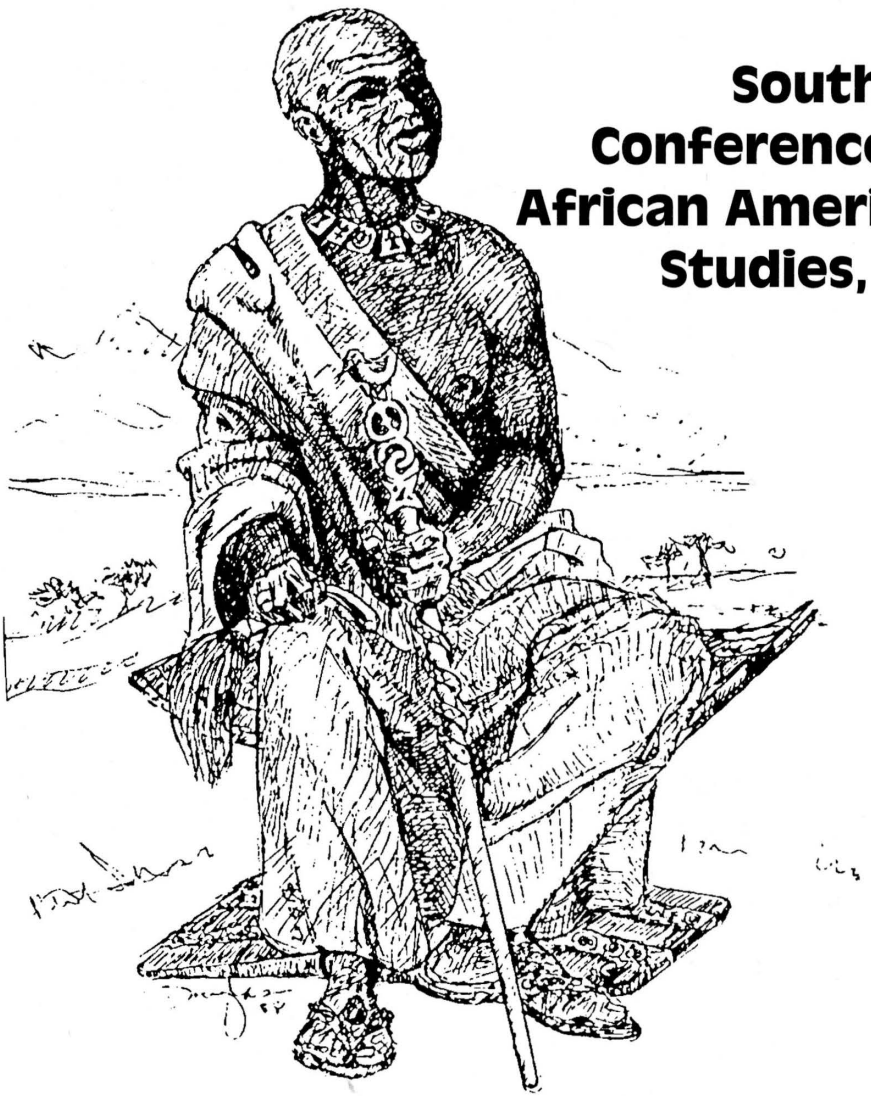
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THE GRIOT: The Journal of African American Studies

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IN ANCIENT AFRICA...
'GRIOT' WERE THE COUNSELORS OF KINGS, THEY CONSERVED THE CONSTITUTIONS OF KINGDOMS BY MEMORY ALONE... IT WAS FROM AMONG THE GRIOTS THAT KINGS USED TO CHOOSE THE TUTORS FOR YOUNG PRINCES... FOR WANT OF ARCHIVES (THEY) RECORDED THE CUSTOMS, TRADITIONS AND GOVERNMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF KINGS...

SUNDIATA, DJIBRIL T. NAINE

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Cultural Adjustments as Protest Against Vilification of the Krio by British Colonialists: The Case of Orisha Tukeh Faduma (1857-1946)

James C. Davies

Beginning in 1787, freed slaves were resettled in what is now Freetown the capital city of Sierra Leone. Eventually known as the Krio, these settlers included former slaves from London (The Black Poor), Canada (the Nova Scotians), Jamaica (the Maroons), and Liberated Africans (those rescued from the high seas by the Royal Navy) (Kup. 1975; Fyfe, 1979: and Clifford, 1999). In terms of the cultural make-up of the Krio,

> it so happened that the first settlers from London, Nova Scotia, and Jamaica were acculturated Africans, most of them born into European civilization. Thus the Black Poor, the Nova Scotians, and the Maroons formed the Western foundations of (Krio) society, which were reflected in their Christianity, education, politics, ideals and aspirations, civic pride and high sense of individualism, their mode of dress, their articulateness, and their language (Wyse, 1989: 1).

According to Wyse, the Krio settlement of Freetown was founded as a way to right the wrongs that Europeans believed that they had inflicted on Africans for subjecting them to the horrors of slavery. In addition, the founders hoped that as time progressed, this settlement of "Black Englishmen" would serve as a beacon of light in dark Africa and the settlers would evolve into a community patterned on Western civilization (1989).

The missionary wing of the Church of England then known as the Church Missionary Society (CMS), played a key role in the westernization and Christianizing of Freetown's population. Beginning in 1804, this agency established a number of schools and churches the British used as the tools to "recreate Victorian Christianity and culture in Sierra Leone" (Moore, 1996: 21). Consequently, although Krio people retained some aspects of African culture, they were essentially culturally, psychologically, and intellectually Eurocentric. Specifically, because they thoroughly embraced European Christianity, the Krio elite came to despise many cultural traits and traditions of indigenous ethnic groups (1996).

This study describes the significance of a Krio intellectual named Orishatukeh Faduma who pointed out the folly of Krio people's Eurocentric orientation. It will also show that a cultural backlash which took the form of certain cultural adjustments ensued when British colonialists used stereotyping and vilification as social control options to dominate the Krio.

According to Faduma, a number of factors existed in Sierra Leone during the latter half of the nineteenth century that reinforced ethnocentric bias among the Krio. He explained that it was clearly evident that European missionaries preferred English as the language of instruction in both schools and churches, whereas indigenous languages were not included in schools' curricula (1896). In criticizing this policy, Faduma cautioned that

> English or other European languages are valuable aids in the evolution of the native mind from heathenism to Christianity. They contain treasures in philosophy and the natural sciences with which they cannot very well dispense. Let the white man's language be studied, but not to replace the native. None of the European languages is poetic enough, none is as euphonious, none touches the tender chords of the soul, and

> makes them vibrate in harmony with the music of heaven and the great heart of God, as the native language spoken to a native ... The aim of and purpose of Christian missions is not to Anglicize... but to Christianize (1896:126-127).

Secondly, African cultural traits and traditions were seen as inferior when compared to those of Europe. Faduma expressed his disgust with this viewpoint by pointing out that

> the general impression is that in order to civilize and Christianize the African , he must be foreignized. Hence, one's native name, dress, and food must be changed in order that he may be ranked among the civilized portion of the community. It is too common when a native is admitted into the Christian church, to change his native name which is not only euphonious but historical and full of meaning, for a foreign one ... The idea is that all foreign names are necessarily Christian and all native names necessarily heathen ... Accordingly, that which distinguishes a heathen from a Christian is not moral character or allegiance to Christ, but outward dress, the stove-pipe hat, the feathered bonnet, the high-heeled shoes, and all these under the burning tropical heat, make a man a Christian gentleman (1896: 127).

He also pointed out that native churches at that time were not self-supporting, but instead relied on supplies from home churches in Europe, which obviously encouraged paternalism (1896). He argued that "paternalism in government, whether civil or religious, is destructive to true manhood. It crushes self-respect and independence, and makes men become children. It pauperizes, belittles, and dwindles men into helpless sucklings "(1896:129).

Another critic of European paternalism was Henry Venn, a British clergyman who was Secretary of the Church Missionary Society from 1841 to 1874. He advised British missionaries to take the cultural peculiarities of Sierra Leoneans into account, and to handle cultural differences with respect and even tolerance. He advised that schools should broaden their curricula to include elements of African culture, rather than insist on maintaining the narrow religious focus of mission schools. Actually, this multicultural approach was music to the ears of British sponsors of the CMS, but the plans were not fully implemented (Moses, 1996). Nevertheless, the seeds of missiological and pedagogical reform were sown. West African ecclesiastics and intellectuals appropriated Venn's ideology and it provided the basis to formulate a critique of Western ideology. In other words, "Venn's progressive missiology thus adapted served as a catalyst of incipient cultural, ecclesiastical, and nationalist ferment in Sierra Leone throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century" (1996:23). This crucial turning point came to the Krio after one hundred years of living as a distinct ethnic group, when a number of young Krio intellectuals began to seriously question the Eurocentric development of their cultural heritage. Subsequently, a movement was started to rectify this schizophrenic cultural development, since these intellectuals came to realize that they were in effect both African and European at the same time (1996).

Intense racism and bigotry characterized the second half of the nineteenth century. As the doctrine of social Darwinism gained ground, Europeans became less willing to embrace educated Black individuals as their equal or even as collaborators in their attempt to westernize and Christianize inhabitants of the African continent. Another factor that intensified the contempt of British colonialists was the Krio people's "refusal to be sufficiently grateful and humble to the them" (Wyse, 1989:51). True, the British had established schools and churches while using their scientific know-how to set up Freetown's infrastructure, but

in spite of these humanitarian efforts, the Krio refused to be denigrated in any way. Consequently,

> British travellers, colonial officials, and even some missionaries "mounted a campaign of vilification against the Krio "... The Krio were referred to as "vice incarnate", "inferior specimens", "ingrates", "degenerates", "uprooted persons", "black Englishmen", and much else in a similar vein" (Wyse, 1989:46).

In response to these attacks, many Krio intellectuals came to the defense of their tribesmen. They forcefully argued that all races were equal, and if their members are granted equal opportunity, people will be great achievers regardless of race. This they did through the media of public speaking, books, and newspapers (1989). For example, using arguments based on biblical passages and the natural and social sciences, a Krio educator named Edward Blyden brilliantly argued that the assertion that Africans were inferior to whites was unfounded (1857). Blyden wrote,

> let the candid among the enemies of our race take, as far as they know, all the cases of Africans who have enjoyed any opportunities of intellectual development and improvement, and see if the majority have not profitably availed themselves of those opportunities. Or take an African of ordinary mind and a Caucasian of like capacity, place them both under the same instructions with equal privileges. We hazard nothing by saying that the Caucasian will not exceed the African, if indeed, he keep pace with him. This has been tested, and the result has turned out in favor of the African. If then, under given circumstances, the Caucasian will arrive at a certain point of intellectual improvement, and under the same circumstances ... as the facts of a fair induction show, the African will attain to the same point. Where is the absolute superiority of the Caucasian? Where is the peculiar mental obtuseness of the African? Where? (1857: 25-26).

Similarly, in reply to the label that the Krio of Sierra Leone are "the most impertinent rogues in all the coast" (Horton, 1868:55), another Krio named James Africanus Horton (1868) explained that even though Krio settlers arrived in Sierra Leone in a state of abject poverty, yet over time their intellectual and commercial achievements were truly noteworthy.

In sum, during the latter half of the nineteenth century, British colonialists used stereotyping and vilification as social control options in an attempt to maintain their social domination of the Krio. Consequently, a number of Krio intellectuals including Faduma played a significant role in the movement geared toward the transformation of Krio society from its Eurocentric acculturation to one characterized by a more profound respect for its African cultural heritage. From a functionalist viewpoint, the main social function of such cultural adjustments was the assertion of self-respect and pride in Krio people's African heritage.

Orishatukeh Faduma: A Biographical Sketch

Orishatukeh Faduma was born on September 15, 1857 in Guyana to John and Omolofi Faduma who were captured from their Yoruba homeland in Nigeria and sold as slaves. They were rescued on the high seas by anti-slavery squadrons of the British Navy, and ultimately taken to Guyana to work in coffee and sugar plantations. Since African names were considered heathenish, he was named William James Davies by his parents. He spent the first couple of years in Guyana, but the family of which he was a part later moved to Sierra Leone and settled at Waterloo Village. When Faduma moved from Waterloo to Freetown, he was increasingly influenced by the Pan-

Africanist and anti-Eurocentric views of Edward Blyden (Moses, 1996). Blyden's ideas provided the foundation upon which Faduma developed his philosophical and social perspectives (See Blyden, 1857). His intellectual and ideological development was also influenced by the Reverend Joseph Claudius May , founder and first principal of Wesleyan Boys' High School (now Methodist Boys' High School), with whom he stayed as a ward. He later taught at the Wesleyan Boys' High School where he developed his teaching and intellectual skills. In 1882, he proceeded to England for further studies, and enrolled at Wesley College in Taunton, England. Upon the completion of his studies at London University, he returned to Sierra Leone, where he received much acclaim for being the first West African to pass the inter-B.A. examination of that university.

When Faduma came to the United States in 1891, theological arguments were becoming more liberal and critical rather than conservative. One feature emphasized in this theological liberalism was the study of comparative religion. Actually, this atmosphere helped to fuel his Pan-Africanist agenda (1996). His Pan-Africanist orientation was evident in an article published in 1896. In this article, he examined religious beliefs among the Yoruba people of West Africa (See Faduma,1896). While living in the United States, he fully affiliated with the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church whose headquarters were in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was first employed as a teacher at a school sponsored by the A. M. E. Church. Later he was hired as a teacher at Kittrell Normal School in North Carolina. He identified strongly with African Americans and his teaching job gave him the opportunity to discuss his Pan-Africanist views (Moore, 1996).

Faduma enrolled at Yale University in 1891 majoring in divinity. After he graduated "with honors" in 1894, he spent another year pursuing graduate studies in Semitic languages and philosophy of religion. After his ordination as a Congregationalist minister in 1895, he accepted a temporary appointment offered by the American Missionary Association (AMA) as superintendent of Peabody Academy and pastor of the Congregational Church at Troy, North Carolina. He came with his wife Henrietta Adams of Augusta, Georgia, together with an assistant. In reality, Faduma was an African Missionary to African Americans living in the American south. This made him feel happy and fulfilled, since he felt that he was making a positive contribution to "his own people" (1996).

Faduma's cultural relativism was clearly expressed at the Congress on Africa conducted in December, 1895 in Atlanta, Georgia, where he insisted that Christian missions to Africa must take into account the cultural, linguistic, and social peculiarities of local ethnic groups if they wished to succeed in spreading Christianity. As an evangelical Pan-Africanist missionary to African Americans, Faduma received much praise for his amazing work not only among liberal theologians, but also among his friends in Sierra Leone. During his seventeen years at Troy, North Carolina, Faduma witnessed a period of intense racism and bigotry, he hoped that his theological arguments and pronouncements would eliminate racial prejudice against African Americans. When he became a naturalized U. S. citizen in 1902, he expressed his solidarity with African Americans. He was well-known in his community, as well as within intellectual circles. He was a member of the American Academy of Politics and Social Science, and the American Negro Association (1996) .

When Faduma moved to Oklahoma in 1913, he participated in the Back-to-Africa Movement under the leadership of Chief Alfred Sam. This movement was founded on the premise that since the life chances of Blacks living in America were so limited, migrating to Africa would be a much better alternative. Founders of the movement believed that such migration would provide much-needed freedom for American Blacks, generate the "missionary spirit", and provide an avenue for industrial development patterned after the philosophy of Booker T. Washington. Although the movement initially made good progress, people

within the United States like W. E. B. DuBois, and others outside the U. S. like Duse Mohamed Ali and T. Hutton Mills opposed it. Even the United States Post Office and the British government took certain steps to ensure that the movement failed. In spite of widespread opposition, the movement had many supporters in the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone. In spite of numerous setbacks, *the Liberia* finally arrived at the Gold Coast on January 13, 1915. However, the delegates were not able to overcome the harsh conditions that Africa had waiting for them such as malaria-causing mosquitoes and a damp wet climate. Subsequently, the movement failed. However, Faduma was not despondent. He kept on speaking and writing that losing this battle did not mean that the war was lost. He continued to express the view that the pioneers of many movements indeed perished, while their followers were ultimate successful (1996).

Faduma returned to West Africa on July 3, 1914 and settled in Waterloo Village near Freetown, Sierra Leone. While in Sierra Leone, he continued his pedagogical, theological, and social reforms. Without doubt, he earned his place among the world's great educators. He served as a high school principal, teacher, and government inspector of schools, as well as being a member of the Colony's Education Committee. His pedagogical reforms included the insistence that vernacular instruction be introduced in schools, while the schools' curricula should include Arabic, Negro history, geography, and the sciences. He believed that the study of Arabic would bring Muslims and Christians together in their common goal to live amicably and peacefully. To Faduma, the goals of African education should reflect the needs of Africans, not Europeans. In order for Africans to develop self-knowledge, racial pride and racial consciousness, the study of "Negrology" should be encouraged. He wanted black people to be self-assertive and independent in thought. In an effort to bridge the gender gap, Faduma called for the widespread education of women. He believed that women were just as intellectually capable as men. To him, the apparent intellectual inferiority of women was due to environmental influences and socialization, not genetic inheritance (1996).

In an attempt to further his Pan-Africanist agenda, Faduma assisted in founding The National Congress of British West Africa (N. C. B. W. A.) in 1920. The main goal of this organization was to guarantee that the social, political, and national rights that the British government had denied West Africans were secured. This congress actualized Edward Blyden's dream of a united West Africa in which tribalism, religious differences, and sectionalism took second place. Faduma proposed that the conference should address among other things population and cultural issues. The N. C. B. W. A. also provided a forum from which he popularized his Pan-African ideology. He believed in self-help, and did not feel that the salvation of the black race would come from without but rather from within. According to Faduma, one way to achieve this goal was through educational reform. However, one factor that militated against the full effectiveness of this organization was its inherent conservatism, lack of religious diversity, and krio class consciousness. The congress was therefore not representative of a broad cross section of West Africa's population. In other words, it lacked widespread legitimacy (1996).

As a theological, missiological, and pedagogical reformer, Faduma wrote many insightful articles and delivered many speeches which contributed greatly to the religious, educational, and political development of Sierra Leoneans. For example, he believed that there should be no argument between those who support the biblical account of creation and advocates of the scientific theory of evolution, since God is the creator but he creates through the process of evolution. He also noted that human language could not adequately express or describe the mysteries of God (1996).

Faduma left Sierra Leone for the United States on September 19, 1923. By December 1924, he was teaching Latin and English Literature at Lincoln Academy in King's Mountain, North Carolina. During his spare time, he

served as mentor to students from Africa. Both in public and private, he enhanced public interest in his version of evangelical Pan-Africanism. At the age of seventy, Faduma became a student at the Chicago Theological Seminary. This did not stop him from being a strong advocate of the liberalization of protestant missiology which was gaining some ground at that time.

Even in old age, Faduma continued the struggle. As the theological and missiological debates raged on, his Pan-Africanist ideology continued to define his perspectives on evangelical liberalism and liberal missiology. His impact was widely felt. In 1945, his alma mater's Divinity School sent him a letter expressing its pride in his achievements. He died on January 25, 1946, and was buried at High Point, North Carolina (1996).

Cultural Adjustments

As mentioned earlier in this study, the spiteful animadversions of British subjects which intensified during the last twenty-five years of the nineteenth century, did cause the Krio to reevaluate their Eurocentric cultural orientation. "Some did not like what they saw and reacted in a positive way by making adjustments in their cultural make-up" (Wyse, 1989:52). What was Faduma's contribution to this movement geared toward the reformation of Krio subculture from its European acculturation to one characterized by a more profound respect for its African heritage? The rest of this study highlights Faduma's activities that gave expression to his theological, intellectual, and ideological tenets.

Name Changing

When Krio society experienced unwarranted assaults by prejudiced British detractors during the nineteenth century, several leading Krio individuals did not take this lightly. One method of refusing to be humiliated by the British was to change their English names to African ones. The changing of one's English name to an African one was an act symbolizing the rejection of the notion that everything British is best. It was a cultural adjustment meant to affirm the dignity of one's African heritage. It was also a way to honor one's bloodline. In the case of Faduma, his original name was William James Davies, but the name Orishshatukeh was derived from the Yoruba deity called "Orisha", whereas "Faduma" was his father's name (Wyse, 1989; Deveneaux, 1979). From a symbolic interactonist perspective, "human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them " (Blumer, 1969:21). Hence, a person's name is a very important symbol. It represents who that person really is. Therefore, when people interacted with "Orishatukeh Faduma", they were constrained to treat him as someone who respected his bloodline, and was proud of his Yoruba heritage.

