Student Membership in Black Greek-Letter Organizations on Black Students' Involved in Collegiate Activities and Their Development of Leadership Skills." *Journal of Negro Education* 67, no. 2 (Spring 1998).
- Leuchtenburg, William E. "The Conversion of Harry Truman." *American Heritage* 42, no. 7 (November 1991): 55.

- Loupe, Diane E. "Storming and Defending the Color Barrier at the University of Missouri School of Journalism: The Lucile Bluford Case." *Journalism History* 16, no. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 1989): 20.
- Martindale, Carolyn. "Coverage of Black Americans In Five Newspapers since 1950." *Journalism Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (Summer 1985): 321-436.
- Mislan, Cristina. "An Obedient Servant: Internationalizing and Capitalizing on Blackness in Marcus Garvey's Negro World." *Journalism History* 39, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 115.
- Murphree, Vanessa D. "The Selling of Civil Rights: The Communication Section of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee." *Journalism History* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 21.
- Nobles, Wade. "Africanity: Its Role in Black Families." *Black Scholar* (June 1974): 10-17.
- Perry, Earnest L. "We Want In: The African American Press's Negotiation for a White House Correspondent." *American Journalism* 20, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 31.
- Redd, Kenneth E. "Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Making a Comeback." *New Directions for Higher Education* 102 (Summer 1998): 33-43.
- Rhodes, Jane. "Race, Money, Politics and the Antebellum Black Press." *Journalism History* 20, no. 3/4 (Autumn/Winter 1994): 95.
- Rix Wood, Henrietta. "Transforming Student Periodicals into Persuasive Podiums: African American Girls at Lincoln High School, 1915-1930." *American Periodicals* 22, no. 2 (2012).
- Stewart, Pearl. "Will They Overcome." *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* 23.
- Streitmatter, Rodger. "Alice Allison Dunnigan: An African-American Woman Journalist Who Broke the Double Barrier." *Journalism History* 16, no. 3-4 (Autumn-Winter 1989): 87.
- _____. "No Taste for Fluff: Ethel L. Payne, African-American Journalist." *Journalism Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 528-530.
- Taylor, Ula. "The Historical Evolution of Black Feminist Theory and Praxis." *Journal of Black Studies* 29, no. 2 (November 1998): 239.

Washburn, Patrick S. "J. Edgar Hoover and The Black Press in World War II." *Journalism History* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 27.

Internet Sources

Alpha Phi Alpha. "General Presidents" <http://www.apa1906.net/general-presidents> (accessed January 11, 2016)

Bluford, Lucille H. (1911-2002), The State Historical Society of Missouri – Historic Missourians, <http://shs.umsystem.edu/historicmissourians/name/b/bluford/>, accessed October 12, 2015.

Clark Atlanta University. "CAU: History." www.cau.edu (accessed June 12, 2015).

Hampton University. "About Hampton U: History." www.hamptonu.edu (accessed June 12, 2015).

Hopkins, Pauline E. <http://www.paulinehopkinsociety.org/>
Multicultural Mizzou: A Timeline of Social Change and Notable First at the University of Missouri, "1938 - US Supreme Court rules in favor of Gains," <https://diversity.missouri.edu/timeline/> (accessed October 12, 2015).

National Negro Publishers Association information. <http://nnpa.org/about-us/> (accessed Feb. 6, 2016).

Schuyler, George (1895-1977), <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/schuyler-george-1895-1977> (accessed February 19, 2016)

Southern University A&M College. Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed, www.blackpast.org/aah/southern-university-1880-0 (accessed March 19, 2013).

Talmadge, Eugene background information.
<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/government-politics/eugene-talmadge-1884-1946> (accessed February 19, 2016).

Tuskegee University. <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/bhmtuskegee1.html> (accessed February 19, 2016).

"Legacy of Leadership," Tuskegee University,
http://www.tuskegee.edu/about_us/legacy_of_leadership.aspx (accessed February 22, 2016).

Zeldin, Theodore. Explanation about his life and works.
<http://www.gurteen.com/gurteen/gurteen.nsf/id/theodore-zeldin>.

Interviews

Beatrice Brown, Linda, interview by author, February 25, 2015.

Chandler, Dana, interview with author, Tuskegee, AL., May 27, 2015.

de Gregory, Crystal, email message to author, March 23, 2013.

Foster, Pamela, email message to author, March 25, 2013.

Rhodes, Jane, interview by author, March 4, 2015.

Non-published work

Edgerton-Webster, Brenda. "The Tale of 'Two Voices': An Oral History of Women Communicators from Mississippi Freedom Summer 1964 and a New Black Feminist Concept." University of Missouri, Columbia, 2007, Dissertation Order No. DA3353499.

McKenzie, Andre. "Fraters: Black Greek-Letter Fraternities at Four Historically Black Colleges, 1920-1960." Columbia University, 1986, Dissertation Order No. 8620386.

Documentaries

Nelson, Stanley (producer). *The Black Press: Soldiers without Swords*, DVD (San Francisco: California Newsreel, 1998).

Newspapers and Magazines

Hackett, David. "The Greeks." *The Crisis* 92, no. 10 (December 1985): 45-47, 59-62.
New York Times, June 23, 1946, p. 30.

