Chapter 7

The Education of African Americans

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INTRODUCTION

The education of African Americans includes both formal and informal attempts by Blacks to gain literacy and develop skills that would allow them to survive in a racialized society. In the nineteenth century, literacy was perceived as a means of emancipation from a life of servitude and a path to eventual citizenship. When slaves were emancipated in 1863, churches, benevolent societies, and philanthropies addressed the need for educational services. During the Reconstruction Era (1865-1877), Black leaders and White elites debated the issue of "Black education." The outcome was industrial education and second-class citizenship. The existence of the slave economy, an agrarian society, and a dispersed rural geography circumvented the development of a systematic approach to education by Southern states for both Whites and Blacks. With the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909, political and legal action overturned the segregation codified in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). Currently, school integration has been eroded due to White flight, the abandonment of busing, and residential segregation.

THE CONTEXT FOR BLACK EDUCATION PRIOR TO THE ANTEBELLUM PERIOD

The Africans who were brought to North America as a result of the slave trade represented a variety of languages and cultures. Nevertheless, Africans were able to preserve and transmit their cultural customs and traditions to the New World. According to historian Ira Berlin, "Slowly, almost imperceptibly, transplanted Africans became a new

people. They spoke English, worked with English tools, and ate food prepared in the English manner. On the eve of the [American] Revolution, many Blacks had done so for two or three generations, and sometimes more Free Blacks, particularly in larger cities, formed their own schools and supplied teachers. John Chavis (1763-1838), a respected free Black teacher and Presbyterian minister, operated a private school from 1808 to 1830 in Raleigh, North Carolina. Originally a multiracial school, Whites eventually protested the presence of Blacks. When they did, Chavis taught White students during the day and free Blacks in the evenings. Abolitionists who opposed the "peculiar institution" of slavery in Northern and Southern states as well as some religious groups educated slaves and free Blacks as well as Native Americans. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) was preeminent in this endeavor. In the Middle West, schools such as the Union Literary Institute in Indiana were supported by Quakers. Founded in 1846 by a multiracial board of Quakers and free Blacks living on the Indiana/Ohio border settlement of Longtown, the Institute was a manual labor boarding school that required students to work the surrounding farmland for four hours per day. While there were other instances of integrated schools, they did not last as racial attitudes hardened in both Northern and Southern states.

A few schools existed for the purpose of advanced elementary and secondary training such as the Institute for Colored Youth, a school started in the early 1830s by a group of Philadelphia Quakers. A college education was also available to a limited number of students at schools like Oberlin College in Ohio and Berea College in Kentucky. Berea was the first college in the South to be co-educational as well as racially integrated. Founded by the abolitionist John Gregg Fee (1816-1901) in 1855, it offered preparatory classes leading to advanced study. In 1904, a Kentucky state law forced it to segregate and accept Whites only. Afterward, Berea administrators assisted in the establishment of the Lincoln Institute near Louisville to educate Blacks until the state law was finally amended in 1950.

Any nascent support for formal education for slaves ceased after the Nat Turner Rebellion took place in Southampton County, Virginia, in August 1831. A mystic, Turner (1800-1831) had learned to read and write and conducted religious services on the

plantation. The Rebellion was the largest and deadliest slave uprising in United States history. Before the Virginia militia quashed it, the slaves killed approximately sixty White men, women and children. The rebellion created hysteria and the retaliation by the Southern states was swift. Black codes or laws were instituted across the Southern states that forbade slaves to learn to read, to assemble, to bring suit against White persons, or to travel without permission. Little distinction was made between free and enslaved Blacks. Even Sunday schools began to limit access to African Americans, who then clandestinely operated their own schools.