When he publicly changed his baptismal name from William James Davies to Orishatukeh Faduma (thus adopting his original Yoruba name), there arose much controversy and debate among Krio elites. He was openly and severely criticized for this blatant indiscretion, but he was adamant. In spite of this opposition, he had his supporters as well. For example, Kufileh Tubohku argued that instead of being criticized, Faduma should be commended for his attempt to cultivate in Africans their true identity, and for advancing genuine civilization in Sierra Leone. Faduma never responded to his critics, believing that nonresponse was the best response (Moses, 1996: 41-45).

Dress Reform

Another reaction against the contemptuous attitude of the English, and their condemnation of Krio assertiveness, was the formation in 1887 of the Dress Reform Society. The main social function of this society was the generation of a positive attitude toward African culture. Orishatukeh Faduma was an active member of this society. Its members regularly wore loose-fitting African attire, which was more suited to Africa's warm and moist climate. Not only did these clothes feel more comfortable, they also constituted a remarkable assertion of pride in

African culture (Wyse, 1989). According to Moore,

> the Dress Reform Society sought to redress another constant reminder of Krio people's European cultural dependency by attempting to establish a form of dress more culturally and environmentally appropriate for West Africans rather than the standard Victorian attire – the Religion of the Frock Coat and Tall Hat – which many Krio people associated with the attainment of Christianity and civilization (1996:45).

At a meeting held in mid-December 1887, Faduma along with other members of the society, modeled a loose-fitting tunic and gown which they hoped would be adopted as the typical mode of dress for all Sierra Leoneans (1996:45).

Pan Africanism

At its most fundamental level, Pan-Africanism refers to the tenet that Africans living on the continent as well as those of the Diaspora, are united by a common history as well as a common destiny. Its adherents seek to among other things, promote racial pride, liberate oppressed black people everywhere, and promote global commerce and industry (Makalani (http://exhibitions.nypl.org/africaaage/essay-pan-africanism.html)).

Until reforms were introduced in 1924, the Krio were ruled by the British with a Governor having almost absolute power. There was no elective representation in the Legislative Council. After 1863, some educated Africans were nominated as unofficial members, but this was seen by Krio people as a form of window dressing. They subsequently resorted to various other means of pressure and protest against this blatant racism and discrimination perpetuated by British administrators. For example, the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA), a Pan-West-African organization was founded in 1920. This association sounded the clarion call for elected representation. It cultivated the spirit of "black awareness", "anti-colonialism", and "national consciousness" (Wyse, 1989). Early in the association's history, several demands were made to the British government. In general, these demands were based among other things on the need for the right of West Africans to participate in governance, the ending of discrimination, and the establishment of a free press. Although these demands were at first rejected, the British to West African countries later granted them. The Sierra Leone branch of this association was dominated by the Krio, and Orishatukeh Faduma was one of its distinguished members. The association's members were not only critical of British policies, but also suggested ways of improving social and economic conditions within Sierra Leone (1989).

Pedagogical Reform

The goal of Faduma's Pan-African-oriented pedagogy was to create in Africans a profound appreciation of their cultures. This he hoped would liberate the race from degradation and oppression, while placing Africa's cultural traditions on a lofty plane. He not only advocated the study of philosophy and religion, but also emphasized the inclusion of comparative study of religion in Africa's educational curricula. According to Moore, he introduced "vernacular instruction, the study of science, and subjects such as Negro history, Arabic, and African folklore"(1996:169) into the curriculum of the United Methodist Church Collegiate School of which he served as principal.

Furthermore, Faduma emphasized the importance of science in the education of African youths. He believed that many phenomena that people think are mysterious will ultimately be understood rationally when explained in scientific terms. In particular, he supported the idea that the theory of evolution and the biblical account of creation are compatible, rather than incompatible. God he claimed indeed created the world, but evolution was his method of creation (1996).

Faduma argued against those who questioned the intellectual capability of women. He encouraged government officials to extend educational opportunities to women of all ages (1996). He used his Atlanta-educated wife as a case in point. She not only helped him in church and school when he was at Troy, North Carolina, but also served as secretary and treasurer of the North Carolina Women's State Organization formed under the auspices of the American Missionary Association (1996).

Theological Liberalism

Faduma's theological liberalism must be understood within the context of the Krio people's dissatisfaction and anguish due to the continuous assaults meted out on them by uniformed and prejudiced British detractors in the nineteenth century. According to Wyse,

> Krio society has always been individualistic and self-critical. On the other hand, the 'spiteful animadversions of a few hasty observers' did penetrate the psyche of the Krio and served to induce an introspective and critical analysis of their society. Some did not like what they saw, and reacted in a positive way by making adjustments in their cultural makeup (1989:52).

In his article entitled "Success and Drawbacks of Missionary Work in Africa by an Eye-Witness" Faduma (1896) indicated that it was a plain fact that missionary work in Africa was beset by certain drawbacks. He explained that

> what Africans need and what all races need, is not what will denationalize or deindividualize them, not what will stamp them out of existence, what will show that God has a purpose in creating race varieties. Christianity is a failure if it requires a loss of race variety, loss of racial and national life, loss of racial and national thought. It is a failure if it requires the native Christians of Japan or India to be the exact picture of their American or English instructors. Let us have a Christian life and thought expressed in Africa, not after the manner of a Frenchman, an American, or Englishman, but assimilated into Africa (1896: 128).

As Wyse (1989:54) explains, in this atmosphere of religious conservatism there was a certain degree of "racial arrogance and discrimination characteristic of missionary churches". In response, several native churches with an African orientation were founded. In addition, Western Christianity was not really spiritually fulfilling. Hence African denominations sprang up everywhere in the late nineteenth century. This may be the reason for Faduma's assertion that Christianity was not the only path to God, and thus argued for the inclusion of Islamic studies in the curricula of schools (Wyse, 1989).

An interesting case in point was the argument regarding what caused the 1918 influenza outbreak that struck Sierra Leone in 1918. Conservative preachers explained that the epidemic was caused by sin, and therefore was a divine punishment. Faduma disagreed with this superstitious explanation and provided a more rational one. He argued that "the problem of suffering was a mysterious problem and one that was a necessary part of man's evolution. On the contrary, he emphasized that the epidemic was due to unsanitary conditions (Moore, 1996).

Conclusion

Two important conclusions can be drawn from this study. Firstly, when people face prejudice and discrimination, it is not always necessary to use outright violence or even widespread rebellion to solve the problem. When British colonialists mounted a campaign of vilification against the Krio, many of them countered by making certain cultural adjustments. These cultural adjustments included name changing, dress reform, adopting a Pan-Africanist world view, pedagogical

reform, and embracing theological liberalism. In short, the Krio simply redefined themselves in the most positive light. They emphasized their dignity and self-respect which indeed sent a powerful message to their British oppressors.

Secondly, a single individual could have a profound influence on any social movement. Orishatukeh Faduma was a man having strong convictions. He not only believed that Africans should be proud of their race, but also "continued to adhere to the central tenets of evangelical liberalism and liberal missiology adapted to his Pan-African ideology" (Moore, 1996: 225). Furthermore, he played an important role in the redefinition of what at that time it meant to be Krio.

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Almena Davis Lomax: A "Hell-Raising" Black Female Journalist (1915-2011

Chandra D. Clark

> I grope back to the beginning through a maze where each turn is like a room where the mind might settle and say, 'Here. It began here.' But it did not begin anywhere except at the beginning, and somehow it seems necessary to work it out, both for myself and for those who might be interested in the phenomenon of a twentieth-century frontierswoman, a Negro woman...taking her children by modern-day covered wagon overland 2,600 miles into the Deep South (A. Lomax, "Journey to the Beginning": A Northern Negro Moves to Dixie," *Nation*, March 25, 1961, p. 251).

In her very own reverse Great Migration, middle-aged and divorced Almena Davis Lomax, publisher and editor of the Black weekly *Los Angeles Tribune* from 1941 to 1960, in 1961 relocated from Los Angeles to Tuskegee, Alabama, her six children in tow, to better cover the burgeoning civil rights movement in the lower South. This unconventional act, though by no means the only one in her life, nevertheless epitomized Lomax's chutzpah and tenacity. In "Journey to the Beginning: A Northern Negro Moves to Dixie," her autobiographical account of her move to the South published in *Nation*, she states, "I decided I was in love with a geography and a way of life and a battle begun now in earnest by a people too long denied by their own; and so we started out for Tuskegee" (p. 250).

A journalist, provocateur, and activist, Lomax's journalism career encompassed many of the major historical events of the 20th century: The Black Great Migration from the South to points north and west; World War II; and the civil rights and Black power movements, among others. As such, she encapsulates, and may well serve as a case study for, the lives and careers of Black female journalists of the postwar/civil rights era. At its peak, the *Tribune*, which featured political commentary, news, and reviews, had a circulation of 25,000 (E. Woo, *Los Angeles Times*, April 1, 2011).

While scholarship on Black women journalists is not extensive, it nevertheless has a long history, and continues to grow. Perhaps partly because early Black women journalists constituted a relatively privileged few, they were, by definition, particularly significant—as abolitionists, suffragists, educators, and civil rights activists---in addition to their work as journalists. Accordingly, the lives and contributions of Black female journalists of the 19th century have been largely recovered in recent years (Dunnigan, 1965; Wade-Giles, 1981; Snorgrass, 1982; Giddings, 1984; Sterling, 1984; Richardson, 1987; Streitmatter, 1994; Tripp, 1996; Royster, 1997, 2000; Logan, 1995, 1999; Guy-Sheftall, 1995; Rhodes, 1998; Walker, 1992; Broussard, 2002, 2004, 2006). Moreover, several notable autobiographies and biographies of individual Black women journalists have been published (Mossell, 1908; Bates, 1962, 1986; Wells-Barnett & Duster, 1970; Dunnigan, 1974; Sterling, 1988; Hunter-Gault, 1992, 2012; Nelson, 1993, 1997; Gaines, 1994; McMurray, 1998; Rhodes, 1998; Stockley, 2005; Gardner, 2007; Bay, 2009; Giddings, 2008; Davis, 2012). Yet, there remains much to glean from those who continued along the path set by journalist-activist foremothers such as Maria W. Stewart, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and others. Notable works specifically focusing on Black women newspaper publishers/journalists of the postwar/civil rights era include Bass (1960); Bates (1962, 1986); and Stockley (2005). It is hoped that the recovery of Lomax's career and contributions will place her in the company of her better-known contemporaries.

Black Writers' Going "Home"

Black writers have long had an ambivalent relationship with the South. While acknowledging the historically troubled region—indeed, sometimes celebrating it—as the wellspring of their familial and literary heritage, and also frequently of their creativity, they have sometimes wrestled with its often crippling legacy (Harris, 2009, p. 1). James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Albert Murray, Gwendolyn Brooks, W.E.B. DuBois, Octavia Butler, Alice Walker, Gloria Naylor, and Zora Neale Hurston represent but a smattering of the Black writers who have engaged the South's legacy in some fashion in their writings. As Harris (2009) posits, "No matter where an African American writer is born in the United States, whether it is Boston or New York, or Idaho or California, or Texas or Georgia, or Alabama or Mississippi, he or she feels *compelled* (emphasis mine) to confront the American South and all its bloody history in his or her writings" (p. 1). Cooke (1974) examines the literary motif of Black male characters' literal and figurative sojourns, while Baker (2000, 2007) specifically engages how the region has impacted his life and work.

In comparing the southern journeys of Black male and females writers, McDowell (1980) states:

> A final theme that recurs in the novels of Black women writers is the motif of the journey. Though one can also find this same motif in the works of Black male writers, they do not use it in the same way as do Black female writers. For example, the journey of the Black male character in works by Black men takes him underground. It is a 'descent into the underworld,' and is primarily political and social in its implications. Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, Imamu Amiri Baraka's *The System of Dante's Hell*, and Richard Wright's 'The Man Who Lived Underground' exemplify this quest. The Black female's journey, on the other hand, though at times touching the political and social, is basically a personal and psychological journey. The state of becoming 'part of the evolutionary spiral, moving from victimization to consciousness' (p. 157).

Interestingly, although Lomax was born in Texas and raised primarily in California, she identifies herself as "Northern" (*Nation*, March 25, 1961). Nonetheless, she recognizes her Southern roots:

> But who is to say that my 'roots are not in the South?' ...I had an Alabama-born grandmother whose hawk nose, chiseled lips and flashing Black eyes proclaimed that more than the ghosts of the Cherokees, the Creeks, the Choctaws, the Chickasaws, lurk in Alabama's tall, military pines.
>
> My mother, whose blue-gray eyes, auburn hair, fine white skin and thin features showed not a hint of Negro blood, was born in New Orleans, but spent her summers with dark-skinned half-relatives in Mobile, Alabama, and went there to Norman School and met my father and ran away to get married.
>
> Down from Mobile, on the Gulf of Mexico, in Galveston, I was born. So, although I was raised in Chicago and Los Angeles, who is to say my roots are not in the South? (p. 250)

Further, although this narrative is not fictional, as explicated by Harris, Lomax is indeed "compelled" to go South (Harris, 2001, p. 1).

Son Michael Lomax recalls, "The article ["Journey to the Beginning"] shares the sense that mother [sic] had that the South was the place of our roots from which we had become disconnected and the place of our struggle as a race to gain our rights and to claim our humanity" (2007).

But who was Almena Davis Lomax, and why did she venture south?

The purpose of this study is to explicate Lomax's career and contributions, which included the postwar and civil rights eras, thus helping to recover a relatively little-known aspect of Black journalism history. Although, as one individual, she cannot possibly represent all Black female publishers and editors, Lomax's career may, nevertheless, shed light on the careers and contributions of Black female journalists of her time.

Henceforth in this paper, I use the terms "Black" and "Negro" interchangeably in rough accordance with the usage prevalent during the various historical periods under discussion.

Primary sources for this project include interviews of Lomax conducted by the California State University-Fullerton Oral History and Public History Project; biographical and other information gleaned from "Journey to the Beginning" (Lomax, 1961); *Tribune* editorials and news stories written by Lomax; other articles written by Lomax published in publications such as *Crisis, Harper's Magazine, The Tribune* (literary magazine), and the *Los Angeles Sentinel*; and information drawn from materials housed in the Almena Lomax Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University Archives. Interviews with Lomax's children and former associates conducted by the author, in addition to obituaries and news reports, provided additional insight.

"A muck-racking, hell-raising journalist"

> If somebody called me the N word, if someone didn't treat me right, I had a muck-racking, hell-raising journalist mother who would give them...I mean, they didn't do that. She is writing, all by herself, a 20-page tabloid weekly, the *Tribune*. That was a trouble-making paper. We fought against capital punishment. Throughout the '50s, when people were blacklisted, and couldn't write for some newspapers, they came to write for us. When the bus boycott hit, she went to Montgomery, and that changed her life. She decided, 'This is the story of my life. I'm going to convince my husband and family to move south' (Interview with Michael Lomax, The Black List, Volume 3, 2009).

Born to Southern parents in Galveston, Texas, in 1915, Hallie Almena Davis emigrated with her family from Texas to Chicago at age 2 (CBS Los Angeles newscast, April 1, 2011). While she was still a child, the family relocated to Los Angeles during the 1920s, where Davis edited the school newspaper and graduated from Jordan High School in 1933 (California State University –Fullerton Oral History, 1966, Tape 1). Following graduation, she attended Los Angeles City College, where she studied English, but also took journalism classes and became enamored with the field (Tape 1). Leaving college before graduating, Davis applied for jobs at several Los Angeles-area White dailies and was turned down, while her White classmates were hired (Tape 1). "They [White newspapers] weren't ready to hire a Negro," she concluded (Tape 1). A friend then introduced her to Charlotta A. Bass, activist editor of the Negro weekly *California Eagle*. Davis began working at the paper in 1938 (*L.A. Watts Times*, March 31, 2011). For $10 a week, "I flunkied," Davis said, learning the business by doing a variety of odd jobs for Bass, in addition to writing, proofreading, and selling ads and subscriptions (Tape 1). She further noted, "I cooked for her," and did rewrites: "She'd say, 'I want to say this.' And I'd just write it for her...This was a training ground for me...I taught myself" (Tape 1). After two years at the Eagle, Davis began hosting a show for Gold Furniture on radio station KTFJ as the station's first Negro reporter (Tape 1). The twice-weekly radio show grew in popularity, until Bass finally issued Davis an ultimatum to either quit the radio show, which was taking up increasingly more of Davis's time, or the *Eagle*; Davis chose to leave the *Eagle* (Tape 1).

In July 1941, Davis purchased *The*

Interfaith Churchman, a weekly newsletter, with $100 borrowed from her future father-in-law, prominent Los Angeles businessman and hotel owner Lucius Lomax, Sr. "He liked me. He thought I had a lot of ability," she observed (Tape 1). Converting the paper from religious to general news, Davis renamed it the *Los Angeles Tribune* (Tape 2). She married co-publisher Lucius Lomax., Jr., and eventually bore six children.

Of these years, she noted:

> My husband and I wrote the *Tribune*, printed it, did job printing, fought for the rights and advancement of Los Angeles Negroes, engaged in politics, and had one baby after another, in the thirteen years of our association. My part was to write everything that appeared in the Tribune's twenty-four tabloid pages (except the sports), 'prime the pump' for enough advertising to cut its $1,200-a-week overhead, supervise the one-girl office, read the proofs, help our three-man shop with the composition and make-up of the paper, and with my left hand bring up the six (Lomax, 1961, p. 250).

Practicing what she called "personal journalism," Lomax often caused controversy with readers and advertisers alike with her political views and activities. For example, she stated that Thrifty Drug Store, a White business, cancelled its advertising with the *Tribune* after Lomax persuaded her husband to run for public office (Tape 2). She noted, "The *Tribune* was a highly personal organ...the last of personal journalism around L. A." (Tape 1). In "Journey to the Beginning," she noted: "My [*Los Angeles Tribune*] articles were invariably distilled through an intensely personal filter. It is practically impossible for me to keep myself out of anything I write...and, as my eldest daughter frequently croaks, I 'have an opinion about everything,' and I'm 'not necessarily handicapped by lack of the facts'" (1961, p. 250). In a *Los Angeles Tribune* editorial on various topics, including W. E. B. DuBois, the NAACP, and Dorothy Day of the *Catholic Worker*, she observed, regarding her work as editor:

> As an editor, charged with the responsibility or prying copy out of other writers, we agree with him [DuBois] implicitly on the futility of 'waiting for inspiration.'
>
> We haven't waited, either.
>
> Our procedure usually is not to write about anything unless we 'want' to write about it. (Lomax, "Editorial What-Not," *Los Angeles Tribune*, May 9, 1958, p. 12).

The Lomaxes converted the *Los Angeles Tribune* to a weekly, which eventually became a 24-page, five-column tabloid. In addition to rearing her children, Lomax estimated that she did the work of four people, writing about 33,000 words a week (Tape 2). The Lomaxes owned their printing press, and also printed other publications (Tape 2). Lomax led two political campaigns, and, according to her resume, served as a board member of the Los Angeles branch of the NAACP, and, in 1958, won the Women for Legislative Action Award for Community Service; initiated community campaigns for the integration of Los Angeles' Fire and Police departments; headed a statewide drive to save Wesley Wells--at the time the longest-serving Death Row prisoner--from execution; and lead a drive to continue child care centers for working mothers following the Korean War (Lomax, Resume, Almena Lomax Papers). She also led boycotts against the movies "Porgy and Bess" and "Imitation of Life" for their portrayals of Negroes. Also, in yet another example of Lomax putting her political views into action, she was selected as a delegate to the 1952 Democratic National Convention (*New York Times*, April 9, 2011).

Eschewing "objective" journalism in the long advocacy tradition of the Black press, Lomax was, at times, a subject of stories in her own newspaper

(*New York Times*, April 9, 2011). For example, in *Los Angeles Tribune* news stories and editorials, she often included first-person anecdotes of her own experiences with racism. One news article, "Woman Shoves Teenagers, Calls Them 'Niggers,'" recounts an incident in which Negro students at Lomax's daughter Michelle's high school were accosted by an unidentified White woman with the words, "You niggers get off the sidewalk" (*Los Angeles Tribune*, Nov. 7, 1958). The article, which is not bylined, goes on to read, "Mrs. Lomax, arriving on the scene a short while later, attempted to find the woman, but to no avail."

According to Michael Lomax, his mother frequented the set of "Cabin in the Sky" (1943), and was well acquainted with entertainers Lena Horne, Billie Holiday, and Billy Strayhorn (M. Lomax, personal correspondence, July 3, 2012). In 1946, she won the Wendell L. Willkie Award for Negro Journalism (named in honor of the 1940 and 1944 Republican presidential candidate), sponsored by *The Washington Post*, for a controversial column debunking the myth of Black male sexual prowess. Attempts to locate this column have thus far been unsuccessful; however, a *Los Angeles Tribune* story announcing the award, "Tribune Wins Willkie Negro Press Award" (March 2, 1946, p. 1), reads:

> In a letter to Miss Davis, which followed the announcement, Mrs. Meyer [wife of *Washington Post* editor Eugene Meyer and a member of the awards committee] described Miss Davis' writing style as 'delightfully ironic and humorous.'
>
> The Willkie awards were established last year by the estate of the late Wendell L. Willkie to be made annually to the three Negro journalists doing the best work in the three branches of writing: editorial, feature, and reporting. Mrs. Meyer's wire did not say in which branch Miss Davis' work was adjudged the best.

