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THE HISTORY OF THE ST. LOUIS NAACP,  
1914-1955.

by

( Daniel T. Kelleher )

B.S. Ed.

( A Thesis Submitted in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Master of Arts Degree )

( Faculty of Historical Studies  
in the Graduate School  
Southern Illinois University  
Edwardsville, Campus )

( July ) 1969

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

The Graduate School

July, 1969

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPER-  
VISION BY Daniel T. Kelleher  
ENTITLED The History of the St. Louis NAACP, 1914-1955  
BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts

Herbert H. Rosenthal  
Thesis Director

Robert G. Fisk  
Faculty Chairman

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is the result of many individual contributions. To list each would entail another chapter, and so for the sake of brevity some will be thanked collectively.

I used the facilities of many libraries some of which were the Lovejoy Library, the St. Louis Public Library, and the State Historical Society of Missouri Library in Columbia, Missouri. All the libraries extended courteous service to this student. In particular, Barry E. Booth of the Lovejoy Library gave prompt action on my many requests.

I was fortunate to find many past officers of the branch. Each was willing to spend a good deal of time talking with me. All the men interviewed had special information that was unobtainable elsewhere. Sidney Redmond, David Grant and Edward McKinney deserve my special thanks for agreeing to two interviews.

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back to 1944. Mrs. Ina Boon was gracious enough to allow me access to these records.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE NAACP COMES TO ST. LOUIS

St. Louis has always had a Negro minority. In 1764, gens de couleur helped found the city, and since that time they have had considerable importance in its history. During this century, black St. Louisans formed many organizations to achieve their goals. Perhaps the most significant was the St. Louis branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The St. Louis branch was prominent both locally and nationally in the NAACP's struggle to obtain first class citizenship for Negroes.

This study is the first made of the St. Louis NAACP branch. It covers the first forty years of the branch's history starting in 1914 with the inception of the branch and ending with a chapter on the post World War II period. Throughout the study, special emphasis is given to the branch's leadership and the effect the branch had on St. Louis, Missouri and the nation.

Although issues and leaders changed, two continuing characteristics were evident from the start. Heated conflicts within the branch were numerous. Individuals differed as to the best solution to the problem facing the Negro. These differences of opinion often led to deep divisions within the branch. During periods of strong leadership when the conflicts were kept to a minimum, the branch made its most notable contributions.

The second trait was the important influence exerted upon the branch by outsiders. The guidance which came from the national headquarters cannot be overemphasized. In every era, the actions of the branch (or its inaction) was often the direct result of stimulation from New York. Equally important was the fact that almost all the branch presidents were not native St. Louisans. The presidents brought new ideas, aggressive tempers, and, in some cases, inspired leadership to the St. Louis NAACP branch. These influences, originally foreign to St. Louis, helped make the branch one of the most important in the country.

Five years before the founding of the St. Louis branch, a group of white liberals led by Mary White Ovington conceived the idea of an organization which was



later called the NAACP. In their view, the Negro had grown in wealth and education since the Civil War, but "...at the beginning of this century, his position as a citizen in the Republic was nearly hopeless."<sup>1</sup> The race riot in Springfield, Illinois the previous year caused the liberals to act upon their conviction that race relations were regressing. They hoped to reverse this process by establishing the new Association.

The white liberals were joined by several Negroes led by W. E. B. DuBois. He rejected the leadership of Booker T. Washington who emphasized vocational training for Negroes while tacitly accepting second-class citizenship for his race. DuBois felt that the constitutional rights of Negroes were of prime importance, and therefore, he and some other dissatisfied Negroes joined together to form the "Niagara Movement." The NAACP absorbed this organization, and DuBois took the position as editor of the Association's official magazine, The Crisis.

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<sup>1</sup>Mary White Ovington, "The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," Journal of Negro History, IX (April, 1924), 107.

During those first years, the leaders of the NAACP devoted much energy to increasing the size of their organization. In 1912, there were but 10 branches in the country. Two years later, there were 54, and by 1920, there were about 400 NAACP branches.<sup>2</sup> The growth was due, in part, to the efforts of Joel E. Spingarn, a white liberal who was considered a "firebrand" even by some leaders of the NAACP.<sup>3</sup> After he was elected chairman of the executive board for 1914, he made two western trips at his own expense, and on his agenda was a visit to St. Louis.<sup>4</sup>

He came to St. Louis as a result of an invitation from the City Club of St. Louis, an organization of civic, business, and professional leaders. Two members of the club, Roger N. Baldwin and Gustavus A. Tuckerman, had strong liberal beliefs and both men held numerous offices in the City Club. Tuckerman's position as Civic

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 115.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Flint Kellogg, A History of the NAACP, 1909-20, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), I, 98. Oswald Garrison Villard labeled Spingarn a "firebrand."

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 128.

Secretary and his membership on the Public Affairs Committee, which arranged for speakers, enabled him to make the invitation to Spingarn.<sup>5</sup>

Rev. John W. Day introduced Spingarn January 19, 1914 at the City Club of St. Louis Luncheon. Spingarn's speech was entitled "The Colored Citizen and His Future."<sup>6</sup> Later he recalled that

...as I spoke, first one person after another left the room in order to show their unmistakable disapproval, until when I finished only about one-fourth of the audience remained.<sup>7</sup>

Many white St. Louisans also believed him to be a "fire-brand" as his reception at the luncheon indicated.

That night Spingarn spoke at St. Paul's Church on Leffingwell Street. His reception by the Negro audience "...was enough to make him forget the humiliation of that afternoon."<sup>8</sup> He reviewed what had happened at the City Club luncheon and encouraged those at the meeting to form a NAACP branch in St. Louis. This advice was taken, and

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<sup>5</sup>City Club of St. Louis, Yearbook, (April, 1914), pp. 2-4; Letter, Roger N. Baldwin to Daniel T. Kelleher, September 25, 1968.

<sup>6</sup>Gustavus A. Tuckerman, ed., City Club Bulletin, IV (February, 1914), 2.

<sup>7</sup>St. Louis Argus, June 28, 1935.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

temporary officers were elected the same night. Rev. W. Sampson Brooks of St. Paul's Church was elected president; Victoria Clay Haley was elected secretary; and Rev. B. G. Shaw was elected treasurer.<sup>9</sup>

Spingarn was scheduled to depart the next day, but before leaving he wanted to establish a permanent organization. A meeting was held for that purpose at Union Memorial Church at Pine and Leffingwell Streets on the morning of the 20th. Upon Spingarn's recommendation, a white man, Gustavus A. Tuckerman, was elected president.<sup>10</sup> Spingarn explained that the most successful branches had white presidents. They were to execute the programs initiated by the board of directors. The board was to be mixed--black and white--but the chairman, Spingarn pointed out, should be a Negro. Thomas A. Curtis was elected Vice-President and chairman of the board, Maude Tanter took the position of secretary, and Albert Burgess was the first

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<sup>9</sup>Edward A. McKinney, personal interviews with author held at 4038 Page, St. Louis, Mo., May 28, 1968 and August 5, 1968.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.; Letter, Baldwin to Kelleher, September 25, 1968. Tuckerman was a clergyman originally from Boston. Prior to the formation of the NAACP in St. Louis, he had served on the Committee on Interracial Relations.

treasurer. All of the officers were Negroes except the president and a few of the board members.<sup>11</sup>

The first internal conflict of the St. Louis NAACP began on the 20th when Rev. W. Sampson Brooks and Rev. B. G. Shaw, both temporary officers, were displaced in favor of new officers. Both men resented the action, and since they controlled large congregations, their lack of cooperation was felt by the branch during membership drives.<sup>12</sup>

The St. Louis branch grew despite the antagonism of Rev. Brooks and Rev. Shaw. By 1918, membership climbed to about 1,000.<sup>13</sup> Many factors contributed to this growth. Most important were the issues confronting the black community which demonstrated the need for such an organization and rallied support to the branch. Joseph E. Mitchell, the managing editor of the St. Louis Argus, gave it enthusiastic support. Much of his newspaper's front page space was devoted to the Association's membership drives in those

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<sup>11</sup>McKinney Interviews, May 28, 1968 and August 5, 1968; McKinney pointed out Maude Tanter died shortly after taking office, and Mrs. Helen Burrell Smith replaced her; Julia Davis, "Down Memory Lane," Unpublished, Typed, p. 38. St. Louis Public Library, Davis Collection. Davis credits Mrs. Smith as being the first secretary.

<sup>12</sup>McKinney Interviews, May 28, 1968; August 5, 1968.

<sup>13</sup>St. Louis Argus, September 13, 1918.

early years. The publicity enabled the new Association to reach large segments of the Negro population. The branch devised incentives to increase membership. Recruitment teams were told that the team obtaining the largest number of paid members could elect the delegates to the national convention. In 1917 the St. Louis Argus charged that the branch did not carry through on its promise.<sup>14</sup>

The branch's meetings in the first few years were conducted at various churches and the public library. At first gatherings were held in large churches. Later the meetings were held in small churches because the leaders of the large churches, finding they could not dominate the Association lost interest.<sup>15</sup>

Although there might have been conflict between the Urban League and the NAACP in some cities, there is little to support the view of Miss Child Nerney of the NAACP's National Board of Directors that the Urban League was strong in St. Louis and used its strength to keep the NAACP from getting a foothold. Roger N. Baldwin was an

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<sup>14</sup>St. Louis Argus, December 21, 1917.

<sup>15</sup>McKinney Interviews, May 28, 1968; August 5, 1968.

important member of the Urban League, and he expressed a hope that a branch NAACP would be established in St. Louis.<sup>16</sup> Rev. John W. Day introduced Joel Spingarn at the City Club luncheon and was the president of the NAACP branch from 1917 to 1924. During this same period, Rev. Day was the first vice-president of the Urban League, and he served on its executive committee.<sup>17</sup> T. A. Curtis, a prominent leader in the local NAACP, had a brother, W. P. Curtis, who was on the board of the Urban League.<sup>18</sup> The interlocking character of the leadership of these groups, facilitated cooperation rather than conflict.

The activities of the St. Louis branch kept the membership busy during those early years. According to The Crisis, the local NAACP investigated rumors of segregation

<sup>16</sup>Kellogg, A History of the NAACP, I, 128. Miss Nerney gave two reasons why the Urban League opposed the formation of a NAACP branch in St. Louis. Roger N. Baldwin, a leader of the white community and Urban League, was thought to be too conservative, and she felt the Urban League leaders feared the new Association would weaken their own organization.

<sup>17</sup>Harvey Lawrence Boxerman, "St. Louis Urban League: History and Activities" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, St. Louis University, 1968), pp. 27, 29.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 29; Dr. L. Simmington Curtis. Personal interview with author held 5857 Waterman, St. Louis, Mo., August 6, 1968.

in the post office, during the summer of 1914, but the rumors proved "...without much foundation."<sup>19</sup> This was the first time the St. Louis branch was mentioned in the NAACP's magazine.

During the winter of 1914-15, the branch started a campaign to end segregated seating at the free symphony. Representatives of the branch asked the President of the Symphony, James E. Smith, to incorporate equal seating privileges for all, but the request was denied. The branch then printed cards telling of the segregated seating of Negroes and passed them out at the entrance. The results were meager; large numbers went in anyway.<sup>20</sup>

The NAACP initiated a battle against the showing of the film "The Birth of a Nation" in 1915. Many branches followed the national's lead, and "their hectoring had considerable nuisance value."<sup>21</sup> The film had many objectionable features including the portrayal of Ku Klux Klan members as noble humane youths defending white maidens in

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<sup>19</sup>The Crisis, VIII (September, 1914), 237.

<sup>20</sup>St. Louis Argus, January 1, 1915.

<sup>21</sup>Mary White Ovington, The Walls Came Tumbling Down, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1947), pp. 129-130.



peril and of Negroes as peanut-eating clowns. The St. Louis branch evidently had some powerful friends in City Hall, for the city authorities issued an order forbidding the showing of the film. It was finally shown in St. Louis after the producers of the film secured an injunction against the order.<sup>22</sup> The battle against the movie continued without success. As late as 1921 a committee from the branch asked Mayor Kiel to forbid the showing of the film. The Mayor declined, stating he did not have the necessary power.<sup>23</sup>

In sum, the founding of the St. Louis NAACP reveals two traits which were of paramount importance throughout its history. In 1914 an outsider encouraged the city's black minority to organize an NAACP branch. Outside stimulation leading to action was established early as a prime characteristic of the branch. Crippling internal conflicts also appeared early as a branch trait. The replacement of temporary officers in favor of permanent ones created ill

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<sup>22</sup>The Crisis, XI (November, 1915), 36.

<sup>23</sup>St. Louis Argus, September 23, 1921.

will, but the branch survived this cleavage as it did the many that followed.

Some of the conditions which induced the founding of the NAACP were also evident during the formation of the St. Louis branch. White liberals started the Association after the Springfield riot of 1908, and it absorbed the black group known as the "Niagara Movement." This process was duplicated in St. Louis to the extent that a segment of the Negro leadership joined a few white liberals to form the St. Louis NAACP branch. The early efforts of the new Association often proved unsuccessful as demonstrated by the fight against the showing of the film, "The Birth of a Nation." The membership list grew, however, which indicated that many St. Louisans saw the need for a NAACP branch. The branch justified the confidence placed in it with many achievements in the years that followed.

## CHAPTER II

### THE RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION ORDINANCE OF 1916

Segregation was not new to the black St. Louisans of sixty or seventy years ago. Before the end of the Reconstruction Era, St. Louis schools for whites and blacks had been separated by statute. During the first twenty years of this century, there were intensive efforts to extend the areas covered by segregation laws.

At the same time St. Louisans demanded progressive reforms in order to make the city government more democratic. It was argued that public issues should be decided by the electorate and therefore the initiative which allowed the public to initiate and vote on issues was included in the St. Louis City Charter of 1914. Two years later, St. Louis became the first city in the country where the people voted directly into law the mandatory residential segregation of Negroes and whites.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Clement E. Vose, Caucasians Only: The Supreme Court, the NAACP, and the Restrictive Covenant Cases. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949), p. 51.

The idea of statutory residential segregation was not original with St. Louis. After Baltimore passed its law in 1910, many cities followed suit: Winston-Salem in 1910; Birmingham, Alabama, and Richmond, Virginia in 1913; and Louisville, Kentucky, in 1914. A host of other border and southern cities had passed residential segregation laws by 1916, and it appeared that such laws would become more numerous throughout the country.<sup>2</sup>

In St. Louis the neighborhood improvement associations provided most of the impetus for a "Baltimore Law." Most of the associations were located on the periphery of the Negro community. These associations, which included the home owners of certain streets, used their organizations to promote what they considered to be the civic welfare of their own areas. Much of their effort was devoted to keeping neighborhood housing values high. They assumed that excluding Negroes from their neighborhoods would enhance property values. Keeping a neighborhood white was viewed in the same light as protection against a natural calamity. According to the United Welfare Association

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<sup>2</sup>The Crisis, XV (December, 1917), 69.

"...Negro invasion... [was] ...a danger...greater even than fire, or flood, or tornado--far greater."<sup>3</sup> It was not only logical they believed, but necessary that the city government pass a law which would forestall this danger.

Soon after Baltimore enacted its law, the neighborhood associations of St. Louis started advocating a similar law.<sup>4</sup> They had little success with the city authorities, but they built an effective organization and gained some powerful allies. The United Welfare Association provided the bond that held together and gave leadership to the forces which were working for residential segregation. Delegates from various neighborhood improvement associations made the policies of the United Welfare Association. The Association's most powerful ally was the Real Estate Exchange. The realtors lent valuable assistance to the Association. In its appeals for financial help, the Association assured its contributors the money would be

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<sup>3</sup>Letter, Felix P. Lawrence, President United Welfare Association to St. Louis Public Library, N.d., St. Louis Public Library, Negroes in St. Louis--Segregation File.

<sup>4</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, December 18, 1911.

used wisely because "the St. Louis Real Estate Exchange guarantee<sup>d</sup> the honest expenditure of every dollar absolutely."<sup>5</sup>

The United Welfare Association increased its activities after the new city charter of 1914 adopted the initiative. A proposed law could be placed on the ballot if 10% of the registered voters signed a petition. The Association started circulating a petition in the summer of 1915 for the purpose of obtaining

an ordinance to prevent ill feeling, conflict and collision between the white and colored races in the city of St. Louis and to preserve the public peace and promote the general welfare by making reasonable provisions requiring the use of separate blocks for residence by white and colored respectively.<sup>6</sup>

The other parts of the law included the same racial restrictions on public places such as churches, schools, and dance halls. The law specifically exempted domestic servants who resided in their employer's buildings.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Letter, Felix P. Lawrence to St. Louis Public Library. N.d., St. Louis Public Library, Negroes in St. Louis--Segregation File.

<sup>6</sup>Residential Segregation Ordinance of St. Louis (copy), St. Louis Public Library, Negroes in St. Louis--Segregation File.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

The literature of the segregationists maintained that if personal encounters between races could be kept at a minimum, the chance of a race riot would be lessened, and that science proved race mixing biologically harmful. The basic appeal, however, was economic. The law was to stop real or threatened influx of Negroes who caused "handsome neighborhoods" to go to ruin.<sup>8</sup> In particular, it was pointed out that the small home owner had the most to lose, and the ordinance would preclude any possibility of loss.<sup>9</sup> The segregationists assured the voters that such a law was not undemocratic or un-American, for all good laws "...seek to bestow the greatest good upon the greatest number."<sup>10</sup> Prejudice was disclaimed as a motive, and Abraham Lincoln was quoted regarding the benefits of segregation.<sup>11</sup> The public statements of the United Welfare Association were

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<sup>8</sup>Chilton Atkinson, "Observations on the Segregation Ordinance," Speech delivered at St. Alphonsus Parish Hall, St. Louis, February 6, 1916, p. 5, pamphlet, St. Louis Public Library, Negroes in St. Louis--Segregation File.

<sup>9</sup>Letter, J. L. Barngrove, Realtor to the Editor. St. Louis Republic, February 29, 1916.

<sup>10</sup>Atkinson, "Observations on the Segregation Ordinance," p. 2, St. Louis Public Library, Negroes in St. Louis--Segregation File.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

not based on blatant appeals to prejudice. Racial harmony and economic advantage were the primary points of emphasis.