Southern plantations were feudalistic, self-contained worlds that manufactured their own food, clothing, tools, and buildings. As a result, on-the-job training programs developed that allowed slaves to acquire some necessary skills. When they were trained to meet certain needs on the plantation, slaves served a kind of apprenticeship. In some cases, masters paid to have promising and trusted slaves apprenticed to master craftsmen. This arrangement benefitted the plantation owners who often hired out slaves to other plantations for profit and were able to reap a higher price when skilled craftsmen went on the auction block. The Colonial Era model of apprenticeship also required that masters teach their students to read and write. While some masters did so, others ignored it and were not penalized. Despite the fact that the practice of hiring out was discouraged by Southern states, it allowed plantations to become, as Booker T. Washington observed, "industrial schools."[1] Enslaved men became carpenters, blacksmiths, machinists, cooks, and farmers. Women were farmers and cooks, seamstresses, weavers, and midwives. This system contributed to the development of skilled workers within both the free Black and slave populations.

The example of Dave the Slave is a case in point. David Drake (c.1801-c.1870s), also known as Dave the Slave or Dave the Potter, may have been born in the United States. His first owner was Harvey Drake, who, with Dr. Abner Landrum, owned a large pottery business in Edgefield, South Carolina. Although it is unclear how he learned to read and write, scholars speculate that Dave worked for Landrum's Edgefield, South

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[1] Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (New York: Doubleday, 1901), 175.

Carolina, newspaper *The Hive.* After Harvey Drake died, Dave's ownership was transferred to Landrum's son and subsequently, to his grandson Franklin Landrum. In 1849, Lewis Miles acquired ownership and Dave produced his largest amount of wares. Twenty of his jars and jugs are inscribed with original poetry, including couplets such as "I wonder where is all my relations/Friendship to all—and every nation."[2] Fifty extant pieces display his signature maker's mark, date, and other inscriptions.

While the plantation economy was intended to deny access to educational experiences, what historian Henry Allen Bullock refers to as a "hidden passage" operated within the slave community prior to the start of the Civil War.[3] Educational opportunities expanded for African slaves by the opening of the nineteenth century. Slaves who worked in the "Big House," as opposed to field hands, were exposed to conversations and written materials. Before coming of age, there was a tendency for slave and White children to interact together. "Play schools" became an avenue through which slaves could be taught to read by their White companions (Bullock, p. 10). The children of more benevolent slave owners sometimes defied the law and held informal learning sessions. Black leaders Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) and Booker T. Washington described in their autobiographies how they were able to become literate.

Several factors motivated the African American quest for literacy: 1) since reading was explicitly forbidden, literacy was an act of defiance; 2) literacy served as a means of doing one's assigned tasks; and 3) it was a means of socializing into the larger society. For Whites, religion also played a role in literacy. As a method of maintaining control over and enforcing obedience, planters would hold religious services on the plantation that often required Bible reading. It was thought to be a deterrent to insurrections and escapes as well as a means of civilizing Blacks by imposing Christianity.

It is important to note that, unlike New England and the Midwest, the South did not have a system of common schools, even for Whites. Common schools were tax-

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[2] Leonard Todd, *Carolina Clay: The Life and Legend of the Salve Potter Dave* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008), 101.

[3] Henry Allen Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South: From 1619 to Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 1-21.

supported institutions that taught a common (or rudimentary) curriculum in a common setting such as a one-room school. Along with Webster's Blue-backed *Speller*, pupils practiced reading via the McGuffey *Eclectic Readers*, which contained moral lessons and taught teachers how to pronounce words correctly in order to standardize the language. During the antebellum period, the diversity of language due to migration and immigration made it difficult to communicate. Although school reformer Horace Mann envisioned that the common school would ameliorate the divisions between the rich and poor, it did not—nor did it welcome Blacks, Native Americans, or Catholics.

THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU, PHILANTHROPY, AND BENEVOLENCE

With the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, Whites feared a mass of uneducated, newly freed Blacks in the South as well as those who had moved to the North, seeking the protection of the Union Army. The enormity of the situation was expressed by General William Tecumseh Sherman (1820-1891) in February 1862: "To relieve the government of a burden that may hereafter become unsupportable, and to enable the Blacks to support and govern themselves in the absence of their disloyal guardians, a suitable system of cultivation and instruction must be combined with one providing for physical wants."[4] Answering the call were benevolent societies in large Northern cities who sent clothing, food, and money, but also teachers for the refugees, who were referred to as contraband of war. Church organizations joined in, most notably the American Missionary Association which had been formed in 1849 for the propagation of the gospel at home and abroad. The Baptist Church, North Home Missionary Society, Freedmen's Aid Society, and General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church also funneled money and supplies through the Union Army. Mary S. Peake (1823-1862) a mixed-race, well-educated member of the Hampton, Virginia, Black elite opened one of the first schools for freedmen in 1861 at Fortress Monroe, Virginia. In 1862, 53