The award was also mentioned in a disparaging *California Eagle* article of Feb. 5, 1948, headlined: "Wife Says Lomax Sired Almena Davis' Babies," by Cyril Briggs. The article indicates that not everyone in the Negro community approved of Davis (who had not yet married Lucius Lomax, Jr., but had borne children by him while he was still married to another woman) or her views:

> A congenital sourpuss who makes no secret of her half-baked, second-hand views of the Negro people as being immoral, indecent and indolent was named this week as co-respondent in a sensational divorce action charging adultery.
>
> As editor of the *Tribune*, Miss Davis has consistently peddled an Uncle Tom philosophy which frequently evoked the anger of the community but won her the plaudits of the enemies of the Negro people.
>
> In her frequent tirades against her own people she often demanded that Negroes return to the 'simplest tenets of decency, cleanliness, thrift and perseverance,' thereby inferring that these qualities were wholly lacking in the character of the Negro people today.
>
> A winner of the Wendell Willkie award for Negro journalists, Miss Davis' award was based on an article on the sex prowess of the Negro male. In that article Miss Davis wrote characteristically:
>
> 'The average Negro man expends the major portion of his energy in bed in nebulous efforts to prove himself over and over again. If he can't do anything else, he can thrill the average woman. And instead of bridge-building, book-writing, and the like, constantly

spurring him on, a flirting skirt, a well-turned hip or a nicely molded bosom gets him up and going.

And especially if the skin beneath the skirt is white. Man alive, a cat's willing to come apart at the seams to please a pink toe.'

Members of the all-white committee of judges who selected Miss Davis' article as the best submitted by a journalist in 1945 were a Kentucky publisher, a Missouri columnist and a New York editor who was probably born south of the Mason-Dixon line.

The award, quite fittingly, was presented by Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman of Richmond, Va., who is best known for his biased and anti-Negro histories of the Civil War, written from the point of view of the Confederacy.

Regarding the award, Lomax wrote in a Feb. 25, 1971 letter to the editor in the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, "Almena Lomax Sets the Record Straight" (p. B3A):

> Would you please correct an error which appeared in your issue of Jan. 28, 1971, in the article, 'Are Black Swains Losing Out to Whites?', by Bill Lane?
>
> The Willkie Award of 1946 was not won by the *Los Angeles Tribune* 'with a story titled 'Negro (Males) are Lousy Lovers,' as asserted by Mr. Lane.
>
> There never was such an article. I never made such a statement.
>
> The award was made for excellence of editorial and feature writing contained in some 20 pieces. Among them was a column, 'How 'Bout This?', written by me which took Negro men to task for bragging about the rather trivial mythic notion that they are any greater love-makers than any other race of men, in the midst of so many obvious needs of the Negro.
>
> The idea that this connoted criticism of Negro men as lovers originated with a reporter on the now-defunct New York Herald-Tribune who hadn't even read the piece, but got his lead from one of the judges, who did not make that assertion either. All of this goes to show you that you cannot generalize. Some of the white ones—as on the late *N.Y. Herald-Trib*—are as bad about getting the facts as some of the Negro ones, as for instance, Mr. Lane.
>
> And Lane's piece also proved that the preoccupations of some of us are still as trivial in 1971 as of those men taking such inordinate pride in the tears of English women over their Negro-GI lovers pulling out in 1946. And the problems of the Negro in 1971 are almost as great as they were in 1946.
>
> The Willkie Award was not won by my newspaper, but by me. While it is true, the *Tribune* is defunct, I am not, but am working at my occupation daily on the *San Francisco Examiner*.

As a proponent of what would now be called diversity, Lomax employed several Japanese writers at the *Los Angeles Tribune* throughout its publication in an attempt to forge stronger ties with the local Japanese-American community. Two were Hisaye Yamamoto and Wakako Yamauchi, who both had been in internment camps, and later achieved literary acclaim—Yamamoto as a short story writer and

essayist and Yamauchi as a playwright, essayist, and short-story writer (G. Robinson, *Nichi Bei*, Feb. 4, 2011). In fact, the *Los Angeles Tribune* was the only Los Angeles newspaper to officially oppose President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, which had forcibly evacuated Japanese-American citizens to relocation camps; thus, the newspaper formally defended the rights of Japanese Americans (*Nichi Bei*, Feb. 4, 2011). Yamamoto, who worked as a columnist and copy editor at the *Los Angeles Tribune* (Hong, 1994, p. 3), wrote a highly regarded autobiographical account, "A Fire in Fontana" (1985), about the murder-by-arson of a Negro family who had moved into a White neighborhood; Yamamoto had written in the *Los Angeles Tribune* about the father's attempts to publicize the threats his family had received (Schleitwiler, 2008; Elliott, 2009). Of her hiring, Yamamoto observed, "The idea of hiring a Japanese on a Black newspaper was that maybe the returning Japanese businessmen would advertise and this would attract some Japanese readership, and maybe there would be the beginnings of an intercultural community" (Yamamoto, 2001, p. 151). Indeed, the *Tribune* was "the only newspaper that would hire a Japanese" (McDonald & Newman, 1980, p. 23).

Lomax became the first Negro writer to be accredited by the Motion Picture Association. She also arranged a deal with Stanley Mosk, a future California State Supreme Court justice and 1958 California gubernatorial candidate Edmund G. ("Pat") Brown's campaign manager, to help deliver the liberal vote to Brown in exchange for increased minority representation in appointive state positions; a formal apology to the Japanese for their internment; a state Fair Employment Practices Commission; and a pardon for "red light bandit" Caryl Chessman. Gov. Brown delivered on all but the pardon--in 1960, Chessman was executed (C. Jenkins, *Black Star News*, April 24, 2011).

Shedding light on her racial outlook, Lomax stated, in echoes of Zora Neale Hurston's assertion of not being "tragically colored" (1928, 1979), "I have no complexes...[I] took it [Black equality] for granted"...There's something crippling about Negro life which I escaped" (Tape 3).

A visit to Montgomery, Alabama, in 1956, to cover the city's ongoing bus boycott would change her life. Having raised the money for the trip by soliciting *Los Angeles Tribune* subscribers, Lomax left her family in Los Angeles for a week and stayed with the family of Martin Luther King, Jr., while writing a profile of the civil rights leader for her newspaper. From her stay came the King profile "Mother's Day in Montgomery: Boycott Leader Serves his Congregation Toynbee, Langston Hughes, Emerson, and Jesus Christ, and is Received in Complete Consanguinity" (*Los Angeles Tribune*, May 18, 1956)—in which she basically reproduced King's May 1956 Mother's Day sermon for readers--as well as a series of articles about the boycott.

Once back in Los Angeles, Lomax was irrevocably changed. She had a fervent desire to return to the South permanently to better cover the civil rights movement:

> I had been stirred by the Montgomery bus boycott as by no single event in Negro history. That was the year Autherine Lucy was stoned at the University of Alabama. That was the time of Emmitt Till, of... lynch and near-lynch victims in Mississippi.
>
> But none of these events stirred me like the story of thousands of Negroes 'walking in dignity' where they had ridden so long under abuse.
> It was as though a signal had been given and we had begun to rise ("Journey," 1961, p. 250).

But Lomax's husband did not agree with her proposed move south. She observed:

> Montgomery meant nothing to my husband. He hadn't heard the signal to rise...He didn't feel the emotion pulsing rhythmically under his skin.

> He could only say pedantically that it was all part of the 'struggle against man's inhumanity to man.' But he could not exult in the struggle. He was, in point of fact, one of its victims (p. 252).

She credited her husband's lack of enthusiasm for the Montgomery boycott, and also, perhaps, his refusal to act upon behalf of his people, for their subsequent divorce: "His usually bland eyes bore a look of reproach, and I read in them, 'Why are you putting us to all this inconvenience for a bunch of walking jokers?' It was at that moment that a divorce was begun" (p. 252).

In 1960, the *Los Angeles Tribune* ceased publication (M. Taylor, Pacific Media Workers Guild, April 8, 2011). Lomax then relocated with her children in 1961 to Tuskegee, Alabama, near Montgomery. Of her decision to move to Tuskegee, she explained:

> I chose it because, as an almost all-Negro community, it would soften the harsh realism of segregation for my children, who had been born, reared and schooled in the comparatively integrated atmosphere of Los Angeles. Further, it is a college town, and I reasoned that the ignorance which I know pervades the South, white and Negro, would be somewhat subdued there (1961, p. 249).

Lomax set out on the cross-country trip from Los Angeles to Tuskegee, Alabama, along with her six children, who ranged from teenager to tyke, in "a battered 1953 Lincoln" (p. 252). After breaking down near Blythe, California, the family continued their journey on a Greyhound bus via Texas--Lomax's birthplace. Stopping at a bus terminal in Big Spring, she and the children were confronted with segregated dining facilities—the first such experience for her children. Refusing to eat in the "Colored" area, Lomax instead went to the White dining section to be served. When the White waitress refused to serve the family, Lomax responded:

> 'We are interstate passengers, and you have no right to segregate us,' I said. "There is a Supreme Court ruling which says you haven't the right.'
>
> I was conscious that my children's eyes were on me. I had the feeling that I was speaking to them and for their futures, as well as in defense of our rights (p. 254).

Refusing to eat in the segregated facilities, and also rejecting any lesser service than that afforded to White bus passengers, the family reboarded the bus and continued on, without having eaten. Lomax admitted that she gave in and used the "Colored" dining facility in Dallas only after witnessing the obvious strain of the ordeal on one of the children, 16-year-old Michelle (p. 255). Using the segregated bus facilities for the duration of the trip, Lomax recalled:

> I realized, as I walked in and out of this Jim Crow facility and...was snubbed by a ticket agent on the white side of the information booth in Birmingham, that Jim Crow eroded my dignity not a whit. As a matter of fact, I never felt so dignified, nor spoke so proudly, nor held my head so high (p. 256).

Once in Tuskegee, Lomax found that local newspapers would not hire her, so she soon thereafter established the *Tuskegee Tribune* newspaper (which she later converted to a magazine and shortened its name to The Tribune), modeled as a sort of literary magazine featuring her short stories, which other publishers were rejecting (Tape 2). Not long after the move, Lomax became dissatisfied with the quality of the local school system. In a March 15, 1965, editorial published in *The Tribune*, she wrote of that time:

> Tuskegee was a revelation to us. It revealed ourselves to ourselves at long last. We found that it made a differ-

ence to us if somebody (just some BODY) stood with us when we stood up to the Superintendent of Schools for talking to the Negro parents as if he were a plantation overseer and for letting rats run around the Negro high school, and for there being a NEGRO high school anyway, and for crowding the children of a burned out Negro school while the 'public school' so called, which is to say the white school, stood all but empty because the white children had decamped from it to a private school with the token integration of 14 Negro children (p. 7).

Lomax also wrote about this incident in an essay, "The Burned Down School of Chehaw," for the January/February 1967 edition of *Crisis*:

> Tuskegee was at the time of the Chehaw [a suburb of Tuskegee] fire, and still is, in the throes of school integration. There were at the time 17 Negro students integrated into the 'Downtown School,' which is the euphemism in that mannered and quietly savage town for the previously white school.
>
> I had attended the PTA meeting where Superintendent Wilson talked about the Chehaw fire and described how because of it, he had been confronted with 'such-another' problem as only a 'Master Teacher' as he described himself could have solved, which was where to put the burned-out Negro pupils and teachers, the other Negro schools already being, he admitted, so full 'you can't see the schools for the pupils,' and I had heard him say that after due thought, he had decided, sagely, if he did say so himself, to put them in the halls and auditoriums of the Lewis Adams and Washington schools rather than 'risk public education in Macon County' by putting them in the all-but empty 'Downtown School.'
>
> Having been the sole audible dissenter to this solution and having in a high, unsteady, emotional voice which kept on making all kinds of weird changes in pitch—not from fear, I'm just a poor speaker—expressed myself as being unable to see why he didn't put the burned-out children and teachers in the almost-empty 'Downtown School,' it seemed fitting that I pursue my bold course and inspect the burned school for a follow-up story in the next edition of the [sic] *Tribune* (p. 21).

She continued in the essay, speaking of her children:

> I felt my uneasiness grow, for...wherever we had lived during my compulsive 'journeying to the beginning' of the Negro's experience in America, they [her children] had all suffered from the toilets of the Negro schools of the South, which are dirty and foul-smelling even when they are 'inside,' but what one would expect where there is usually just one janitor, paid a hundred dollars a month to clean up after more than a thousand pupils, besides taking care of the furnace, where there are furnaces (p. 33).

Besides her unhappiness with its schools, Lomax may also have become disillusioned with Tuskegee in general. She wrote later, in the same editorial:

> We found that we had overidealized Negroes and the simple life, as well. Just because the cause is noble doesn't mean they're all noblemen, even on the picket line; and Negroes in the South exploit

> Negroes, just as the white people do, and for the same reasons: to preserve the status quo, and to keep the poor poor and the rich rich; and Uncle Tom is not dead (p. 8).

Later, she also recalled, "I never had enough money to live properly there (Lomax, Oral History Project, Tape 2). However, her feelings about Alabama appeared to be mixed. In "In the Faraway Country of Montgomery, Alabama," published in the September 1968 issue of *Harper's Magazine*, which is labeled a "'story' by Almena Lomax" but in which she uses her children's real names (the piece reads much like an autobiographical essay), Lomax wrote:

> I'm crazy about Alabama. If it weren't for the schools, which...white or Negro, aren't fit to educate a cretin, I would never have left. And I'm going back someday. I don't know when. But my idea of heaven is to live in Eufaula, which is only sixty-two miles from Tuskegee, on the banks of the Chattahoochee River (p. 61).

Lomax was also critical of Tuskegee's Negro middle class. She asserted:

> This is why the evil endures. Negroes with drive and education, who might have courage if they were challenged to discover it, quickly learn the ways and means of removing themselves from what the masses face. They go North and move in an area circumscribed by the maximum of personal liberty for a Negro; or they drive a car rather than use segregated public transportation. They go by air, which traditionally has been unsegregated, and use their wits to avoid any segregated situation from which money cannot protect them.
>
> As here in Tuskegee, they send their teen-age children to New England to private schools.
>
> They do none of these things particularly in opposition to segregation—they do little to end it—but because segregation is personally humiliating to them (Lomax, "Journey," 1961, p. 256).

Decrying these practices in the face of continued racism, she insisted that, regardless of money or station, each Negro man and woman had an individual responsibility to pursue the freedom of the whole: "Negroes who lead, or can lead, who have any motivation at all toward bettering the world for mankind, need to go often into the teeth of Jim Crow and know it for its brutal, dehumanizing reality" (p. 256). She herself offered an example of this, in "moving to Dixie" and refusing to be bowed by racism along the way; in her refusal to "remove myself from the fate suffered by the majority of my race, by 'the brother'" (p. 256). However, after only six months in Tuskegee, she moved the family back to California.

Despite her move away from the region, Lomax continued to travel throughout the South, writing about the civil rights movement. In addition to *Nation*, *Crisis*, and *Harper's*, her freelance work was also published in *ADA World*, *Frontier*, and other publications during the mid to late 1960s. Also during this time, she founded and published *The Lomax Poll: A Journal of Negro Opinion*, a newsletter which was syndicated in numerous Black newspapers, and established her own political party.

Of her journey south and subsequent return to California, she stated, "I went down there [South], and I wanted to go back, and I still do. It's a great conflict to live in the West... It's a torn situation" (Tape 2). Her plan to move back to the South never materialized however.

Soon following her return to California, the *San Francisco Chronicle* hired Lomax as a copy editor, resulting in her being the first Black person to work on its city desk. But although she had finally achieved her long-held goal of working for a mainstream daily, Lomax's real desire was still to write. Thus, about a year after her hiring by

the *Chronicle*, she moved on to the *San Francisco Examiner* as a reporter, covering the Patty Hearst kidnapping, the Angela Y. Davis murder, kidnapping, and conspiracy trial, and other prominent stories of the late 1960s and early 1970s (*Los Angeles Sentinel*, April 7, 2011). Still active politically, she was appointed by California Governor Ronald Reagan to the State Coordinating Council of Higher Education.

After several unsuccessful attempts to land a reporting job there in the early 1970s, she sued the *Los Angeles Times* for employment discrimination; the company settled the suit in 1976 for an undisclosed sum.

Although she retired from daily journalism in 1976, Lomax remained a prolific writer throughout her life, amassing many letters to the editor to newspapers such as the *Los Angeles Times* and other Los Angeles-area publications, and correspondence with several prominent elected officials, including Attorney General Robert Kennedy, California Governor Ronald Reagan, and Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard Nixon (Lomax, correspondence, Almena Lomax papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University; R. F. Kennedy to Lomax, Sept. 1, 1966 and May 20, 1967; R. Reagan to Lomax, June 8, 1971, July 8, 1971, Aug. 13, 1971, June 15, 1972, July 25, 1972, Aug. 11, 1972, and Nov. 2, 1972; L. B. Johnson to Lomax April 9, 1968; R. M. Nixon to Lomax Feb. 4, 1974, April 9, 1976, and May 20, 1977).

Reflections on Lomax

In an interview for the documentary "The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords" (Nelson, 1999), the pioneering *Pittsburgh Courier* journalist Edna McKenzie spoke of her time at the *Los Angeles Tribune*: "I was a general assignment reporter, had to run all over Los Angeles and do all kinds of stories about music, about murders, about any kind of news... It was exciting. I had to come back and...the editor...Almena Lomax, was a very, very hard taskmaster...I worked all day...but I loved it" (McKenzie, 1999).

Notably, Michael Lomax states that filmmaker Stanley Nelson wanted to interview his mother for the "Soldiers Without Swords" documentary, "But she was so contrary and difficult" (M. Lomax, personal correspondence, July 3, 2012).

Leo Branton, Jr., a retired Los Angeles civil rights and entertainment attorney known broadly for serving on the legal defense team of Angela Y. Davis and for helping defend Los Angeles Communists during the "Red Trial" of 1952, among other notable proceedings, became acquainted with Lomax through his civil rights work (*Los Angeles Examiner*, 1952, Feb. 1; L. Branton, personal communication, March 13, 2013). He said Lomax, who gave him an award during the 1950s for his civil rights work, was a "great writer....She printed everything" (Branton, 2013). Interviewed by the Los Angeles Times on Lomax's death, he said, "She was a terrific writer...the only one of all the Black newspapers at the time who really was fearless about exposing things as they were. She didn't soft-pedal anything" (E. Woo, *Los Angeles Times*, April 1, 2011).

Michael Lomax states that his mother's political views evolved throughout her life, moving from decidedly radical during the *Tribune's* early years to a more conservative stance at middle age (M. Lomax, personal correspondence, July 3, 2012). "In the '30s and '40s, Mother was progressively left wing," with many Communist or Communist sympathizers as friends or associates (July 3, 2012). However, her outlook appeared to change during the late civil rights era. "The [Black] Panther period alienated her...I think she found the radical politics of the late '60s pretty hard to stomach," he notes. "She would castigate me for having a beard and looking like a Panther" (July 3, 2012).

Of his mother's life and career, Michael Lomax further notes, "She was challenging as hell...She broke a lot of rules...as a parent, as a woman, as a journalist" (July 3, 2012). "She pissed off everybody in Los Angeles...She just told it the way she saw it" (July 3, 2012). Comparing her to conservative Black journalist George S. Schuyler, Michael Lomax states his mother was "full of contradictions...She was iconoclastic,

satirical, ironic" (July 3, 2012). Lomax died March 25, 2011 at age 95.

Discussion and Conclusion

Lomax, as illustrated by her writings and civil rights activism, is a descendant of such bold, brave Black female journalist-activists as Maria W. Stewart, Mary Ann Shadd Cary, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and others who exemplified these traits. Much as these 19th century women, as racial reformers, fought for the abolition of slavery and lynching, and sought equal citizenship for all Americans via the vote and other means, so did mid-20th century Negro women journalists and activists, such as Almena Davis Lomax, continue the fight for the advancement of their people. Though just one Negro woman newspaper publisher and journalist of the postwar/civil rights era, her career and contributions may nevertheless be indicative of that of other such women journalists of the period. More biographical and other studies of postwar/Civil Rights era Negro women publishers and journalists would enhance our understanding of race, gender, and journalism.