In order to obtain an audience for these views, the United Welfare Association used the film "The Birth of a Nation" advantageously. The film graphically portrayed the chief desire of Negroes as being lust for white women. As the audience filed out, they were confronted by representatives of the United Welfare Association distributing propaganda and asking for signatures to their petition.<sup>12</sup>

The Association mailed letters asking for support and financial contributions. The letters included a small leaflet entitled, "Do You Realize This Danger--Your Danger?" The leaflet listed the names and addresses of persons representing about 1,000 people who claimed to have lost from \$250 to \$12,000 because of Negro invasions into their neighborhoods.<sup>13</sup> Such methods and arguments were successful, and early in December, 1915, the petition was presented to the city officials. The price of \$73,285 was

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<sup>12</sup>The Crisis, XI (November, 1915), 36; XI, (January, 1916), 140.

<sup>13</sup>United Welfare Association. "Do You Realize This Danger--Your Danger?" (N.d.), leaflet, St. Louis Public Library, Negroes in St. Louis--Segregation File.



affixed by the Board of Election Commissioners as the cost for the special election to be held February 29, 1916.<sup>14</sup>

The opponents of the residential segregation law were equally active. As early as 1911, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch characterized such a law as "fatuous and futile."<sup>15</sup> In 1913, "The Committee on Housing of Negroes" published a six-page report. The report argued against the "Baltimore Law" that was pending in the Municipal Assembly of St. Louis. In the Committee's opinion, the race problem could not "...be solved by crystalizing prejudice into legislation."<sup>16</sup> By the spring of 1915, a committee of fifteen whites and fifteen Negroes was waging an extensive campaign against the attempt to pass the segregation ordinance. One white leader of the committee, Roger N. Baldwin, prepared a pamphlet for publication and

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<sup>14</sup>St. Louis Republic, December 11, 1915.

<sup>15</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, December 18, 1911.

<sup>16</sup>The Committee on Housing of Negroes. "The Legal Segregation of Negroes in Saint Louis," January, 1913, leaflet, St. Louis Public Library, Negroes in St. Louis--Segregation File.

distribution.<sup>17</sup> The local NAACP pressured candidates for the Board of Alderman to take a stand on the segregation ordinance. Many of the aldermen came out against it.<sup>18</sup> These early efforts were successful, and the United Welfare Association was forced to circumvent the city government and resort to the initiative.

Until the fall of 1915, the battle was fought between St. Louisans with much of the effort against the proposed law falling upon the white leaders of the community. Indeed, the masses of Negroes in St. Louis were suprisingly indifferent. They were already segregated, and they reasoned passing a law would make little difference.<sup>19</sup> The Negro leaders were concerned, and the NAACP branch continued its activities. When it appeared that the law's advocates were making great strides with the initiative, the NAACP decided to help its St. Louis branch.

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<sup>17</sup>The Crisis, X (May, 1915), 39; Letter, Roger N. Baldwin to Daniel Kelleher, September 25, 1968. Baldwin organized the groups opposed to the ordinance.

<sup>18</sup>St. Louis Argus, April 9, 1915; The Crisis, XI (March, 1916), 260.

<sup>19</sup>The Crisis, XI (March, 1916), 240.

The NAACP sent Miss Kathryn M. Johnson, one of its field workers, to St. Louis. She took charge of the headquarters set up in the Knights of Pythias Hall which was lent by that Negro fraternal group. She received help at the headquarters from Mrs. Helen A. Smith, the secretary of the branch; Miss Helen Spears, the stenographer and clerk in charge of the headquarters; and a solicitor in charge of auditing all accounts.<sup>20</sup>

Once the initiative petition started circulating, the battle revolved around campaigns to reach as many people as possible. During September, Kathryn Johnson reached an estimated 5,000 people by addressing groups in churches, schools, and theatres. A house-to-house canvass was planned for October. Miss Johnson also helped organize public meetings. One such meeting was held at the Central Baptist Church, and the speakers included Congressman L. C. Dyer of St. Louis, Miss Child Nerney of the NAACP's national office, and clergyman B. G. Shaw. The Negro community appreciated Kathryn Johnson's "valuable assistance."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., XI (January, 1916), 140-141.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., XI (November, 1915), 36; St. Louis Argus, October 29, 1915; March 3, 1916.

The national office provided help, but St. Louisans did most of the work. Local Negro NAACP leaders chaired the various committees in charge of publicity, legal matters, and finances. Such leaders as Charles Pitman, Thomas A. Curtis, Homer G. Phillips, and George L. Vaughn played prominent roles.<sup>22</sup> The chairman of the branch executive committee, Charles Pitman, was indispensable. He was a "bright" Negro,<sup>23</sup> and could go to meetings from which Negroes were excluded. This enabled the NAACP to keep abreast of what the opposition was doing. Pitman was a realtor, and he spent his own money to keep the fight going. One observer remarked that Pitman spent at least some time every day at the headquarters while the fight continued.<sup>24</sup>

Opponents of the "Baltimore Law" published and distributed volumes of propaganda. Negro girls and women

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<sup>22</sup>St. Louis Argus, August 6, 1915.

<sup>23</sup>Curtis Interview, August 6, 1968. This term in the black community denotes one having a very light complexion. Curtis said Pitman could and did pass easily for a white.

<sup>24</sup>McKinney Interviews, May 28, 1968 and August 5, 1968.

passed out circulars on the streets bearing a cartoon depicting a white man lashing a Negro with the caption "Back to slavery."<sup>25</sup> Anti-segregationist literature included "Negro Segregation--A Measure to Assassinate a Race" by George E. Stevens.<sup>26</sup> A brochure entitled "A Shaming Stigma Upon St. Louis" used a Fitzpatrick cartoon from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. The cartoon was named "The Great Divide," and it pictured the black and white communities glaring at each other over an alley. The reader was informed that "Segregation would create moral slavery,"<sup>27</sup> and was not in the American tradition of fair play. Another piece of literature, a one page cardboard leaflet, reported that the segregation law was unconstitutional, un-Christian, and "...nefarious, hideous, dangerous, and un-American and calculated to undermine our

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<sup>25</sup>"Negro Segregation in St. Louis," Literary Digest, LII, (March 18, 1916), 702.

<sup>26</sup>The Crisis, XI (November, 1915), 36.

<sup>27</sup>St. Louis Branch NAACP, "A Shaming Stigma Upon St. Louis Would Be Race Segregation by Law," (N.d.), Leaflet, St. Louis Public Library, Negroes in St. Louis--Segregation File.

civilization and the principles of democracy upon which it is founded."<sup>28</sup> The NAACP did not hesitate to enter vigorously into the battle of words, and by December over 20,000 pieces of literature had been sent out from the branch headquarters.<sup>29</sup>

In December, 1915, the forces opposing the proposed law had a moment of optimism, for it looked as if the money for the election might not be appropriated. The Board of Aldermen asked the City Counselor to submit an opinion on the constitutionality of the initiative clause in the new charter, and then adjourned for two weeks. After Christmas the fight was on again.<sup>30</sup>

Even before the city counselor reported back to the Board of Aldermen, there was some talk of testing the constitutionality of the initiative in the courts. Based on "...the best legal opinions in Missouri and  $\angle$  the

<sup>28</sup>St. Louis Branch NAACP, "Reasons Why Residential Segregation Should Be Defeated," (N.d.), Leaflet, St. Louis Public Library, Negroes in St. Louis--Segregation File.

<sup>29</sup>St. Louis Argus, December 17, 1915.

<sup>30</sup>St. Louis Republic, December 17, 1915; The Crisis, XI (February, 1916), 194-195.

advice of Mr. Story, Counsel for the National Association...", the NAACP opposed this approach.<sup>31</sup> So did the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.<sup>32</sup> Even so, some leaders in the Negro community announced their intention to test the initiative clause.<sup>33</sup> This caused some conflict, and Kathryn Johnson, the NAACP's field agent in St. Louis wrote a public letter calling for unity.<sup>34</sup> The NAACP, through The Crisis, warned that "...the bourbons of St. Louis will have reason to congratulate themselves if the colored people split on this issue while the enemy as usual stands as one."<sup>35</sup> Finally, the local NAACP agreed to take the case, but this did not stop the factionalism. The disagreement now centered on who would take the case and on what grounds. One group of Negro ministers wanted to hire some white lawyers and attack the proposed law on the grounds that the segregation ordinance might soon be

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<sup>31</sup>The Crisis, XI (January, 1916), 141.

<sup>32</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, December 18, 1915.

<sup>33</sup>The Crisis, XI (January, 1916), 141.

<sup>34</sup>St. Louis Argus, December 17, 1915.

<sup>35</sup>The Crisis, XI (January, 1916), 141.

declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States. The branch leaders wanted their legal staff to handle the case. The branch attorneys wanted to argue the position that the Constitution of Missouri did not permit the people of St. Louis to legislate by means of the initiative.<sup>36</sup> Finally, the branch filed the case in court. Homer G. Phillips and George L. Vaughn, the branch's counsel, pleaded the case, and Charles Pitman, the Chairman of the Executive Committee, was the plaintiff. The money used for the suit could have been saved because mid-way through January, the court decided against Pitman.<sup>37</sup>

How badly the split over legal strategy hurt the opponents of the "Baltimore Law" is hard to ascertain. Certainly the wasted time, effort, and money did not further the cause. The NAACP consoled itself by explaining the division in terms of the heritage of slavery which had left the Negro an uncertain person.<sup>38</sup> Splits

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<sup>36</sup>St. Louis Argus, December 17, 1915.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., January 21, 1916; The Crisis, XI (February, 1916), 194-195.

<sup>38</sup>The Crisis, XI (March, 1916), 240.



of this type were not unusual. Negroes in other cities similarly threatened also spent needed energy fighting amongst themselves.<sup>39</sup>

By January, 1916, the opposing forces increased the pace of their campaign. The United Welfare Association favored passage as did the Real Estate Exchange which included almost all the real estate companies. On January 28, 1916, the Polish Americans of St. Louis held a special meeting and publicly endorsed the law.<sup>40</sup> As the election came closer, the United Welfare Association portrayed it as a simple contest of White vs. Black.

How can we afford to let the Negro whip the white man in this election. Shall such a report as that go out over the country...

The Negroes have raised over \$25,000 to defeat the white man in his fight for segregation and home protection. They have registered in the thousands, driving to the polls in style in limousines. Hundreds if not thousands are reported to have been shipped in here from Memphis and the south to swell the Negro vote....<sup>41</sup>

The forces in favor of the law were substantial, and the tone of their appeal while not outlandishly racist,

<sup>39</sup>Kellogg, A History of the NAACP, I, 186.

<sup>40</sup>St. Louis Republic, January 29, 1916.

<sup>41</sup>Letter, Felix P. Lawrence to St. Louis Public Library. N.D., St. Louis Public Library, Negroes in St. Louis--Segregation File.

certainly was calculated to appeal to the average white's inner prejudice.

If the forces in favor were substantial, the forces against seemed almost overwhelming. Not only was the Negro community opposed, but also 23 of the 28 aldermen had declared themselves against such an ordinance.<sup>42</sup>

L. C. Dyer, Republican congressman from St. Louis worked against it, as did most of the Republican leadership of the city. State Senator Michael Kinney (Democrat) used his political organization to distribute handbills against the proposed law.<sup>43</sup> The Jewish Community and the Socialist Party openly opposed the passage of such a law.<sup>44</sup> Most of the political leadership of the city were against the residential segregation ordinance.

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<sup>42</sup>The Crisis, XI (March, 1916), 260.

<sup>43</sup>McKinney Interviews, May 28, 1968, August 5, 1968.

<sup>44</sup>Merle Fainsod. "The Influence of Racial and National Groups in St. Louis Politics (1908-1928)." (Unpublished Masters "dissertation." Washington University, St. Louis, June, 1929), p. 59. On page 58, Fainsod mistakenly states that the Negro community was in favor of the new law. This is a rather important mistake in this comprehensive Master's work.

The newspapers were generally opposed to the law. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch as early as 1911 expressed its opposition, and continued to carry this view before and after the election. The St. Louis Argus was solidly opposed and devoted a great deal of space to the battle. The St. Louis Globe-Democrat also came out against the law, but basically the paper crowded its pages with other news. The St. Louis Republic editorialized briefly against the law, but generally most of the space on this topic was devoted to the pros and cons of the proposed law.<sup>45</sup>

The NAACP made an attempt to gain the support of the Catholic Church. Kathryn Johnson went to Father McGuire to enlist his support. She asked him to persuade Archbishop Glennon of St. Louis to come out publicly against the ordinance. Although Father McGuire was the pastor of St. Elizabeth, a Negro church, he declined Kathryn Johnson's request. She broke down in tears as Father McGuire stated he believed in the segregation of the races. Cardinal Gibbons was asked to intervene, but he

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<sup>45</sup>St. Louis Republic, March 2, 1916. This issue gives a good summation of how the St. Louis newspapers stood on the controversy.

telegraphed back that Archbishop Glennon was supreme in his own diocese. He also advised the NAACP field worker to contact the Papal delegate in Washington, D. C. This was done, and Archbishop Glennon finally made the public statement desired by Miss Johnson. The pronouncement by the church leader came so late that it could not have made much difference, for few of the faithful were aware of the church's stand.<sup>46</sup>

All concerned parties made eleventh hour efforts. The City Club of St. Louis held a debate four days before the election. One of the debaters, the Attorney for the City of Louisville, Kentucky, Pendleton C. Beckley, told the audience that the question was moral and not political. Why, he asked, could not the principle of segregation be applied to housing as it had been to schools and hotels? His opponent, Judge A. D. Nortoni, rested his argument on the supposition that the proposed law was unconstitutional. Walter McGinnis, Counsel for the Real Estate Exchange disputed this point, and

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<sup>46</sup>McKinney Interviews, May 28, 1968, August 5, 1968.

publicly announced that the proposed law was "both lawful and wise."<sup>47</sup>

The St. Louis Republic was informed by telephone that nine priests of the city had preached the previous Sunday against the segregation law. However, of the priests who could be reached, none confirmed the caller's claim.<sup>48</sup>

On the morning of the election, the Board of Election Commissioners was forced to issue supplementary instructions to the police working at the polling stations. This action was necessary because challengers were appearing at polling places with unauthorized credentials. Reportedly, the NAACP issued the credentials but the newspaper incorrectly called the Association, "the Society for the Advancement of Colored People."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>St. Louis Republic, February 17, 1916; February 26, 1916. The Louisville Residential Segregation Law was being appealed at that time to the United States Supreme Court by the NAACP.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., February 29, 1916.

<sup>49</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 29, 1916. The credentials were signed by Gustavus Tuckerman, who was president of the local NAACP, Mrs. A. J. Smith, and the rubber stamp signature of John Schmoll, Chairman of the Republican City Committee.

On election day, the opponents of the segregation law hoped for a light turn out. Of the 140,010 registered voters eligible to vote, only 9,846 were black men. Both sides publicly expressed confidence, but privately those at the branch headquarters said the ordinance would win by a big majority. This prediction proved correct as the voters turned out in unusually large numbers for the special election. Only three of the city's twenty-eight wards were carried against the ordinance, and the final vote was 52,220 in favor to 17,877 against.<sup>50</sup> The white wards closest to Negro residential areas voted most heavily for the ordinance. The Republican leadership of the city who served as allies in the fight against the ordinance "...would not, dared not, or could not deliver their wards as they had promised."<sup>51</sup> Only a Democrat, Mike Kinney, was able to carry his ward, and the Negro leadership

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<sup>50</sup>St. Louis Republic, February 29, 1916; March 1, 1916. There were two proposed laws. One made it illegal to invade a block if its residents were 100% of one race. The other was more stringent, for it lowered the percent to 75%. Both laws were passed and the most stringent one took effect.

<sup>51</sup>Fainsod, "The Influence of Racial and National Groups in St. Louis Politics," pp. 58, 60.

pointed an accusing finger at the Republican leaders and cried "double-cross."<sup>52</sup> The St. Louis Argus summed up the election results with the headline, "Prejudice Wins Election."<sup>53</sup>

The people had spoken. It was clear that the vast majority of St. Louisans wanted residential segregation formalized by law. The St. Louis Republic called on both sides to keep friction at a minimum and urged St. Louis Negroes to accept the new law and improve on what they had.<sup>54</sup>

Charles Pitman, the Chairman of the St. Louis branch Executive Committee, was not willing to accept the will of the majority. He contacted Col. Wells Blodgett, chief counsel for the Wabash Railroad and an ex-officer in the Union Army, in the hope of taking the new law into the courts.<sup>55</sup> On March 7, a meeting was held at Col. Blodgett's

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<sup>52</sup>St. Louis Republic, March 1, 1916.

<sup>53</sup>St. Louis Argus, March 3, 1916.

<sup>54</sup>St. Louis Republic, March 1, 1916.

<sup>55</sup>McKinney Interviews, May 28, 1968, August 5, 1968.

office where strategy was planned. A committee, including the ex-Secretary of Interior Charles Nagel, Col. Blodgett, Percy Werner, Judge Selden P. Spencer, Joseph Wheless, and Judge Leo Rassieur prepared to file a suit, without charge to the NAACP, restraining the city officials from enforcing the new ordinance.<sup>56</sup> Before the end of the month, the case was before the court, and by April, 1916, Judge D. P. Dyer had issued a temporary injunction enjoining the city from operating under the new segregation ordinance. This injunction was to remain in force until a similar case pending before the United States Supreme Court had been decided.<sup>57</sup>

On November 5, 1917, the Supreme Court decided unan-  
imously that the Louisville residential segregation law  
was unconstitutional.<sup>58</sup> Judge D. P. Dyer, who had issued

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid.; McKinney remembered that the local NAACP did pay \$1.00 to Col. Blodgett; The Crisis, XII (May, 1916), 37.

<sup>57</sup>St. Louis Argus, March 24, 1916; April 21, 1916. Judge D. P. Dyer was related to Congressman L. C. Dyer who had worked against the passage of the ordinance. L. C. Dyer later introduced an anti-lynch bill into Congress. (See Chapter III.) The Dyer family had long been considered friends of the Negro.

<sup>58</sup>Buchanan vs. Warley, 245 U.S. 60, November, 1917.



the temporary injunction said he would make this injunction permanent if asked to do so because both the St. Louis law and the Louisville law involved the same principle.<sup>59</sup> In March of the following year, Judge Dyer made permanent the temporary injunction issued over a year before.<sup>60</sup>

The victory, while important, was nevertheless somewhat hollow. Private agreements (restrictive covenants) among property owners restricting the sale of their property from Negroes achieved the objective fought for by the proponents of the residential segregation ordinance. These agreements had the force of a contract and were enforceable in the courts. In 1948, the highest court in the land would declare such covenants un-enforceable in the courts, and St. Louis would again play a central role in this fight of a generation later.

