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The Federated Colored Catholic's *Chronicle*, 1929-1932: A Monitor and Barometer of American Race Relations

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Abstract: This essay examines *The Chronicle*, the Federated Colored Catholics' official periodical. The author argues that the short-lived publication was an educative vehicle that provided practical strategies for addressing the day-to-day racial disparities facing the larger Black community. Remnants of the social and economic issues that *The Chronicle's* founder Thomas Wyatt Turner sought to address during the late 1920s and early 1930s remain with us today, and as such, continue to demand both attention and solutions.

Keywords: Federated Colored Catholics, Thomas Wyatt Turner, Economic, Social, Education, Race Relations

In 1917, Thomas Wyatt Turner, a Black Catholic professor of biology at Howard University, Washington, D.C., hosted a meeting at his home for a small group of fellow Black Catholics to discuss the treatment of Blacks within the Catholic Church.¹ His assemblage of Black Catholics to take on racial discrimination within the Catholic Church was not the first time Black Catholics had endeavored to do so. As early as 1889 Black Catholics had organized and raised their voices concerning race and their "place" within the Church when they first assembled as the Catholic Afro-American Congress. Organized by journalist and Black Catholic, Daniel Rudd, in 1889, the congresses would run each year until the closing of its fifth meetings in 1894 when Black Catholics were said to be becoming assertive in their demands for parity. During those five years, the congresses called for racial parity within the church as well as access to education, labor unions, and better housing for Blacks. Turner

¹ Marilyn W. Nickels notes that this meeting occurred in 1915 in Marilyn W. Nickels, "Thomas Wyatt Turner and the Federated Colored Catholics," *U.S. Catholic Historian*, 7, no. 2/3, The Black Catholic Community, 1880-1987 (Spring-Summer 1988): 215-232. In Marilyn W. Nickels, *Black Catholic Protest and the Federated Colored Catholics, 1817-1933* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988), 2-3. Nickels notes the meeting was in 1917 citing H.M. Smith, "An Outline of the History of the F.C.C. of U.S." *Chronicle*, (December 1929): 3-5. I also found 1917 to be the year of the meeting in H.M. Smith, "An Outline of the History of the F.C.C. of U.S.," *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States*, (December 1929): 3-5. (*The Chronicle*, Pius Collection Rare Books, St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri, hereafter cited as *The Chronicle*, SLU).

had continued protesting in that same vein in 1915 in a series of published articles he wrote that highlighted race-based contradictions in Church policy and practice, but felt the need to mobilize a cadre of Black Catholics for the fight to end racial disparities within the Catholic Church.² The small group that met in his home in 1917 would grow and undergo several name changes as its charge solidified and it became the second surge of Black Catholic protest. As The Committee Against the Extension of Race Prejudice in the Church, members focused their efforts on raising public awareness about and against racial discrimination and launched a letter writing campaign to U.S. Catholic hierarchy and those in Rome about the treatment of Black Catholics within the Church. By 1919 amid larger Black anti-discrimination campaigns, the small group had grown to 25 members and had changed its name to The Committee for the Advancement of Colored Catholics (CACC).³ In 1923, the CACC invited delegates from other Black Catholic parishes around the country to a December meeting in Washington, D.C. to further organize and establish a permanent group with a temporary constitution. In 1925 the CACC reorganized and renamed itself the Federated Colored Catholics (FCC), expanded nationwide, and held its first annual convention at St. Augustine's Catholic Church, a Black Catholic parish also located in Washington, D.C.⁴

During the next couple of years, the FCC gained more recognition within the Catholic Church and throughout the country. The Vatican's official publication, *Osservatore Romano*, ran a supportive article about them, and the group began publicizing its activities in both Catholic journals – including its own small newsletter, *The Council Review* – and Black periodicals.⁵ By the time the FCC held its fourth and fifth conferences in 1929 and 1930, the meetings had become interracial with members of the Josephites religious congregation, a predominately white order of Catholic priests founded to convert Blacks and who had developed Black Catholic schools primarily in the Southeast and

² For example, the Church exhorted Catholic parents send their children to Catholic schools, yet its racially segregated school system provided limited access to Catholic high school education as few areas had Black Catholic high schools. Once Black students in the District completed the eighth grade at St. Augustine's they would have to attend Black public schools as local White Catholic high schools would not admit them. Morris J. MacGregor, *The Emergence of a Black Catholic Community: St. Augustine's in Washington* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1999).