[4] Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (Boston: Lea and Shepherd Publishers, 1893), 16-17.

missionaries mainly from New York and Boston landed at Beaufort, South Carolina, and started the first extensive schools for former slaves on the Sea Islands.

Since the benevolent societies were located in the North and their stated mission was education for salvation, they set about devising a school system based on the New England common school. As the relief effort taxed the army, the U.S. Congress passed an act in 1865 creating the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, which was known as the Freedmen's Bureau. Operating out of the War Department, the Bureau was a custodial agency charged with securing the "health, sustenance, and legal rights for refugees" and provide them with "the foundations of education. "The act served to legitimize the teachers of the benevolent societies and to protect them. However, many in the army did not feel it was their job, as is expressed in a letter by a teacher in The *Freedmen's Bulletin* in 1865: "Arrived—went about gathering scholars; have forty. Did well enough till it rained; since then have walked three miles a day, ankle-deep in thick, Black mud, that pulls off my shoes. Nothing to eat but strong pork and sour bread. Insulted for a 'nigger teacher.' Can't buy anything on credit, and haven't a cent of money. The school shed has no floor, and the rains sweep clean across it, through the places where the windows should be. I have to huddle the children first in one corner and then in another, to keep them from drowning or swamping. The Provost Marshal won't help me. Says 'he don't believe in nigger teachers—didn't 'list to help them.' The children come, rain or shine, plunging through the mud—some of them as far as I do. Pretty pictures they are. What shall I do? If it will ever stop raining, I can get along."[5]
Referred to derisively as Yankee Schoolmarms, this challenge provided adventurous women an occupational opportunity. The Schoolmarms were Black as well as White and generally stayed in the South only a year or two. Middle-class Black teachers such as Charlotte Forten (1837-1914), an anti-slavery Philadelphia teacher, who were newly exposed to the poverty and racism of the South, found it difficult to stay. White women saw it as their missionary duty and were criticized for importing New England Puritan values into the South such as punctuality, cleanliness, good manners, and standard

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[5] *Freedmen's Bulletin*, Chicago, Vol. 1, No. 6, May 6, 1865.

speech. It should be noted that the Freedmen's Bureau shouldered much of the burden by contributing $672,989 in taxes and tuition and donating approximately $500,000 through their own church organizations. This generosity was despite the fact that they were now sharecropping, starting businesses, and establishing other institutions such as churches and aid societies that would lead to the formation of a Black middle class. This pattern of matching funds would set in place a pattern capitalized on by philanthropists during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

By 1869, more than 9,500 teachers were working in the Freedmen's schools. By 1870, when their educational work ended, the Freedmen's Bureau had established 4,329 schools with an enrollment of 247,000 students. Those in Louisiana, Virginia, and North Carolina made the most progress toward an organized system of education. Historian James D. Anderson points out that efforts by Blacks to self-educate are harder to track and, as a result, underappreciated in the historical record. Whites were often not happy with the educational progress afforded to Blacks. Makeshift schools that met in outbuildings and abandoned shacks were burned and teachers were threatened. But some White children began to attend Freedmen's schools, which became briefly multiracial.