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<sup>59</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, November 6, 1917.

<sup>60</sup>St. Louis Argus, March 29, 1918.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE EAST ST. LOUIS RACE RIOT AND THE ANTI-LYNCH CAMPAIGN--CAUSE AND EFFECT

During the first hot days of July, 1917, the United States experienced its worst race riot of the century. According to one eye witness, the East St. Louis Riot was more than a race riot--it was a massacre. To the chant of "get a nigger...get another," mobs stopped street cars and pulled off, stoned, and clubbed blacks without regard to age or sex. White prostitutes grabbed the hair and clothing of fleeing Negro women, and then beat them about the face and breasts with sticks and stones. A group of Negro men attempted to submit to some white rioters but as they held their hands high, the rioters clubbed them with gun butts. As they lay on the street, young girls bloodied their stockings by kicking the limp bodies. The mob threatened ambulance drivers if they stopped to pick up wounded blacks. In one attempt to give a wounded Negro a proper southern death by lynching, the clothes-line broke, but stronger rope was found. As Negroes fled

from their burning houses, they were picked off like "running rabbits." One reporter saw the white East St. Louis mob throw a small black child into a blazing shack. When it was all over, 200 houses had been destroyed, and the estimates of those killed ranged from forty-seven to several hundred.<sup>1</sup>

The use of Negroes as strike breakers and a lax city government appear to have brought on the explosive situation. There had been some conflict between blacks and whites earlier that summer, and Governor Lowden of Illinois had sent in the militia. The militia, according to the St. Louis NAACP in a letter to Governor Lowden, was "...discriminating in favor of whites." This alleged discrimination took the form of disarming the Negro community while white citizens were allowed to keep their arms.<sup>2</sup>

In July, the hate in East St. Louis erupted and spilled forth destruction and death. While the rioting was

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<sup>1</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 3, 1917; Elliott M. Rudwick, Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 1917 (Carbondale: SIU Press, 1964), Chapter 5.

<sup>2</sup>St. Louis Argus, June 1, 1917; June 8, 1917.

at its height, the St. Louis "National Association for the Advancement of Negroes" [sic] called a meeting which 200 persons attended. At the meeting, the NAACP leadership made plans for helping the refugees coming into St. Louis, and prepared appeals asking President Wilson and Governor Lowden to take steps to stop the killing in East St. Louis.<sup>3</sup> The existing social organizations in St. Louis handled most of the relief for the East St. Louis refugees. Many were housed in a big warehouse across from city hall. St. Louis Negroes, acting as individuals, performed numerous other services for these refugees.<sup>4</sup>

As an organization, the local NAACP was primarily concerned with the legal work which developed as a result of the riot. The U.S. District Attorney of East St. Louis announced immediately following the riots, that under a new statute, the city of East St. Louis was liable up to

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., July 6, 1917; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 3, 1917.

<sup>4</sup>McKinney Interviews, May 28, 1968 and August 5, 1968. McKinney indicated the refugees were met and counseled as they crossed the bridge into St. Louis; Curtis Interview, August 6, 1968. Curtis went to East St. Louis while the riot continued in order to obtain the pay checks of some of the riot refugees.

\$5,000 for each person killed.<sup>5</sup> William E. B. DuBois came to St. Louis to form a committee of St. Louisans to gather evidence and take testimony.<sup>6</sup> In a public letter, Homer G. Phillips, speaking for the legal committee of the branch, told the victims of the riot that the NAACP stood ready to represent them without charge in any attempt to recover damages for their loss. Much of the branch's legal work concerned the collection of damages, and ultimately the branch handled a large number of the nearly 2,000 claims filed against the city of East St. Louis.<sup>7</sup>

To carry on this work, the branch immediately called for \$2,000 in donations for a fund to support relief and legal action.<sup>8</sup> By December, 1917, the Committee of the East St. Louis Refugee Defense Fund had raised over \$4,000,<sup>9</sup> but in the collection and disbursement of the legal defense money, a schism developed within the Negro community. The controversy revolved around Dr. Leroy N.

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<sup>5</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 6, 1917.

<sup>6</sup>St. Louis Argus, July 13, 1917.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., August 3, 1917.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., July 13, 1917.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., December 21, 1917.

Bundy, an East St. Louis dentist and local political figure. He was one of several Negroes charged with inciting the riot.<sup>10</sup> Dr. Bundy became the scapegoat for the whites in their attempt to explain the riot as a Negro conspiracy. He also became a hero for a nationwide Negro audience. To raise legal defense money, Dr. Bundy accepted many speaking engagements around the country. He seemed to enjoy taking his case to the people. Being a national celebrity appealed to him more than making a living at his chosen trade,<sup>11</sup> and the temper of white East St. Louisans was such that Dr. Bundy was safer outside the city.

From the speaking tours Dr. Bundy not only expected to raise money for the defense fund, but he also planned to pay his living expenses. This might have been palatable to the NAACP, which was handling his defense, but Bundy's refusal to make an account of what was collected was not acceptable to the Association. The feud first developed between Bundy and the branch's Executive

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<sup>10</sup>Several whites were also charged.

<sup>11</sup>Rudwick, Race Riot at East St. Louis, p. 122.

Committee led by Charles Pitman. By April, 1918, Dr. Bundy and the members of the branch's Executive Committee were not on speaking terms.<sup>12</sup> The branch refused to sanction his appeals for money. Bundy asked the branch leaders if the NAACP planned to furnish him enough money to support himself.<sup>13</sup> Dissatisfied with the branch's answer that he should support himself with dentistry, he continued on his speaking tour. The St. Louis branch thereafter described his personal appearances as "junkets."<sup>14</sup>

The St. Louis NAACP recommended to the national office that they withdraw from the case. The national was reluctant to follow the branch's recommendation and promptly called a meeting where Dr. Bundy was to present his side of the story. The meeting was a fiasco, and the national came to the same conclusion as the St. Louis branch because

His (Bundy's) demeanor throughout the hearing impressed the committee as lacking in frankness and was characterized by an apparently

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 122-123.

<sup>13</sup>The Crisis, XVI (September, 1918), 225.

<sup>14</sup>Rudwick, Race Riot at East St. Louis, pp. 122-123.

strong desire to avoid disclosing the real facts in the situation to the committee.<sup>15</sup>

The national asked its followers to stop contributing money to Bundy because the Association could not strictly account for collections and expenditures. In order to prevent scandal, the NAACP never sponsored individuals who took unaudited money.<sup>16</sup>

Dr. Bundy was not without friends. Attorney Homer G. Phillips, a leader in the St. Louis Negro community and the local NAACP, continued to serve as one of Bundy's counsel. Other St. Louisans were displeased with the NAACP's decision to drop the case. On the front page of the St. Louis Argus, a letter condemned the NAACP for withdrawing. The letter pointed out that the Bundy Case was a cause to which all black men should rally. It was signed by a long list of people including many prominent Negro clergymen.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps it was a cause behind which all Negroes should have united, but the NAACP's fear of scandal and loss of control over the funds became the overriding factor in its decision to resign from the Bundy Case.

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<sup>15</sup>The Crisis, XVI (September, 1918), 224.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 225.

<sup>17</sup>St. Louis Argus, September 27, 1918.



The East St. Louis Riot undoubtedly caused fears and apprehensions in the white community, but within the Negro community and parts of the white leadership the riot served as a first-hand reminder of the Negro's tenuous position in the American society. New efforts were made to improve his position including the new vigor given the NAACP anti-lynching campaign.

The NAACP started the anti-lynch campaign in 1911. The original plan was to investigate, educate, and to bring pressure to bear on public officials to punish mobs.<sup>18</sup> The branch was active early in this campaign.<sup>19</sup> After the East St. Louis Riot, the campaign was expanded to include the demand for state and federal laws to prevent mob action.

Congressman Leondias C. Dyer launched these efforts on the national level. Since 1910, Congressman Dyer had represented Missouri's 12th district which included the

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<sup>18</sup>Ovington, "The National Association," p. 112.

<sup>19</sup>St. Louis Argus, September 29, 1916. That year the St. Louis NAACP raised \$115.37 for the anti-lynch campaign.

majority of St. Louis Negroes. By 1920, the black population of that district had increased to where Negroes formed a majority of those voting the Republican ticket. As the Negro population increased, Republican Dyer's concern for the welfare of blacks was re-doubled.<sup>20</sup> Congressman Dyer and Charles Pitman, an activist in local Republican politics and the chairman of the executive board of the branch, were friends. Another friend of Dyer's was Dr. T. A. Curtis, an active executive board member and later the first Negro president of the branch. No doubt these men consulted about the possibility of a federal anti-lynch law.<sup>21</sup> Added to these practical motivations was the long-standing reputation of the Dyer family as a champion of the Negro.

Whatever his motives, Dyer introduced a bill into Congress which would have made lynching a federal crime. In 1918, he told Arthur Spingarn, Chairman of the NAACP's Legal Committee, that this was his intention.<sup>22</sup> In 1922,

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<sup>20</sup>Fainsod, "The Influence of Racial and National Groups in St. Louis Politics (1908-28)," pp. 103-104.

<sup>21</sup>McKinney Interviews; May 28, 1968, August 5, 1968; Curtis Interview, August 6, 1968.

<sup>22</sup>Kellogg, A History of the NAACP, I, 226-27.

the House of Representatives passed Dyer's Anti-Lynching Bill by the vote of 230 to 119, but the Senate blocked its passage. During the late 1930's, the northern Democrats again brought up the same type of legislation only to see it defeated by a Senate filibuster.<sup>23</sup>

The St. Louis NAACP also increased its campaign against mob violence on the state level. Governor Gardner remained silent despite a telegram from the branch asking him to punish the mob responsible for the Moberly, Missouri lynching of 1919.<sup>24</sup> The branch thereafter lobbied for a state anti-lynch law. In 1921 such a bill was defeated in the Missouri Legislature.<sup>25</sup> During the 20's anti-lynch legislation was a popular topic, and the branch sponsored such speakers as Congressman L. C. Dyer and Walter White from the NAACP national headquarters to discuss this issue in St. Louis.<sup>26</sup> In the early 1930's,

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<sup>23</sup>Jack, History of the National Association, Association for the Advancement of Colored People (Boston: Meadon Publishing Co., 1943), pp. 31-32.

// <sup>24</sup>St. Louis Argus, November 21, 1919.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., October 21, 1921.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., April 20, 1923.

another effort was made to obtain an anti-lynch statute for Missouri. The bill was introduced by State Senator Michael Kinney, Democrat from St. Louis, and it passed both houses only to be vetoed by Governor Caulfield.<sup>27</sup> Even as late as 1938, anti-lynching was still an issue. The branch sent letters to President Roosevelt and the Governors of Alabama and Louisiana protesting lynchings, but without result.<sup>28</sup>

The St. Louis branch played an integral part in the NAACP's anti-lynch campaign. Much exertion went into the anti-lynch campaign, but anti-lynch laws were never enacted by either Congress or the state of Missouri. This part of the attack on mob action was not successful, but the original objective of the NAACP pertaining to education did attain results. As Roy Wilkins pointed out, hardly anyone of prominence spoke out against lynching in 1919, yet by the late 1930's, public opinion had been reversed.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., September 29, 1938.

<sup>29</sup>Rayford W. Logan, ed. What the Negro Wants, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), p. 119.

## CHAPTER IV

### LEADERSHIP CHANGE, WHITE TO BLACK 1919-1932

During the 1920's, the people of this nation were pre-occupied with enjoying themselves. The popularity of sports, motion pictures, and the automobile all attest to this concern with personal gratification. An equally important characteristic of the 20's was summed up by President Coolidge when he remarked, "The business of America was business." Almost everyone worked hard at acquiring his share of the prosperity. Americans were less inclined toward reform movements at this time, for people concerned with business and pleasure usually have little time for idealistic notions. Under these conditions, it is little wonder that liberal and reform groups suffered or found themselves exerting much effort just to keep the gains they had made in the past.

The NAACP, generally falling into the classification of a reform group, found itself beset with the same overall problems of other such organizations. The finances of the national were such that the continuation of the

Association was a day-to-day problem. Any group existing on a subsistence level could hardly be expected to have a well-planned dynamic program. The legal activities of the NAACP were extremely limited, and most of the work was relegated to the various branches.<sup>1</sup>

The St. Louis NAACP relied upon the national office for direction and support. In the era after World War I, the national was often unable to give this guidance, and partly because of this, the local NAACP fell into periods of inactivity. The branch's hibernation during the winter of 1918-19 caused the people of St. Louis "...to wonder what had become of the local branch of the NAACP?"<sup>2</sup> The St. Louis Argus in 1922 pointed out that people would support a group which took the lead, but the "mere maintaining of an organization does not justify its existence when the real work of the organization is being neglected."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>William Otis McMahon, Jr., "The Litigation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1910-42." (Unpublished Master's dissertation), Howard University, Washington D. C., June 1942), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>St. Louis Argus, February 28, 1919.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., June 9, 1922.

Throughout the post war years, membership campaigns took most of the branch's energy, and in some years it was practically the only object of effort.<sup>4</sup> Often as an incentive to secure a large membership, a prize was offered.<sup>5</sup> Most members would renew their dues each year, but they lacked the initiative to forward the money without a reminder. The same twenty or twenty-five people attended the majority of the branch's meetings. At two or three meetings a year as many as 400 people would turn out to hear a well-known speaker.<sup>6</sup> The maintenance of the Association in St. Louis, given the condition of the period, was a herculean task.

Lacking an overall plan of attack from the national headquarters, the branch's efforts were sporadic and generally limited to matters of local concern. These

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<sup>4</sup>Curtis Interview, August 6, 1968.

<sup>5</sup>St. Louis Argus, February 18, 1927. A trip to New York or \$150 was offered to the person securing the largest amount of money over \$300. Some membership dues were one dollar per year. This was a large order especially during the 1920s when membership seldom exceeded 1,000.

<sup>6</sup>Curtis Interview, August 6, 1968.

activities were basically of a defensive nature. In the summer of 1919, under George L. Vaughn's direction, a committee investigated the complaints of Negro soldiers who had been gassed and wounded, but whose discharge papers claimed they had had no battle engagement.<sup>7</sup> The branch appointed a special committee that year to help prevent riots like those experienced in Chicago and Washington, D. C.<sup>8</sup> The branch's activities in 1920 included helping prevent the extradition of a seventeen-year old boy to Tennessee and the investigation of the murder of a Negro at Webster Groves, Missouri.<sup>9</sup> The following year, the branch fought the formation of the Ku Klux Klan in St. Louis. Protests declaring the purposes of the Klan to be illegal were made to city and state officials.<sup>10</sup> In 1923, Mayor Kiel of St. Louis addressed one of the branch's meetings,<sup>11</sup> and 2,181 signatures from St. Louis were added to the petition

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<sup>7</sup>St. Louis Argus, April 26, 1919.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., August 8, 1919.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., January 21, 1921.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., May 13, 1921.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., July 20, 1923.



circulated by the NAACP for the "Houston martyrs" in prison at Leavenworth, Kansas.<sup>12</sup> The NAACP hoped that if enough signatures were obtained the President would pardon the Negro soldiers who they felt were unjustly imprisoned. Starting in 1924, the branch became involved in the restrictive covenant cases arising in St. Louis. Segregated housing was achieved in St. Louis by restrictive covenants after the Supreme Court declared the Louisville segregation ordinance unconstitutional. Restrictive covenants were private agreements between neighbors declaring that none of the parties would sell their houses to Negroes. These contracts were used to cause the eviction of Negroes who had moved into neighborhoods covered by such agreements. The handling of these cases lacked a comprehensive plan. In 1931 the Supreme Court of Missouri upheld the Cote Brillante Avenue Restrictive Covenant and Negroes were given sixty days to vacate the white neighborhood.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., December 28, 1923; January 4, 1924. Members of an Army Company of Negroes had gotten into a gun battle with some local whites of Houston, Texas. They were convicted and sent to Leavenworth Army Prison. The NAACP felt that this was unjust because the soldiers had merely defended themselves.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., March 27, 1925; October 9, 1925; October 16, 1931.

The branch in 1928 was also involved in fighting the extradition of Reverend P. A. Cantrell who did not want to be sent back to Mississippi to face mail fraud charges.<sup>14</sup>

The year 1929 marked the beginnings of increased activity on the part of the St. Louis NAACP branch. The activity was noted by the St. Louis Argus and more space was devoted to its enterprises. For example, in 1929, the branch raised the issue of police brutality for the first time. The local NAACP became engaged in this fight by investigating complaints.<sup>15</sup> As the effects of the depression began to take hold, there was increased competition for jobs. The branch started a "buy where you can work" movement and formed a committee to check on employment.<sup>16</sup> By the late 1920's and early 1930's, the St. Louis NAACP was beginning to become more energetic, which was an indication of the aggressive nature it was to assume by the mid 1930's.

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., June 29, 1928.

<sup>15</sup>St. Louis Argus, May 24, 1929; October 4, 1929.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., May 2, 1930; October 28, 1932.

Perhaps the most significant development during the 1920's was the change in leadership. The national headquarters had been, up to that time, largely controlled and administered by whites. During the 1920's, the organization's leadership gradually changed in complexion from white to black.<sup>17</sup> As this transformation took place at the national office, the branches were also having a similar experience.<sup>18</sup>

White St. Louisans played a significant role in the St. Louis branch during the early years. Whites were conspicuous in the formation of the branch in 1914, in the branch's efforts for anti-lynch legislation. Three particular Caucasians were valuable. Roger N. Baldwin helped organize the groups opposed to the segregation ordinance of 1916. Gustavus Tuckerman was active in starting the branch, and he served as the first permanent

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<sup>17</sup>Kellogg, A History of the NAACP, 1909-1920, I, 291; St. James, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, pp. 101-103; McMahon, "The Litigation of the National Association," p. 23.