³ Nickels, *Black Catholic Protest*, p. 3.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 4.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 6.; also "Osservatore Romano," *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* (December 1930): 297. (*The Chronicle*, SLU).

throughout the Gulf coast states, attending.⁶ A young Jesuit priest, Rev. William Markoe also attended the fifth annual convention. Markoe was the pastor of a Black Catholic parish, St. Elizabeth's, in St. Louis and offered the FCC his parish's newsletter, the *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle*, to be the organization's official journal. Although Markoe's offer included "unlimited space for Federation matters, freedom of expression, and a low subscription rate, all at no additional cost to the organization itself," he would remain the publication's editor.⁷ Turner, now a professor at Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia and the president of the FCC accepted the terms and *The Chronicle Review* became *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States*.⁸ The St. Louis community, however, would remain a key focus of the paper.

With the former St. Louis publication officially renamed an organ of the FCC, Turner and associates moved forward with producing a journal that could explain Black Catholics' thoughts on a variety of topics impacting their lives, with race relations and economic opportunities being foremost among them. For example, faulty scientific studies that concluded Blacks to be intellectually inferior, immoral, and criminal by nature were regularly distributed through mainstream scholarly literature and media and helped propagate Black disenfranchisement throughout the United States during the early 1900s.⁹ Black social scientists W.E.B. Du Bois and Charles S. Johnson were among those who frequently refuted the pseudo-scientific notions and presented counter narratives in their well-known publications -- *The Crisis*, founded in 1910 by Du Bois as the official journal of the National Association of the Advancement for Colored People (NAACP), and *Opportunity*, founded by Johnson in 1923 as the official publication for The National Urban League (NUL). Numerous *Chronicle* writers were members of the NAACP and the NUL which kept them abreast on social, political, and economic matters facing African Americans, but they also understood Black Catholics –

⁶ Nickels, *Black Catholic Protest*, 6-9. Nickels also shares that critics had launched complaints accusing the organization of being a "Jim Crow organization", and charged that "blacks themselves had created consciously the same racial isolation they were attempting to abolish" because of the FCC's primarily Black membership and focus on Black issues. The third FCC annual convention was held in New York City, the fourth in Cincinnati, and the fifth in Baltimore. Also see Smith, op. cit., p. 3-5.

⁷ Nickels, *Black Catholic Protest*, p. 8.

⁸ *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States*, (October 1929): p.3. (*The Chronicle*, SLU).

⁹ See Charles S. Johnson, "Mental Measurements of Negro Groups," *Opportunity* 1, no. 2 (February 1923): 21. Also see Charles S. Johnson, "Public Opinion and the Negro," *Opportunity* 1, no. 7 (July 1923).

unlike their brethren in traditional Black churches – faced discrimination within their own places of worship and wanted to address that reality as well.¹⁰ In the January 1930 edition, armed with writers that included educators, small business owners, lawyers, and social workers, the new *Chronicle* articulated its desires to “express to the world the thoughts, feelings and aspirations of the [Black] Catholics of the United States” and in doing so, expanded the FCC’s presence in the arena of American race relations as it monitored and disseminated information impacting their communities.¹¹