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Africa for Christ: The African Methodist Episcopal Church's Rhetoric of Heathenism

Allezo Owens

I. Introduction

> ALMIGHTY Jesu, change proud Japheth's heart-
> Make him to know that Thou a Brother art
> To Shem and Ham, the Yellow and the Black.
> From him Thy throne's great face O hold not back.
>
> Almighty Jesu, stay proud Japheth's hand-
> Upraised and dominant in ev'ry land
> He goes-but not for love of Thee and God.
> In pride he scorns to kiss Messiah's rod.
>
> Almighty Jesu, Thou of Shemite blood,
> Remember, O remember Shem, for good;
> Thou Priest, like to Melchizedek, who came
> Of Ham, remember, O remember Ham. [1]

The above epigraphical poem, penned by Bishop Benjamin Tucker Tanner of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC), alludes to an important question regarding the status of African humanity vis-à-vis the Christian story,[2] "what is the nature and destiny of African humanity?" This overarching question leads to other important issues regarding the placement of African descended people into the Christian story: Does African humanity occupy a coequal status with others, or does it exist on a sub-stratum of human being-ness? According to the practices of early American evangelical Christianity, African humanity was indeed considered a specific kind of phenomena; it existed solely for the purpose of being the drawer of water and the hewer of wood. Inferior African humanity existed to be enslaved by a superior representation of humanity. Even if some of the so-called superior race felt that enslavement was anathema, they still entertained the idea of African inferiority. There were many reasons for this attitude: social, political and ideological. However, for the purposes of this paper, there was also a certain theological and historical stance that rendered African humanity inferior. According to this stance, African humanity suffered the ignominy of being doubly condemned. Like all humans, African humanity fell from edenic blessedness as a result of Adam's sin. However, unlike others, African humanity also experienced a second fall from grace through the mythic story of Ham and his progeny.

Per this mindset, African humanity descended from Ham. Ham and his son Canaan, cursed by Noah, became the forebears of those who, throughout history, would be the eternal servants of Japheth and Shem, the brothers of Ham. Perhaps Augustine of Hippo engendered this mindset when he wrote of Noah's middle son, Ham:

> ...Noah commended his sons Shem and Japheth in his prophetic blessing; for he knew and foresaw what was to happen far in the future. Hence it was also that he cursed his middle son...the name Ham means 'hot'; and Noah's middle son, separating himself, as it were, from the other two, and remaining between them, is included neither in the first fruits of Israel nor in the fullness of the Gentiles... It is for this reason that Ham was cursed in the person of his son: in his fruit, as it were; that is, in his works. Hence, it is fitting that his son's name, Canaan, should

> mean 'their motion;' for what else does this mean but 'their works?' Shem and Japheth, on the other hand, represent the circumcision and the uncircumcision, or, in other words the Jews and the Greeks...The wicked brother, however, in the person of his son—that is, in his works—is the servant, that is, the slave, of the good brothers. And what this means is that the good are to make intentional use of the wicked, to train themselves in patience or to increase their own wisdom. [3]

Augustine does not racially classify the wicked brother or his descendants, however; he and others of his era posited that Ham's descendants can primarily be found on the African continent. He further made the claim that these descendants would be the slaves of Shem and Japheth in perpetuity. The nineteenth century American evangelical, following the theological argument of Augustine, fleshed out racial classifications for Ham, his progeny and those of Shem and Japheth. They did so by using what I refer to as the language of evangelical anthropology.

Steeped in an ethos of religious fervor, the evangelical of the Nineteenth Century viewed humanity as utterly depraved, so enthralled to sin that its every effort at self-fulfillment is destined to fail. Building upon the anthropology of earlier theologians that posited the sinful nature of humanity, Nineteenth Century evangelicals further held that a heart-felt, emotive conversion to belief in Jesus Christ as the unique Son of God was the primary assurance of freedom from depravity. For the evangelical, Jesus was not some abstract deliverer to be found in the pomp and circumstance of esoteric liturgy. Rather, Jesus personally manifested himself to the true believer as savior. More often than not, reason hindered true knowledge of Jesus; one had to know Jesus in a personal, emotive manner. Knowing Jesus meant accepting Jesus' atonement, that is, his dying on the cross for the sins of humanity. If one accepted Jesus as savior, then one had a right to be called a child of God; without acceptance of Jesus atonement, one was destined to perdition.

Acknowledging Jesus' atonement often led to the crucible of conversion, a process wherein one was faced with the depravity of his or her human condition, a depravity that could only be removed by the atoning work of Jesus Christ. As part of the process of conversion, one became intensely aware of the stain of sin and of the necessity of having the stain washed away. The awareness of sin led to feelings of anxiety because of the condemnation one felt as a sinner, a condemnation justly deserved. Only an unconditional surrender to God's will by acceptance of Jesus as savior was necessary. The conversion experience, sometimes referred to as a new birth, meant that one was washed in the blood of Jesus, the crucified lamb, becoming a new creature, a radically changed individual.

The changed individual expressed the newness of conversion in an intense recognition of salvation, and as many more entered into new existences as children of God, they began to form ecclesial communities that adhered to a pattern of making new converts. The quality of a minister's preaching and the lifestyles of those affiliated with evangelical churches were key determinants in whether converts entered the Christian household. If the minister lacked the necessary fervor to convince a recalcitrant sinner of damnation or if the Christian community led a life no different than the reprobate, then there was little likelihood that the sinner would come to Christ..

Many protestant denominations of the Nineteenth Century, in an effort to win as many souls to Christ as possible, espoused evangelical anthropology. One of the leading espousers of evangelical anthropology was the Methodists. Initially, they led the way in bringing many to the cross of Christ so that they could experience the highly emotive assurance of salvation through the conversion process. From the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, to the many itinerant clergy and lay preachers of Methodist camp meetings, the idea of the depravity of

humanity was firmly established.

Yet, when it came to the Africans in their midst, the Methodists and other white evangelical denominations took the additional step of arguing that the Africans were not only depraved like other humans, as Ham's descendants they also suffered the additional burden of being cursed by God. By using explicit racial categorizations, the white evangelical argued that the African was either of an inferior species or that, if human, not fully so and of lesser stock than other humans. Initially, this meant that there was no need to convert the African. Secondarily, even after the white evangelical undertook conversion efforts, they still viewed the African converts as inferior beings.

Richard Allen, one of the founding members of the AMEC, came to his religious sensibilities during this heightened period of American evangelicalism, at once accepting the evangelical message of Christian conversion, and yet, having to grapple with the negative attitude of his white evangelical brothers and sisters. He relied upon the simplicity of the Methodist gospel message to convert other Africans to Christianity; he believed in and espoused the tenets of evangelical anthropology.

However, Allen and his followers had the additional burden of defining themselves as children of Ham, people who, as intimated by Augustine, would perpetually be the slaves of Shem and Japheth. The idea that African Americans descended from Ham permeated the world of nineteenth century America, evangelical and non-evangelical, north and south, black and white. It also provided a ready tool to impose a different anthropology upon the African. On the one hand, the Hamitic myth allowed the African to claim a connection to God's creative and redemptive works; Ham was a beneficiary to the reestablished covenant God entered into with Noah. He, along with his brothers and their respective wives were to repopulate the newly cleansed earth.

On the other hand, Ham's story also allowed some white Americas to claim that the Africans experienced a second fall from grace, a fall that did not affect Noah's other two sons. This alleged second fall from grace led the nineteenth century evangelical to use the rhetoric of heathenism as it pertained to others in general, and to the African specifically. The heathen could best be defined negatively: The heathen was neither Christian, civilized, nor a part of God's household. The further one was from the ideal status of Christian, civilized and a part of God's household, the closer one was to the perdition. The white evangelicals viewed themselves as normative, the standard by which all Christians were to be judged. However, based upon their rhetoric of heathenism, they viewed the Africans as furthest from the norm: God had abandoned the Africans because they were degenerate sons and daughters of Ham.

The AMEC thus struggled with its own historical anthropology. As children of Methodism, it wholeheartedly adhered to the evangelical idea that all of humanity had fallen from grace and needed salvation. As a body that came into existence in an era that posited the African as heathen, it also had to confront the notion that Ham's descendants could never become a part of God's household because of the prevailing evangelical anthropology. Being children of Methodism and children of Ham put the AMEC in a paradoxical position. Like all other nineteenth century American evangelicals, the AMEC evangelical believed that if one confessed with the mouth and believed in the heart that Jesus is Lord, then one would be saved, residing as adopted children in God's household.

However, the AMEC could not escape the zeitgeist of the era: As children of Ham, the Africans were doomed in perpetuity to remain outside of God's household. Thus, the AMEC, as an evangelical American engendered church body, had the difficult task of fervently arguing for the inclusion of Ham's descendents into God's household while at the same time confronting the negative idea that Ham's descendants are doomed to experience perpetual servitude and damnation. These dual foci caused the AMEC to engage in its own evangelical anthropology, an anthropology that paradoxically

engaged the African as heathen.

This perhaps can be seen in no better venue than on the continent of Africa. The AMEC, along with other evangelical church bodies, viewed Africa as a huge mission field, one wherein the cross of Christ could be planted to reap a rich harvest of civilized Christians. Beginning in earnest in the mid-nineteenth century, it began to send missionaries to the African continent, and increasing its efforts throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The AMEC documented its missionary efforts in The Voice of Mission (VOM), a missionary journal spearheaded by Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, an outspoken proponent of African independence.

The VOM contained letters, commentaries, and other correspondence that preserved countervailing attitudes about the African. As shown by contributions to the VOM, the AMEC maintained that the African, once proud children of Ham, had devolved into worshipers of rock and stone. If not a complete savage, the African was at least uncivilized and uncouth, led astray by demonic forces into ignorance of the one true God. The correspondence in the VOM, in an unsystematic manner, covered a wide range of disparate understandings of Africa and Africans. However, within this paper, I will lay out three broad categories that influenced the anthropological view that the nineteenth century AMEC had of Africans on the continent. These categories are the: 1) African as heathen; 2) AMEC missionary activity; and 3) AMEC emigration efforts.

As already alluded, the AMEC viewed the African as heathen, separated from God because of the unpardonable sin of their progenitor, Ham. In order to save the Africans from their heathenish ways, the AMEC also endeavored to send a steady stream of missionaries to Africa, taking the Christian message to its lost brothers and sisters. Concomitantly with mission work, the AMEC argued that well trained, purposeful missionaries should emigrate to Africa, providing a critical mass of civilized Christians that would lay the groundwork for Africa's redemption.

II. AFRICAN AS HEATHEN

The first issue of the VOM appeared in January of 1893, as a reporting mechanism of the missionary activities of the AMEC. During this time in America the Southern states and foreign lands were all comparably viewed as potential arenas in which the gospel message could be spread. As a result, the AMEC looked to the Southern states and the African continent as prime mission fields to spread Christianity.

As it relates to Africa, W.B. Derrick, Secretary of the Office of Home and Foreign Missionary Society, stated that a "whole continent [needs] to be redeemed from heathen night and be made to see the glorious gospel." In his view, only the gospel of Christ could save and redeem. He stated if AME missionaries go to Africa the "Son of Righteousness" will go with them, rising "with healing in his wing," thus saving "a nation from eternal death." Derrick informed his AME compatriots that the heathens of Africa cry out for the redemptive gospel of Jesus Christ. He asked them to:

> consider the pressing call of a large mission field, consider the fond and affecting cries of the destitute [African] crying aloud, 'Send us the bread of eternal life. Come and tell us about the Lamb that was slain. Come and tell us about Him who came to make men free from bondage of sin and death. Come and tell us about Him who invites all to come and drink of the water of life'. [4]

Missionaries from the AMEC heeded the call of Derrick, wanting to ensure that their African kin were exposed to the redemptive qualities of the gospel, thus saving Africans from their heathen practices. AME missionaries did not give a formal definition of what it meant to be a heathen, however; they did espouse the idea that the heathen had no real knowledge of the one true God. As pointed out by Sylvester Johnson, most felt that heathenism was synonymous with not having faith in the Christian God. A heathen rejected the

one true God, and as a result of the rejection, God despised them and issued a divine decree that they could not be God's people. The mythic idea of Ham formed the basis for the heathenist anthropology. Operating out of the prevailing idea that all Africans descended from Ham, Johnson argues that:

> ...black Christians who gazed back upon the land of their origin—the Dark Continent—beheld an abode of heathens whose existence was delimited by a lack of civilization and culture. These Africans were depraved...because they had forsaken God. [5]

In an appeal for the AMEC to assist in Africa's redemption, an unnamed author wrote in an 1897 VOM letter that the AMEC can "break the bands of superstitions, chains of ignorance," and "dispel the black clouds of idolatry, [and] to overturn the temples of pernicious polygamy." He went on to say that, as a result of its efforts, the AMEC would bring illumination to the "inhabitants of that despised, forsaken, outraged and neglected land with the light that streams from Bethlehem's manger..." [6]

Also echoing the need for the AMEC to play its part in the redemption of the land, Carrie Belle Lee, while delivering an address at Wilberforce University in 1899, told the assembled guests that certain parts of Africa toiled in darkness; there were some indigenous Africans who had never been "brightened by the dawn of civilization or even possessed of the slightest idea of the weighty import of that word." They were a people that had no knowledge of Jesus or any idea what heaven looked like. Lee goes on to say that when the AMEC looks to its ancestral home it would:

> ...behold an uncouth, rugged child, with no kind, gentle parent to train her in the path of righteousness, no talented teachers to cultivate her mind; we behold her, still in her youth, a barbarous piece of humanity, speaking an old language and as wild as the beasts that made their abode there, not having a vague conception of the existence of her fellow creatures. [7]

Lee equated the heathen Africans with the fauna of the land; presumably these people used a language that lacked any intelligibility, thus giving credence to the notion that they were a godless, "barbarous piece of humanity".

Other members of the AMEC expressed the same anthropological view of the African as Lee, many in the guise of exhorting AMEC missionaries to redeem the African continent. However, one must ask what was the result of this mindset on continental Africans? Did continental Africans view themselves in the same manner as members of the AMEC? Not all Africans denuded themselves of their Africanness, those things that made the AMEC and other missionaries to Africa to proclaim their godlessness. Yet, other Africans did accept and believe the pronouncements of AMEC missionaries.

The Reverend James M. Dwane, a native South African who later became Superintendent of the South African mission work, wrote of his conversion from heathenism to Christianity. He noted how lost he and his village were in their practices of heathenism:

> Both my parents were heathens...I was brought up a heathen boy at a heathen kraal...We had no ministers, no teachers, no schools, and no one to tell us that under us are the everlasting arms of one that sticketh closer than a brother, even Jesus. No, the condition of our kraal was a deplorable one. We were simply enveloped in ignorance and darkness. [8]

A white missionary soon came to their kraal, a word signifying a South African village or a pen that holds livestock, and spoke of the necessity of knowing Christ as savior. Dwane's mother went to hear the white missionary and upon her return home, she

told the family that the white missionary indicated that a "great God who inhabits the heavens and is the maker and keeper of all," and that all people are sinners before him who must be "converted and accept His son [or] be punished eternally." [9]

Upon hearing these words, Dwane felt restless and sensed that "things were not straight between me and the great God." He stated that,

> Days and nights rolled on, but there was no improvement in the state of my mind. Another thing which proved to be a trouble and hindrance in my way was the Kaffir word 'Ukuggoboka,' used for conversion. The white teacher said we were to be converted in order to please God, but the spiritual meaning of the word conversion was unknown in those days. Ukuggoboka literally meant cutting open or piercing through a cloth or any hard substance with a sharp instrument such as knife or assigai. Some of the people who had heard the white teacher said that our chests were to be operated upon in this way, and then God would be pleased and accept us. However, the idea of undergoing such a painful operation did not recommend itself to my mind. I dreaded it very much. It seemed to me an awful thing. I looked round in the kraal for an assistance. I needed someone to guide and show me the way, but there was none to be found in the whole village as the people were all heathens and Christianity had not been introduced. [10]

Dwane's village could not help in the process of escaping heathenism; they themselves were hopelessly lost because Christianity had not come to them and, in their ignorance, misinformed Dwane on what it meant to be a Christian. As a result of his intensely felt desire to know the great God in heaven, Dwane traveled to the home of white Methodist missionaries in Queenstown, Cape Colony to get a better understanding of what it meant to escape heathenism and to become a civilized Christian. Under the tutelage of the white missionaries, Dwane converted to Christianity, became ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church and thanked the missionaries for helping him find God through Jesus Christ. Dwane concluded that,

> During the course of my ministry I have seen great revivals of the work of God among the heathens. The great object of my life is to do good, to spend and be spent in uplifting the people of this land, in making known to my countrymen the truth as it is in Jesus. This I am determined to do, God being my helper. [11]

Similarly to Dwane, E. Mayfield Boyle, a native of Sierra Leone, wrote of the superstition that was prevalent in the land and how it hindered the redemption of the continent. The people were superstitious because they "know not the true God to place their confidence." Although some in the land displayed a semblance of civilization, many more heathens "dwell in ignorance and superstition," and these made "converts of those whose faith in Christ is not implicit." Boyle claimed that it is incumbent upon the AMEC to reclaim these lost people: "the sons and daughters of Africa must feel it their duty to heed the call...and pledge themselves for any fate [until] the mission of Christ is fulfilled." [12]

According to Boyle, Dwane, Lee and others, the mission of Christ was nothing less than the total redemption of Africa; that is, engaging in the process of ridding Africans of their heathenism, converting Africans to Christianity and putting them on the path of civilization.

Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, the driving force behind the VOM and African missionary work, stated that, "[t]he King of Heaven and Earth has given to Christian people permission to go or send down into his mines of

Africa...and gather as many precious souls as we can."[13] H.B. Parks, Missionary Secretary of the AMEC, went further by stating that it was the burden of the "American Negro" to redeem the African continent. He challenged the members of the AMEC to "put their hand to the plow," because "[t]wo hundred million Negroes, natives of Africa, will within the next ten years, be brought face to face with civilization." [14]

Parks further compared Africans to Native Americans who, when faced with a superior, civilized force, had either to become civilized, or face the annihilation that their heathenism brought on them:

> The native stands in the same position the American Indian held a hundred years ago. Civilization may mean either enlightenment and a happier condition, or it may mean rain. He must either fall in step and learn to march with the advancing army or must inevitably be trodden under. If he resists, he will be exterminated. If he takes to whisky and miscellaneous vice, he will meet the fate of the American Indian. [15]

Not wanting the fate of one group of heathens, the Native Americans, to fall upon his heathen brothers and sisters of Africa, Parks called upon the "Negro of the United States" to take up the burden of African redemption, a burden that could only be righteously undertaken by them and not white missionaries. The burden belonged to the American Negro because "you are the only one fitted to bear it," because it is "your first great chance to show your strength and worth in the eye of the world." Finally, the burden belonged to the American Negro because the African is:

> your kith and kin, and, savage though he may be, he has the strength and manhood and nobility that should make you proud to call him brother...You can understand his nature and he can understand you. It is the spiritual love of the Missionary, but the sympathy of blood—the actual physical sympathy that appeals to the man of nature before he can even grasp the idea of spiritual love. [16]

According to Parks, not only would the autochthons of Africa enjoy a present benefit from the missionary endeavors of the American Negro; it would also adumbrate the future glory of the American Negro because "the great world of civilized powers" would see the success of missionary work. He asked,

> Can you see the immense credit that will reflect upon the American Negro when the world is forced to recognize the success of the movement? Is the race spirit strong enough in you? Have you who dream of the future of the race, force and energy enough to join your fellows for a long pull, and a strong pull and a pull all together? [17]

Parks made clear in his editorial that no one can redeem Africa except the American Negro; it is a burden that the American Negro must accept. To not do so means leaving the Christianization and civilization of the African to others, primarily white missionaries who may not have the best interest of the Africans at heart. However, Christianization and civilization are both inevitable because "Africa is the world's new field, to the development of which all nations are giving attention..."It would be best if the African is shown the path out of heathenism and experience the accoutrements of Christianity and civilization from the hands of those who are related by blood and "race sympathy."[18] As a result of the call of Henry McNeal Turner, H.B. Parks, others in the AMEC, and native Africans, the AMEC undertook the task of bringing the heathen African to Christianity, thus raising the African to a higher status of humanity, resulting in the African becoming a fledging member of God's household.

The AMEC did this primarily by engaging in missionary work and in calling for emigration of Christian Negroes to Africa.

III. AMEC MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

Founded on the evangelical principles of the nineteenth century, the AMEC believed wholeheartedly in the call to spread the gospel abroad. Like the Methodist Episcopal Church, from which it hailed, the AMEC undertook the task of sending forth missionaries to teach and preach a salvific gospel to heathen peoples and nations. As has been noted, when it came to the African continent, members of the AMEC felt there was no group better suited to save the heathen African than the AMEC.