MAKING THE CASE FOR BLACK HIGHER EDUCATION

There was also a recognized need for professional education by which Black doctors, lawyers, and teachers could be trained. The Freedmen's Bureau cooperated with philanthropic and religious organizations to develop a number of institutions of higher education. Although the curriculum initially consisted of elementary and secondary (high school) work, the colleges would eventually grow into their name. In 1866, the American Missionary Association established Fisk University (originally the Fisk Free Colored School) in Nashville, Tennessee, and Talladega College (originally named for Freedmen's Bureau General Wager Swayne) in 1867 in Talladega, Alabama. Fisk classes were initially held in the barracks of the Union Army. In the 1870s, a nine-member coeducational singing

group of students later named the Jubilee Singers was formed that performed traditional spirituals and slave songs. The proceeds from the sale of shackles and chains from a slave pit on the Fisk property were used to fund their travel and touring expenses. Other religious denominations and aid societies began to turn their attention to higher education as well.

This was not the case for Howard University, however. Sponsored by the First Congregational Society of Washington, D.C., it was originally founded as a seminary for the education of African American clergymen. It was named for General Oliver Otis Howard (1830-1909), a Civil War hero, who was the Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau and later president of the University, 1869-1874. Chartered in 1867, Howard was funded by philanthropy and tuition as well as an annual congressional appropriation from the U.S. Department of Education. This arrangement would lead some historians of higher education to refer to Howard as the national African American university. Unlike other colleges, Howard was devoted to graduate and professional education from its very beginning, including medical training, law, sociology, and history focused on the Black experience.

By 1890, more than 200 colleges dedicated to serving Black students had been founded by a combination of funds from missionary groups, Black churches and benevolent groups, and the Freedman's Bureau. These universities would form the infrastructure of Black higher education, and were later joined by land-grant institutions sponsored by the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862. The first Morrill Act focused on branches of learning as related to agricultural and the mechanical arts. The Second Morrill Act of 1890 required separate land-grant institutions for persons of color. Among the seventy colleges and universities which evolved from the Morrill Acts are several of today's historically Black colleges and universities, such as Mississippi's Alcorn State (established in 1871), Georgia's Fort Valley State (established 1895), and Kentucky's State Normal School for Colored Persons (established 1886), which would later extend beyond its function as a "Normal" school that focused on training teachers and be renamed Kentucky State University.

The founding of these numerous colleges precipitated a fierce debate between Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois over the nature of the educational curriculum for Black students. Booker Taliaferro Washington (1856-1915) was born into slavery in Virginia to an African American slave and a White plantation owner. After emancipation, his mother moved the family to West Virginia to join her husband. Washington began to learn to read and attended school for the first time. He worked in salt furnaces and coal mines in West Virginia and then made his way to Hampton Institute. Hampton Institute president General Samuel C. Armstrong served as a mentor and recommended that Washington become the first leader of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, which opened in 1881.

By 1890, Armstrong had articulated his theory of Black education and was convinced that the moral uplift of Blacks could be achieved through labor. He presented industrial education as the character-building force capable of elevating Blacks to a level of acceptance by the South and the nation. He identified hard work as a Christian virtue and a civilizing force. According to Armstrong, Blacks disliked labor because they had been forced to work all their lives. But an industrial system would make Blacks not only self-supporting, but also provide the South with a labor force. His ideology took hold in Washington. When he became principal of Tuskegee, it was modeled on Hampton. Responding to the context in which Blacks lived, Tuskegee's mission was originally to supply well-trained teachers for various schools but it was also intended that teachers be able and eager to teach vocational skills such as gardening and carpentry. Students had to apply practical skills even to their more academic courses. Washington emphasized literacy for freedmen and basic education and training in manual and domestic labor trades. This, ideology, however, also led to a discriminatory base for Black education—one that ostensibly required less money, under-qualified teachers, and fewer resources.
Washington's far-reaching influence on conservative social and educational issues for Blacks made him popular among not only Black leaders but also White philanthropists. Some Blacks, however, criticized his control over the Black masses as the Tuskegee Machine. Nevertheless, he became the foremost Black leader in the post-Reconstruction era. His autobiography, *Up from Slavery,* recounted his struggle to escape poverty and

gain an education. Emphasizing the Hampton model, the term Hampton-Tuskegee soon came to stand for industrial education as the preferred educational curriculum for Blacks. William Henry Baldwin, Jr, (1827-1894) the president of Long Island Railroad, convinced other major White philanthropists to support Tuskegee, particularly the president of Sears, Roebuck and Company Julius Rosenwald.