Throughout its brief existence *The Chronicle*, in “plain, clear language” and with a goal of expanding the “fundamental principles of justice and charity”, provided updates on national and local policies that impacted training, employment opportunities, and labor policies.¹² It offered counter narratives to the rampant notions of racial inferiority and superiority, highlighted Black art and culture, and challenged discrimination within the Catholic Church. While still introducing the publication to its readers in the second issue, contributor Victor H. Daniels argued that *The Chronicle* was needed because of the unfinished work towards Black progress. Daniels, also the principal for the Cardinal Gibbons Institute (CGI), a Black Catholic boarding school opened in Ridge, Maryland in 1924, understood that the violent racial riots erupting during the early to mid 1900s, signaled the need for more accurate research on African Americans and its dissemination to counter false claims and address racial tensions. In the November 1929 issue, Daniels wrote

Those of us who are conversant with the progress of the Negro in all lines of human endeavor since his emancipation, frequently fail to realize that such knowledge is still far from being general....the realization that in the movement for the spread of accurate information about the Negro, the surface has hardly been scratched.¹³

Although Daniels believed that Black progress was evident, others still failed to see the advancement and held to stereotypes. As such, he saw

¹⁰ MacGregor, op. cit., p. 230.

¹¹ *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States*, 2, no. 10 (October 1930): 15. (*The Chronicle*, SLU).

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States*, (November 1929): 3. (*The Chronicle*, SLU).

The Chronicle as a vehicle that could transmit that accurate knowledge. Fellow *Chronicle* writer, and Daniels' wife, Constance Daniels, also believed the publication's educative usefulness in spreading critical knowledge on Black advancement. Constance, who was also the co-principal of CGI, shared her husband's educational attainment as both had received the best classical and vocational education available to Blacks during the early 1900s. The Daniels were committed to the concept of racial uplift through education, with Victor believing "education was liberating."¹⁴

Racial uplift was a Black middle class ideology during the late 19th and early 20th centuries that Black scholars and elites utilized to respond to the rampant and violent racial attacks committed by whites against Blacks. Those who held to racial uplift thought those in the Black middle class were the best examples of Black potential, and as such, could use their talents to build the larger Black community's material wealth and respectability. As the entire race progressed economically and morally, racial uplift ideology held whites would see Black advancement and end their racial antipathy against the group. Historian Kevin Gaines shares that Blacks understood racial uplift to mean different things, but one interpretation "came to mean an emphasis on self-help, racial solidarity, temperance, thrift, chastity, social purity, patriarchal authority, and the accumulation of wealth."¹⁵ Members of *The Chronicle* staff may have also understood uplift in different ways, but they regularly featured articles on self-help, racial solidarity, and the accumulation of wealth as a way to foster better economic and social opportunities for their readers. They also continued in the vein of other African American scholars who challenged the proliferation of scientific racism in academic journals.¹⁶

Employment

America fully entered into what would become known as the Great Depression while *The Chronicle* launched. Before the actual stock market crash on October 29, 1929, the falling price of cotton, rising unemployment, and racial terrorism had already compelled Blacks, many of whom had been sharecroppers, to leave the South in search of

¹⁴ Cecilia Annette Moore, "A Brilliant Possibility: The Cardinal Gibbons Institute, 1924-1934" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1997), 96 and 98. UMI.

¹⁵ Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 2.

¹⁶ See, Katrina M. Sanders, "Intelligent and Effective Direction: The Fisk University Race Relations Institute and the Struggle for Civil Rights, 1944-1969" (New York: Peter Lang, 2005) for an exploration of scientific racism.

employment in northern urban areas where they found Jim Crow waiting to withhold skilled industrial job opportunities from them. Almost 10 years after labor leader A. Phillip Randolph organized the first Black labor union, The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1925, Blacks were still struggling to secure skilled jobs. In a 1932 article appearing in *Opportunity*, Johnson reflected on the irony and impact racist hiring practices had on Black labor. He wrote:

In effect this legislation backed by a solid sentiment, threw up an economic breastwork of protection for white workers against the free competition of the blacks who had the sole advantage of actual possession of the trades as a heritage of three hundred years of slavery.¹⁷

That the laws which had historically limited Black workers to the trades were now being reconstituted to lock them out of those very jobs because whites now wanted them, further relegated Blacks to menial labor where they were unable to learn needed skills for what would become the better paying industrial jobs. It was under these economic conditions that *The Chronicle* endeavored for Black workers by identifying educational and training opportunities as well as agencies and offices that could assist in their job search and training efforts, and explain legal rights and exploitive employment practices.