Rev. J.J. Coker called upon the AMEC to provide men, tools and resources to build successful mission stations on the continent. He urged "every true-hearted Christian to think of the African mission work, that we are among heathens and seek more for their souls," and implored them to look and support Africa, so that all would know "the value of our people on the other side." [19]

The "more for their souls" to which Coker alluded was apparently more than mere salvation. He felt that salvation meant nothing if it did not also lead to a concomitant change in heathenist status for the African. Alexander Crummell, a contemporary of Coker argued that Christianity should not only offer salvation:

> The aim of Christianity is to lift men up. It avails itself everywhere under right conditions of all providential appliances for this uplifting of degraded humanity. Civilization is one of the grandest of God's gifts to man. And hence the adjunct of civilization is the needed factor to be added to the process of evangelization in a heathen community. It is only by this process that the grand transition can be made from the rudeness of barbarism. [20]

The uplift of the race prevailed as a motif in the theological thought of churches like the AMEC. Echoing Crummell, members of the AMEC deemed that a necessary consequence of missionary work to heathen Africa would be the uplifting of Africans from their degraded status as heathens, thus realizing their full potential as members of God's household. Henry McNeal Turner even suggested that God providentially allowed the enslavement of the American Negro so that the newly Christianized Negro could spread the good news to native Africans. He believed that the "Negro was brought to this country in the providence of God to a heaven-permitted if not a divine-sanctioned manual laboring school, that the Negro might have direct contact with the mightiest race that ever trod the face of the globe." [21] Exposure to the mightiest race meant that the Africans brought to America received the double boon of Christianity and civilization, a double boon that could in turn be later passed on to native Africans:

> The heathen African...eagerly yearn for that civilization which they believe will elevate them and make them potential for good. The African was not sent to and brought to this country by chance, or by avarice of the white man, single and alone. The white slave purchaser went to the shores of that continent and bought our ancestors from their African masters. The bulk who were brought to this country were the children of parents who had been in slavery a thousand years...Thus the superior African sent us, and the white man brought us, and we remained in slavery as long as it was necessary to learn that God, who is spirit, made the world and controls it, and that that Supreme being could be sought and found by the exercise of faith in His only begotten Son...I believe that the Negroid race has been free long enough

now to begin to think for himself and plan for better conditions than he can lay claim to in this country or ever will. [22]

In several statements found in the VOM, Turner reiterated his opinion about God's providential design of the Africans. At one time he stated that "[f]or many years...I have believed that the enslavement of the black man in America...was tolerated in the providence of God for his Christianization and intellectual and moral development."[23] Presaging his more developed arguments for emigration, Turner claimed that

> it was the purpose of God in permitting the negro to be brought to this country; slavery was simply a manual laboring school, and the negro is now in his senior year in the exercise of his locomotive freedom, and just as fast as he graduates and secures the diploma of self-reliance he ought to start back to Africa. [24]

By going back to Africa, not only as emigrants, but also as missionaries, the AMEC would greatly benefit its African brothers and sisters. He proclaimed that there "are no heathen upon the face of the globe who are more anxious for the gospel and more susceptible of its provisions and virtues than the heathen African," and no other Christian denomination was better suited than the AMEC to take the Christian, civilizing message to the Africans because "Africa is prefixed to its title, and there are no people upon the earth devoid of the gospel, who desire it as much as the heathen African—not so much for its moralizing virtue, as for the idea...that Christianity enlightens and elevates mankind." [25]

Many others besides Turner called for AMEC missionaries to go to Africa with the civilizing message of Christianity; most proclaimed that Africa was for Christ, a grand mission field awaiting its sons and daughters to return with the good news. Annie Weeks, in a poem read at Bethel AME in Little Rock, Arkansas, which became the battle cry of AMEC missionaries, called upon the soldiers of the cross to take up the banner of Christ and travel to Africa and conquer the land. Reminiscent of the soldiers who fought in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, the Negro armies of Christ should bravely go to a strange and dark land and, though they may die, save the Africans from heathenist destruction. She wrote:

> When battle bugle blast was heard,
> Calling the soldiers into war,
> They did respond without delay,
> Those marshaled millions. O, what for
>
> Why did they leave their families,
> Their homes—the scene of sweet childhood—
> And march out on the battlefield
> To die, mid scenes of strife and blood?
>
> O how they fought at Lexington, at Baltimore,
> At Bunker Hill, at Valley Forge, at Gettysburg,
> Bleeding, dying, but conquering still
>
> Half fed, half clothed, on snow-clad hills,
> They battled hand to hand with death,
> Right up before the cannon's mouth,
> Till blown off by the cannon's breath.
>
> What for? That nations then unborn
> Might claim America with pride,
> And sing, 'My country tis of thee—
> Land where our father's bled and died.
>
> If common soldiers battled thus
> For unborn nations yet to be;
> O, Christ, the soldiers of the

cross
Will conquer Africa for thee.

God called a woman on the field.
She heard the call and it sufficed
Hark! She is sounding o'er the field
The war cry: "Africa for Christ." [26]

Africa for Christ became the battle cry for AMEC missionaries, men and women alike. In fact, with religious fervor, Weeks clearly stated that women will lead the way in establishing Christian missions in Africa. Although male pastors would go, the task could not be accomplished without women who were willing to sacrifice, taking the "blood stained banner" of Christ to heathen Africa with a victorious shout of "Africa is for Christ." Not to be undone by the patriarchy of the era, Weeks furthered stated:

However frail woman may be,
She's borne the strife so well, so long.
That God speaks down the round of time ,
"The battle is not to the strong."

Hark! Hear the bugle blast proclaim,
"Victory awaits the woman's hand
All avenues are open now,
Go through them and possess the land."

You Christian woman long have sung,
"O, let me go, I cannot stay."
Go now, to darkest Africa,
And put the battle in array. [27]

With women leading the way and given the task of saving a "benighted," destitute Africa, the heathens could not help but to succumb to the superior forces of AMEC missionaries who wield Jehovah's power. Weeks concluded her poem with triumphal zeal by proclaiming that:

The banner of the prince of peace
By missionaries' hands adorned,
Shall float in triumph o'er the heads
Of mighty millions unborn...

And shall we disregard his voice
Who purchased us with blood unpriced?
No. Whatever the cost may be,
We shall save "Africa for Christ." [28]

A later editorial appearing in the VOM, relying upon the idea that Africa is for Christ, chastised those within in the AMEC who would not support mission work to the continent. The editorial begins by stating that "[n]o man possessed of the least degree of feeling or compassion for the human race can deny the necessity and utility of Christian missions," because most of the world, especially Africa, "is enveloped in grossest darkness, bound with the chains of savage barbarity and immersed in the awful chaos of brutal ignorance...." This gross darkness called for and required men and women who would take the light of Christianity into its midst and dispel the heathenist ignorance it caused. The editorial stated that "[t]his age demands action among the sons of Ham and the A.M.E. church...We must rise up and do our part towards the restoration of the black sons of Africa...." [29]

One of the black sons of Africa delineated the differences between Africa prior to the advent of Christian missions and Africa after Christian missionaries came to the continent. Rev. Mark Christian Hayford, a native Ghanaian, in a lecture before an audience at the YMCA in London, gave a synopsis of Christian mission work in Africa. He asked, "what was the condition of the natives before the introduction of Christianity among them?" Just as the missionaries had a jaundiced view of the Africans, Hayford also stated that the Africans "were pagans and idolaters who worshipped

> ...natural objects which inspired fear or veneration. The sea, the swift running stream falling over some rocky precipices and forming a beautiful cascade or a sublime cataract, the calm pool or placid lake, reflecting on its surface the magnificence of the heavens, or the beauties of lower nature; the wooden grove, awe-inspiring and majestic, or the individual tree with over-spreading bowers, mighty and storm-defying, the black rock, capable, in a sense, of telling the story of the ages—these they bowed the knee to and revered. Then they worshipped the spirits of the departed, and the wooden images or jujus which their priest consecrated for their worship, and in which the spirits of the dead were supposed to reside. [30]

Even beyond the natural objects or the spirits of dead ancestors that the Africans worshipped, there existed some "great nebulous" entity in the sky. Hayford referred to it as nebulous because the Africans' "conception of the Creator were unguided by Divine inspiration or revelation;" they believed this nebulous thing caused their existence and could, with its very breath, "extinguish their life." However, this sky being had no personal relationship with its creation; priests stood between the native and their nebulous God and "interposed...human and diabolical agencies" he blamed for their current condition.

After he recounted the conditions of the heathen prior to the introduction of Christianity, Hayford then extolled the results of Christianity's presence:

> Idolatry with fetish or juju worship is now very largely a thing of the past in many places...In the Gold Coast colony alone, which may be said to fairly represent other parts of West Africa in this matter, there are more than 40,000 adherents to Christianity and fully that number, or more, who habitually attend Divine services, and are, if not professing Christians, neither pagan in their practices, so that we have at least 80,000 under the immediate influence of the Gospel. [31]

Thanks to the civilizing influence of Christianity, "destruction of human life, upon grounds of pagan sacrifice" ceased and "heathenish superstitions have very largely come to an end". Hayford was thankful for the presence of Christian missions in Africa. However, for the AMEC, mission stations insufficiently provided a mechanism of insuring that the Africans would rise up to be full, free human beings who had a right to be in God's household. The AMEC also proclaimed that its members should emigrate to Africa. Emigration, along with missionary activity, would provide the necessary critical mass of Christian Negroes on the continent to save the African heathens from utter destruction.

IV. AMEC Emigration Efforts

The VOM, ostensibly a tool to aide the AMEC in spreading the Christian gospel to heathens in the South and foreign lands, also served as a mechanism for promoting African emigration. Spearheaded by Bishop Turner, the VOM in its inaugural issue alluded to its dual foci; W. H. Butler, chairman of the Committee on Missions, reminded his colleagues in the AMEC that "of all departmental work in the church, that of missions, home and foreign, must ever hold the foremost place in our legislation."[32] According to Butler, missions should be foremost on the AMEC agenda because under the leadership of Turner, Africa has become a "practicable" sight for missionary activity; Because of Turner's "holy ardor" and indefatigable efforts, "the banner of African Methodism floats over a band of heroic missionary...workers," such that more mission stations in Africa "have been added to the galaxy of annual conferences." [33]

As these mission stations were added to the galaxy of annual conferences the sentiment began to coalesce around the idea that permanent Negro residents should reside in Africa, not only to run the mission stations, but also to serve as models of Christian civilization for the heathen. Africa needed intelligent African-American Christians to remain on the continent to ensure civilization. In what Sylvester Johnson called Ethiopianism, a concept that pervaded the minds of many African-American Christians, the AMEC used Ethiopia as a trope to designate both the past glory of Africa and its present degradation. Believing that "Africa was lost in spiritual darkness and that Africans had become uncivilized and backward because they did not worship the God of Christianity,"[34] AMEC missionaries engaged in intense efforts to uplift, or civilize the autochthons of Africa. According to Johnson, the rhetoric of Ethiopianism played a central role in the civilization process:

> Ethiopianism comprised a body of jeremiads contingent upon the conception that God, as revealed in the religion of Christianity, had effected through colonization and slavery the Christianization of black people...'authenticated' by...Psalm 68:31...Ethiopia was the icon of continental Africans and Diasporan blacks. And God had orchestrated the events of history to ensure that this people would be swept by the revelation of Christianity. [35]

An AMEC example of Ethiopianism was Rev. A.H. Hill who stated that [h]istorians have written of the rise and fall of different nations. Amongst the nations that have risen and fallen, none are more conspicuous than the Roman and Ethiopian nations."[36] Of Ethiopia, he stated that it "once towered in all splendor of ancient civilizations," but its splendor was soon tarnished by heathenism. Once tarnished, it became subject to "ignorance and its consequences, and finally lost its identity as a nation in American slavery. God suffered this nation to be then arranged in order to work out for it a certain destiny (Emphasis mine)." According to Hill, God providentially allowed Ethiopia to be brought under the tutelage of a civilized Christian nation. It was "being taught the things that would in the future merit its birth as a nation." [37]

Hill then wrote of how the emancipation and the penning of the 13th-15th amendments to the U.S. Constitution laid the groundwork for the restoration of the Ethiopian nation; these events were all God ordained. Yet, he felt that the prejudice of the white race, as evidenced by Plessy vs. Ferguson,[38] a Supreme Court case that gave de jure justification for the separate and unequal segregation of the races, thwarted the advancement of this nation in the U.S. He concluded that this nation needed a place other than the U.S. that would provide space for its advancement:

> It is a nation by birth, and only needs some field in which to labor. What demonstrates its ability to govern better than the A.M.E Church? Her very existence is due to the fact that Allen and others felt that they were capable of self-government. That spirit has been given new impulse until it has become the very soul's work of such leaders as Bishop Turner. The A.M.E. Church with her able and well managed departments, is a living fact illustrating the possibility of this new-born nation. The A.M.E. Church is the only Negro movement on this side of the ocean. She revolves in her own circle, feeds from her own springs...I see no field so inviting to this new-born nation as Africa. [39]

As shown by Johnson, Hill conflated Ethiopia with all of Africa, particularly West Africa. Ethiopia once sat upon the world's stage as a great empire. But, according to Hill, unexplained heathenism caused Ethiopia to devolve into a state whereby its people had to be enslaved to reintroduce them to

Christian civilization. The AMEC represents the culmination of this reclamation process. The AMEC, as representative of the revitalized, Christianized and civilized Ethiopian empire, was well suited to return to the native land and save it.

Alfred Lee Ridgel, a contemporary of Hill in the AMEC, took it upon himself not only to become a missionary, but also an African emigrant. A former pastor of an AME congregation in Newport, Arkansas, Ridgel relinquished his pastorate, raised funds, and set sail for Africa as a missionary. Ridgel spent three months traveling throughout the AMEC connection raising funds for his eventual journey to Liberia. Beginning in Tennessee, Ridgel traveled through Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Washington, D.C. Maryland, and New York, before boarding a liner to Liberia.

After his self-described arduous trek to Liberia, Ridgel arrived in Freetown, Sierra Leone on April 4, 1893. Upon setting foot on African soil, he declared,

> When I look back over the immense journey, fraught with dangers on every hand; when I remember how sinful and worthless I have been compared with others of God's servants, and then find myself here on the shores of our fatherland with health and strength, trying to preach the gospel to my dear kinsman, who are bound by the strong cords of heathenism, I can but exclaim in the language of the Psalmist: "Praise the Lord, O, my soul, and forget not all His benefits." I here...reconsecrate myself to my Saviour and His great work. [40]

Proclaiming the importance of missionary activity, Ridgel stated that the AMEC should lead the way in redeeming Africa. The Church, when "imbued with missionary enthusiasm," when it "utilizes every opportunity to enhance the gospel of Jesus Christ, to promote the interest of moral, social, intellectual and spiritual life and activity," then it would have done what is necessary to show the light of Christ to heathen Africa. [41]

Lauding Africa's ancient past, primarily through extolling the virtues of Ethiopia and Egypt, Ridgel complained that many historians of his era attempted to "to rob the sons of Ham, not only of Africa, but of every other laudable achievement which they have gained." [42] AMEC missionaries, through their Christianizing efforts, could alter that prejudiced view of Africa by establishing a Christian kingdom on the continent. The establishment of this Christian kingdom would not only benefit the heathen African; it would also adumbrate blessings to the Christian Negro as well. Suffering under the negative impact of American racism, the Negroes would be better served if they returned to their homeland:

> [T]o my mind the negro in foreign lands must return home and become renegroized, if you please, before be can fully appreciate himself and his people. For nearly three hundred years the American negro has been away from home; two hundred and forty-seven years of this time he served as a slave, subjected to the most inhuman treatment; whipped, sold, terrorized in numberless ways; in every instance he was reminded of his inferiority, as reckoned from the white man's standpoint. He was taught as a slave that the most commendable thing he could do was to be an honest, obedient negro to the laws of master and mistress; everywhere he turned the white man was lord and ruler; finally, with such strong environments, many of the weaker minds succumbed to the almost inevitable and formed the opinion that God created the white man to rule and the negro to serve. Such convictions are dangerous to the race, for when the negro becomes satisfied to occupy a

> secondary position in the affairs of the world, his aspirations will never rise higher. [43]

By returning home, the Christian Negro would find a place where he or she could realize their full human potential sans the virtual enslavement that remaining in America would entail. Thus, the Negro needed Africa as much as Africa needed the Negro. Ridgel called upon those Negroes in America to "[c]ome home where you can rest from near three hundred years of persecution. Come out from among your enemies and come among your friends. Let every negro who is prepared come without delay. Your mother longs to take you in her bosom." [44]

Ridgel's ardor for emigration did not diminish over time. In an article submitted to the VOM in 1896, he asked should the Negro return to Africa? He began by stating that Africa is the ancestral home of the Negro no matter where they may end up in the Diaspora. He then took to task people like Hill who claimed that God providentially allowed the enslavement of Africans. Terming enslavement as the "sum of all villainies," Ridgel doubted that "providence had anything to do with the establishment and perpetuation of an institution so vile and degrading." Institutionalized enslavement of Africans "was born in hell and fostered by the arch fiend, night." In Ridgel's mind, "God is too wise, just and holy, too multiform in the operation of the affairs of creation to have resorted to such unholy means for the development of a race." [45]

Notwithstanding God's purported lack of a role in the enslavement of the Africans, Ridgel concluded, "...the curse is upon us. Its imprint is deep and lasting. Its poisonous sting is not easily cured." The curse was so ingrained in the Zeitgeist of the age that

> ...its reign has been transmitted from parents to children and from generation to generation. It has become one of the hereditary evils of the age. It has gone down in history; it has disgraced the church and mocked the gospel. God alone knows the extent of this heaven-daring sin. The sin of slavery is awful. The seat of its power reached down to hell, the insults, miseries and despotism of its reign reached up to heaven. [46]

Because enslavement was not providentially ordained,

> "God was insulted," and "nature revolted, and the safety of the Union demanded its overthrow. It fell, but not in death. The strong impulses of its defender still beat in their bosom. A Negro, living or dead, rich or poor, wise or simple, is a Negro nevertheless." Being a negro in America meant that no human rights existed to protect one from harm or inexplicable death. [47]

As a result of the dehumanizing treatment that Negroes faced in America, Ridgel advocated the return of the Negro to Africa. "In Africa the Negro can be a man. He can rise to eminence in common with other men." Not only for respect as a human being should the Negro return to Africa; "The Negro should return to Africa and help redeem his heathen brethren. He should come back and help restore the pristine glory of his ancestral home." [48]

Many others in the denomination shared the thoughts of Ridgel regarding the dual foci of emigration: the need to redeem the African heathen and the concomitant need to escape American racism. However, there were others within the AMEC who argued just as vociferously against emigration, basing their arguments partly on the idea that Africa and Africans had devolved to such a point that nothing could be done by the American Negro to redeem. One such author, Rev. R.C. Holbrook, while not expressing any great love for the United States, iterated that perhaps Africa had once been a grand and glorious continent. However, those days have now been lost forever and focusing on the grandeur filled days of some bygone era, the AMEC should now see what Africa is and what

it can hope to be. Holbrook implied that because of its degradation, Africa holds no promise for the American Negro. God is "as near me as much in the United States as he would be were I in...Africa." [49]

Further complicating matters for Holbrook was his idea that the majority of the "Negroes of [the United States] descended from the lowest tribes of Africa, and are deceitful, lascivious and treacherous to an extreme...."[50] Apparently, because of their descent from the most heathen of Africans, these Negroes could not possibly redeem the African continent because of their own degradation. The only possible solution would be to remain in America and let it "ameliorate the circumstances of the Negro. This country is destined to be the place where the millennium will first be felt." [51]

Holbrook did not go unchallenged. Many within and outside the denomination questioned the efficacy of his anti-emigrationist stance. In a series of scathing retorts Marie Duchatellier, a native of Panama, argued that the United States does not recognize the humanity of the American Negro, evidenced by the nomenclature of "African" which the "free North and slaveholding South," freely uses. Further, any interests that America has in Africa was for pure commercial gain, "she has no time to evangelize Africa;" that task falls to the "enlightened, scattered children" of the African Diaspora. As for Holbrook's argument that most American Negroes descended from the lowest African tribe, Duchatellier rhetorically asked if he was familiar with the "highest tribes" and whether he was descended from the lowest or highest tribes? [52]

Duchatellier acknowledged that millions of American Negroes existed in darkness, but that was not because of descent from some lowest tribe, rather the degradation resulted from the injustices of living in the United States. She felt that the "Allfather" would bring the necessary enlightenment to Africa's scattered sons and daughters so that they could readily return to the continent and redeem it. [53]

V. Conclusion

The AMEC view of African humanity, as expressed in correspondence sent to the VOM, displayed the tension of existing as an evangelical organization that believed in a salvific gospel for all while, at the same time, believing that Africans suffered under a double curse. As part of Adam and Eve's offspring, Africans were subject to the consequences of their sin. Also, as the mythological children of Ham, Africans suffered the curse of perpetual servitude to the children of Shem and Japheth.