<sup>18</sup>Kellogg, A History of the NAACP, I, 292-293.

president from 1914 through 1916. Rev. John Day was active from the beginning, and he held the office of president from 1917 through 1923. Whites were selected as presidents in order to lend prestige to the Association and because of their connections with the white community. For example, Rev. Day was the minister of the Unitarian Church which included in its membership many prominent St. Louisans. The white presidents were basically nominal officers who did not concern themselves with the day-to-day affairs of the Association. They usually attended few meetings other than the annual meeting.<sup>19</sup>

From the branch's inception, the brunt of the work was done by the black St. Louisans. More often than not, the Chairman of the Executive Committee ran the organization in the early years.<sup>20</sup> Three Negro chairmen were outstanding. Dr. T. A. Curtis was active from the beginning, and later became the first Negro president of the branch. Charles Pitman gave much time, energy, and money

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<sup>19</sup>Curtis Interview, August 6, 1968.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

to the branch, particularly during the fight against the residential segregation law. Attorney George L. Vaughn served usefully, dividing his time between the NAACP, his law practice, and local politics. Although Vaughn and Pitman never became presidents of the branch, some accounts incorrectly remembered them serving in that capacity.<sup>21</sup> This is testimony to the fact that the Chairman of the Executive Committee furnished most of the leadership in the early years. After the first black man became president, this process was reversed. The presidents of the local NAACP, thereafter, dominated the Association, not only functioning as presiding officers, but as guides to its everyday affairs.

There were many signs indicating the move towards more black domination of the St. Louis NAACP. Increasingly, the St. Louis Argus dwelled upon the Chairman of the Executive Committee, and by 1922, the white president was scarcely mentioned. Early in 1923, the branch moved the office of the secretary into the building

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<sup>21</sup>St. Louis Bicentennial Corp., Negroes--Their Gift to St. Louis, (Employees Loan Co.), 1964, pp. 37-39; McKinney, interviews May 28, 1968 and August 5, 1968.

occupied by the St. Louis Argus.<sup>22</sup> Also during that year, the branch reached a new low. The membership campaign could not be handled by the Association and had to be organized by the City Federation of Women's Clubs.<sup>23</sup> The branch was experiencing one of its periodic internal battles and perhaps this explains the low ebb reached that year.<sup>24</sup> The branch even postponed its elections in order to give the candidate committee more time to find a suitable person for president.<sup>25</sup> They finally selected Dr. Thomas A. Curtis, a Negro who had served as the Chairman of the Executive Board for 1923.

Dr. Curtis' life was an interesting one, but for our purpose, he had two particular characteristics which were shared by the vast majority of the branch's presidents. He was born and educated outside of St. Louis, and secondly, his occupation was a professional one. Dr. Curtis was Alabama's only Negro dentist when a confrontation with

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<sup>22</sup>St. Louis Argus, March 9, 1923.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., April 13, 1923 April 20, 1923.

<sup>24</sup>The Crisis, XXVI, (June, 1923), 66-67.

<sup>25</sup>The St. Louis Argus, November 16, 1923.

southern white violence, and southern officialdom's indifference caused him to move north in 1896.<sup>26</sup> Most of the presidents to follow Curtis came from southern or border states, and they probably sought by moving not only to help themselves materially, but also to improve the racial climate in which they lived. Moving as they did, implies that they were either aggressive or idealistic or both. These characteristics were in demand by an organization such as the NAACP. Almost all of the presidents earned their living by a profession.<sup>27</sup> This was important because it freed them, to a large degree, from financial dependence upon the local white community.

To recapitulate, the 1920's were difficult years for the St. Louis NAACP branch. These were years when the branch barely managed to survive the handicaps of internal divisions, lack of guidance from the national office, and the conservatism of the period. Given these disadvantages,

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<sup>26</sup>Curtis Interview, August 6, 1968. A Negro cotton gin owner had had his gin burnt down by whites in the vicinity of Montgomery, Alabama. Dr. Curtis was on a committee that went to the Governor of Alabama to ask for more protection. The Governor received them in a patronizing manner and recommended that if they were good people, the whites would treat them accordingly.

<sup>27</sup>Appendix, #1.

it was remarkable that the branch was able to survive the white to black leadership change and still engage in some defensive activity.



## CHAPTER V

### THE ESPY AND REDMOND ADMINISTRATIONS:

#### DEPRESSION AND WAR YEARS

Two factors, national guidance and keen branch leadership, merged during the depression and war years to produce an impressive list of major accomplishments. The central characters in the St. Louis branch's new surge of energy were Joseph E. Mitchell, Henry D. Espy, and Sidney R. Redmond. Espy and Redmond were lawyers who had come to St. Louis in the late 1920's. They formed a partnership which is still in existence today.

Henry D. Espy was brought up near the small town of Gifford, Florida, where his father homesteaded 160 acres of land. He came to St. Louis after graduating from the Howard University Law School. Espy served as an officer of various organizations a few of which were the Mound City Bar Association, the Republican Party 6th Ward organization, and the NAACP.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Henry D. Espy, Personal interview with author held 705 Chestnut, St. Louis, Mo., August 9, 1968.

Sidney Redmond was raised in Jackson, Mississippi, and he was graduated from the Harvard Law School. After settling in St. Louis, he became active in many different organizations. After a few years he was elected president of the local Negro Bar Association.<sup>2</sup> Aside from his busy law practice, he wrote "Legal Hints" in the St. Louis Argus. As early as 1931, he served as counsel for the NAACP.<sup>3</sup> Redmond was a member of the National Board during the late 1930's and early 1940's, and he served as the State NAACP President. One of his interests was local Republican politics, and he held the offices of Associate City Counselor and Alderman in St. Louis.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>St. Louis NAACP Branch. Minutes of the Meetings of the Executive Board, January 26, 1949. There were two bar associations in St. Louis before 1950; one having only black members and the other having only white members. Redmond was refused admittance into the St. Louis Bar Association (white) because of race in 1949. Black lawyers usually belonged to the Mound City Bar Association.

<sup>3</sup>McMahon, "The Litigation of the National Association," pp. 102-3. Redmond defended Tom Carraway of Biloxi, Mississippi. The trial ended in 1934 when the court sentenced Carraway to prison for life.

<sup>4</sup>Sidney R. Redmond. Personal interviews with author held 705 Chestnut, St. Louis, Mo., May 27, 1968 and August 13, 1968. Redmond was a city alderman until the mid 1950's.

Henry Espy and Sidney Redmond provided much of the leadership for the branch from 1934 to 1945 by serving as presidents during these years. They devoted the time and energy necessary to turn the St. Louis NAACP into one of the most active branches in the country. Equally important was the fact that both were lawyers. This qualification proved indispensable, for most of the important achievements of the St. Louis branch required minds experienced in law.

The third man mentioned above was Joseph E. Mitchell. Mitchell was elected as the president of the local NAACP in 1933 and 1934. He was a self-educated man who came to St. Louis at the turn of the century.<sup>5</sup> In 1912 with the backing of a fraternal insurance group, he started the St. Louis Argus. As early as the World War I he organized a Negro political machine and became a power behind the scene in local Republican politics.<sup>6</sup> Anyone reading the St. Louis Argus during the pre-World War II era would

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<sup>5</sup>Curtis Interview, August 6, 1968. Curtis remembered helping Mitchell with his spelling and grammar.

<sup>6</sup>Herman Dreer, "Negro Leadership in Saint Louis: A Study in Race Relations." (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation), University of Chicago, September, 1955, pp. 97-100.

have to agree with Mitchell when he wrote, "the Argus has been the life blood of the local Branch of the NAACP during the past twenty-five years."<sup>7</sup> From the very beginning, the St. Louis Argus provided the branch with publicity, an ingredient greatly needed by any volunteer organization.

Circumstances helped bring about the emergence of these leaders by the early 1930's. The national office was moving toward a more aggressive posture, and there were many in the branch who felt this aggressiveness should be duplicated locally. This group wanted the branch to take the offensive. To achieve this, some felt new leadership was needed while others felt President Curtis had held that office long enough. Curtis agreed with some of these opinions and attempted to step aside in 1931.<sup>8</sup>

A division in the branch developed over the selection of the person to follow Curtis. Finally, Joseph E.

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<sup>7</sup>St. Louis Argus, May 7, 1937.

<sup>8</sup>Curtis Interview, August 6, 1968; Espy Interview, August 9, 1968; Redmond Interviews, May 27, 1968 and August 13, 1968.

Mitchell won the presidency over Rev. E. R. Clark in December, 1932.<sup>9</sup> Mitchell served one year, was elected to another but asked Henry Espy to finish out his 1934 term because of failing health.<sup>10</sup> Mitchell provided the transition from the defensive-minded leaders of the 1920's to the more aggressive legal-minded leadership provided by Espy and Redmond.

The branch became involved in a variety of activities during the 1930's and early 1940. The branch's efforts caused a removal of the signs "Negro" from the restrooms at the railroad station. In 1936, an essay contest on Negro history was sponsored by the branch.<sup>11</sup> The branch continued handling cases involving police brutality and increased its effort in this direction. The local NAACP was active in about twenty-five cases of police brutality in 1941. However, by 1944 the Association furnished counsel

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<sup>9</sup>Curtis Interview, August 6, 1968; St. Louis Argus, December 9, 1932.

<sup>10</sup>Espy Interview, August 9, 1968.

<sup>11</sup>St. Louis Argus, November 10, 1933; February 14, 1936.

in only two cases. The decrease proved to the branch the effectiveness of their campaign.<sup>12</sup>

On the political front, the branch was active under the Espy and Redmond administrations. In 1943 alone the branch worked with Alderman Joseph C. Caston in drafting a city ordinance prohibiting racial discrimination in restaurants located on city-owned property; sponsored a civil rights bill in the Missouri Legislature; and led three delegations to Jefferson City in behalf of pending legislation.<sup>13</sup>

The St. Louis NAACP never developed a general program of job procurement during these years,<sup>14</sup> but much was done in specific areas. For example the branch obtained more and better jobs for Negroes in work projects

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<sup>12</sup>St. Louis NAACP Branch, Bulletin, 1940-41; 1944. From 1938 through 1944, the branch printed these one page flyers telling of its achievements for the preceding year. The titles varied sometimes appearing as Branch Achievements, Branch Accomplishments, or Branch Bulletin. They will be referred throughout this paper as it appears in this footnote.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 1943.

<sup>14</sup>Espy Interview, August 9, 1968; Redmond Interviews, May 27, 1968; August 13, 1968.

started by the federal government.<sup>15</sup> Partial success was achieved in the St. Louis Post Office and the St. Louis Police Department. At the Post Office the branch secured promotions for Negroes into four new departments where they had previously been excluded. The branch held conferences with the police board and the Governor in order to encourage the hiring of more black policemen. More were hired, but in 1944 the forty-six black policemen made up only 3% of the total force.<sup>16</sup>

The branch opened a business office in 1935. Mrs. Ruth Roland Wheeler, the secretary of the branch, was in charge of the office, and it was open from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on weekdays.<sup>17</sup> The office space, telephone, and often the secretarial help was provided by lawyers Espy and Redmond.<sup>18</sup> During the war years of 1943 and 1944, the branch sent almost 600 telegrams and over 4,000

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<sup>15</sup>St. Louis NAACP Branch, Bulletin, 1938-39; St. Louis Argus, February 14, 1936.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid, 1938-1944.

<sup>17</sup>St. Louis Argus, November 29, 1935.

<sup>18</sup>Redmond Interviews, May 27, 1968 and August 13, 1968.

letters pertaining to NAACP business out of Redmond and Espy's office.<sup>19</sup>

It was not an accident that the National NAACP Convention was held in St. Louis at the beginning of the Henry Espy Administration. Espy and Redmond attended the 1934 National Convention seeking the convention for St. Louis the following year. They thought that holding the convention in St. Louis would attract more members, and it would act as a further stimulus for branch activities. The 1935 convention was held in St. Louis, and it provided the branch with what the St. Louis NAACP leadership had planned for--publicity and stimulation.<sup>20</sup>

During the depression and war years, efforts were made to develop regional organizations. Herbert J. Seligman of the national office started the plan in 1930.<sup>21</sup> The Kansas City NAACP branch organized the first

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<sup>19</sup>St. Louis NAACP Branch, Bulletin, 1943-1944.

<sup>20</sup>Espy Interview, August 9, 1968; St. Louis Argus, July 19, 1935, Headline--"NAACP Had Rebirth at Meeting Here."

<sup>21</sup>McMahon, "The Litigation of the National Association," p. 37.



Missouri State Conference in 1931,<sup>22</sup> but the state-wide organization soon became dormant. It was not until 1940, under the prodding of Sidney Redmond that the Missouri State Association of Branches was revived. Redmond spoke in towns throughout Missouri to create interest in the state organization and to "inspire" rural branches towards action. He served as the President of the State Association during the war years, but because of limited funds, it was "very inactive."<sup>23</sup>

The primary concern of the branch during the Espy and Redmond years was civil rights. The Vashon High School Suit was one of the successful cases handled by the St. Louis NAACP. In 1934 the branch joined with other groups to protest the building of an elementary school on the Vashon High School grounds. St. Louis Public Schools were strictly segregated until the mid-1950's, and Vashon was a Negro high school. Large segments of the

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<sup>22</sup>Robert W. Bagnall, "NAACP Branch Activities," The Crisis, XL (June, 1931), 206.

<sup>23</sup>The Crisis, XLVII (November, 1940), 360; St. Louis NAACP Branch, Bulletin, 1940-1941.

Negro community opposed the school board in the selection of this site for the new Negro grade school. The NAACP, under Henry Espy's leadership, provided much of the guidance and money in the fight against this school site selection. In order to put pressure on the school board, the local NAACP opposed the 1934 school bond issue. This led to some internal problems for the branch. Many members were St. Louis public school teachers, and they felt compromised when the branch opposed the bond issue. To resolve this apparent conflict of interest and to protect their jobs, many teachers resigned from the NAACP.<sup>24</sup> The bond issue passed, and the Negro leaders decided to take the issue to court. Lawyers George L. Vaughn, Robert L. Witherspoon, and Sidney Redmond argued the case.<sup>25</sup> Finally in December, 1937, Judge Robert J. Kirkwood decided that "the area there (Vashon High School grounds) was already too small to whip a cat on,"<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Espy Interview, August 9, 1968; St. Louis Argus, December 28, 1934. Robert P. Watts, Secretary of the local, was one of many to resign, and the Argus questioned his motives by asking, "Was it pressure or fright?"

<sup>25</sup>The Crisis, XLV (January, 1938), 21.

<sup>26</sup>Robert L. Witherspoon, Personal Interview with author held 1518 Sarah, St. Louis, Mo., August 31, 1968.

and he issued the permanent injunction sought by the NAACP lawyers.

The branch's legal efforts proved unsuccessful in another case arising during the mid-1930's. A new municipal auditorium for St. Louis was opened in 1934. The building was christened Kiel Auditorium after the Republican Mayor of the World War I era. At low-brow events such as prize fights and political assemblies, there was no problem of segregation. However, when the Grand Opera leased the Auditorium, a Negro public school teacher complained to one of St. Louis' leading Negro Democrats, David Grant, that he could only buy a segregated seat.<sup>27</sup> Joseph P. Harris, a lawyer, was chosen to be the plaintiff in the case primarily because he was willing, and he paid property taxes to support Kiel Auditorium.<sup>28</sup> Harris attempted to buy tickets to the Grand Opera, and found he would have to sit in the right or left side of the balcony.<sup>29</sup> Numerous meetings were held between the

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<sup>27</sup>David M. Grant, Personal Interviews with author held 705 Olive, St. Louis, Mo., June 1, 1968 and August 10, 1968.

<sup>28</sup>Espy Interview, August 9, 1968.

<sup>29</sup>Harris vs. City of St. Louis, III S.W. 2d 997, 1938.

city administration's representatives, Guy Golterman who had licensed the building for the Grand Opera from the city, and the Negro leadership. After one meeting, the following conversation was reported to have taken place between Charles M. Hay, City Counselor and Joe Harris:

Hay: "Joe, I don't know why you want to attend the opera. All I do at the opera is sleep."

Harris: "Well Mr. Hay, I have as much right to sleep there as you."<sup>30</sup>

The city officials held firm in their policy of allowing the person leasing the building complete discretion on admissions. In order to placate the Negro leadership, the Grand Opera liberalized its seating policy to allow groups of seats to be sold to Negroes throughout the Auditorium, but still on a segregated basis.<sup>31</sup> The proposal was unacceptable to the local NAACP, and preparations were made for a more extensive battle.

The St. Louis NAACP fought on two fronts in its attempt to force the city to discontinue its policy of

<sup>30</sup>Grant Interviews, June 1, 1968, August 10, 1968.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.; Espy Interview, August 9, 1968.

allowing segregation in Kiel Auditorium. In 1935, the Association opposed the Memorial Bond Issue in the hope that the city officials would have second thoughts. The branch President, Henry Espy, explained that this move was a "retaliatory" gesture because of the restrictive use of Kiel Auditorium.<sup>32</sup> This approach failed, for the city administration did not change its position.

While the local NAACP fought the bond issue, court action was also started. The Association brought suit in the St. Louis Circuit Court against the city of St. Louis in 1934. This venture failed and was then taken to the St. Louis Court of Appeals. The attorneys for appellant Joseph Harris were Henry Espy and Sidney Redmond. It was Harris' position that the city did not have the right to allow segregation. His tax money helped pay for the building of Kiel, and therefore, he ought to be admitted the same as anyone else. The city argued that they were not the party who discriminated and that according to state law, the party leasing a building had the right as a proprietor to set the conditions of admittance. The court sided with the city, and the Missouri Supreme

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<sup>32</sup>St. Louis Argus, August 30, 1935.

Court declined to hear the case in 1938 because no Constitutional issues were involved.<sup>33</sup>

Failure in the courts did not end this controversy. What had been sought by litigation was achieved without court order. Soon after the case was decided, the city changed its position, and thereafter what segregation occurred at Kiel Auditorium was on a voluntary basis.<sup>34</sup>

During World War II, the branch membership, along with the rest of the country, spent much time thinking about military affairs. The NAACP leadership was concerned about the Negro in the armed services. Because of the pressures brought by the branch, discriminatory signs were removed at the local U.S. Medical Depot and the Canteen at the Veterans Hospital.<sup>35</sup>

Up to World War II, Missouri had never sent a Negro to West Point. The branch set out to change this tradition. In 1943 because of the efforts of Redmond, Espy and others, Congressman L. E. Miller of St. Louis

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<sup>33</sup>Harris vs. City of St. Louis, III S.W. 2d 995-1000.

<sup>34</sup>Grant Interviews, June 1, 1968, August 10, 1968; Redmond Interviews, May 27, 1968, August 13, 1968.