A December 1929 article entitled "Work of Colored Nurses" highlighting an annual nursing convention in New York City is but one example of the publication's efforts to notify Blacks of job training opportunities. The article, written by an unidentified staff writer, arguably referenced racial uplift ideology as it stressed the need for nurses by first discussing mortality rates for African Americans and argued that having more African American nurses would "lift the level of life and health" among Black families.¹⁸ Anticipating that some of its readers may have been interested in the profession, but did not know where to seek training, *The Chronicle* also identified an agency that not only had been "especially active" in assisting in the training of the nurses, it also had an African American staff consisting of twenty nurses and two supervisors.¹⁹ *The Chronicle* also alerted readers as to where they could find assistance in their employment search for less skilled

¹⁷ Charles S. Johnson "The Frontier of Negro Labor," *Opportunity* 10, no.6 (June 1932): 169-170.

¹⁸ "Work of Colored Nurses", *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States*, 2, no. 12 (December, 1929): 16. (*The Chronicle*, SLU).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

jobs. The Women's Department of the NUL would help any Black female find work even if they had no experience, but the department also kept a "preferred list" of applicants with domestic work experience, checked references, and "good personal appearances."²⁰ Those on the preferred list could make anywhere between \$50 to \$100 a month from employers who wanted a "higher type of worker."²¹ According to *Chronicle* writer, Jennie C. Buckner:

There [was] no difficulty in placing women of experience and good personal appearance. This type usually stays in one place for a year or more, has the confidence of employers, gets one afternoon off a week, two Sundays in a month, a vacation and sometimes a trip with the family yearly.²²

Other jobs that did not require workers on the preferred list included positions in stores, hotels, restaurants, commercial laundries and in industries "where standards and working conditions [were] rather poor and wages low."²³

Although workers often accepted low paying jobs because they needed the work, some employers would go to even greater lengths to further cheat their employees and secure maximum services at minimum pay.²⁴ Buckner warned readers that "the overworked housewives" were the most deceptive of employers and would resort to methods that handicapped workers such as:

- (a) *The wetting of soiled clothing before the girl arrives to hide the fact that she will have three weeks' washing instead of one to do.*
- (b) *Being hired by Mrs. A and required to work for the next door neighbor, a mother or sister who might live several blocks away, thereby doing two or three families' work for the pay of one.*

²⁰ Jenny C. Buckner, "Problems of Women Workers: General Statement of Women's Employment Department of the St. Louis Urban League," *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* (April 1930): 81. (*The Chronicle*, SLU).

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

- (c) *Care of furnaces, building fires and bailing ashes from the basement.*
- (d) *Cleaning porches, steps and walks and even cleaning off the snow.*
- (e) *Washing second, third and fourth story windows on the outside as well as inside.*
- (f) *Staying nights with the children – no extra pay being given.*
- (g) *Turning back the hands of the clock.*
- (h) *Cleaning walls and paints, thereby getting "day work" done at prices rated by the week.*
- (i) *Being hired at some low figure with the promise of a raise which never comes.²⁵*

The article cautioned that a large number of these exploitive orders came in during the holidays, but to be sure, the list of tactics showed the extent to which employers violated the rights of workers in efforts to get more work without paying for it.²⁶

On the other hand, some employees took measures to supplant the underhanded the tactics of the housewives. Some of the recorded tactics included:

- a) Leaving jobs without giving ample notice to employers.
- b) Feigned illness (often to look for other jobs).
- c) Removing small articles from the employer's home.
- d) The taking of introductory slips and failing to interview employers or failing to go to the job. Often giving slips to friends or sometimes selling them.
- e) Reporting to the place of work late.
- f) Raising the prices of jobs.
- g) Failing to furnish bona fide [stet] references.²⁷

²⁵ Ibid. (emphasis in the original)

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 81-82.