The curse led to the theological idea that Africans had devolved from an ancient civilized past into a degraded existence marked by rank superstition that prevented them from ever re-attaining their former glory. As a result, God allowed some of them to be enslaved so that they could at some later date return from the Diaspora and redeem the people and the land of Africa through missionary efforts and emigration. Those that returned, the Christianized American Negroes, viewed their African kindred as heathens who, without American Negro efforts, would continually be not fully human. The AMEC, a product of its time, took bold steps to save the heathens from themselves and eternal damnation. Under the leadership of men like Henry McNeal Turner, the founder of the VOM, the AMEC unsystematically held the belief that the heathen qua heathen would always be in need of the assistance of a superior, more intelligent, more civilized Christian beings. Ideally, those beings would come from the AMEC.

As a result, the AMEC began efforts to save the heathens. It did so first by encouraging willing and able members to proceed to Africa as missionaries; it was believed that these missionaries, the brothers and sisters of the Africans, could save Africa for Christ. Once a critical mass of these missionaries was established in Africa efforts could then be undertaken to establish a homeland not only for AMEC missionaries, but also for other African American Christians. The AMEC fervently believed that Africa could be redeemed and thus provide a civilized homeland in which its mem-

bers could live as respected Christians, unlike their experiences in the United States.

The desire to redeem and civilize Africa on the one hand, and the hope of establishing it as a Christian homeland, on the other hand, compelled the AMEC to engage the heathen unlike white evangelical Christians. White evangelicals were unencumbered by any racial or ethnic identity with the Africans; they earnestly believed in their own superiority. The AMEC, whose members identified with the Africans at least on the basis of race, occupied a tension filled liminal space. As a Christian denomination, it believed in the superiority of its faith, but as a body whose members viewed themselves as descendents of African heathens, it had to wrestle with ideas of inferiority, ideas that permeated the American landscape. The juxtaposed ideas of superiority and inferiority most likely affected any possible and actual successes the AMEC experienced. Although history has shown that the denomination met with a modicum of success in evangelizing Africans, very few of its members actually emigrated to the African continent; many viewed it as a hopeless land full of heathenish superstition.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the real and probable outcomes of nineteenth century AMEC missionary activity to Africa. Yet, a major issue remains to be examined, namely, whether the evangelical theology that informed AMEC missionary activity in the nineteenth century, coupled with its supposed African-ness, still plays a role in AMEC engagement with Africa in the twenty-first century? There maybe anecdotal information available that indicates that the denomination still struggles with the African as heathen. However, one would have to examine both primary and secondary sources to determine to what extent, if any, nineteenth century evangelical theology and nineteenth century ideas of the heathen affect the denomination's engagement with Africa today.

Endnotes

1. Benjamin Tucker Tanner, "A Prayer to Jesu," The A.M.E Church Review Vol. 7, no. 4 (April, 1891), 392.

2. From the time that the first African was forcibly brought from the African continent to the shores of the Americas their identities have been problematic. Variously referred to as Africans, Negroes, colored, African Americans, Afro-Americans, people of color and other names, the descendents of the Africans have struggled with identity. Within a broader context, many descendents of Africa exist within the Diaspora; they too exist in a world of amorphous identity.

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4. W.B. Derrick, "Proclamation, Office of Home and Foreign Missionary Society, African Methodist Episcopal Church." Voice of Mission, Vol. 1, no. 2 (February 1893) n.p.

5. Sylvester Johnson, The Myth of Ham in Nineteenth Century American Christianity: Race, Heathens, and the People of God. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 11.

6. "Will the A.M.E. Church Play her Part in the Redemption of Africa?," Voice of Mission IV, no. 12 (December 1896), n.p.

7. Carrie Belle Lee, "The Future of Africa," Voice of Mission VII, no. 7 (July 1899), n.p.

8. Reverend James M. Dwane, "A Native South African Writes of his Conversion Experience from 'heathenism' to Christianity," Voice of Mission V, no. 12 (December 1897), n.p.

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11. Ibid.

12. E. Mayfield Boyle, "A Native African Boy Represents His Country in Alabama," Voice of Mission V, no. 6 (June, 1897), n.p.

13. Henry McNeal Turner, "Editorial," Voice of Mission V, no. 5 (May, 1897), n.p.

14. H.B. Parks, "Redemption of Africa: The American Negro's Burden," Voice of Mission VII, no. 9 (September, 1899), n.p.

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17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

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20. Alexander Crummell, "Civilization as a Collateral and Indispensable Instrumentality in Planting the Christian Church in Africa," Africa and the American Negro: Addresses and Proceedings of the Congress on Africa (Miami, FL: Mnemosyne Publishing, Inc., 1969), 119.

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22. Ibid.

23. "The Dark Man and the Dark Continent: A Chat with a Negro Bishop," Voice of Mission I, no. 5 (May, 1893), n.p.

24. "Bishop Turner: Atlanta's Colored Bishop Talks About African Emigration," Voice of Mission II, no.9 (September, 1894), n.p.

25. Ibid.

26. Annie Weeks, "Africa For Christ," Voice of Mission IV, No. 7 (July, 1896), n.p.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid

29. "Grandeur of Missionary Work," Voice of Mission V, No. 4 (April, 1897), n.p.

30. Rev. Mark Christian Hayford, "Christian Mission Work in West Africa: Lecture Delivered to The Young Men's Christian Association in London, August 16, 1895," Voice of Mission IV, no. 2 (February, 1896), n.p.

31. Ibid.

32. W.H.H. Butler, "Report of Committee on Missions" Voice of Mission 1, no. 1, (January 1893), n.p.

33. Ibid.

34. Johnson, 74.

35. Ibid., 75.

36. Rev. A.H. Hill, "A Colored Statesman as Well as a Divine, Speaks," Voice of Mission IV, no. 9 (September, 1896), n.p.

37. Ibid.

38. Plessy v. Ferguson, 136 U.S. 537 (1896).

39. Ibid.

40. Alfred Lee Ridgel, Africa and African Methodism (Atlanta, GA: Franklin Printing and Publishing. 1896), 38.

41. Ibid., 63.

42. Ibid., 52.

43. Ibid., 45-6.

44. Ibid., 56.

45. Alfred Lee Ridgel, "Should Afro-Americans Return to Africa?," Voice of Mission IV, no. 3 (March, 1896), n.p.

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48. Ibid.

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52. "Lady Duchatellier Goes For Rev. Holbrook," Voice of Mission V, no. 7 (July, 1897), n.p.

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Kelly Dumas

If My Hair Could Talk

I can't sing but the way you make my heart feel is wonderful
and I can't dance but the way you make my body feel is beautiful
but you can't run your hands through my hair with your fingers
I've got kinks that run down from my crown to my soul
and yo' momma said if I can't use your comb don't bring me home
and my momma said tell that lady she's just mad she ain't got her own
but momma can't make me no babies and my clock is tickin'
so I went ahead, relaxed my hair in yo' momma's kitchen

If my hair could talk, she would say:
How dare you say you've struggled do you know that I've been through more in history than any
book can tell you
I was royalty's only ticket into longevity
the only way crowns placed upon heads interlocked with each other the only reason Delilah betrayed
Sampson was because I provided the strength
the only reason you knew that you and Jesus Christ shared similarities
do you know, what I've been through?
I have been through decades and centuries of misconceptions and misunderstandings about how I
lived my lifestyle
Straight or kinky
grown personal bonds with people just to get cut off after they couldn't handle the attachment
got knotted up in Nubia entangled in twisted up nature locked up with my Sistas
then my locks grew bigger and they had the nerve to commercialize my struggle call it Rastafarian
connections
pick out my flaws and wear them big on their heads calling a revolution
how dare you say you know my struggle but you have no idea what I've been through?
they burned me to straighten me out
threw water on me so I could shrivel up
treated me with hot oils so I would calm down
clip my ends when I was already broke
and when placed under the heat, they cover your ears in fear of you being scarred with the truth
that you've damaged me unproperly managed me
cut off your own that I gave you to buy someone else's
but the grass ain't greener on the other side,
youíre still the same person whether Im dead or dyed neither here nor there
ilyedî to me so I could relax when the white started to burn me
turned my land into crop circles in order to lay down tracks
raze me up when I'm down but get mad when I become in grown
made you look unprofessional if I didn't flow down your back
but if I'm not tamed you won't even hire your own
would you sell the diamonds in your uterus if it came with left-ring finger benefits?

no.
then why would sell your roots out for them?
do you know what I've been through?
I've kept you warm on many a cold nights,
I've captured tears for you, braided up your fears for you
but its funny how nobody cared to ask me how I felt but itís cool, cuz I still come back stronger, every
time, you cut me down,
And as Garvey says "do not remove the kinks out of your hair, remove the kinks out of your brain"
But just remember, if it wasn't for me,
no one would notice your crown in the first place.

Marietta Finkley

Educate

The more I become educated about other cultures and the challenges and horrors they face,
The more I become angry with the black community, my community, that Negro race...
The ones that,
Know better but don't do better,
The ones that
Reverse the repeat of history by enslaving themselves
Killing each other, over foolish things,
Going to jail, over foolish things
Yes it can be argued it happens in more than just the "Black community"
And I am well aware
But I am a part of that community
So don't you dare?
It has been said countless times, that people have marched and people have died
They were being lynch and mutilated, for the rights of you and I
And yet when I look around
You act as if your rights don't matter,
As if,
the rivers of blood that flowed from the noose down the oak tree
Didn't pave the way for you and me
To this thing we call education.
Education is not about reading what the white man wrote,
It's about learning and growing so you don't have to choke
On the lies that society feeds you!
It's so
History won't repeat itself,
It's so
Your eyes can finally see
It's about
Rewriting that laws that would rather have you locked behind bars
than in school learning and growing and realizing you are free.
The bible says
people parish from lack of knowledge
And you know I believe that's true
Cause the chains on great granddaddy's ankle are now the chains around bruh man's neck
Flossin' and blingin' but yet so easily fooled
Thinking he is somebody
cause of his gold and his jewels

"Store not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and dust corrupt, and where thieves break in and steal"
And they will steal
all that you have
but nothing that you know
So
What's the purpose of slangin'
What's the purpose of bangin'
and selling dope
You
Need to make something of yourself
instead of
Being slain at the stake but the way of the street
Landing yourself under 6 ft
Cell block G3!
Money stay laughing
at you
Every time you sell yourself short
Money stay crackin at you
Got you feelin like you got a game to beat
Needing to
prove yourself to the game
When it don't even know your name
You just a number
586-0243!
So when will you be done beating the air
hoping your fist will strike gold
Laying all your cards on the table
You gonna have to fold
Cause you been
Mining in tunnel
with no air and no lights
Tryna get by
But bye ain't good enough if you're gone
So when the screech of a bullet is your last song
Who then will sing for you?
What then will bling do for you?
When the game only leaves you with stuff
And then that's all you'll have
And moths and dust will corrupt
And thieves will break in and steal
But I bet they won't touch your books
So maybe you should start reading
Playa'!

Out of the Shadows

She is out of the shadows for the world to see,
She is swinging and fighting claiming victory.
She will do this and she will win,
Because she has life and is dead to sin.
She is a winner and is ready for round two,
Whispers and lies come but she knows what to do.
She knows who she is and will no longer be,
Though the tempter plays unfair God is her referee.
So she is swinging, got on her fighting gloves,
The enemy pulls but she shoves.
And see she is fighting with love,

The love from above
And with the grace and mercy that rest upon her,
And she know she's more than a conquer.
Round three begins...
Ooo....this girl is gona win,
Oh but wait the enemy hits below the belt,
She screams out a yelp,
But God is present help.
He comes to her rescue flooding that place,
For by grace,
Is she saved!
And her faith proclaims,
That she will win
And she gets back in,
The enemy has no hold because she is dead to sin.
So swing girl swing this fight is almost done
And she is claiming in Jesus her, her victory is won.

Out of the shadows
I see her
She has found victory
She walks and runs and neither does she fall or faint
She has come out on top
She has overcome
She is stepping into a new light of life
Though her path may seem lonely
She is a never that
She is a conquer
She is still in the game
She is royalty
Standing ovation
Cause she is still in the ring
Swing girl swing
They chant in the crowd
She can't do it! She won't make it!
But she is... and she will... and she did

Michael T.Y. Harris

Shoot for Freedom

I'm shooting for my life and freedom,
America will embrace my presence or regret the day I revolt.
With my musket by my side,
I'd die just to see a white man's face into blasted oblivion.

I've lived miserably, but given the chance,
I'd fight for a country that doesn't want me,
because I have no where else to go.
I know we ain't supposed to live like this,
they justify it,
by feeding us gruel and bible verses,
straight from the mouths of preaching toms.

Who've forgotten the tombs we created,

and the wombs we were created from.
We are the greatest. And I'm anti-slavery,
escaped the South to rally with the North, I had no choice
because this is the Civil War.
Slavery must end so America can open other doors.
Doors to colonization, and foreign soil.

But I'm not free, I'm fighting for freedom.
I'm not dumb, just never learned to read.
but who needs words to shoot,
I'd kill a man with my boot to break free.

I'm not a caged bird, I'm a human being.
Been held since we crossed the Great Sea,
and I can see that fighting this war could reunite me with my family.

It could bring new freedoms to me and my sons,
I won't run from the night anymore because it always catches us.

I won't truly love America, because she has always neglected us, but trust,
I will attain these unalienable rights, I will be a citizen,that is my right!
I will never abandon my mission.
We the negroes of America must create a new tradition,
make this awful place usable until we return to where we originally existed.
Will will show the world our vision, even if we have to use bullets and resistance,
So shoot my brother, shoot my sister, shoot little children, shoot, shoot,
shoot for freedom. Shoot for liberty, and always remember this is war so shoot for victory!

Phillip C. Kolin

Emmett Weeps Over Chicago

Like Christ over Jerusalem
I weep over Chicago,
Over all those black and blue smiles
Slain in this stormy, husky, brawling City of Big Shoulders.
More black children hit the streets dead
In a year than all the soldiers, marines, and pilots who fell
In Afghanistan, this new Chicago
I mourn in.

The Chicago River, the Outer Drive, South Shore
Wail for this generation of hemorrhaged children
Limbs slashed, severed,
Bodies sweating arteries dry.
Sightless sockets, soundless wrists.
Stabbing, jabbing-this is Chicago's terrible burden of destiny.
The snow is always black and red.
You act like a Hog Butcher of the World.

Chicago, you shoot their dreams from
Underneath them;
Open graves stretch across your wards;
Hearses beat out ambulances
There are not enough
Cemeteries to receive your massacred children.
They tell me you are crooked--
The gangs, the drive-by shooters, the back
Alley snippers, the switch-blade wielders,
Laugh in the custody of your keyless jailors.
My sisters and brothers wait
For eyewitnesses to recover
From their memories

So many unwritten lives.
Thank God, I had a mother who wrote.
But Chicago's lost children are sketched in chalk
Their photographs turned into silhouettes
Their dreams shriveled.
School yearbooks are getting smaller.

Who will sing obituaries for Chicago's slain children?
My voice is well-trained in the chords of hatred.
My voice will be their ballad.
My voice will be their loudspeaker tombstone
Keening
Accusing
Recounting
Honoring
Memorializing
Hoping, joining, rebuilding.

My Father's Ring

The day my father died
my mother first held me.
He'd given her his signet ring
for his son to wear, which
she wrapped in frayed linen

and placed it in a nicked-up
dresser drawer, then folded me
in some second-hand-washed diapers
and kept her faith in a scorched Delta Bible.
On family feast days, she used to take

the ring out and slide it on
my finger, like soft silt on a riverbed.
When I reached 15 she placed
my father's ring on my finger
and told me it was mine for the journey.

The Tallahatchie turns even
the truest words to screams, the way
it churns flesh to mud, like a face
caught in a gin fan: eyes gone.
Then the ears and jaw.

Still, in that dense darkness
of that Tallahatchie tomb
I felt my father's hand on me.
He put a ring on my finger
then bloodied pinions on my feet.

Leonard Slade, Jr.

Miracles

If you don't believe in miracles,
It doesn't matter.
We do, and we have proof from three doctors.
As for the sweet person,

She fought a brain tumor
And heard about people's prayers.
Words, be healed we beg
For this woman of faith

Then the doctors wept
And thought she had gone
To a place that defies description,
Which traumatized her husband.

She was strong and so was the family
Who hollered prayers in their closets.
Her dogs barked at her return home
And could not believe her laughter

The Artist

She smile, and her face
Is radiant and classy.
Many think she's brilliant.

She takes art
Building to building through communities.
Once I was asleep but her heart beat
And woke me. "Do you love

My creations?" she whispered, staring
Not at me but at the sky.
"Yes," I said, admitting
My ignorance and curious of her question.

And she disappeared,
Leaving me yellow roses as she went
To wake the world with her exquisite work
And immortal beauty.

President Robert J. Jones

He's brilliant now.

His fertile mind
will move the university
again--
because he's spiritually deep--

an intellectual heavyweight
believing in power
from Heaven
for faculty and students
to teach and learn
from the stars

there's no doubt now that he's anointed --

Thanks to fire
in wise persons' blood,
he'll change the world forever.

The sun shines
bright today,
red roses bloom
bluejays sing from
tree tops
angels circle the president
with love

it seems --
on television daily
the message of another beginning
still dreamed by all,

the community,
the institution
engaged first
marrying each other
for one purpose,

and every song
all speeches
and curious scholars

will wonder how
one leader accomplished
so much with beauty
sweetness and poise,

his work immortalized.

Trayvon Martin

They're arguing
because they're afraid,
of a guilty or not
guilty verdict.

They're fearful
of the death of a prince,
because they lie
when they say he brought

it on himself.
What do they understand?

Do they fear the truth
(justice)
which makes neighborhoods
frightened?

They want to believe
he's alive –

but sob.

They want to forgive
but can't.

He looked down
from Heaven

his tears flooded
streets

destroyed bridges
drowned white bodies.

The jurors
hide

unsure
of themselves
dissatisfied
"like the rainbow
colored bird

gone blind
that has light

that sheds not."

I Begin Writing the Poem

to produce sweat
and to boil blood.
No matter who reads
or doesn't, I'm a poet.
I'll always have something to say.
I write the truth
about the good
and the bad. Nothing
can stop my sword.
I'll continue with the poem
until maggots eat my eyeballs.
I'll return to the poem
that eats the flesh
or that kisses the soul
And remember, there's war
in my heart, there's love, too
but don't find yourself
in the pit of the poem.
Love me and help me
fly.

On Joy

Sun shining
Flowers blooming
Babies laughing
Mothers smiling
Fathers whistling

Children playing
Teachers inspiring
Students studying
Preachers guiding
Police officers protecting

Farmers plowing
Poets praising
Musicians playing
Choirs singing
Performers dancing

Christians forgiving
People loving
Architects building
Doctors diagnosing
Citizens praying

Brought
joy
to
the
world.

The Mouse

The brown mouse
stopped in the middle
of the kitchen floor
to stare at me
while I ate bread
at the table.
He moved slowly
under the electric stove
(quietly) to eat
his own morsels
where he stayed forever.

I Could Not Sleep

I could not sleep
because of foreign wars
because of committed murders
because of starving children
because of self-serving leaders
because of hateful relatives
because of unjust friends
because of evil enemies
because of sickly loved ones
because of domestic violence
because of vociferous ignoramuses
because of past transgressions
because of higher power wants to talk to me.

The Movie

He walked down main street
to arrive on time to see
the world premiere of
Twelve Years a Slave:
A True Story of Soloman Northup
Alexis and her friend
sat waiting for the perfect
time to enter the theatre.
As he approached their
bench, he greeted them.
He did not have a
ticket for the premiere
showing.
As they entered the theatre
where names were checked
off for all invitees,
Alexis requested name be added to the list
for entrance to the theatre.
He was grateful.
Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Earl Graves
greeted him before the movie
began. He was shocked.
Blood, sweat and tears
spilled from the movie screen.

Shackles of slavery and violin music
and dancing in Georgia
made us wonder what
the conclusion would be.
Reuniting with family
in Saratoga after
twelve years of forces slavery
in Georgia brought smiles
and jubilation to the
Northup family
and applause from the theatre audience.
We left the movie quietly with private thoughts
and curiosity as to what
could have been our fate
in 1853.
The year 2013 was
worth celebrating.
A black president
Played golf now
At Martha's Vineyard.
There would be no
turning back.

The Carriage House

Alone behind a palatial house
Surrounded with luscious grass
And small rocks in the driveway
The white house waited for poetry.
What would the lines be
About three rooms with tall ceilings
Bread in the kitchen waiting
To be savored in the dining room
And yes television stories
About law and order
Or Jeopardy game shows?
What about the steamy shower
And mirrors in the bathroom
To reflect who we are?
The queen size bed for love
Screams and silence
My poetry now begins
At Martha's Vineyard.