<sup>35</sup>St. Louis NAACP Branch, Bulletin, 1940-1944.

nominated a Negro principal and Negro alternates to West Point. Congressman Miller, a Republican, had many friends in the Negro community, and since he needed a large Negro vote every two years, he was favorably disposed toward granting this favor. The outcome was the admission and graduation from West Point of the first Negro from Missouri.<sup>36</sup> No doubt this feat achieved by the St. Louis NAACP was a point of pride for St. Louis Negroes, indeed for all Missouri Negroes.

Some of the achievements of the Espy and Redmond administrations had importance beyond the borders of Missouri. Redmond and Espy served as toastmasters for the Anniversary Club of St. Louis. One responsibility of the toastmaster was to obtain guest speakers for club meetings. The Mexican Consul stationed in St. Louis spoke at one of the Anniversary Club meetings. In various conversations with the Mexican Consul, Redmond and Espy pointed out the unfairness of requiring a \$500

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 1943; 1944. Charles L. Smith was the first Negro from Missouri to enter West Point; Guy S. Ruffin, Personal Interview with author held 3520 Laclède, St. Louis, Mo., August 31, 1968. Smith was graduated and is now an officer in the U.S. Army.

deposit from United States Negroes entering Mexico. The Mexican Consul agreed, and he wrote the officials in Mexico.<sup>37</sup> In 1939 the branch received written assurance that this policy would be discontinued.<sup>38</sup> This equalization of treatment at the Mexican border served to illustrate how with quiet consultation, the branch was able to achieve some of its goals without public threats, political wire pulling, or court action.

The St. Louis NAACP branch obtained some of its objectives through thoughtful conversation with the right people, but generally while Espy and Redmond provided the leadership, the primary emphasis for change came through the courts. The courts have been the favorite target for the NAACP. It seemed only natural that once the NAACP passed from the doldrums of the 1920's and decided to break new ground, it would choose for its leaders, men skilled in the area where change was sought. Not only was more

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<sup>37</sup>Letter, Lic. Raul E. Valenzuela Cons. Depto. Inf. Consular Tlatelolco D.F. Mexico to Daniel Kelleher, June 22, 1968. The consular service of Mexico claimed that a legislative or administrative policy never existed that required a deposit from Negroes entering Mexico.

<sup>38</sup>Redmond Interviews, May 27, 1968, August 13, 1968; The Crisis, XLVI (May, 1939), 149.



aggressive leadership needed by the branch during the depression and war years, but also leaders skillful in law. Sidney Redmond and Henry Espy filled these needs most adequately as the many accomplishments of the 1930's and early 1940's bear witness.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ST. LOUIS NAACP BRANCH AND THE GAINES CASE

A few years before World War II, the Supreme Court of the United States handed down a decision that was to mark the turning point for segregated education. The high court's decision in the Gaines Case forced the states providing separate education for whites and Negroes to re-evaluate that policy and to lend more than tacit support to Negro education. The decision formed the legal bedrock for the desegregation decisions following World War II in graduate level education, and it helped provide the judicial atmosphere for the ordering of local public schools' desegregation in the mid-1950's. This case involving a young Negro from St. Louis and the University of Missouri gained importance far surpassing its local significance. It provided the nation with an answer to a pressing problem, and at the same time it heightened the controversy revolving around state and federal responsibility in the fields of education and human rights.

The Gaines Case was the first educational suit sponsored by the NAACP to reach the Supreme Court. The case was successful due to the cooperation between the NAACP and its St. Louis branch. As usual, the stimulation and direction came from the national office. Under the leadership of Henry Espy and Sidney Redmond the branch was willing and eager to take to the offensive. The outcome was the accomplishment of the branch's most notable contribution to the advancement of black people.

The Gaines Case, indeed the NAACP's entire attack on segregated education, did not happen by chance. It evolved because of a plan and financial help from an outside source. Nathan Margold, who managed the American Fund for Public Service, counselled with the NAACP leaders. In May, 1930 both parties agreed to a total sum of \$100,000 to be provided in periodic allotments for the financing of a legal offensive against segregated schools. Margold's original three part plan included concentration on the worst states; forcing equality under a dual system in each state, thus making it too costly to continue segregated education; and focusing public attention on segregated education.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>McMahon, "The Litigation of the National Association," p. 18; Robert McLaren Sawyer, "The Gaines Case:

The depression caused a shrinkage in the assets of the American Fund, and it was 1934 before any money was made available to the NAACP. The amount available was reduced from \$100,000 to \$10,000 in that year, and ultimately, about \$21,000 was contributed to the NAACP's efforts to desegregate education.<sup>2</sup> The reduction in funds caused not only a delay but a shift in the plan of attack. Charles H. Houston, who became the NAACP's full-time special counsel in 1935, planned the new attack. Houston's blueprint entailed the same basic idea as the Margold plan. The hope was to make it so costly to provide a dual system of education that the states would voluntarily desegregate. Instead of a broad attack, however, a pin point thrust was made on the graduate university level, and the worst areas were left for later as

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Its Background and Influence on the University of Missouri and Lincoln University 1936-1950." (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Missouri University, January, 1966), pp. 101-103; Thurgood Marshall, "An Evaluation of Recent Efforts to Achieve Racial Integration in Education Through Resort to the Courts," Journal of Negro Education, XXI (Summer, 1952), 318.

<sup>2</sup>Sawyer, "The Gaines Case," pp. 103-104; McMahon, "The Litigation of the National," p. 20.

precedents were sought in the border states.<sup>3</sup>

The NAACP lost its first case in 1933 against the University of North Carolina on technical grounds.<sup>4</sup> In 1935, the NAACP had a better record. Defeat came in Tennessee where a Negro was refused entrance into the University of Tennessee on the technical point that administrative remedies had not been exhausted. The suit against the University of Kentucky ended in the establishment of a makeshift engineering course at a Negro college.<sup>5</sup> Victory finally came when Donald Murray attempted to enter the University of Maryland's law school. The state court of appeals ruled that out-of-state tuition paid by the state to Negroes attending schools outside of Maryland was discriminatory. The court ordered Murray admitted to the University Law School since no state official was authorized to establish a new school for Negroes. This was a significant breakthrough for the

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<sup>3</sup>Marshall, "An Evaluation of Recent Efforts," pp. 317-318; St. Louis Argus, July 19, 1935; Charles H. Houston, "Educational Inequalities Must Go!", The Crisis, XLII (October, 1935), 300-301.

<sup>4</sup>McMahon, "The Litigation of the National," pp. 232-235. The president of the Negro college refused to certify the plaintiff's scholastic record.

<sup>5</sup>Sawyer, "The Gaines Case," pp. 109-110.

NAACP, and immediately plans were made to continue the attack. It was at this point that a request for legal aid came from a St. Louis Negro.<sup>6</sup>

Lloyd L. Gaines was a lean handsome young man of some twenty-three years when he asked for the aid of the NAACP. He was the youngest of five children brought by their mother from Oxford, Mississippi, in 1926. He worked his way through high school and college, receiving some additional financial help from scholarships and his two older brothers. He attended Stowe Teacher's College in St. Louis for a year, and then entered Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. On August 4, 1935, Gaines graduated from Lincoln as an honor student and president of his class.<sup>7</sup> A few days later, he registered with the placement bureau at Lincoln. Early in June of that year, he received a University of Missouri catalog. Gaines could not find a teaching position,

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 107-108; Harry S. Ashmore, The Negro and the Schools, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), pp. 31-32.

<sup>7</sup>Lucile H. Bluford, "The Lloyd Gaines Story," The Journal of Educational Sociology, XXXII (February, 1959), 242-243.

and in August he again wrote the University of Missouri. This time he filled out the application blank for the law school, and at the same time he wrote the President of Lincoln University asking that his transcripts be forwarded to the University of Missouri. In this letter, Gaines indicated that he knew his application had a special meaning. He hoped that what he was doing would improve opportunities for all Negroes.<sup>8</sup>

It was not until the registrar received Gaines' transcript that he knew Gaines was a Negro. The month of September passed with little accomplished except an exchange of many letters between Gaines, the University of Missouri, and Lincoln University. It appeared that the University of Missouri was not going to admit him; Lincoln University did not have a law school; and his only recourse was to apply for an out-of-state scholarship.<sup>9</sup>

As Gaines was writing letters, he was also conversing with a St. Louis public school teacher who was active in the St. Louis NAACP. Zaid D. Lenoir suggested to Gaines that he allow his name to be used by the NAACP in a law

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<sup>8</sup>Sawyer, "The Gaines Case", pp. 152, 155-157.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 157-159.

suit. Gaines contacted the branch's leaders in late September and they in turn sent the request for legal aid to the national office.<sup>10</sup>

It was not mere coincidence that Lloyd Gaines decided to apply to the all white University of Missouri. The NAACP's successful suit against the University of Maryland was well publicized and most educated Negroes of Gaines' caliber were cognizant of the victory. In July, 1935, the NAACP held its national convention in St. Louis. At this convention, Charles Houston outlined the attack which had started against the University of Maryland. He made it clear that this was just the beginning.<sup>11</sup> The NAACP had informed its branches that it would finance a plaintiff fitting its needs, and the St. Louis branch let it be known that it would like to see the matter tested in Missouri.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Edward T. Clayton, "The Strange Disappearance of Lloyd Gaines," Ebony, VI (May, 1951), 31; Espy Interview, August 9, 1968; Redmond Interviews, May 27, 1968; August 13, 1968.

<sup>11</sup>St. Louis Argus, July 19, 1935.

<sup>12</sup>Redmond Interviews, May 27, 1968; August 13, 1968; Houston, "Educational Inequalities Must Go!", p. 300.



The NAACP could not afford to spread itself thin. It wanted the best possible plaintiff to achieve its goal. The Association had many requests for legal aid, but it selected Gaines to accomplish its ends. The reasons for his selection were many. Charles Houston felt the need for Negro lawyers was critical if Negroes were to achieve full equality.<sup>13</sup> Gaines' excellent scholastic record was a consideration. The fact that he was a product of Missouri's segregated schools lessened the chance that the state would argue that he was not qualified. To argue along these lines would be to admit the inequality of education provided Negroes in Missouri.<sup>14</sup> Missouri had a policy of providing scholarships which paid part of the tuition to those Negroes wishing to do graduate or professional studies outside the state. States throughout the nation were adopting this method

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<sup>13</sup>Charles H. Houston, "The Need for Negro Lawyers," The Journal of Negro Education, IV (January, 1935), pp. 49-52.

<sup>14</sup>Espy Interview, August 9, 1968.

of "equalizing" education.<sup>15</sup> The NAACP wanted to bring this policy into question.<sup>16</sup>

The NAACP in behalf of Lloyd Gaines petitioned for a writ of mandamus in the Circuit Court. This forced the official at the University of Missouri to either admit Gaines or show cause why he could not enter the law school. By March, 1936, the University of Missouri decided to formally reject Gaines because Missouri law would not permit a person of African descent to enter a white school.<sup>17</sup>

Within three weeks, the NAACP petitioned the court to force the University of Missouri to open its doors to Gaines on the grounds that it was the only public law school in Missouri. The NAACP argued that state law and the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution

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<sup>15</sup>Oliver C. Cox, "Provisions for Graduate Education Among Negroes and the Prospects of a New System," The Journal of Negro Education, XXX (January, 1940), 23. Examples of states that passed out-of-state tuition: Missouri, 1921; West Virginia, 1927; Oklahoma, 1935; Maryland, 1935; Tennessee, 1936; and Texas, 1936.

<sup>16</sup>Leon A. Ransom, "The Supreme Court Upholds Lloyd Gaines," The American Teacher Magazine, XXIII (January, 1939), 15.

<sup>17</sup>Sawyer, "The Gaines Case", pp. 160-162.

left the court with no other alternative than to order the admission of Gaines to the University of Missouri. Judge Dinwiddie of the Boone County Circuit Court set July 10, 1936, for the hearing of oral arguments.<sup>18</sup>

Almost 200 people, one-half of whom were black, crowded the sultry courtroom on that day in July. The lawyers representing the University of Missouri argued that it was public policy that required the separation of the races. They pointed out that under Missouri law, Lincoln University was supposed to open new schools when the need arose. Until new schools were opened, the practice of granting scholarships to black students for graduate studies outside Missouri served to equalize educational facilities. Judge Dinwiddie was impressed with this argument, and he denied Gaines entrance to the University of Missouri. The NAACP immediately filed an appeal.<sup>19</sup>

The appeal reached the Missouri Supreme Court in December, 1937. Sidney Redmond, Henry Espy, and Charles Houston, the same lawyers who represented Gaines in the

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 162-163.

circuit court, handled the cases before the Missouri Supreme Court. The arguments used by the NAACP were clearly stated. The out-of-state scholarships were branded:

...a compromise and subterfuge, all the more inadequate because the very essence of them is to withhold from a Negro citizen because of race, the joy and pride of studying at home in a state university which he helps to support.<sup>20</sup>

To counteract the state's contention that there was not enough demand for a law school at Lincoln, it was pointed out that Gaines' rights did not depend upon numbers, but rather on his rights as an individual.<sup>21</sup>

The heart of the matter was the argument that the out-of-state scholarships were of a temporary nature until Lincoln University could provide new schools. In an attempt to make light of this contention, the NAACP lawyers said:

If relator (Gaines) had the power to command the sun to stand still and to order time to pause in its flight, he might be able to wait that uncertain date when a law course might be inaugurated at Lincoln University....<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Gaines Appellant vs. Canada. Brief for Appellee at 61. Prepared by Sidney Redmond, Henry Espy, and Charles Houston for the Supreme Court of Missouri, May Term, 1937, #35, 386.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

The Missouri Supreme Court sided with the lower court's opinion in rejecting the arguments presented in behalf of Gaines. To them, Missouri law had a clear intention, and that was to keep Negroes and whites separated for the purpose of education.<sup>23</sup> The NAACP lawyers used the Pearson vs. Murray Case as precedent, but the court found that there were basic differences between higher education provided Negroes in Missouri and Maryland. For example, in Maryland no official was authorized by law to establish separate schools, but in Missouri, this was the responsibility of the Board of Curators of Lincoln University. Also Maryland's out-of-state scholarship plan was not so liberal as that provided by Missouri.<sup>24</sup> To the members of the Missouri Supreme Court, the state was not depriving Gaines of due process of law under the 14th Amendment. They pointed out the 14th Amendment provided for equal not identical privileges and rights. Thus Missouri's provisions for higher education for Negroes were found "substantially equal" to that provided for whites.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Gaines vs. Canada, 113 S.W. 2d, 786-787.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 791.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 788-790.

While the battle in the courts continued, there was close cooperation between the national office and its local chapter in St. Louis. Charles Houston made the general plans for the case. He and Sidney Redmond handled the oral arguments in court. All three lawyers, Redmond, Houston, and Espy, helped in the research and the taking of depositions with Redmond and Espy doing most of the work on the local level. It is hard to appreciate in 1969 the hardships and chances Espy and Redmond took in the mid-1930's. The hardships involved financial sacrifices and traveling inconveniences, but more important was the threat of losing their professional status. The lawyers for the University of Missouri took statements trying to prove Espy and Redmond were soliciting business. If this charge had been proved, they would have stood in peril of disbarment.<sup>26</sup> Despite this disquieting threat, Redmond and Espy persevered and there was never a formal charge.

The NAACP was able to take large numbers of cases to court because the lawyers usually donated their services.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Espy Interview, August 9, 1968; Redmond Interviews, May 27, 1968, August 13, 1968.

<sup>27</sup>McMahon, "The Litigation of the National...", p. 32.

This tradition was upheld during the Gaines Case. Money was needed, however, for expenses. The national office paid Houston's expenses, and they also paid Gaines so he could go to school in Michigan. The national provided Redmond expense money for his trip to Washington, D. C. where he joined Houston for argumentation before the Supreme Court. The branch paid all other expenses incurred by Redmond and Espy.<sup>28</sup>

It was early in November, 1938, when Redmond made the trip to Washington, D. C. The Supreme Court heard the oral presentations from both sides on November 9. On that day, the lawyers for the University of Missouri were embarrassed several times, for the questions from the bench frequently forced them to correct overstatements on Missouri's generosity to Negro education.<sup>29</sup>

On December 12, 1938, the Supreme Court in a 5 to 2 decision found in favor of Gaines. Chief Justice Hughes,

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<sup>28</sup>Espy Interview, August 9, 1968; Redmond Interviews, May 27, 1968, August 13, 1968.

<sup>29</sup>"Says University of Missouri Belongs to Whites," The Crisis, XLV (December, 1938), 399.

speaking for the majority, agreed with all the basic arguments of the NAACP:

Here, petitioner's [Gaines] right was a personal one. It was as an individual that he was entitled to the equal protection of the laws, and the state was bound to furnish him within its borders facilities for legal education substantially equal to those which the state there afforded for persons of the white race, whether or not other Negroes sought the same opportunity.<sup>30</sup>

The court was saying that out-of-state scholarships were not providing equal treatment under the meaning of the 14th Amendment. Another important feature of this ruling, as shown by the quotation, was that Gaines' right to education was a personal one. This would, in effect, force Missouri and other states to establish expensive schools for a few Negroes within each state. This was in accord with the NAACP's plan, for it was thought that faced with this overwhelming expense the states would then desegregate their schools.

Justice McReynolds wrote the dissenting opinion which undoubtedly reflected more closely the feeling of most whites in the 1930's. He questioned the intentions

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<sup>30</sup>Gaines vs. Canada, 305 U.S. 351.



of Gaines and saw only undesirable alternatives for Missouri under the majority's opinion. The University of Missouri would have to abandon her law school "...or... break down the settled practice concerning separate schools, and thereby, as indicated by experience, damnify both races."<sup>31</sup> McReynolds saw the long run effect of this decision, and what he saw, he did not savor.

In the short run, the decision was not as sweeping as might have been expected. Although, it reversed the Missouri Supreme Court, the case was sent back to that court with instructions that Gaines be admitted to Missouri University in the absence of other provisions which would provide him equal treatment within the state.<sup>32</sup> In other words, the final decision of admitting Gaines to the University of Missouri or setting up a segregated school was left up to the authorities in Missouri.