Although some may conclude the retaliatory measures Black domestics took against their unscrupulous employers were warranted – and even celebratory – the circumstances ultimately show the flagrant racial abuse Blacks encountered on a regular basis in their work environments. Besides the work of domestics in private homes, *The Chronicle* also covered the opportunities and problems Black women faced as they worked in a variety of other jobs including stores, restaurants, commercial laundries, hotels, bakeries, and factories. Many of those issues centered around work schedules and long hours, but articles like Buckner's provided Black women the opportunity to make informed decisions about the jobs available to them.

Job training and employment opportunities were not the only focus of *The Chronicle's* labor efforts. World War I had also drawn Blacks to urban areas for war-related jobs, and many had secured federal jobs. The Federal Compensation Act of 1916 had established compensation for loss of wages incurred from a job-related injury, and *The Chronicle* made sure to alert readers of their rights. In another February 1930 article entitled "The Rights of Workers Lost Under Compensation Act", *The Chronicle* clarified changes to the Missouri Workmen's Compensation Act and articulated those major points for readers. The detailed article, written by Joseph L. McLemore, an attorney with his own law firm located in St. Louis, contained two clearly labeled topic headings: "Call In a Lawyer" and "Claims Must Be Filed Early".²⁸ Arguably, McLemore and the journal's staff understood how employers regularly took advantage of Blacks and that some of those employees would be most hesitant to seek out legal help, so he wanted to make sure that workers not only knew their rights, but knew how and where to get help. The article explained the percentage of weekly pay, the length of payments, and medical options for employees injured on the job. It also broke down the basic steps to take if an employer disputed the injury or the extent of the injury. Lastly, McLemore underscored that readers needed to get a lawyer when injured on the job and not fall victim to their employer's deceptive rhetoric that the procedures were "so simple that a lawyer [was] unnecessary in a compensation case."²⁹ Not getting a lawyer had consequences and "caused many employees to sustain

²⁸ Joseph L. McLemore, "The Rights of Workers Lost Under Compensation Act," *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States*, (February 1930): 38. (*The Chronicle*, SLU).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 38

losses."³⁰ For those concerned with the cost of legal representation, he explained how the attorneys would be paid.

McLemore also walked through how and when to file claims associated with death cases and the detrimental impact not doing so in a timely manner could have sharing: "In the event of the death or injury to an employee ALL OF THE RIGHTS OF THE WIDOW OR EMPLOYEE ARE LOST UNLESS THE CLAIM IS FILLED WITHIN SIX MONTHS."³¹ The print, in all capital letters, signified the importance of the timeframe. Throughout the article he reiterated the need to obtain legal advice, but also how the attorneys would be paid. He cautioned that the new change to the act was radically different from the former provisions and that many employees and their dependents who had waited beyond the allotted six months to file a claim been "completely barred from receiving any compensation."³² McLemore closed by once again encouraging readers not to hesitate in seeking legal consultation if they or a family member were seriously injured or killed on the job, and offered reassurance that the law and commissioners who would hear the cases welcomed attorneys."³³

The Chronicle would continue to bring readers articles that focused on employment during subsequent years of its printing. In the December 1930 issue a story ran updating readers on the status of Black unemployment since migration during both World Wars. In May of 1931, the journal explored the results of a nation-wide employment study on Blacks in industrial centers conducted by the NUL, and the December issue of that same year reviewed reasons for businesses not employing African Americans.³⁴ The journal's interest in job opportunities for Blacks, however, would not just focus on Blacks working for others. It would also explore Black-owned businesses.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ "Negro Unemployment Severest Since Migration," *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* (December 1930): 295. (*The Chronicle*, SLU); "Unemployment Among Negroes Becoming Worse," *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* (May 1931): 430. (*The Chronicle*, SLU); and Arthur G. Falls, "Industrial and Social Problems," in *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* (December 1931): 678-681. (*The Chronicle*, SLU).