Perhaps no statement was more derided than Washington's address to the attendees of the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition in 1895, when Washington, flanked by wealthy White benefactors, stated to the crowd: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things of mutual progress."[6] Uttered during a period of increased incidences of lynching, Washington's comments preceded by a year the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Plessy v Ferguson* that upheld racial segregation and codified the doctrine of "separate but equal." By eschewing civil and political rights, Washington was accused of accommodating to White interests by DuBois, newspaper editor Monroe Trotter, and other members of the Black intelligentsia.

William Edward Burghardt DuBois (1868-1963) was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, to mixed-race parents who were part of a small free Black community. After attending local integrated public schools, neighbors and the First Congregational Church of Great Barrington sponsored his collegiate education. He matriculated at Fisk University and later received a second bachelor's degree in history from Harvard since White schools would not accept credits from a Black college. After studying at the University of Berlin on a fellowship from the John F. Slater Fund for the Education of Freedmen, he returned to Harvard and was the first African American to earn a doctorate from that institution in 1895. He performed sociological field research in Philadelphia's Black neighborhoods and published *The Philadelphia Negro* in 1899, the first case study of a Black community in the United States. In that study, he described the Black underclass as "the submerged tenth" and would later use the term the "Talented Tenth"

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[6] Booker T. Washington, Address delivered at the Opening of the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition, September 18, 1895.

to indicate a Black elite class who should be educated in the classics, humanities, and social and physical sciences. He came to believe that racial integration was the key to democratic equality in American cities.

DuBois's educational views began to crystalize when he opposed Washington's apparent accommodation to White interests as expressed in the Atlanta Compromise. He felt that Black schools should focus more on liberal arts and an academic curriculum as a means of developing a leadership cadre. His publication in 1903 of *The Souls of Black Folk* took direct aim at Washington's silence on civil and political rights. Although both men emphasized education, the debate over the curriculum would continue, and Black colleges and universities were caught in the middle. As a result, many chose to skillfully incorporate both a classical-liberal curriculum and a vocational curriculum, in order to attract money from White philanthropists. But these Black leaders were not the only ones who began to devise a plan for Black education.

DECISIONS AT CAPON SPRINGS

On June 29, 1898, a group of White ministers, college presidents, and philanthropists met in Capon Springs, West Virginia, to formulate their own philosophy in regards to training Black teachers and leaders. This gathering was the start of a series known as the Capon Springs Conference for Education in the South. By the end of the Third Conference at Capon Springs, it was agreed by all members that the best way to provide training for Blacks was to first provide adequate schools and education for the neglected Southern Whites. The schools would be separate but operate under one set of laws and supported by taxes paid by the pupil. It was decided that certain Black colleges would be strengthened for the purpose of training ministers, physicians, and lawyers. In this instance, there was at least an inkling of recognition for the need for a differentiated curriculum rather than one that treated the race as a homogeneous mass. It also marked the beginning of the formulation of the concept of "negro education"—ideals that

encompassed the morality and self-help lessons of the common school and reserved industrial education for Blacks.

At the opening of the Fourth Conference in 1901, the Southern Education Board (SEB) was established to sway public opinion on behalf of public schools and solicit gifts from private persons, boards, and philanthropic foundations to promote public education. Specifically, the General Education Board (GEB) made up of the trustees of the SEB, handled gifts and grants. In 1909 Standard Oil owner John D. Rockefeller and his son established the Rockefeller Foundation, in part to deflect criticism of the Standard Oil company's ruthless business dealings. By 1914, it had invested in schools for Blacks and begun a broad-based philanthropic agenda that involved farming in the Southern states, public high schools in the South, and a campaign to eradicate hookworm. As a result, the Conference for Education in the South became the most influential educational force in the history of the region, spanning the entire policy-making realm of Southern education. Philanthropists funneled money through it, public school officials sought its advice, and state legislatures paid attention. The goal was to make Southern people more willing to accept self-imposed taxation for the purpose of financing education for their children.