I Loved Her

I loved her
because she was selfless
because she believed in me
because she loved everybody
because she stuck by her man
because she forgave all enemies
because she lived by example
because she was humble
because she worked hard
because she turned the other cheek
because she divorced evildoers,
because she went to church
because she obeyed God
because she loved righteousness
because she feared no person
because she was my mother.

Pejorative Language

Because he parked on the street
With his automobile lights
Blinking to communicate
To drivers that they could
Pass him instead of stopping
And because he was
Waiting for his wife who
Had gone inside a store
With a blue walker,
One motorist passed
By him slowly and called
Him an ignoramus
Another called him stupid.
He turned the other cheek
And began praying.

The Elusiveness of a Quality Education for Blacks in East Baton Rouge Parish, 1970-2008

Wanda F. Jackson

East Baton Rouge Parish (EBRP) is located in southeast Louisiana. It has four cities-Baker, Baton Rouge, Central and Zachary. Its largest city, Baton Rouge, is both its seat and the capitol of Louisiana. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the parish's population is 440,171 of which forty-nine percent is white and forty-five percent is black. Citizens younger than nineteen years comprise twenty-six percent of the parish's population. The percentages of high school and college graduates respectively are eighty-seven percent and thirty-three percent of the people who are older than twenty-four years. Although only eighteen percent of its citizens lives below the poverty line, eighty-five percent of its public school students is impoverished. [1]

Blacks' fight against segregated schools in EBRP took forty-seven years to unravel. It pitted the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the major advocacy organization for African-Americans, against the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board (EBRPSB.) Three U.S. District Court Judges (F. Gordon West, from 1970 to 1979, John V. Parker, from 1979 to 2000, and James J. Brady, from 2000 to 2003) presided over school desegregation. Its milestones were as following: parents filing a lawsuit, the Davis case, on behalf of their children in 1956; voluntary neighborhood/geographic desegregation in 1963; unrestricted neighborhood and faculty desegregation in 1970; mandated busing in 1981; and the NAACP's agreement to settle the case in 2003.

"The Elusiveness of a Quality Education for Blacks in East Baton Rouge Parish" investigates the plight of African-American students as and after desegregation unfolded. It blends statistical data with interviews and secondary sources. Student, educator, special education and graduate populations are examined. Scores from the Louisiana Education Assessment Program (LEAP Test) and Graduation Exit Examination (GEE) are also analyzed. This research primarily relies on the *Annual Report*, which is a publication of the Louisiana State Department of Education for statistics, and the department's official website for testing data. Interviews, newspaper articles and academic literature provide a cohesive narrative for this study.

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As did most school districts in the South, EBRPSB used the "all deliberate speed" clause of the *Brown* decision to stave off desegregation. When the federal government demanded an immediate end to the dual school system in 1969, Judge West intervened in the process, and in 1970, he ordered unrestricted neighborhood desegregation. At the outset of unrestricted neighborhood desegregation, blacks' voices were muted. For instance, to assist him, the judge appointed a biracial committee, comprising seven whites and three blacks, thereby providing whites with a super majority on the biracial committee. In conjunction with West's order, EBRPSB implemented faculty desegregation in 1970. [2]

Initially, desegregation was limited. From 1970 to 1981, EBRPSB implemented geographic desegregation. Since most neighborhoods in the parish were segregated, the overwhelming majority of students attended one race schools. Judge Parker succeeded West in 1979 and mandated busing in 1981. Resultantly, the attendance of white students declined. On September 1, 1981, the first day of ordered busing,

the EBRPSB reported that 7,000 students were absent. By late September, it surmised that 4,330 of them had left the East Baton Rouge Parish School System (EBRPSS). Each successive year, the newspapers published articles bemoaning the flight of white students. Although Parker ordered the EBRPSB to maximize integration by assigning students to specific schools, white parents ignored the mandate, built nonpublic schools and fled the parish. Moreover, the EBRPSS developed special education classes, which insured that segregated classes would thrive in desegregated schools. [3]

Throughout the early 1980's, the refusal of many whites to attend schools, which had a student body that was at least thirty-five percent black, resulted in the failure of many public schools in the parish to meet their prospective enrollment quotas. Whites were particularly reticent about attending schools located in black neighborhoods. Banks, Crestworth, Dalton and Eden Park elementary schools and Capitol High School were such schools. After the busing mandate, the aforementioned schools were still at least ninty-five percent black and had abnormally low overall student populations. Wedgewood, Shenandoah, Rivercrest, Parkview and Twin Oaks elementary schools; Broadmoor Middle School; and Bellingrath, Broadmoor and Woodlawn high schools were overcrowded, and blacks consisted fewer than twenty percent of their student population. EBRPSB used taxpayers' money to rent metal buildings to house surplus students at the majority white schools. [4]

To escape integrated schools, some white parents enrolled their children in non-public schools. Officials of Catholic parochial schools insisted that they established regulations to insure that their institutions would not become "safe havens" for those who sought refuge from desegregation; however, their requirements did nothing to curtail such endeavors.[5] For instance, they granted first priority to-Catholics living in the diocese, second priority to-Catholics residing outside the diocese, but who obtain their priest's permission to enroll in the school and third priority to-students promising to observe Catholic rites and teachings. Brownfields Baptist Academy, Central Private School, Parkview Baptist School and Trafton Academy received the lion's share of white students. [6]

Actually, from 1960 to 2008, for both races, the annual average number of students registered in non-public schools rose. For blacks, it was 1,145 in the 1960s, 1,669 in the 1970s, 1,586 in the 1980s and 1,659 in the 1990s. The annual average number of whites matriculating in non-public schools proliferated considerably. It was 9,859 during the 1960s, 9,132 during the 1970s, 12,978 during the 1980s and 16,871 during the 1990s. From 2000 to 2008, it respectively was 2,785, and 17,029 for blacks and whites. More importantly, in 1999, the number of whites attending non-public schools exceeded that of those at public schools. From 2000 to 2008, non-public schools served an annual average of sixty-four percent of white students. [7]

Besides attending non-public schools to avoid desegregation, some whites fled to rural neighboring parishes. Most white migrants from EBRP settled in predominantly white Ascension and Livingston parishes. In Ascension Parish, the enrollment of black students experienced modest growth while that of their white counterparts more than doubled. The annual average enrollment for black and white students respectively was 3,161 and 4,949, from 1960 to 1969, 3,400 and 6,800, from 1970 to 1979, 3,862 and 9,819, from 1980 to 1989, and 4,118 and 10,715, from 1990 to 1999. In Livingston Parish, the annual average enrollment of black students declined as that of whites soared. In Livingston Parish, the annual average number of registered black and white students respectively was 1,400 and 7,277, during the 1960s, 1,300 and 10,000, during the 1970s, 1,233 and 14,987, during the 1980s and 1,203 and 16,635, during the 1990s. From 2000 to 2008, the annual average number of black students was 5,016 in Ascension and 1,240 in Livingston parishes whereas that of white students was 11,126 and 20,096 in the respective aforementioned parishes. [8]

The EBRPSS experienced a decrease in its overall student popula-

tion from 1960 to 2008. The number of black students consistently grew while that of white students precipitously declined. During the 1960s, the annual average enrollment was 21,331 for blacks and 34,529 for whites, during the 1970s, 25,199 for blacks and 29,867 for whites, during the 1980s, 30,324 for blacks and 29,867 for whites and during the 1990s, 32,738 for blacks and 20,669 for whites. From 2000 to 2008, the enrollment for blacks rose to 37,448 and fell to 9,554 for whites. [9]

After desegregation, black students also confronted harsh disciplinary action. In fact, the rise of suspensions and expulsions among black students accompanied desegregation. Extensive desegregation of high schools was especially contentious. In fact, the most heated racial unrest occurred at Robert E. Lee High School, the namesake of the Confederate general. For instance, at Robert E. Lee High School, in January 1971, Robert Miller, a white student, hit Billy Nick, a black student, "in the forehead with a twelve inch miniature baseball bat."[10] Black students gathered outside the principal's office to obtain information regarding Nick's status and Miller's punishment. (Nick "suffered a bad bruise," and Miller was arrested for aggravated battery.)[11] "School officials" "ordered black students either return to class or leave the school grounds," and "between 75 to 100" of them adhered to the latter.[12] While walking away from the school, twenty-four black students were accused of blocking traffic and were then arrested for disturbing the peace. In addition, in March 1971, a white student at Robert E. Lee High School brought a tear gas gun to the school and sprayed black students. A "melee" ensued. [13]

Events unfolding at Robert E. Lee High galvanized the black community. Accusing the school's principal, Ernest T. Murphee, of fostering a hostile environment for their children, black parents demanded that the EBRPSB fire him. They charged him with permitting students to wear clothes bearing Confederate insignia and forcing black students to sing Dixie. Since the school is a traitor's eponym, the parents wanted to rename it. D. Dupuy Anderson, a black member on the biracial committee, added to the parents' complaint by stating that school officials failed to disseminate to blacks students information regarding Honors Day, thereby effectively insuring those students' absence from the program. Joe Delpit, a black city council member, supported the parents and Anderson's assertions. According to Delpit, when he spoke to Murphee, he could "understand some of the problems."[14] The council member went on to say "either Murphree or all of the black students were talking with fork-tongues."[15] The EBRPSB members addressed none of the blacks' concerns. [16]

The arrests, expulsions and suspensions of black students also captured the attention of the NAACP. In 1970, African-Americans "constituted about thirty-eight percent of the student population of the EBRPSS and sixty percent of its suspensions."[17] D'Orsay Bryant, local NAACP president, emphatically asked, "why are our jails filled with blacks and not whites."[18] To rectify this problem, he instructed Murphy Bell, the local NAACP legal adviser, to file a lawsuit in federal court. Bryant also invited Emmet Douglas, president of the NAACP for the State of Louisiana, to a meeting held at Mt. Zion 1st Baptist Church. Douglas warned that if EBRPSB members failed to require school officials to "enforce regulations equally," parents will "take every black child in the parish out of school."[19] Moreover, the Department of Housing, Education and Welfare (HEW) supported the NAACP's complaint about the disciplinary procedure against black students. In fact, in both 1978 and 1979, HEW withheld over $500,000 from the EBRPSS because it accused the EBRPSB of tolerating an incredibly high suspension rate among African-Americans. [20]

In addition to facing elevated suspension and expulsion rates, black students also had to confront the growth of special education which paralleled desegregation. Actually, special education programs preserved segregation and white supremacy. In 1981, Superintendent Raymond Averson alluded to this fact when he stated, "the five almost all white classes of gift-

ed/talented students which have been located at Buchanan (Elementary School) may encourage more white parents to allow their children to attend public schools."[21] Apparently, some white parents understood Averson's inference. In 2008, Buchanan was one of the few schools in the EBRPSS that had a thirty percent non-black population. [22]

The NAACP's spokespersons sporadically focused on special education. In 1981, they sought to explore the "low attendance of blacks in high academic programs."[23] In 1983, they denounced the practice of conducting "segregated classes in desegregated schools." [24]

Press Robinson, a black EBRPSB member during the 1980s and 1990s, emphatically linked desegregation to the rise of special education. (During Robinson's illustrious career, he served as a professor and Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs at Southern University in Baton Rouge and as Chancellor at its campuses in Shreveport and New Orleans.) According to him, whites' perception that black children had behavioral problems was the impetus for them to refer blacks to special education classes. He contended that white teachers were "perturbed" by black students' refusal to say, "Yes ma'am" and "Yes sir."[25] According to Robinson, since most of the teachers in EBRP were white females, who felt threatened when black males challenged them, they particularly targeted black males for special education. Many black parents did not understand the meaning of special education; therefore, they readily agreed to the assignment of their children to those classes. More disturbingly to Robinson, when some of them discovered its meaning, they acquiesced to it so that they would receive social security benefits, thereby augmenting their household income. He stated:

> What I hate about it, most of all, is that once in special education, students never seem to get out of it. It stays with them for the rest of their life. [26]

Desegregation heavily influenced the assignment of students to the mentally retarded category. Although the EBRPSS placed only 60 students in mentally retarded classes in 1970, that number skyrocketed to 813 the following year. At the height of the initial wave of school desegregation, in 1975, the number of mentally retarded students peaked at 1,350, and its decline stabilized at an annual average of 611 in the 1980s and 626 in the 1990s. More than likely, the *Larry v. Riles* case in 1977 influenced the number of students assigned to mentally retarded classes. In the case, lawyers used academic work of scholars to convince Supreme Court Justices of the inaccuracy and perniciousness of labeling minority pupils mildly/educable mentally retarded. [27]

Since the *Larry v. Riles* case made assigning minority students to mentally retarded classes controversial, the EBRPSS began to use the learning-disabled category to undergird its practice of maintaining segregated classes in desegregated schools. In fact, as the number of mentally retarded students was decreasing, the number of learning-disabled was increasing. The latter leaped from 571 in 1975 to 1,521 the following year. In 1995, the EBRPSS assigned its largest number of students (3,074) to learning-disabled classes. The annual average number of learning-disabled students was 2,347 in the 1980s and 2,979 in the 1990s. [28]

In 1971, slow learner/educationally handicapped category debuted in EBRP. The annual average number of slow learning students was erratic; 221 from 1971 to 1979, 623 from 1980 to 1989 and 53 from 1990 to 1999. The extreme volatility of the number of slow learners renders the annual average inconsequential. For instance, officials found 14 slow learners in 1972, none the following the year, 235 in 1974, 904 in 1981, 355 in 1982 and 1,166 in 1983. From 1984, it steadily declined until reaching zero in 1999. [29]

Harshly criticizing the gifted/talented category, Robinson declared, "most white students are no more gifted than I."[30] Robinson contended that the parents of white students pay private psychologists to bestow the gifted/talented label on their children, but most blacks cannot afford that luxury. Actually, the expo-

nential rise and then dramatic decline of the number of gifted/talented students gave credence to Robinson's assertion. Listing no gifted/talented students before 1975, the EBRPSS designated an annual average of 123 of them from 1975 to 1979, 2,215 of them from 1980 to 1989, and 2,654 of them from 1990 to 1999. More than likely, the decrease of gifted/talented students in the late 1990s was caused by the State of Louisiana's introduction of the LEAP test, for fourth and eighth graders and GEE, for twelfth graders in 1993. All public fourth, eighth and twelfth graders must pass their respective standardized test if they are to be promoted to the next grade or to graduate. Students attending non-public schools are exempted from taking the aforementioned tests. Consequently, by 1994, in EBRP, white students in public schools outnumbered those at non-public schools by only eighty-four, and from 1999 to 2008, non-public schools had a higher number of white students than public schools. Simultaneously, the annual average number of gifted/talented students fell from 3,256 from 1990 to 1993 to 1,785 from 1994 to 1999. [31]

Results from the GEE and LEAP test also validate Robinson's charges regarding special education. (All GEE and LEAP test results are from 2008.) Studying the information from those examinations is somewhat imprecise because the Louisiana Department of Education did not divide the ethnic information by gender. Nonetheless, in 2008, the EBRPSS had seventy-eight schools that underwent testing; Baton Rouge Magnet High and Shenandoah Elementary were the only majority white schools, and all but seventeen of them had a student population that was at least eighty percent black. More specifically, males outperformed females at only thirty-seven schools on the Math section and at six schools on the English/Language Arts (E/LA) of the LEAP test and GEE. [32]

The graduation rate also supports Robinson's assertion that black males are isolated in special education classes more than black females. From 1970 to 2008, black females comprised an annual average fifty percent of the black student population and fifty-seven of its graduates. During this period, the number of black male graduates outpaced their female counterparts only once while the number of black female registered students surpassed that of their male counterparts nine times. Overall, the annual average number of black and white graduates respectively was 851 and 2,056 during the 1960s, 1,382 and 2,869 during the 1970s, 1,317 and 2,005 during the 1980s and 1,307 and 1,363 during the 1990s. From 2000 to 2008, an annual average of 1,471 blacks and 816 whites graduated from schools in EBRP. Unfortunately, except for the 1970s, the gap between the annual average number of black registered students and that of black graduates widened after desegregation. For instance, it was nine percent in the 1960s, six percent in the 1970s, ten percent in the 1980s and thirteen percent in the 1990s, and it leaped to sixteen percent from 2000 to 2008. [33]

Black students were susceptible to special education because many of their parents had not obtained a quality education, thereby limiting their parents' ability to protect them. As in many Southern school districts, during the Jim Crow period, African-Americans in EBRP faced blatant discrimination. In fact, the State of Louisiana had no mandatory attendance policy for them until 1944. Moreover, in 1944, in EBRP, blacks comprised forty percent of the student body; however, the worth of school sites for blacks and whites respectively was $258,500 and $2,057,777. Throughout the school district, only one bus served black children while fifty-six of them transported white children. Black schools secured nine percent of the equipment as well as seventeen percent of the instruction budgets and housed six percent of the library books. Since blacks were barred from the public library, the scarcity of books at their schools was especially pernicious. [34]

Moreover, statistical data demonstrates the difficulty that blacks had with pursuing a secondary education in 1944. Black high school instructors consisted twenty-eight percent and white high school instructors made up forty-four percent of their respective overall

teacher populations. Blacks received a mere twelve percent of the funds allocated for high school instruction. EBRPSB operated nine high schools-two (black) and seven (white). Blacks' percentage of the overall graduates (twenty-one percent) further illustrated EBRPSB's neglect of secondary education for its black citizens. [35]

By 1954-55, the academic year after the *Brown* decision, the educational figures improved, but they were still skewed heavily in favor of whites. During that year, black students comprised 39 percent of the student population; however, only 39 buses transported them while white students had access to 100 buses. Blacks' share of the equipment budget was thirty-two percent. The value of blacks' schools was $5,526,291 and that of whites was $14,231,388. Libraries at black schools housed only twenty-five percent of the books. EBRPSB did increase its investment in black secondary education. At this point, blacks received thirty-three percent of the high school teacher budget, and forty percent of the black teacher population was high school instructors. (White high school instructors comprised forty-two of the white teacher population.) Although the percentage of black graduates rose from twenty-one to twenty-eight percent, it was still eleven points lower than the percentage of black registered students. [36]

The limitation of the power of black educators also made it easier for the EBRPSS to trap black students in special education courses. Nathan Mensia, a black member of the biracial committee, noted that whites, not blacks, were pushing for faculty desegregation, because it guaranteed them control over black schools. Calling for complete faculty desegregation, the committee fixed a quota of thirty-five percent black and sixty-five percent white instructors at all schools. William Turner, assistant principal at McKinley High from 1970 to 1979 and principal at Capitol High from 1979 to 1991, witnessed Mensia's concerns. (Capitol and McKinley were black high schools.) At McKinley High, the year before faculty desegregation, two out of sixty teachers were white; yet, a year later the majority of them were white. Robinson also opposed the implementation of faculty desegregation. Since the plan sent "our best teachers" to white schools, contended Robinson, it devastated black schools.