Black Enterprise

As the Great Depression still held its grips on the country, *The Chronicle* also considered employment opportunities for Blacks that expanded beyond them working for others. The May and July 1930 issues promoted the value of Black owned businesses and Black communities supporting them. For example in "Developing Negro Business", Otto A. Hicks, a government employee, suggested Blacks consider working for themselves because persistent racial and legislative barriers kept them from securing and holding well paying jobs.³⁵ He wrote:

It is worth noting that the Negro is continually struggling to procure and hold a good job. He considers himself blessed when permitted to work for a fair employer. All very good. But job opportunities are not the only opportunities that exist. He has abundant opportunities to strike out for himself in a broader field. Glance through a copy of your favorite Negro weekly and notice how few advertisers there are of business enterprises owned and operated by our group beyond the merely local. Then think of the number of Negro businesses of national scope. Not many, are there? It seems that we are overlooking unlimited opportunity.³⁶

Hicks's hopes that readers would look to their favorite Black weekly newspapers and see that his ruminating on Black opportunity were valid, would inspire some to join him in his thoughts on the value of Black enterprise.

Martha Nevins, another *Chronicle* writer, also saw the opportunities for independent Black businesses and urged readers to support Black owned businesses. In the July 1930 article, "Swaddling Clothes or Two-Trouser Suit " Nevins, the co-owner of a grocery store with her husband, began by asking readers two reflective questions: "How can we formulate some plan which will vitalize our effort and build something

³⁵ "Our Contributors," *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* The (May 1930): 107. (*The Chronicle*, SLU). Notes that at the time of publication Otto A. Hicks was "in the government service" but would be leaving St. Louis that summer "to enter New York University where he will complete his work in Journalism, begun at Washburn College, Topeka, Kans."

³⁶ Hicks, op. cit., p.103-104. (*The Chronicle*, SLU).

commercially substantial?" and "Where do we stand in Business?"³⁷ Nevins' position as a proponent of Black-owned businesses was evident as she argued Blacks were making money for others and not themselves by not supporting Black endeavors. She reasoned that if Blacks would actually support Black businesses, they would be more competitive with the immigrant businesses.³⁸ She wrote:

[G]rocery stores, our neighborhood drug stores, our laundries, our markets, our dry goods stores, our tailors and so on? Such places as we have are not properly supported, and we must compete with the neighborhood Jew, Greek, German, Italian, Chinese, and of course the 'Nordic.' Suppose we did patronize our own in so far as we can get service and the commodity as good as our competitors can supply? Our business concerns would be able to expand, and could develop to such an extent that we could employ large numbers of our boys and girls in lucrative positions. When will we realize that we must combine effort and funds with common sense, and know that when we spend, we must insure that some of our money will return to us. Why an all white money stream?

We must awake to the fact that Negro money is making wealth for others. We must foster our own enterprises, and stimulate business already begun.³⁹

Nevins projection that supporting Black owned businesses that had merchandise that was just as good as their white competitors would mean some of the hard earned Black dollars would return to Black communities.

Nevins understood that some would not agree with her and tried to convince naysayers that she was not alone in her support for Black entrepreneurs by writing that:

A tremendous movement is on, in our part of America today. The Negro Press, the Urban League, The Negro Business League, the Business Department of the Federated Clubs, the Federated Catholics, are all

³⁷ Martha Nevins, "Swaddling Clothes or Two-Trouser Suit," *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* (July 1930): 154-155. (*The Chronicle*, SLU).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

interested in this great question. **We Must Work Together. We Must Have Confidence In Our Own.**⁴⁰

To further illustrate her position, Nevins pointed out that Blacks in St. Louis spent "thousands of dollars a day for food, clothing, leisure" and wondered about the impact Black available dollars would have if they actually spent their money in Black businesses.⁴¹ She closed her piece encouraging readers to support their Black physicians, dentists, and lawyers instead of spending their money on less qualified white "Quacks" who were "amassing fortunes" off of Blacks.⁴²