Although they were not at the table, Blacks reaped some benefits. Some of the states equalized school terms and normal schools for Blacks were established with newly acquired public funds. But as time passed, industrial education became almost solely a Black school curriculum. The SEB transferred its functions to the GEB in 1914. The result was that Black hopes for equality of educational opportunity had been sacrificed because of the decisions. The South accepted its responsibility for Black education but the division had been made. The federal government was excluded from Black education and the door was opened wider to the whims and prerogatives of White philanthropy.

The economic revolution of the late nineteenth century created a class of wealthy industrialists. Many of these individuals were self-made men who believed in individualism and monopolistic business practices. To some extent, their investment in the South was motivated by self-interest. The South offered a ready labor market and a means to offset the criticism. In 1867, financier George Peabody (1795-1869) established the Peabody Educational Fund for the promotion of education in the American South. The fund

supported public schools as well as normal schools, and beginning a pattern that would persist, it required local communities to provide matching funds at a ratio of up to three or four dollars for every one dollar in Peabody support. Clearly directed at industrial education, the Peabody Fund focused its attention on assisting the South, but not particularly Blacks. It was going to assist in the establishment of a permanent system of public education by granting scholarships to students who were studying to be teachers and in the promotion of industrial education. The trustees of the fund directed their efforts toward providing separate schools for the races.

In 1914, the Peabody Fund merged with the Slater Fund (1882-1937). A Connecticut textile manufacturer, John F. Slater (1815-1884), had created a fund in 1882 for industrial education among the freedmen of the South, focusing on teacher training and industrial education for Blacks. By 1911, the Fund began to encourage the development of a system of county training schools to provide courses in teacher training and basic industries. The Slater Fund supported colleges in order to develop teachers for the complement of county training schools, which it was seeking to build. It provided substantial support for the Black colleges that denominational groups had established and funded Hampton and Tuskegee disproportionally. It supported Black colleges to establish and maintain industrial departments, even if those colleges had originally developed as liberal arts institutions. The county-training school would become a permanent part of the South's public school system.

Dr. Hollis Frissell, the White president of Hampton, and Booker T. Washington approached Miss Anna T. Jeanes, a Philadelphia Quaker, for assistance in the development of a rural school program that had been started by their respective institutions. The Jeanes Rural School Fund would develop an extension service that combined practical lessons with traditional subjects. Black teacher Virginia E. Randolph, who worked with a Black school in Henrico County, Virginia, administered the Jeanes model. She visited other teachers and encouraged them to improve their schoolhouses and start industrial training. The first Jeanes teacher was Virginia Estelle Randolph (1874-1958), appointed in 1908 to work in Henrico County, Virginia. She was to be a helper rather than a supervisor and responsible to the local school superintendent and his school

board. Other funds soon began to contribute to the Jeanes Fund and it spread to other states. Although the school was the core of the program, it was also concerned with public relations in that it sought to cultivate community interest in school welfare. This involved changes in the curriculum and a more applied approach to issues encountered in the everyday environment of African Americans. The Jeanes teachers participated in churches, clubs, and community improvement leagues. Jeanes teachers taught the children to grow or produce many of the products that their parents bought from stores. The school garden and its products were utilized to teach methods of canning and preserving vegetables.

The Julius Rosenwald Fund (1917-1948) perhaps had the biggest impact on Black education. Julius Rosenwald used money derived from his presidency of Sears, Roebuck and Company. He also funded the construction of sixteen Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) buildings and one Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) for Blacks and supported a large Black housing project in Chicago known as the Michigan Boulevard Garden Apartments in 1929. Rosenwald became a trustee of Tuskegee Institute and established the Rural School Building Program in 1917. Rosenwald established a nonprofit enterprise that directed its interests toward building rural schools, later toward the support of high schools and colleges, and finally toward the provision of fellowships to enable Blacks and Whites of unusual promise to advance their careers.