Reaction to the historic Gaines decision was predictable. In general, the newspapers of the North viewed it

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 353.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 352.

as a "great step forward," and the newspapers of the South were less than enthusiastic.<sup>33</sup> The law reviews reflected this same difference of opinion. The University of Chicago Law Review reported "...the instant decision represents a bold and laudable affirmation of Negro rights."<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, a voice from the South expressed the following hostile reaction: "The opinion of the dissenting justices seems to be the better view as a fair effort to solve a difficult problem..."<sup>35</sup> Within the informed circles of white America, the reaction to the Gaines decision ranged from applause to mild criticism.

The black community received the news of the Gaines decision with guarded optimism. Walter White, the Executive Secretary of the NAACP, declared the decision "more sweeping" than was hoped, but he added that there was a long struggle ahead to get the states to obey the

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<sup>33</sup>Sawyer, "The Gaines Case", pp. 248-251.

<sup>34</sup>"The Gaines Case," University of Chicago Law Review, VI (February, 1939), 305.

<sup>35</sup>Claude L. Goza, "Admission of Negro to Law School of the State University," Georgia Bar Journal, I (May, 1939), 54.

court's mandate.<sup>36</sup> W. E. B. DuBois was optimistic that Missouri would open the doors of the University of Missouri to Gaines. He felt Missouri had proved herself an "enlightened and progressive state," and hoped she would not disappoint the Nation.<sup>37</sup> The Crisis characterized the decision: "...as the most significant victory for Negro rights in the highest court of the land in the past decade."<sup>38</sup> The article went on to say that the Gaines Case was just the beginning for this type of litigation.

Most authorities agreed that Missouri was not yet ready for desegregation, and the Missouri legislature proved them correct. During the first few months of 1939, the legislature worked out its answer to the Supreme Court's decision. Although more than 200 black people attended the hearings in opposition to the Taylor Bill,<sup>39</sup> it became law by May, 1939. The new law made it mandatory

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<sup>36</sup>"Damnify Both Races," Time, XXXII (December 26, 1938), 20.

<sup>37</sup>William E. B. DuBois, "The Gaines Decision," The Commonweal, XXIX (January 6, 1939), 282.

<sup>38</sup>"University of Missouri Case Won," The Crisis, XLVI (January, 1939), 10.

<sup>39</sup>St. Louis Argus, April 14, 1939, Lawyer David M. Grant acted as Chairman of the delegation and presented the speakers opposing the bill.

for the Board of Curators at Lincoln University to set up new schools when the need arose, and \$200,000 was appropriated to provide a law school for Negroes in Missouri.<sup>40</sup>

By the summer of 1939, the NAACP lawyers found themselves back where they had started. The Missouri Supreme Court sent the case to the circuit court for a jury trial to decide if the newly created law school set up by the Missouri Legislature proved equal to that of the University of Missouri's Law School. If the facilities proved unequal, Gaines was to be admitted to the law school at the University of Missouri.<sup>41</sup> On October 11, 1939, the NAACP lawyers informed Judge Dinwiddie that their client was missing. By January, 1940, on the strength of the fact that the plaintiff was still missing, the Gaines case came to an end.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Norval Banksdale, "The Gaines Case and Its Effect on Negro Education in Missouri," School and Society, LI (March 9, 1940), 310-311; Sawyer, "The Gaines Case," pp. 188-189. Previously, the Board of Curators had only discretionary power to establish new schools at Lincoln University.

<sup>41</sup>Gaines vs. Canada, 131 S.W. 2d, 219-220.

<sup>42</sup>Sawyer, "The Gaines Case," pp. 190-191.

The NAACP never had a chance to test the equality of the two public law schools of Missouri. With the financial help of his family and the NAACP, Gaines graduated from the University of Michigan with an M.A. degree in economics. He worked for a time as a W.P.A. clerk in the Michigan State Civil Service Department. Then he came back to St. Louis and worked at a service station. Gaines told friends as late as December, 1938, that he expected to enter the University of Missouri Law School by the fall of 1939.<sup>43</sup> Redmond and Espy helped Gaines while the trial continued. From time to time they paid for his room at the YMCA.<sup>44</sup>

He left St. Louis in the spring to speak in Kansas City, and from there, he went to find work in Chicago. After almost three years of court cases, Gaines tired of being the sacrificial lamb. His idealism waned as the following letter to his mother indicated:

I have found that my race still likes to applaud, shake hands, pat me on the back, and say how great and noble is the idea; how historical and socially important the case, but-- and there it ends.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Bluford, "The Lloyd Gaines Story," p. 243.

<sup>44</sup>Clayton, "The Strange Disappearance....," pp. 32-33.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 29-30. This letter was dated March 3, 1939, and was shown to Clayton by Gaines' mother.

A dejected Lloyd Gaines stayed in Chicago for a time, and then one night he left his room at the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity house and was never heard from again.<sup>46</sup>

The explanations for his disappearance ranged from foul play to a financial settlement, but all such reasons were based only on rumor. When Charles Houston showed up in St. Louis to carry on the court battle in October, 1939, the NAACP thought they had a client. They soon found that Gaines had been missing for some months. A panicked search led nowhere. Pictures were carried in the nation's newspapers and appeals went out, but the NAACP was unable to locate Gaines. Even the Selective Service System during World War II was unable to discover his whereabouts.<sup>47</sup> To this day, Gaines' disappearance remains an enigma.

No sooner had Lloyd Gaines dropped from sight than a new crusader took his place. Lucile Bluford began a struggle to enter the University of Missouri's School of Journalism. Several times, she went in person to the

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>47</sup>Bluford, "The Lloyd Gaines Story," p. 246.

Registrar's Office only to be told that Lincoln University was responsible for higher education of Negroes in Missouri. When the Gaines Case was dropped, the NAACP turned to Miss Bluford as the means to crack the door at the University of Missouri, and in this sense, the Bluford Case was an extension of the Gaines Case.

Bluford was brought up in Kansas City, Missouri. She attended the University of Kansas and graduated in 1932 with a degree in journalism. The State of Missouri paid part of her tuition during her college years under the out-of-state scholarship plan. After working briefly for the Atlanta Daily World, she obtained a job with the Kansas City Call in 1932. Starting in 1937, Bluford became Managing Editor of that Negro newspaper. Encouraged by the Gaines decision and the advice of the NAACP, both local and national, she tried to enroll at the University of Missouri during the winter of 1938-1939.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Bluford vs. Canada. Brief for Appellee at 4, 9, 20. Prepared by Attorneys Sidney Redmond, Henry Espy, John H. David, and Charles Houston for the Supreme Court of Missouri, May Term, 1941, #37449. Dorothy Davis, "She Knocks at the Door of Missouri University," The Crisis, XLVI (May, 1940), 140.

The Bluford case again revealed the spirit of co-operation between the St. Louis branch and the national office. The same lawyers who worked on the Gaines Case also handled the Bluford suit. There were many reasons why the St. Louis branch took the case over the Kansas City branch. The St. Louis NAACP was more active, and it was in a better financial position. Redmond and Espy had the Gaines experience behind them, and they were eager to make up for the sad conclusion experienced in that case. Houston preferred working with Redmond and Espy because of the experience factor. Bluford, who had reported the progress of the Gaines Case in the Kansas City Call, knew Redmond personally.<sup>49</sup>

Even before the Gaines Case was formally closed, the NAACP lawyers moved quickly with this new attack. In October, 1939, litigation was started in the state courts, and by July, 1940, the case rested before the Missouri Supreme Court. The high court decided the state had until February, 1941 to establish the necessary courses at Lincoln or admit Bluford to the University of Missouri.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Redmond Interviews, May 27, 1968, August 13, 1968; Espy Interview, August 9, 1968.

<sup>50</sup>Bluford vs. Canada, 153 S.W. 2d, 17, 18.



At the same time Bluford was seeking a writ of mandamus in the state courts against the University of Missouri, the NAACP lawyers, filed a civil damage suit in the federal district court. A civil rights law of 1870 provided that a person depriving another of rights secured by the Constitution could be held liable in the courts for redress. Under this law, Bluford sued Registrar Canada of the University of Missouri for \$10,000. The court found that the: "...plaintiff [Bluford] may not complain that the defendant [Canada] has deprived her of her Constitutional rights until she has applied to the proper authorities for those rights and has been unlawfully refused."<sup>51</sup> The court was indicating that perhaps she would have had a case if she were suing the Lincoln University Registrar. The federal court proved to be no more receptive than the state courts.

The immediate result for Missouri from the litigation of both the Gaines and Bluford cases was the establishment of two new Jim Crow schools. The Lincoln University Law School opened in the fall of 1939 over the

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<sup>51</sup>Bluford vs. Canada, 32 Fed. Sup. 711.

protest of pickets carrying placards.<sup>52</sup> The school was located in St. Louis, and it operated until 1943. Some of its graduates were admitted to the Bar.<sup>53</sup>

Starting in 1941, graduate courses in journalism were offered at Lincoln University. The school included an attractive building, adequate library, good print shop, and an excellent faculty. Teachers from the University of Missouri provided the instruction by driving to Jefferson City. By 1945 a Negro faculty was added to the new school.<sup>54</sup>

These schools were opened because of the efforts of the NAACP, Lloyd Gaines, and Lucile Bluford. Gaines and Bluford, however, never attended the schools created for their expressed needs. Gaines mysteriously disappeared. Bluford felt she had more experience than the new school could offer, and her basic motive for her suit was to open the University of Missouri.

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<sup>52</sup>Carey McWilliams, "Racial Dialectic: Missouri Style," The Nation, CLX (February 24, 1945), 209.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 208-209.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 209.

The Bluford suits brought to an end the NAACP's concentrated effort to open the professional schools for Negroes in Missouri. War diverted interest away from this effort. The NAACP had carried on the drive for six years, and the finances of the Association would not permit it to spend more of its already insufficient funds on the seemingly impregnable segregation policies of Missouri.<sup>55</sup>

After World War II, the NAACP decided to attack segregated education head-on. It became apparent that the states would continue to evade the Gaines mandate by setting up segregated schools. Starting in 1947, the NAACP devised a program to demolish the entire structure of segregated education.<sup>56</sup>

This new offensive started with state professional and graduate schools. All of the cases undermining segregation in higher education depended heavily upon the Gaines decision.<sup>57</sup> By 1949, the NAACP's efforts in

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<sup>55</sup>Marshall, "An Evaluation of Recent Efforts...", p. 318; McMahon, "The Litigation of the National...", p. 249.

<sup>56</sup>NAACP Annual Report, New York, 1947, pp. 22-23.

<sup>57</sup>Ashmore, The Negro and the Schools, p. 32; Frank P. Graham, and Benjamin E. Mays, "Segregation and the Schools," Public Affairs Pamphlet, #209, New York: NAACP, N.d., p. 9.

Oklahoma and Texas were successful, for the highest court in the land, in effect, over-ruled the "separate but equal" doctrine for professional schools.<sup>58</sup>

Missouri was moving away from segregated graduate education by the late 1940's. In 1949, Missouri's House of Representatives passed a bill allowing Negroes to enter the University of Missouri if the courses it offered were not available at Lincoln University. This bill was blocked in the Senate, however, because of the Fairgrounds Park Incident<sup>59</sup> and the maneuvering of Senator Edward V. Long.<sup>60</sup>

The Board of Curators of the University of Missouri hoped this bill would pass, and when it did not, they decided to act. One Board member contacted the St. Louis NAACP and indicated that the time was right to file another suit. Three black students were selected, and then

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<sup>58</sup>Jessie P. Guzman, Twenty Years of Court Decisions Affecting Higher Education in the South, 1938-1958, (Tuskegee Institute Press, June, 1960), pp. 12-13; Albert P. Blaustein and Clyde Ferguson, Jr., Desegregation and the Law: The Meaning and Effect of the School Segregation Cases, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1947), pp. 109-110.

<sup>59</sup>See Chapter VII.

<sup>60</sup>Sawyer, "The Gaines Case", pp. 324-327.

they filed for admittance to the engineering and graduate schools at the University of Missouri. The case was taken to Judge Sam C. Blair's Cole County Circuit Court because both parties thought Judge Blair more sympathetic than the judge serving in Columbia.<sup>61</sup>

In March, 1950, the University of Missouri asked for a judicial determination in the case. In other words, the University of Missouri's officials asked that the ruling be given in general terms. This type of ruling would do away with the need for future suits. Judge Blair did not frustrate the consenting sides, for he ruled that Negroes could not be excluded from the University of Missouri because of race if the courses they wanted were not offered at Lincoln University.<sup>62</sup> The University of Missouri did not appeal the ruling, and in the fall of 1950, the school received its first black students. The St. Louis NAACP branch bore the financial burdens incurred in this case. The branch also financed, in part, the educational

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<sup>61</sup>Espy Interview, August 9, 1968.

<sup>62</sup>Sawyer, "The Gaines Case", pp. 327-330.

expenses of the three black students during their first year at the University of Missouri.<sup>63</sup>

With the admittance of these black students to the University of Missouri, the branch achieved in an anti-climactic fashion the goal first sought in the Gaines Case. The success experienced with the Gaines case was due to the close cooperation between the NAACP and its branch in St. Louis. The national furnished the stimulus, and the branch eagerly became active in the new offensive. The Gaines decision proved to be the most important contribution of the St. Louis branch to the advancement of black Americans. The decision had towering importance for the entire country, for it supplied the legal basis for the desegregation of professional and graduate facilities in several border and southwestern states after World War II. In the long run, the importance of the Gaines Case cannot

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<sup>63</sup>Witherspoon, Interview, August 12, 1968; Letter, Henry Espy to St. Louis NAACP, December 21, 1950, St. Louis NAACP Branch Files. This bill was submitted to the branch by the Redmond and Espy law firm for services amounting to \$1520 for the Bell, Horne, and Rigdel vs. University of Missouri Case. This bill gives one an idea of the expenses encountered by the branch.

be limited to higher education. Given hindsight, it is easy to conclude that the Gaines Case was the first major break in the wall of segregated education. Once each state was forced to provide truly "separate but equal" schools, it soon became apparent that this was an impossible task. From that point, it was a relatively small step for the Supreme Court in 1954 to conclude that segregated education was "inherently unequal."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE POST WAR YEARS: 1945-1955

Usually the meetings of the St. Louis NAACP were held at the Pine Street YMCA. This was not the case for the November, 1944, membership meeting, whose chief business was to elect the president for the following year. Militant members led by Henry Wheeler had changed the location for this particular meeting to the Carr Square Village Housing Project Meeting Hall. The maneuver was designed to make it easier to get their supporters to the meeting. The militants elected David Grant president for 1945,<sup>1</sup> thus ending the six-year term of Sidney Redmond. By the spring of 1945, the changeover in leadership was completed and the office of the branch business secretary was moved adjacent to the law office of David Grant.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Redmond Interviews, May 27, 1968; August 13, 1968; Grant Interviews, June 1, 1968; August 10, 1968.

<sup>2</sup>St. Louis Argus, November 10, 1944; April 27, 1945.



Grant, like Redmond, was highly articulate, outspoken, and energetic. Style and political philosophy separated these two men. Redmond was serious in conversation. Grant, on the other hand, was apt to interject a humorous or risqué illustration to get his point across. Redmond was a life-long Republican, while Grant was a member of the Democratic party since the 1930's.

David Grant was a native St. Louisan. He obtained his law degree from Howard University. Under Democratic dominated city administrations he held the offices of Associate City Counselor, Assistant Circuit Attorney, and Research Director for the Board of Aldermen. In 1939, he was arrested while leading demonstrators who were picketing the Jim Crow Law School in St. Louis established by Lincoln University. The year 1942 found Grant actively engaged with Theodore D. McNeal, president of the St. Louis Sleeping Car Porters Union, in organizing the March on Washington in St. Louis. The March on Washington Organization arranged a demonstration outside the St. Louis Small Arms Plant. Following the demonstration, McNeal and Grant negotiated with the plant management demanding jobs for Negroes. Soon these demands were met by the

opening of a separate building which employed Negroes.<sup>3</sup>

Grant was the first Democrat to become president of the St. Louis NAACP. During the 1930's, he claimed he was not an active member of the NAACP because he was a Democrat. It was thought by many St. Louis Negroes as late as the 1940's that being a Democrat was the equivalent of being disloyal to one's race. Grant was always forced to defend himself at NAACP meetings, and therefore, he dropped out as an active member.<sup>4</sup> In 1943, he gained some distinction by working with Thurgood Marshall in a case that equalized the salary for Missouri Negro teachers with that of white teachers.<sup>5</sup> At this point, Grant's popularity began to rise among the middle-class Negroes.

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<sup>3</sup>Grant Interviews, June 1, 1968, August 10, 1968; The Booker T. Washington Trading Stamp Association. "Metropolitan St. Louis: Negro Directory: A Classified Publication of Biographies," St. Louis, 1943, p. 19. The March on Washington was conceived by A. Phillip Randolph of the National Sleeping Car Porters Union. It was organized to march 10,000 protestors on Washington, D. C. if the Federal Government would not open defense jobs to Negroes. President Roosevelt issued an executive order which made the planned march unnecessary.

<sup>4</sup>Grant Interviews, June 1, 1968, August 10, 1968.

<sup>5</sup>St. Louis Argus, August 20, 1943.

It was over the relatively small matter of advice given to department store demonstrators that Grant came to the forefront as a candidate for the president of the branch. As early as 1933, the NAACP local had protested the discriminatory practices in the cafeterias of the leading department stores. Although not under the sponsorship of the NAACP, many members participated in sit-ins and demonstrations in 1944, which were under the direction of Theodore McNeal.<sup>6</sup> Representatives of the stores threatened the demonstrators with arrest for trespassing. Henry Wheeler and some other active NAACP members sought the advice of Sidney Redmond. Redmond advised that "there was at least a strong likelihood that they would be arrested."<sup>7</sup> Dissatisfied with this advice, Wheeler and his group went to David Grant. Grant told Wheeler that as long as there was no destruction of property, they would probably not be arrested. His opinion was based on the premise that the stores would not act because they feared

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., November 10, 1933; St. Louis Globe-Democrat, July 9, 1944.