There may have been any number of reasons why African Americans in the St. Louis area, as Nevins saw it, did not support Black businesses or professionals, but scientific racism and the longstanding belief that African Americans were somehow inferior to whites most likely played a role because the faulty findings could also impact the group's perceptions of other African Americans and themselves.⁴³ That *The Chronicle* offered readers articles that challenged biased research that concluded African Americans were intellectually inferior and criminal was no accident as the journal's team of writers joined African American intellectuals and other proponents of improved race relations in efforts to end notions of inferiority and superiority. In one editorial, "Pseudo-Sociologists", for example, *The Chronicle* staff explained why they believed white sociologists continued to publish findings that marginalized Blacks. Believing that white sociologists primarily saw African Americans as a "peculiar phenomenon", the writers concluded that:

In their analysis they are handicapped by a frame of mind which plainly indicates that they consciously or unconsciously differentiate themselves from the object of their study. They conduct their research a good deal like the chemist holding his test tube over a Bunsen burner. They forget at the outset that after all there is only a slight accidental difference between themselves and their object of analysis. This subjective attitude of students greatly hinders their having a true comprehensive

⁴⁰ Ibid. (emphasis in the original)

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Woody Klein, *Toward Humanity and Justice: The Writings of Kenneth B. Clark, Scholar of the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education Decision* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004). See for more on impact of racism on African Americans.

understanding of the Negro's thoughts, feelings, aims, and aspirations—especially in anything like a sympathetic vein.⁴⁴

As *The Chronicle* saw it, white researchers were simply unable to empathize or make any true connection with Blacks because they were disassociated and failed to see any true similarities between themselves. The researchers who were able to show empathy for African Americans did so, she maintained, as they would towards a pet. The journal offered that:

There may be a great deal of sympathy expressed, but it is like the sympathy that a member of the Humane Society has for the patients in his cat hospital. Such students are like zoologists treating of a species different from themselves which largely prohibits their seeing in Negro psychological reactions a parallel of their own souls.⁴⁵

Chronicle writers did not reference any particular studies in her editorial, but researchers like Robert E. Park and Franz Boas had begun expanding conversations on race relations beyond racial inferiority and superiority during the early 1900s. Some scientists, however, continued to categorize racial groups by brain size and structure or intelligence well into the mid 1900s.⁴⁶ The editorial ended with calls for “real sociologists and not zoologists” to conduct research on issues negatively impacting African American progress.⁴⁷

New Direction

During the late 1920s Thomas Wyatt Turner and the Federated Colored Catholics sought a publication that would allow them to share with the world their views on social and economic conditions from a Black Catholic perspective. The journal arguably accomplished much more as it provided Blacks with practical strategies for obtaining an education, securing jobs, countering inaccurate racial beliefs, and navigating racial disparities facing the larger Black community. The FCC and its *Chronicle*, however, may have achieved a little too much. In 1932 Markoe, the young Jesuit priest who had offered his parish

⁴⁴ “Pseudo-Sociologists: An Editorial,” *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* (July 1930): 156. (*The Chronicle*, SLU).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Sanders, op.cit.

⁴⁷ “Pseudo-Sociologists,” p.158.

newsletter to Turner and the FCC to be the organization's official journal with "unlimited space for Federation matters, freedom of expression, and a low subscription rate, all at no additional cost to the organization itself," wrote Turner a letter in September informing him that after the October issue, *The Chronicle* would become *The Interracial Review*.⁴⁸ The new name would reflect the journal's widening focus on interracial efforts, and its lessening attention to Black issues.

⁴⁸ *The Chronicle: Official Organ of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States* (October 1929): 3, *The Chronicle*, SLU and Nickels, *Black Catholic Protest*, p. 99. For more information on events surrounding the name change, see Nickels, *Black Catholic Protest*.

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