Its most well-known program was the Rural School-Building Program started at Tuskegee. In a matching fund system, Blacks had to supply money and labor to support the schools, which were known as Rosenwald schools. Blacks purchased the land and some White citizens contributed a little money. The program lasted from 1917 to 1932 and built 5,357 public schools, shops, and teachers' homes in 883 counties of fifteen Southern states. In accordance with Progressive Era philosophy, the architectural plans were standardized. The Rosenwald Schools became a part of the public school system. In 1925, the Fund began work in the field of library services. It assembled and distributed small sets of books to rural schools, attempted to improve the library facilities of Black colleges, and cooperated in the establishment of country library systems. This program was extended to the development of libraries in Black colleges. However, some of the

material goods received by Black colleges from Sears, Roebuck and Company were often "seconds" or imperfect products. In addition, no Blacks were employed at the Sears headquarters in Chicago.

The Rosenwald Fellowship program gave matching grants to both White and Blacks to pursue advanced training at Northern institutions. For Blacks, it would lead to the development of a leadership cadre of teachers at Black institutions who could professionalize by earning an advanced degree and return to Black institutions better trained. This, in turn, would lead to institution building on the part of Black colleges. The selection was made through applications and interviews. At first, the Fund focused on teachers but over time, the Fund awarded fellowships to writers, painters, dancers, and musical composers. After a while, there were not enough positions in Black higher education to provide jobs because White colleges resisted hiring them. As a result, some high schools benefited. For example, Crispus Attucks High School in Indianapolis, Indiana, had on its faculty teachers who had received such fellowships and contributed to the reputation that it was the jewel in the crown of Black schools in Indiana. As the Fund became more attuned to the problems of segregation, it shifted its attention to the field of race relations until the Fund closed in 1948. It was Rosenwald's express desire that the Fund should expend its capital and not seek to exist in perpetuity.

THE NAACP AND THE SUPREME COURT

The formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1910 included as one of its objectives the commencement of a scientific study of Black schools and the formation of a national committee for the purpose of studying the question of national aid for education. Led by Charles H. Houston, the vice dean of Howard University's School of Law, a cadre of lawyers filed suits against graduate and professional schools who did not admit Blacks. In this regard, the 1896 *Plessy* ruling of Separate but Equal was vulnerable. Some elite private schools had been willing to accept

Blacks that were studying law or theology but virtually no public graduate or professional schools admitted Blacks in the South. Focusing on small numbers of mature graduate students was expected to quell White fears.

Beginning in 1935, the NAACP filed suits against institutions in border states to accommodate Black students. In response, Southern states instituted out-of-state tuition scholarship programs whereby the states would reimburse Black graduate students for tuition or bus fare to travel to Northern institutions. But this meant that Blacks had to leave their families behind and the reimbursement was often not commensurate with the costs incurred by graduate study. The practice, however, lasted well into the 1960s in some states despite that fact that in 1938, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v Canada* that the scholarships did not eliminate the discrimination. The Southern states largely ignored the ruling.

Although the NAACP lost cases in Kansas and Tennessee, it secured an important win in a case involving Ada Lois Sipuel's denied application for admission to the University of Oklahoma's law school. In 1947, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Sipuel v Board of Regents of University of Oklahoma* that the state was compelled to establish a law school for Blacks within a state institution by. After delays, Sipuel was eventually admitted to the University of Oklahoma law school in 1949.

The next case was that of Heman Marion Sweatt, who had applied for admission to the University of Texas law school, since it was the only one in the state of Texas. In *Sweatt v Painter* the District Court of Travis County ruled that Sweatt had been denied equal protection of the laws as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. The ruling stipulated that the state of Texas had to establish a separate but equal law school for him. A three-room law school was set up at Houston, Texas, under the supervision of historically Black Prairie View A&M College, which was clearly not equal to the White school. In 1950, the Supreme Court found in favor of Sweatt and ordered that he be admitted to the University of Texas law school. Although more suits were filed, and some states remained resistant, considerable progress in the integration of graduate education had been accomplished by 1950.