<sup>7</sup>Redmond Interviews, May 27, 1968, August 13, 1968. Redmond disapproved of the demonstrators' using children, for if they were arrested they would have that mark for life.

adverse publicity. Mayor Kaufmann had recently declared Pruitt Day in honor of the World War II Negro Air Force pilot from St. Louis. Grant reasoned that the stores would not want to bring attention to the fact that they were discriminating against the race that had just had one of its members honored by the city. This advice proved correct, for the demonstrators were not arrested, and their efforts were rewarded by some desegregation of store cafeteria facilities.<sup>8</sup>

On the strength of the advice given to the militant members of the NAACP, Grant was approached about the presidency. After Theodore McNeal encouraged him to accept this offer, Grant told the group that he would accept the position if elected.<sup>9</sup> Probably one of the chief motives for Grant's candidacy was a desire on the part of McNeal and Grant to give more prestige to their party by obtaining the leadership of the NAACP. Up to this time, it had always been held by leading Republicans.

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<sup>8</sup>Grant Interviews, June 1, 1968; August 10, 1968.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., Theodore McNeal was on the Executive Board of the St. Louis NAACP, and he was a leading Negro Democrat and labor union leader.

Whatever the motive, Grant was elected at the housing project meeting, and he took office early in 1945.

The Republican and Democratic parties were stereotyped on the issue of economics. Many saw the Democratic party as "big spenders" and the Republicans as "misers." Grant and Redmond, acted out these exaggerated roles. One of the last acts of the Redmond administration was to put several thousand dollars of the branch's funds into U. S. Government Savings Bonds which could not be cashed for a six-month period. This action reflected Redmond's fear that the Grant administration would be less than thrifty.<sup>10</sup> Grant proved Redmond correct, for by the end of 1947, the branch had little in the way of surplus funds. Grant believed that the branch needed liquidity and not investments. It was his feeling that the funds could serve a better purpose by being used in the work of the NAACP. Another shift in policy was the de-emphasis of volunteer work. Paying people for their services was thought by Grant a much better policy than the unreliable method of volunteer work.<sup>11</sup> This new

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid; Redmond Interviews, May 27, 1968, August 13, 1968.

<sup>11</sup>Grant Interviews, June 1, 1968, August 10, 1968.

policy, no doubt, cut into the reserve fund accumulated during the Redmond years.

One innovation in the postwar years was the hiring of an executive secretary for the St. Louis NAACP. This was part of the change sought by Grant of relying more on paid workers as opposed to volunteer help. The innovation may have solved some problems, but it also created a new one. Throughout the postwar era, the branch was forced to define the role of the executive secretary. The executive secretary found her job difficult because her responsibility and authority were not clear. It was hard to please everyone in the branch because everyone had a different idea as to what this new position entailed.<sup>12</sup> The first executive secretary faced this handicap, and in the spring of 1948, the executive board of the branch, over the protest of the president, voted to terminate her services. Objections to the caliber of her work and

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<sup>12</sup>Witherspoon Interview, August 12, 1968; Hubert L. Brown, Personal Interview with author held 4515 Holly Pl., St. Louis, Mo., August 14, 1968.

the financial condition of the branch were the reasons for this action.<sup>13</sup>

It had become common practice for the branch to ask the NAACP for a field worker to organize their membership campaigns. The branch was expected to pay for this help. Instead of following this procedure, the branch decided to hire someone from within the branch. Mrs. Stella B. Price was hired at \$100 per month to conduct the 1949 membership campaign.<sup>14</sup> By the spring of 1949, Mrs. Price was ready to resign because she felt "...handicapped by an uncooperative attitude of some of the officers and members of the board."<sup>15</sup> Some groups felt the paid worker was infringing upon their fields of authority.

In addition to the difficult problem of defining the authority of their paid workers, the branch also had

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<sup>13</sup>St. Louis NAACP Branch, Minutes of the Executive Board Meetings, April 17, 1948; May 29, 1948. (Type-written), St. Louis NAACP Files. As a protest to this action, Mrs. J. Claybourne Bush, the secretary of the branch, resigned.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., January 9, 1948.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., May 14, 1959; Letter, Stella B. Price, Business Secretary of Branch, to President Pettigrew, July 1, 1949, St. Louis NAACP Files. She asked in this letter to be released from her duties because she found it impossible to continue.

to contend with the possible infiltration of their organization by subversive groups. It was known that the Communist party had adopted the policy of capturing branches in order to exert an influence on the NAACP.<sup>16</sup> During the Grant and Ruffin administrations, some attempts were made in this direction. The FBI was continually checking various individual branch members. Some members worked as "dupes,"<sup>17</sup> and some of the leaders of the branch were approached to take out membership in the Community party.<sup>18</sup> All the branch's leaders agreed, however, that a Communist never gained a position of leadership in the branch and some believed it only a "red herring."<sup>19</sup> The branch was very careful, perhaps to the point of over reaction, in the selection of its leaders. For example, in 1950 Mrs. Valla Abbrington was nominated for the executive

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<sup>16</sup>Wilson Record, The Negro and the Communist Party. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1951) pp. 147, 182, 265-268.

<sup>17</sup>Grant Interviews, June 1, 1969; August 10, 1968. Unfortunately specific information on this topic was unobtainable.

<sup>18</sup>Ruffin Interview, August 31, 1968.

<sup>19</sup>Brown Interview, August 14, 1968; Witherspoon Interview, August 12, 1968.



board. It was pointed out that she was an official in the Social and Office Workers Union, which had been expelled by the CIO as subversive. This objection to her appointment kept her off the board until the "charges were proven unfounded."<sup>20</sup> The leadership of the St. Louis NAACP did not want to compound their problems of being black by also becoming "Red."

One of the chief characteristics of the St. Louis NAACP during the postwar period was increased factionalism and constant internal dissension. Heated disagreements developed before the end of Grant's administration. The very group that had elected Grant turned on him after he was elected. The militants, led by Henry Wheeler and Joseph Clark, continually attacked him at meetings, and more than once Grant and these members almost came to blows.<sup>21</sup>

The national office showed some concern over the branch's internal difficulties. The branch voted to

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<sup>20</sup>St. Louis NAACP Branch, Minutes of the Executive Board Meetings, June 3, 1950; September 11, 1950, (Type-written), St. Louis NAACP Files.

<sup>21</sup>Ruffin Interview, August 31, 1968; Grant Interviews, June 1, 1968, August 10, 1968.

accept a worker from the national office because that office felt the branch "needed stimulation."<sup>22</sup> The report of the NAACP's worker, Daniel E. Byrd, listed many causes for the branch's difficulties, but the conclusion pinpointed the chief problem: "I am convinced that segregation can be eliminated in St. Louis if some semblance of unity is forthcoming from the Negroes."<sup>23</sup> From the national office's point of view, the branch had to limit its schismatic tendencies before a successful program could be achieved.

The internal splits that developed in the St. Louis NAACP in the postwar era were very obvious, but the reasons for this phenomenon were more obscure. In Chapter IV, it was pointed out that in the 1920's the St. Louis NAACP had similar difficulties. In both periods there was a major shift in leadership; in the 1920's from white to black and in the mid 1940's from Republican to Democratic. The conflict between Republicans and Democrats, at least

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<sup>22</sup>St. Louis NAACP Branch, Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting, June 20, 1949. Special meeting, (type-written) St. Louis NAACP Files.

<sup>23</sup>Letter, Daniel E. Byrd, Assistant Field Secretary of the National NAACP to the Executive Board of the St. Louis NAACP, July 29, 1949, St. Louis NAACP Files.

in part, caused some of the internal schisms. Indeed, the national office found it necessary to set down precise rules forbidding branches from participating in partisan politics.<sup>24</sup> Another reason for the factionalism was the conflicting ideas of militants and conservatives. The militants wanted the branch to expand its program to include many new issues, and they also wanted to use the weapon of demonstrations. The more conservative members were inclined to focus on one or two primary problems. They felt that other organizations were better suited for demonstrations, and they wanted to keep the center of their attention on the courts.<sup>25</sup> From 1948 through 1953, the duration of presidential tenure was one year. Certainly the constant change of presidents caused a leadership vacuum where strong presidents had previously guided the branch. This leadership void encouraged the chairmen of

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<sup>24</sup>Grant Interviews, June 1, 1968, August 10, 1968. St. Louis NAACP Branch. The Political Action Committee File, August 27, 1946, (typewritten), St. Louis NAACP Files. At the 37th annual conference which David Grant attended, it was decided to restrict the activities of the branches to purely non-partisan politics. This action was unnecessary before because the NAACP had been overwhelmingly Republican orientated.

<sup>25</sup>Ruffin Interview, August 31, 1968.

the various committees to promote their particular spheres of concern as major projects to be undertaken by the entire branch. This competition between committees, in turn, furthered the internal bickering.<sup>26</sup> There were many causes for the schismatic tendencies, and the lack of unity weakened the branch in many ways.

During the War and immediately afterwards, the NAACP had its greatest surge in membership. Following the war membership peaked at about half-million mark.<sup>27</sup> In 1949, the dues were increased from \$1 to \$2 per year, and membership dropped appreciably. The greatest decline in membership came in the big cities, and St. Louis was one of these cities.<sup>28</sup> During the last years of the war and the years following, branch membership ranged between 5,500 and 8,000. From 1949 through 1955, membership totaled under 3,000 per year.<sup>29</sup> On the national level,

<sup>26</sup>Ibid; Brown Interview, August 14, 1968.

<sup>27</sup>St. James, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, pp. 54, 86-87.

<sup>28</sup>NAACP Annual Report, New York, 1949, pp. 65-66. Membership for 1949 was put at 248,676.

<sup>29</sup>Gloster Current, "Report of the Director of Branches to the Missouri State Conferences of Branches," October 2, 1948, St. Louis NAACP Files; NAACP Annual Report, New York, 1951, p. 15; St. Louis NAACP Branch, "Annual Report of Local Branch of St. Louis," 1961, p. 7.

the sharp decline was attributed to lay offs, crop failures, and the dues increase. In St. Louis, the schismatic condition of the branch helped to decrease membership.

The finances of the branch reflected the drop in membership. Early in 1949, individuals extended the branch gifts and loans totaling almost \$1,000 to keep it alive until the membership drive was completed in the summer of that year.<sup>30</sup> Gloster Current of the national office reported in 1953 that the branch started the year with a \$13.74 deficit. He also noted that over \$1,000 had been borrowed from the branch's special fund which was supposed to be used only for educational purposes.<sup>31</sup> Along with all the other problems facing the branch, financial difficulties plagued the branch in the postwar years. Despite these obstacles, the branch was able to carry out an active program.

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<sup>30</sup> St. Louis NAACP Branch, Minutes of General Membership Meeting, January 3, 1949, (typewritten), St. Louis NAACP Branch, Disbursement File, June, 1949, St. Louis NAACP Files.

<sup>31</sup> St. Louis NAACP Branch, Minutes of a Special Executive Board Meeting, May 9, 1953, (typewritten), St. Louis NAACP Files. At this special meeting, a report of Gloster Current revealed that of the \$1,000 borrowed, \$555.82 had not been properly authorized.

The branch played a restricted, but important role in the historic case of Shelley versus Kraemer. The Supreme Court ruled in the Shelley Case that restrictive covenants (private agreements among white property owners not to sell to Negroes) could not be enforced in the courts.<sup>32</sup> The ruling eliminated the chief legal means by which the Negro population of large urban centers was kept confined to a relatively small space. In St. Louis, the number of restrictive covenants in St. Louis had increased since the World War I era until the Negro ghetto was surrounded. Meanwhile the Negro population of the city had swelled so that by 1945, it was bursting at the seams.<sup>33</sup>

One day in 1945, Leatha Shelley narrowly missed being criminally assaulted on her way home from school. The Shelley family set out to get away from such things by buying a house on the 4600 block of Labadie Avenue, because this neighborhood "looked decent."<sup>34</sup> Within two

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<sup>32</sup>Shelley vs. Kraemer, 334 U.S. 1.

<sup>33</sup>Herman H. Long and Charles S. Johnson, People vs. Property: Race Restrictive Covenants, (Nashville, Tennessee: Fisk University Press, 1947), pp. 13, 36.

<sup>34</sup>St. Louis Star Times, May 4, 1948.

weeks after moving into their new house, the Shelleys were served with a court summons. They had moved into a house that was covered by a neighborhood restrictive covenant. The Shelleys immediately contacted Robert Bishop, the realtor who handled the sale of the house.<sup>35</sup> Bishop was a member of the Real Estate Brokers' Association which was composed solely of Negro realtors. This association hired George L. Vaughn<sup>36</sup> to represent the Shelleys in court. Vaughn won his case in the circuit court, but the decision was reversed by the Missouri Supreme Court December 9, 1946.<sup>37</sup>

The NAACP was also engaged with the restrictive covenant issue. The National held a conference July, 1945, in Chicago for the purpose of educating and coordinating those involved with pertinent cases throughout the country. George Vaughn and David Grant attended the Chicago conference.<sup>38</sup> Even at this early stage, the NAACP attempted

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<sup>35</sup>Vose, Caucasians Only, pp. 109-111. Bishop was the minister of the church which the Shelleys attended. He bought the house from a straw party for \$4,700 and sold it to the Shelleys for \$5,700.

<sup>36</sup>This was the same George Vaughn who had served immediately following World War I as Chairman of the Executive Board of the branch NAACP. See Chapter IV.

<sup>37</sup>Vose, Caucasians Only, pp. 116-119.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 57-59, 61-64, 105.

to select the best possible case to place before the Supreme Court. The NAACP was not allowed to select because Vaughn unilaterally filed the Shelley case before the Supreme Court in April, 1947. This forced the NAACP to file its cases before all was ready for such a move.<sup>39</sup>

Such was the situation when the St. Louis NAACP received a letter requesting financial help for the Shelley case. The letter was from the Real Estate Brokers' Association, and it pointed out that \$2,000 had already been spent getting the case before the Supreme Court.<sup>40</sup> The letter was forwarded to the national office with the additional information that the branch in St. Louis was in no position to give financial assistance.<sup>41</sup> The national office saw in this financial request a lever with which to bring the Shelley case more directly under their supervision. They felt Vaughn was "lacking proper sophistication and skill to handle the intricate legal complexities

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>40</sup>Letter, Charles T. Bush to St. Louis NAACP, July 11, 1947, St. Louis NAACP Files.

<sup>41</sup>Letter, David M. Grant to Thurgood Marshall, July 30, 1947, St. Louis NAACP Files.



of the problem."<sup>42</sup> The NAACP held a conference in September, 1947, in New York City to solve the problems facing the lawyers whose cases were pending before the Supreme Court. George Vaughn and James T. Bush, the President of the Real Estate Brokers' Association, attended.<sup>43</sup> Soon after this conference, it became clear that all the problems separating Vaughn and the NAACP were not solved. The NAACP offered \$1,000 to the Brokers' Association on the condition that Vaughn would work closely with the NAACP lawyers. The brokers rejected the offer because they interpreted it to mean that Vaughn was to step aside as the principal attorney in the Shelley case.<sup>44</sup>

During the month of September, 1947, the St. Louis NAACP attempted to provide the financial help needed for the Shelley case. On September 22, the branch asked permission of the national office to allow a mass meeting

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<sup>42</sup>Clement E. Vose, "NAACP Strategy in the Covenant Case," Western Reserve Law Review, VI, Winter, 1955, 129.

<sup>43</sup>Vose, Caucasians Only, pp. 160-161.

<sup>44</sup>Letters, Thurgood Marshall to David Grant, August 1, 1947, September 23, 1947. Letters, Charles T. Bush to Thurgood Marshall, September 9, 1947, September 29, 1947. St. Louis NAACP Files.

for raising money.<sup>45</sup> This permission was forthcoming in the same letter from Thurgood Marshall that withdrew the \$1,000 pledge to the Brokers' Association.<sup>46</sup> Even before the permission was granted, a citizens' committee was formed and efforts were under way to raise the estimated \$6,000 or \$7,000 needed to successfully complete the defense of the Shelley family.<sup>47</sup>

While it was true that the NAACP did not formally sponsor the Shelley case, George Vaughn and the Brokers' Association did benefit from its efforts. Vaughn attended several conferences sponsored by the NAACP and no doubt he profited, at least to some degree, from conversations with lawyers handling similar cases. Even with all the bickering between the NAACP and the Brokers' Association and the resulting lack of coordination, the organization of the attackers upon restrictive covenants

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<sup>45</sup>Letters, Ruth W. Williams, St. Louis NAACP Branch Executive Secretary, to Gloster Current, September 22, 1947, St. Louis NAACP Files.

<sup>46</sup>Letter, Thurgood Marshall to David Grant, October 3, 1947, St. Louis NAACP Files.

<sup>47</sup>Letter, Herman Dreer, Chairman of the Citizens Committee addressed to "Dear Friend," October 1, 1947, (mimeographed), St. Louis NAACP Files. This letter was printed on the stationery of the Brokers' Association of St. Louis.

proved superior to the organization of the defenders of the restrictions. This, in large measure, proved the margin of victory.<sup>48</sup>

In St. Louis, Vaughn and the brokers received strong support from the local NAACP. Indeed, it was hard to distinguish between the brokers, the citizens' committee, and the NAACP leadership because of the overlapping memberships.<sup>49</sup> Without the indirect support of the national office and the enthusiastic backing of the branch, one can speculate that the outcome of the Shelley case might have been different. While the NAACP deserved and claimed no formal recognition for this particular case,<sup>50</sup> to neglect its role would be the same as disregarding an important part of the story.

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<sup>48</sup>Vose, Caucasians Only, pp. 251-252.

<sup>49</sup>Ruffin Interview, August 31, 1968; Herman Dreer, "Negro Leadership in St. Louis: A Study in Race Relations," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1955), pp. 154-156. The Citizens Committee was largely composed of the Executive Board of the St. Louis NAACP and some Brokers' Association members.

<sup>50</sup>NAACP Annual Report, New York, 1948, pp. 27-28. The NAACP claimed credit for the other cases which were ruled on by the Supreme Court at the same time as the Shelley case, but specifically stated that the Shelley case was not under its direction.

After World War II, the branch again became involved with the problem of segregated education. When David Grant took the reins of the St. Louis NAACP, he initiated an attack on the segregation policies of Washington University of St. Louis. Washington University had not admitted Negroes as students since the turn of the century. In the spring of 1945, a group sponsored by the NAACP attempted to enroll at the school, but they were informed that the school did not admit Negroes.<sup>51</sup> Much of the money that went to support Washington University was in the form of receipts from millions of dollars worth of tax free property in St. Louis. From time to time, the City of St. Louis would take the school to court in order to collect the taxes on this property. In an attempt to put more pressure on Washington University, in 1945 the branch started filing a friend of the court brief in connection with the city's suit against the school. This

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<sup>51</sup>St. Louis Argus, May 18, 1945; June 22, 1945. David Grant was quoted as saying the school's policy was "immoral and dishonest" because Negroes were barred, but forced to contribute in an indirect way by increased taxes necessitated by Washington University's tax-free property holdings in the city.

method failed in the courts,<sup>52</sup> but pressure, bad publicity, and changing attitudes caused an alteration in the admission policies. In 1947, some of the graduate and professional schools were opened to Negroes, and by 1952 all divisions admitted Negroes.<sup>53</sup>

In 1948, the local NAACP attempted to get students to apply to Hadley Technical School and Harris Teachers College. Both schools were administered by the St. Louis Board of Education. The Catholic schools of St. Louis had desegregated, and it seemed right that the public schools should follow suit.

St. Louis supported two teachers colleges; Stowe for blacks and Harris for whites. Marjorie V. Toliver attended Stowe Teachers College. In 1949, she attempted to enter Harris Teachers College because Stowe did not offer all the courses she wanted and because Stowe was not an accredited school. The State Circuit Court found in her

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<sup>52</sup>Grant Interviews, June 1, 1968; August 10, 1968; John J. Kessler, "The St. Louis Public Schools: A Survey of Race Inequalities," (mimeographed), 1950, p. 65. St. Louis NAACP Files.

<sup>53</sup>St. Louis Bicentennial Corp., "Negroes--Their Gift to St. Louis," 1964, p. 8; William D. Hammack, "The Admission of Negroes to Washington University," Phylon, (December, 1949), 415-416.

favor. By the time the case got to the Missouri Supreme Court, however, Stowe had been accredited. The Missouri Supreme Court found the two schools "substantially equal" and reversed the ruling of the lower court.<sup>54</sup>

In another case initiated by the branch, Wesley H. Brewton and Wilbert R. Brewton applied for entrance into the previously all white Hadley Technical High School. They attended Washington Technical High School for Negro students. The Hadley School included in its curriculum an aeromechanics course which was not included at Washington Technical. In November, 1949, the circuit court ordered the board of education to admit the Brewton brothers.<sup>55</sup> The case was taken to the Supreme Court of Missouri, but before the court could decide the matter, the aeromechanics course was dropped from the curriculum at Hadley. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Brewton brothers, but pointed out that the case was "moot" and should be dismissed because the course in question had

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<sup>54</sup>Toliver vs. Board of Education of St. Louis, 230 S.W. 2d, 726.

<sup>55</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, November 30, 1949.

been abolished.<sup>56</sup> The St. Louis Post-Dispatch summed up the disheartened feeling of the Negro community with the caption "Victory Without Gain."<sup>57</sup>

The frustration of trying to open the St. Louis public schools turned into elation when the branch succeeded in desegregating the St. Louis open air public swimming pools. By 1949, Negroes had moved into the Fairgrounds Park area. Fairgrounds Park included an open air swimming pool, but no city-owned open air pool was open to Negroes. The branch decided to open the Fairgrounds Park pool. Henry Wheeler led several Negroes to the pool, but they were turned away. The NAACP asked John J. O'Toole, Director of Public Welfare, for a ruling.<sup>58</sup> O'Toole issued an order forbidding discriminatory practices at any city-owned pool.<sup>59</sup> The very next day, a near riot took place at Fairgrounds Park as Negroes attempted to swim in the pool. It was not until 400 policemen had been rushed to the area that the thousands of whites and blacks were

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<sup>56</sup>St. Louis Star Times, November 14, 1950.

<sup>57</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, November 15, 1950.

<sup>58</sup>Witherspoon Interview, August 12, 1968; Grant Interviews, June 1, 1968, August 10, 1968.

<sup>59</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, June 21, 1949.

placed under control. A total of nine people were hurt in various fights during the day.<sup>60</sup> Mayor Darst promptly rescinded O'Toole's order desegregating the pools, and the branch took the matter to court.

The branch selected the Federal Court to test the issue. Many of the city's high officials were sympathetic with the NAACP's goal, but they were afraid of an angry reaction from the city's white majority. The officials looked forward to the court's favorable decision as an excuse to justify opening the pools.

In the absence of city or state statutes prohibiting integration of open air pools, the court found in favor of the plaintiffs, Attorney George W. Draper and Rose E. Taylor the business secretary of the branch. The NAACP lawyers Henry Espy, Sidney Redmond, and Robert Witherspoon presented the case in behalf of the plaintiffs. The court ordered the city to open its open air pools,<sup>61</sup> and by the summer of 1950, Negroes in St. Louis enjoyed swimming privileges at Fairgrounds Park.

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., June 22, 1949.

<sup>61</sup>Draper and Taylor vs. City of St. Louis, 92 Fed Supp. 546.



Court cases were not the only activity of the St. Louis NAACP during the years following World War II. Increasingly, many branch members were resorting to more direct means of bringing about change. One method was picketing. A group led by Henry Wheeler continually picketed the American Theatre from 1944 to 1953. Letters were also sent to actors, playwrights, and the Actors Equity Association in order to apply more pressure to have the American Theatre stop its segregated seating policy.<sup>62</sup> Finally in 1953, the year Wheeler became president of the branch, the theatre discontinued its discriminatory seating policy.<sup>63</sup>

Among its other activities in 1948, the local NAACP attempted to defeat a bond issue and to have the first Negro in the city's history placed on the school board. The branch was successful in helping to defeat the bond issue for slum clearance. The branch opposed it because no provisions were made for the people displaced by the proposed clearance. Also the NAACP wanted guaranteed

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<sup>62</sup>St. Louis NAACP Branch, Minutes of the General Membership Meetings, January 5, 1948, (typewritten), St. Louis NAACP Files.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., January 5, 1953; St. Louis Globe-Democrat, January 2, 1953. The theatre was also torn down that year.

low-cost housing and fair treatment of Negroes in the area after it was rebuilt.<sup>64</sup>

The local NAACP was not successful in securing a Negro member on the school board. It was the Mayor's job to fill vacancies which occurred because of death or resignation. When a vacancy developed in 1948, Mayor Kaufmann proved unresponsive to written and oral appeals calling for a Negro appointment. The NAACP, led by the President, Guy Ruffin, picketed City Hall. This effort brought the desired publicity, but not the appointment of a Negro to the post.<sup>65</sup>

The subject of jobs for Negroes gained more importance following World War II. During Guy Ruffin's administration, the branch made an unsuccessful effort to discontinue the Public Service Company's policy of hiring only white bus drivers.<sup>66</sup> This attempt followed the pattern set by previous administrations of concentrating only

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<sup>64</sup>David Grant, Transcript of speech given on KWK radio October 24, 1948; St. Louis NAACP Files; St. Louis Argus, October 29, 1948.

<sup>65</sup>Ruffin Interview, August 31, 1968; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, August 12, 1948.

<sup>66</sup>St. Louis NAACP Branch, Minutes of the Executive Board Meetings, February 10, 1948, St. Louis NAACP Files; Ruffin Interview, August 31, 1968.

on government or public service employment. By the mid-1950's, under the direction of President Herbert Brown, the branch widened its approach to include private industry. But here too the efforts of the NAACP were largely unsuccessful.<sup>67</sup>

A good case can be made for the claim that the St. Louis NAACP could have accomplished much more during the postwar era if it had been more united. A case in point was the general desegregation of the St. Louis public schools. In 1950, the branch started making plans for a test case.<sup>68</sup> Much of the work of getting the case ready for presentation was done by the Education Committee, chaired by Mrs. A. N. Vaughn. One particular member, Herbert Brown, who also served as the Sumner High School P.T.A. president, spent much time researching the records of the Board of Education. The research led Brown and the

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<sup>67</sup>Brown Interview, August 14, 1968. Attempts were made to have Negroes hired at Kroger Stores and Southwestern Bell Telephone Company. The people negotiated which usually indicated they were sympathetic, but either their boss or the people in the plant were opposed, and their hands were therefore tied.

<sup>68</sup>St. Louis NAACP Branch, Minutes of the Executive Board Meetings, June 3, 1950. Minutes of the General Membership Meetings, November 4, 1950, St. Louis NAACP Files.

Education Committee to the conclusion that such a case could be started in 1952.<sup>69</sup> Two important NAACP lawyers, David Grant and Sidney Redmond, disagreed. The disagreement burst forth at a general membership meeting with the net result that Sidney Redmond resigned from his capacity as attorney in the proposed education suit, and the following spring David Grant was asked to withdraw from the case.<sup>70</sup> According to Herbert Brown, if some semblance of unity had been worked out, and if the lawyers had not been so "lackadaisical," the St. Louis NAACP could well have had its case before the Supreme Court instead of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka*.<sup>71</sup>

By 1954, there was a general "internal awakening" that the dissension hindered the effectiveness of the branch. Herbert Brown was approached by five different

<sup>69</sup>Brown Interview, August 14, 1968.

<sup>70</sup>Letter, Harvey Parham to Sidney Redmond, November 15, 1952, St. Louis NAACP Branch, Minutes of the Executive Board Meetings, April 4, 1953, St. Louis NAACP Files.

<sup>71</sup>Brown Interview, August 31, 1968.

factions and asked if he would serve as president. He was elected as the fusion candidate and became the first president to serve more than a year since the David Grant Administration. The branch began to solidify under Brown's guidance, and by the end of his term, the branch showed signs of becoming a more unified force.

## CONCLUSION

The NAACP's goal has always been the elimination of discriminatory barriers placed before the black minority. The St. Louis branch frequently played a major role in campaigns started by the national headquarters. During the World War I era as the Association argued its case against the Louisville Segregation Ordinance before the Supreme Court, the branch fought a similar St. Louis law. The national and the branch were eventually successful in their respective battles, but segregated neighborhoods were kept intact by the use of restrictive covenants. A generation later, restrictive covenants were declared unenforceable by the Supreme Court, thus destroying the legal basis for segregated housing. The NAACP sponsored most of the restrictive covenant cases, and the branch assisted a local group in bringing the historic Shelley vs. Kraemer Case to a successful conclusion.

Blacks were often the victims of mob action during the first thirty years of this century. The NAACP sought to raise public indignation toward lynchers, and, later,

demands were made for laws to punish mobs. After the East St. Louis riots of 1917, the NAACP made unsuccessful efforts to have the Missouri and Federal governments enact anti-lynch laws. Nevertheless, the Association succeeded in changing the public's attitude, for by the late 1930's hardly any leader in the country justified mob action. The struggle against lynching illustrates how some of the NAACP's objectives were achieved only after many years of frustration and disappointment.

The Gaines Case was the branch's most important contribution to the advancement of black Americans. By winning this Supreme Court case, the NAACP took the first big step towards breaking the tradition of segregated education. The decision made it clear that equal educational facilities would have to be provided Negroes within each state. After World War II, the NAACP pressed its advantage and made the point that the states could not or would not provide equal education. In 1954, the Supreme Court agreed and reversed its "separate, but equal" ruling of the 19th century, declaring that segregated education was "inherently unequal." The branch's sponsorship of the Gaines Case assured it a place of distinction in any study of the American Negro.

The branch used a variety of methods to achieve its goals. Favorite techniques included lobbying and consultation with the power structure. These methods worked when branch leaders obtained the appointment of Missouri's first Negro to West Point. Although the branch never claimed control of the St. Louis Negro vote, it did on occasion threaten city officials with that vote. The branch opposed several bond issues to force concessions from city authorities on issues which the branch felt crucial to the black community. To bring discriminatory practices to the public's attention and to advertise its work, the branch always encouraged publicity. In 1945, the branch started using a new publicity tactic--demonstrations. The tactic was effective at department store cafeterias and at the American Theatre. Litigation was the most reliable method used by the branch. Aside from its involvement in the Gaines and Shelley cases, the branch was active in many lesser known suits. Some were successful, such as the Draper Case which opened the outdoor swimming pools of St. Louis to Negroes and the suit against the University of Missouri in 1950 which unlocked the University doors to black students. Other court cases



did not provide immediate victories, but in every instance the desired change eventually developed.

Certain branch characteristics were found in every period. Branch activities were usually the result of outside stimulation. The national office gave the direction and support needed by the branch for its major undertakings, and most of the branch presidents were not native St. Louisans. The Gaines Case provides the best illustration of this theme. The national office furnished the basic plan, organization, and legal aid. The two branch leaders who handled the case had lived in St. Louis for less than eight years.

Disunity was another branch trait. Disagreements over goals and tactics often led to cleavages among members. At times, divisions were so intense they hindered the effectiveness of the branch. After World War II the branch was especially racked with internal dissension and suffered for it.

Branch leadership has undergone considerable change since 1914. At first prominent whites were sought for the office of president. They served usefully during the first ten years and added prestige to the Association. Most of the work, however, was done by the black chairman

of the executive board. After a black man assumed the presidency that office became the most important in the branch. Lawyers held office from 1934 to 1948, and litigation increased greatly during those years. Until 1945, the president had always been a Republican with a professional background. The year 1945 not only started the Democratic party ascendancy in the branch, which reflected a change in the voting habits of the black St. Louisan, but also witnessed a marked change in the character of the rank and file. Previously most of the members were of the middle or upper middle class. Membership status had shifted downward as the Association widened its base. The change was mirrored with a new type of branch president. Many presidents after 1945 were Democrats holding non-professional or semi-professional occupations.

Changes in leadership types and membership status were not the only alterations which took place during the branch's history. The NAACP has proved itself a flexible organization as tactics were frequently changed, and as one goal was reached new ones were pursued. The basic objective of the NAACP, the attainment of first-class citizenship for blacks, has always been the same. A good deal of progress has been made in obtaining this

objective, and the St. Louis NAACP played a conspicuous part in this endeavor.

## APPENDIX #1: PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE ST. LOUIS NAACP 1914-1958

| Date                           | Name                     | Occupation  | Birthplace          | Schooling                   | Year of Migration to St. Louis | Political Affiliation |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Jan. 19, 1914-<br>Jan 20, 1914 | W. Sampson Brooks        | Clergyman,<br>St. Pauls<br>Church                   | *                   | *                           | *                              | *                     |
| Jan. 20, 1914-<br>1916         | Gustavus A.<br>Tuckerman | Clergyman   | Boston,<br>Mass.    | *                           | *                              | *                     |
| 1917-1923                      | John W. Day              | Clergyman,<br>Unitarian<br>Church of<br>the Messiah | *                   | *                           | *                              | *                     |
| 1924-1932                      | Thomas A. Curtis         | Dentist   | Marion,<br>Ala.     | Meharry Med. Coll.<br>Tenn. | 1896                           | Republican            |
| 1933-1934                      | Joseph E.<br>Mitchell    | Newspaper<br>Publisher                              | Alabama             | High school                 | 1900                           | Republican            |
| Summer 1934-<br>1938           | Henry D. Espy            | Lawyer  | Gifford,<br>Florida | Howard U.<br>Law School     | 1928                           | Republican            |
| 1939-1944                      | Sidney R. Redmond        | Lawyer  | Jackson,<br>Miss.   | Harvard U.                  | 1928                           | Republican            |

## APPENDIX #1, Continued

| Date      | Name                  | Occupation   | Birthplace                        | Schooling                        | Year of Migration to St. Louis | Political Affiliation |
|-----------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1945-1947 | David M. Grant        | Lawyer   | St. Louis, Mich. U. Missouri      | Born St. Law School              | 1926                           | Democrat              |
| 1948      | Guy S. Ruffin         | Public School Teacher                              | Clarksburg, Howard U. W. Virginia | Howard U. Columbia U. Chicago U. | 1926                           | Republican            |
| 1949      | Jasper M. Pettigrew   | Clergyman, Lane Tabernacle C.M.E. Methodist Church | McRae, Georgia                    | M.I. Holly-spring, Miss.         | 1943                           | Republican            |
| 1950      | Robert L. Witherspoon | Lawyer   | Bennettsville, S.C.               | Howard U. Law School             | 1930                           | Republican            |
| 1951      | Henry T. Reams        | Pharmacist   | Alamo, Tenn.                      | Howard U. Pharmacist School      | 1931                           | Democrat              |
| 1952      | Harvey E. Parham      | Attendant, Sleeping Porters Union                  | Martin, Tenn.                     | High school                      | *                              | Democrat              |
| 1953      | Henry W. Wheeler      | Post Office Clerk                                  | Jonesboro, Ark.                   | Arkansas State Coll.             | 1910                           | Democrat              |

## APPENDIX #1, Continued

| Date      | Name               | Occupation   | Birthplace              | Schooling             | Louis | Year of Migration to St. | Political Affiliation |
|-----------|--------------------|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1954-1955 | Hubert L. Brown    | Post Office Clerk                                  | Louisville, Kentucky    | High school           |       | 1942                     | Independent           |
|           |                    |  |                         | Business college      |       |                          |                       |
| 1956-1958 | Ernest A. Calloway | Research Director, Central Conference of Teamsters | Herbington, W. Virginia | High school           |       | 1950                     | Democrat or Socialist |
|           |                    |  |                         | Brookwork Labor Coll. |       |                          |                       |

KEY: \* Information unavailable

APPENDIX #2

MEMBERSHIP--NAACP

| National |         | St. Louis Branch |          |
|----------|---------|------------------|----------|
|          |         | 1914             | 1st Year |
| 1914     | 3,000   |                  |          |
| 1918     | 40,000  | 1918             | 1,000    |
| 1925     | 125,000 | 1925             | 800      |
| 1935     | 150,000 | 1935             | 1,500    |
| 1947     | 400,000 | 1948             | 7,500    |
| 1950     | 225,000 | 1950             | 3,000    |
| 1955     | 200,000 | 1955             | 2,700    |
| 1960     | 250,000 | 1960             | 7,000    |

NOTE: These figures are estimates based on many sources.

APPENDIX #3: STRUCTURE OF THE NAACP

NATIONAL\*

President---  
Chairman of Board  
of Directors

Executive  
Secretary

Wash. D.C. Bureau  
Public Relations  
Crisis Legal Committee

Employment---  
Political  
Action and  
other committees

Legal, Educa-  
tional and  
other committees

Director of  
Branches

Membership  
Block  
Chairman

Branches

Membership

ST. LOUIS BRANCH

President and  
Chairman of Executive  
Board

Executive  
Secretary

\* McMahan, "The Litigation of the National," p. 10.

NOTE: The structure of the branch is very similar to that of the National Association. It needs to be emphasized, however, that often the formal structure means little on the local level for more informal means of communication are often used. Also, for the most of its history, the branch did not have an executive secretary.



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