Encouraged by this progress, the NAACP turned its attention to elementary and secondary schools. Although Black parents had filed lawsuits challenging the unequal conditions of Black schools compared with White ones, each suit had to be fought at the local level. The NAACP, led by attorney Thurgood Marshall, decided to challenge the practice of separate but equal as unconstitutional, thereby overruling *Plessy v Ferguson*. Several cases were consolidated. A unique strategy was employed when psychologists Kenneth B. Clark and Mamie Clark conducted experiments with dolls. Children were asked questions about Black and White dolls such as "who is smarter," "who is prettier," and so forth. When even the Black children chose the White doll, it reified the argument that segregation was the root cause of low self-esteem and, therefore, inherently discriminatory. A unified U.S. Supreme Court issued the landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954, ruling that "in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."[7]

Contrary to common belief, the issue was not bilaterally supported. Not all Blacks wanted integration, but they did want equality. Black community schools were places of nurturing and comfort, despite not having the newest books and furniture. Teachers and principals were often leaders in their communities and parents were involved in their children's education. The decision in *Brown* would set a precedent for other court cases in regards to inclusion. But White resistance continued. In 1958, in Little Rock, Arkansas, nine Black children chosen for their excellent grades attempted to integrate Little Rock's Central High School. U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, a gradualist, tried to take a moderate stand. As tensions flared, he finally sent in federal troops and activated the Arkansas National Guard. The children were admitted and all but one finished the year at Central High. But afterward, White governors closed public schools throughout the South to avoid integration. But if the Supreme Court had envisioned an end to segregation, integration would be another matter.

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[7] *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483, May 17, 1954, 495.

Questioning the actions of Southern states to integrate the schools, the case of *Swann et al. v Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education et al.* was filed by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund on behalf of six-year-old James Swann and nine other families. In 1965, Judge J. Braxton Craven ruled in favor of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) but the case was filed again. The issue was whether or not school busing—a term that described a desegregation effort that bused school children from their neighborhood schools into different schools in the city—was an appropriate remedy for the problem of racial imbalance in schools. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and led to the widespread use of busing to end segregation. But the courts also mandated that, once the schools were determined to be desegregated, busing would end. The use of busing during the 1970s and 1980s made Charlotte known nationally as "the city that made desegregation work." But in the 1990s, CMS introduced a choice plan around the concept of magnet schools. White families complained, however, and the federal order of busing ended in Charlotte Mecklenburg. CMS then crafted a "School Choice Plan" that divided the city into four large attendance zones based on neighborhoods. A similar dismantling of the use of busing to racially equalize school populations has occurred throughout the South and Midwest.

CONCLUSION

The slaves freed by the Emancipation Proclamation looked at education as a means of realizing freedom and social inclusion. Their children, however, were tracked into a system of industrial education and a path to second-class citizenship crafted by Northern industrial philanthropists, some Black educators, and most Southern school officials. The decisions made at Capon Springs gave Whites control over the direction, structure, and content of Black elementary, secondary, normal, and college education until the 1940s. With the formation of the NAACP, however, Blacks strategically used the legal system to dismantle school segregation, and in its wake, segregation in all facets of society.

Discussion Questions

1. African Americans were conflicted about integrated schools. What are the benefits and what are the disadvantages of school integration?
2. The debate for "negro education" centered around the curriculum. What are the benefits of a liberal-classical curriculum versus a vocational-technical (industrial) curriculum?
3. Booker T. Washington remains a controversial figure. By advocating for industrial training for the Black masses, was he an accommodationist to White interests or a realist?
4. In 2010, Mark Zuckerberg, of Facebook, donated $100 million to the failing Newark, New Jersey, school system. It didn't go well. Was he following in the paths of the educational philanthropists of the Progressive Era?
5. Was it a wise decision for the NAACP lawyers to use psychological methods to argue that racial segregation was inherently harmful?

Writing Prompt

Brown v. the Topeka Board of Education is considered a precedent for other cases in which students have been prevented from participating fully in the public school system. Can you identify at least two of them and explain why *Brown* acted as a precedent? View episode 3 of *Only a Teacher.* CMS schoolteachers lament the end of busing as a solution to equity in public schools. What are the pros and cons of busing as a strategy and why did it work well in Charlotte?