Overall, the number of all teachers in EBRP increased. The annual average number of black teachers was 865, during the 1960s, 1,219, during the 1970s, 1,249, during the 1980s, and 1,390, during the 1990s. Employing the aforementioned periodical system, ascending from the 1960s through the 1990s, the annual average number of white teachers was 1,427, 2,164, 2,097 and 2,295. [37]

In 2000, James J. Brady replaced Parker as the U.S. District Court Judge. Sensing an opportunity to resolve the lawsuit, EBRPSB members voted to uphold the "Desegregation Pact."[38] It promised that predominantly black schools would "continue to receive extra teachers and money to operate pre-kindergarten, extended day and extended year programs."[39] After engaging in a legal battle for forty-seven years and witnessing the transformation of EBPRSS to a majority black school district, in July 10, 2003, by a vote of twenty-three to seventeen, the NAACP reluctantly agreed to conclude its litigation against the EBRPSB. [40]

As the desegregation saga was culminating, rural areas began to secede from the EBRPSS. In 2002, Zachary (Zachary Community School District) was the first rural school district to gain its independence. Baker (City of Baker School System) in 2003 and Central (Central Community School System) in 2006 followed Zachary's lead. By 2008, the number of registered students was 1,842 in Baker, 3,637 in Central and 4,618 in Zachary. Baker was predominantly black whereas Central and Zachary were majority white. Simultaneously, the teacher populations were disproportionately white. The respective black and white teacher populations were 83 and 113 in Baker, 15 and 237 in Central and 66 and 304 in Zachary. In 2008, the poverty level of students was forty percent in Zachary, forty-eight percent in Central and eighty-five percent in Baker. From 2003 to 2008, the gap between the annual average per-

centage of the student and graduate populations of blacks was two percent in Baker and five percent for Zachary. Actually, for Baker, the number of black graduates surpassed that of their student population by one percent in 2004 and three percent in 2008. For Central, the variables were even in 2007, and there was a two percent gap in 2008. [41]

Based upon data from 2008, the proficiency percentile of blacks on the LEAP test and GEE were mixed. The composite proficiency percentile is obtained by averaging the proficiency percentiles from each school and the E/LA along with Math sections of the examinations. On both tests, blacks in Zachary had the highest proficiency percentile. Using the above system, the composite proficiency percentiles of blacks and whites on the LEAP test respectively were seventy-seven and ninety-one in Zachary, sixty-six and eighty-two in Central and forty-one and seventy-five in Baker. On the GEE, the Louisiana Department of Education did not release data for whites in Baker. In that city, the composite proficiency percentile of blacks on the test was forty-three. The composite GEE proficiency percentiles for blacks and whites respectively were sixty-eight and eighty-three in Central and sixty-nine and eighty-eight in Zachary. [42]

Each year since 2005, Zachary has secured the title "Louisiana Top Performing School District."[43] Data, however, may offer a contradictory narrative. In Zachary, Port Hudson Career Academy serves grades five through twelve. Its students are exempted from GEE and LEAP test. Since its students are not college bound, it may be conjectured that they are not taking advanced courses. The segregation of poorly prepared students in a school that does not take statewide tests artificially elevates Zachary's proficiency percentiles. [44]

Lastly, the secession of rural districts caused a significant shift in data for the EBRPSS. The number of white students dropped more significantly than that of blacks. For whites, it plummeted from 11,697 in 2002 to 5,110 in 2008, and blacks from 38,138 to 36,446. During this same period, the number of black graduates declined from 1,792 to 1,321 and that of whites from 1,183 to 369. The number of black teachers rose slightly from 1,472 in 2002 to 1,475 in 2008, while that of white teachers decreased from 2,015 to 1,491. In 2008, the EBRPSS enrolled 368 mentally disabled, 1,365 learning disabled and 786 gifted/talented students. [45]

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For some blacks, the success of school desegregation is debatable. Robinson bemoaned that desegregation as implemented in the United States, particularly in EBRP, was a failure. According to him, blacks lost their educators and some of their schools. Their children were bused across town. One of Robinson's greatest regrets was that he could not convince the NAACP to focus on equal funding of schools rather than total integration. [46]

Some of the data support Robinson's assertions. At some schools with sizable white populations, the total (average of the E/LA and Math scores) proficiency percentiles of blacks on the GEE and LEAP test mirrored those of students attending nearly all black impoverished schools. For instance, the poverty level at Glasgow and Buchanan elementary schools was below sixty-seven percent, relatively low for the EBRPSS, and their non-black student population was at least thirty percent; however, their total proficiencies for black students were below fifty percent and those for whites were above ninety-six percent. The total proficiency percentiles of students at Forest Heights and Ryan, nearly all black elementary schools, were better than those at Glasgow and Buchanan. Forest Heights, which had a student body that was ninety-five black and seventy percent impoverished, successfully educated its children. Its total proficiency of ninety-seven percent for black students was their second highest total proficiency percentile on the LEAP test in the EBRPSS. In addition, it won the Kennedy Center Arts Education Award. Furthermore, over ninety-nine of the students at Ryan were black and economically disadvantaged, but its total LEAP test proficiency was seventy-five. [47]

Some of the data contradict Robinson's assertion as there is compelling statistical information that suggests that economically secure blacks made gains after desegregation. For instance, the poverty rate of Baton Rouge High was thirty-five percent, and blacks comprised forty percent of its body. The GEE total proficiency of neither blacks nor whites sank below ninety-nine percent. In fact, blacks scored 100 percent on the E/LA section of the test. Additionally, Shenandoah, Sherwood Forest, South Boulevard and Westdale Heights Academic Magnet elementary schools had poverty rates of no more than fifty percent and their black student population was lower than seventy percent. At each of the abovementioned schools, blacks' total proficiencies were higher than eighty percent. [48]

From examining the data, blacks' powerlessness is the major issue. Whether a school system is desegregated or segregated, black children will suffer if their adults fail to influence school policy. The statistical data certainly demonstrated that blacks in EBRP did not have input in budgetary decisions during segregation. Had the NAACP focused solely on obtaining an equitable portion of the budget, it would have had difficulty with forcing whites of EBRP to relinquish the funds. Turner noted that during his tenure at Capitol High, much of the supplies and equipment earmarked for it were redirected to white schools. Moreover, the tax base of EBRP shrunk as Baker, Central and Zachary seceded and well to do citizens fled to Ascension and Livingston parishes. A larger percentage of a smaller budget would not significantly elevate the expenditures on public schools, which are overwhelmingly black in EBRP.

The problem is since the earliest arrival of blacks to EBRP, there has been a concerted effort to deny them an education. Although the *Brown* decision ended legal restrictions, it did not transform the attitude of parish officials. As late as 2008, within the EBRPSS, whites comprised fifty percent of the teacher population while they made up only twelve percent of the student body. In essence, many teachers do not have a vested interest in the public school system because neither their children nor their community will be impacted by its status. Since the EBRPSS transitioned from segregation to special education, many black parents had not obtained a quality education. Consequently, for many of them, navigating the educational process after the dual system ended was difficult because they had not acquired the skills needed to evaluate and analyze programs.

In sum, blacks and whites in EBRP will benefit from an educated citizenry. In 2008, only twenty-eight out of seventy-eight schools in the parish had total proficiency percentile on the LEAP Test and GEE that was higher than fifty-nine percent. Unfortunately, the plight of black children of EBRP will remain bleak until adults realize that all children deserve a quality, comprehensive education.

Endnotes

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Help Seeking Behavior: An Evaluation of Participant Satisfaction in a Mental Health Outreach Program on a Historically Black University Campus

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ABSTRACT

Research examining help seeking behavior and African American students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) has been sorely neglected in recent literature. The literature reports that African Americans associate stigma with mental health services and thus are less likely than other groups to seek help. Since African American students may be at greater risk for mental health issues during matriculation and may not seek services through conventional means, counseling center staff and researchers must develop innovative ways HBCU students can access help. This study evaluates participant satisfaction in two mental health awareness outreach programs; additionally, the study examines participant's willingness to encourage others to seek help on campus. Implications of the findings and suggestions for future research are offered.

College students arrive to campus with varied life experiences and many have overcome insurmountable odds on their journey to higher education. The college experience can be exciting and carefree; however, some find the experience depressing, lonely and isolating. Although mental health content has been woven into the fabric of popular culture, research shows that society continues to harbor negative attitudes toward persons with mental disabilities (McLaughlin, Bell, & Stringer, 2004). A majority of the research among university students tends to utilize samples at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) and therefore their samples generally do not accurately reflect the African American experience; moreover, the literature suggests that African Americans are less likely than other racial groups to seek mental health counseling (Alvidrez, 1999; Richardson, Anderson, Flaherty, & Bell, 2003 and Snowden, 2004). African American young adults have been shown to be more at risk for mental illness than any other racial/ethnic group (Pratt & Brody, 2008; Ting, 2011). Ting (2011) asserts that stress due to challenges of academic coursework and additional adult responsibilities could lead to mental health symptoms such as depression. Furthermore, the challenge becomes greater for those who have a history of mental illness.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2012) the most effective idea to combat the challenge of mental health stigmatization is to raise awareness about mental health issues (i.e., depression, anxiety and other disorders). The authors of this study wish to advance this discussion by adding health seeking behavior to the equation; specifically examining if certain interventions (i.e., psycho-educational groups and participatory forums) can be used to encourage help seeking behavior among young black college students; which in turn may help the group at-large. Previous research has demonstrated an extensive need for greater mental health awareness outreach programs (Mowbray, et al 2006). Various methods including a psycho-educational group were used to reach students on this HBCU campus. This article reports level of satisfaction among participants in two mental health outreach programs and it evaluates the participant's willingness to help others. Implications for HBCU administrators (staff and faculty) and recommendations for empirically-based research regarding mental

health and help seeking behaviors among students at HBCUs are presented.

Literature Review

Removing Barriers

The research literature has revealed several important barriers that must be minimized to ensure that mental health needs are effectively addressed; however, for this study, stigma and help seeking behaviors will be examined because both factors speak to issues that HBCU students appear to face. Also, the literature suggests ways to increase help seeking behaviors.

Stigmatization associated with receiving mental health services is a very large burden resulting in a lack of needed services among African American young adults at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) (Knifton et al., 2009). Many African American people feel that if they are diagnosed with a mental health disorder such as bipolar or depression, they will become victims of discrimination, in that they may not be able to perform certain types of work; they may face rejection from family and friends; and they may experience personal shame.

The National Leadership Council on African American Behavioral Health (2009), Inc. produced a pilot study that examined the needs of counseling center personnel. Using an online survey completed by nine HBCU students and nine counseling center directors, the researchers concluded that these students had experienced a high rate of trauma before their college years. They recommended that counseling center directors focus modalities on Afrocentric perspectives, provide comprehensive education and outreach programs to destigmatize mental health problems, remove barriers to accessing appropriate care, and encourage help seeking. Further, it was recommended that the centers participate in activities designed to reduce stigma related to mental illness, given the potential to affect a larger segment of the African American community. The researchers concluded with a call for a large-scale research agenda to explore variables to determine the impact of mental health issues on student functioning.

Help-seeking is a term that is generally used to refer to the behavior of actively seeking help from other people. It is about communicating with other people to obtain help in terms of understanding, advice, information, treatment, and general support in response to a problem or distressing experience. Help seeking is a form of coping that relies on other people, and is therefore often based on social relationships and interpersonal skills (Rickwood, Deane, Wilson and Ciarrochi, 2005; Griffiths, 2013).

The literature presents several pathways in which help seeking behaviors can be increased and they are: lowering barriers to services (i.e., more accessibility); utilizing peer networks and/or social supports; anonymous internet based tools; providing ethnically appropriate services for the population and lastly, young people were observed to be more likely to seek or recommend help for a friend, than to seek help themselves (Wilson and Deane, 2001; SPRC, 2013; Takeuchi, Sue and Yeh, 1995; and Inspire Foundation, 2013). As for this present study, the authors felt it important to mainly utilize peers groups within the sessions in order to undergird the focus on help seeking behavior. Additionally, ethnically relatable advertisements were used to attract participants to each of the groups. Since programming offered was not the usual "information only" format, many of the participants assumed socially supportive roles via sharing in sessions. The authors felt that students and faculty would be more responsive to learning and utilizing the information by allowing the students to have active roles in the program. This was confirmed in the work of Walcott and Music (2012) who state that adolescents generally display a greater preference for informal sources versus formal sources when it comes to seeking help.

Theory

Traditional approaches to mental health treatment have been dominated by European and masculine perspec-

tives, which do not adequately address the needs of other groups. Over the past two decades, scholars and clinicians alike have increasingly called for inclusion of multiculturalism in treatment modalities, including the use of an Afrocentric paradigm in counseling and outreach services (Parham, 1989; Reynolds & Pope, 2003; Taylor, 1999). This type of paradigm allows clinicians to consider the influence of Afrocentric worldviews on the development and maintenance of specific mental health behaviors, as well as the use of Afrocentric values and/or principles in the choice of mental health intervention methods. This culturally congruent paradigm is often found to be appropriate and quite effective with African and/or African American clients (Robinson & Howard-Hamilton, 1994; Whaley & McQueen, 2004). Specifically, the authors of this study used this perspective in the design of their intervention with HBCU college students. That is, black symbolism and characters that are well known and common to the students were used to make the topic relatable to and for this population.

Proponents of Afrocentric paradigms on mental health cite the importance of several key theoretical components (e.g., interdependence, collective work, spirituality and faith, creativity), although a few of these are particularly pertinent to this study. For example, the principle of Umoja (unity) is reflected in the use of student peers to review common mental health issues among students. Ujima (collective work and responsibility) is utilized in the form of focus groups to discuss current mental health struggles of the participants' friends. Also, the use of a popular television show and well-known African American student character at a fictional HBCU is derived largely from the principle of Kujichagalia (self-determination), which suggests that the modern-day African American self is often defined by external influences, including visual, print, and audio media.

Methodology

RAMCOURAGERS (Raising Awareness about Mental Health) was implemented during the 2009-2010 academic year at Winston-Salem State University in North Carolina. Funding for the project was provided in the form of a mini- grant from Morehouse College School of Medicine and SAMHSA. The researchers (faculty/staff from the university counseling center and two human services-related academic departments) recruited and trained 15 undergraduate students to be peer educators and assist with organizing several outreach programs on campus. The students were trained regarding mental health services available on and off campus and they learned how to encourage peers who appeared to be chronically sad or hopeless.

As part of the program, the researchers along with peer educators, held an awareness day on campus and sent a message to the campus community via post card about dealing with holiday blues. In spring 2010 the researchers, along with the RAMCOURAGERS, developed two programs: (a) "I have a friend that . . ." and (b) Relax, Relate, Release.

The "I have a friend that . . ." program convened a large focus group (N = 27) session for 1 hour to discuss issues that their friends were experiencing such as relationship/domestic violence issues, depression, anxiety and other interpersonal challenges. As confirmed by the literature, the researchers presumed that most students would not visit the counseling center to receive help with a personal problem or to get information about assistance with a program. Considering that students typically spend a significant portion of their time with each other, they are more likely to share personal issues with peers rather than with conventional counseling center staff. According to Kitzinger (1995), focus groups allow people to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in a one-to-one interview. During the focus group session, the participants and peer educators wrote comments regarding their friend's problems on a card and the researchers (who represented helping professions) read the cards and gave some simple advice on how to assist the friend. The facilitators advised participants on how to identify needs and

use specific campus and community services to access assistance. Participants also offered suggestions to each other and the peer educators also provided information on services offered at the university and in the community. At the end of the session, a Likert-type scale measure was completed by each participant.

For the last outreach program of the year, the researchers used a popular phrase ("Relax, Relate, Release") from an episode of the television show "A Different World." The television show was based on a fictional HBCU that focused on the lives of Black students on a campus in the South. In this particular episode, one of the main characters had to see a therapist to gain control of stressful life events. During the session, the therapist taught the student a catch phrase to use when she experienced an uncontrollable situation; "Relax, Relate, Release".

The researchers developed a program around this theme and invited students (N = 93) to attend a two-hour presentation. Participants viewed and participated in activities such as massages, tai-chi, and relaxation techniques. Speakers rotated among groups to hold mini-workshop segments on managing stress and anxiety during the final exam period. During the program, the authors and peer educators spoke briefly to the participants about indentifying personal problematic issues and seeking help formally and informally for themselves or their peers. At the end of this program, a Likert-type scale measure was completed by each participant.

The samples primarily consisted of African American female students, faculty, and/or staff at the university. The data was compiled to examine the levels of satisfaction with each program. Frequency distributions were used to evaluate participants' overall satisfaction.

Results

Attendees at both programs were asked to complete a post-program evaluation form. For the "I Have a Friend Program," 85% of the 27 participants rated the overall program as Excellent and 100% rated the program as either Excellent or Good. For the "Relax, Relate, and Release" program, 66.7% of the 93 participants rated the program as Excellent and 29.0% rated the program as Good (Table 1).

Table 1

Participants' Ratings of the Programs

Rating	I Have a Friend		Relax, Relate, Release	
	f	%	f	%
Excellent	23	85.2	62	66.7
Good	4	14.8	27	29.0
Fair	0	0.0	2	2.2
Poor	0	0.0	2	2.2

Other than rating a program overall, another measure of a program's success is whether participants would recommend the program to others. Ninety-one of the 93 students who participated in the "Relax, Relate, Release" program and all 27 of the students who participated in the "I Have a Friend" program indicated that they would recommend that others attend the sessions. Students were asked to indicate whether they would be able to help others access services on or off campus as a result of having participated in the program. All 27 students who participated in the "I Have a Friend" program indicated that they could help other students and 82 of the 91 students who participated in the "Relax, Relate, Release" program indicated that they could help other students with symptoms of mental health problems as a result of having participated in the program (Table 2). Overall, the programs accomplished the goal of student satisfaction and the action-oriented goal that attendees would be able to use what they had learned to help other students.

Table 2

Participants' Recommendation of the Programs to Others and Prediction of Help for Others

Recommendation	I Have a Friend		Relax, Relate, Release	
	f	%	f	%
I will suggest to others to attend these sessions	27	100	91	100
I will be able to help others on/off campus	27	100	82	92

Discussion/Implications

This study highlights several valuable points related to African Americans college students seeking help on an HBCU campus. First, the participating students indicated that mental health awareness activities that incorporated engaging interventions were more helpful than information-only sessions. The results of the data (Table 1) demonstrate that participants were not only satisfied with the programming but would encourage others to participate in these types of programs. This type of engagement early on helps the student to anticipate how the process will feel and to evaluate its effectiveness prior to actually "needing" the service or intervention. Additionally, if participants would recommend these types of programs to their peers who are struggling, this in turn may increase their actions to seek help. Furthermore, this will assist counseling center personnel in identifying at-risk students.

These interventions should be marketed to everyone on campus to increase participation. Support of outreach activities and any activity aimed at increasing help seeking behavior is a critical priority for HBCU administrators such as Presidents/Chancellors, Assistant Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs/Provosts, Academic Deans, and Department Chairs. Although the typical administrator is focused on academic affairs and student persistence, administrators must recognize the need for psychosocial stability as a key predictor of academic success. As

reported in the literature (Cheatham, 1975, 1976; National Leadership Council on African American Behavioral Health, 2009), administrative staff must ensure that counseling centers are well funded and adequately staffed to ensure continuity of services to students, faculty, and staff. For example, some institutions may be exempt from employing licensed staff in counseling centers, which is a serious disservice to present students on campus with mental health challenges. Students involved in the awareness-raising activities presented in this study shared personal information that, in some cases, warranted formal referral to the counseling center. These decisions were made by individuals, licensed by the state as mental health professionals.

Programmatic activities (such as "I Have a Friend") should offer anonymity so that participants can discuss issues and challenges openly. Students are likely to be aware of what is going on with other students. As confirmed by Walcott and Music (2012), without question, the use of peer educators spreads the word in classrooms as well as off campus about services that are available to those who are experiencing stress and challenges.

There is a dearth of research literature on the topic of help seeking behavior on HBCU campuses. HBCU counseling staff, community stakeholders, and research faculty must make efforts to produce empirical research that is relevant to their campus. HBCUs can then exchange research literature, ideas, and interventions for use on both HBCU and non-HBCU campuses. HBCU counseling centers can develop strong research ideas to solicit grants from local, state, and national funders to study phenomena unique to HBCU campuses.

Students on college campuses face a variety of challenges and needs. Minority students, especially African Americans, are likely to experience a variety of situations and stressors that predispose them to mental illness. It is imperative that HBCUs provide a variety of awareness-raising activities to reduce the stigma of seeking services and to increase help seeking behaviors. HBCUs should provide mental health services in a wide range of formats, including nontraditional formats. Additionally, it is most important to use other mechanisms to increase help seeking behavior in the most effective manner and through the use of various mediums and platforms.

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Book Reviews

Costello, Brannon and Qiana J. Whitted, eds. *Comics and the U.S. South.* **Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 2012. Pp. 342.**
Reviewer: Coke Ellington

For *Comics and the U.S. South*, editors Brannon Costello and Qiana J. Whitted have gathered a broad area of graphic treatments of the region. From the opening essay, "Li'l Abner, Snuffy and Friends: The Appalachian South in the American Comic Strip," to the closing essay, "The Demands of Reading John Neufeld's *A.D.: New Orleans After the Deluge*," contributors make provocative statements about the often "complex, multiple nature of southern culture(s)." Using Superman as a focus, the editors explain their basic reason for using the South as a backdrop. "Within the superhero comics genre and in comic studies generally," they write, "Superman's 'never-ending battle for Truth, Justice, and the American Way' is most likely to take place in a major northern city, a fantasy landscape, or the far reaches of the galaxy, with Mississippi, Tennessee, and Louisiana usually all but invisible until a lesson on the need for tolerance is in the offing."

Illuminating the South and its predominantly black and white denizens through study of media that "include serial comic books, graphic novels, comic strips, editorial comics, webcomics, and other forms of visual narrative" is Costello and Whitted's principal task. Their qualifications are ideal for the job. Costello is associate professor of English at Louisiana State University. Southern literary studies and comic studies are his primary areas of specialization. Whitted is associate professor of English and African American studies at the University of South Carolina. She specializes in "postmodern black American literature and the intersections of race, history, and censorship in comics." In the book under review, they seek to "combine formal and ideological concerns to model a method of reading that works ... to engage with the South in all its complexity." Race and ethnicity are paramount.

Comics in the U.S. is arranged topically. Part one, titled "The South in the National Imagination," covers mostly newspaper comic strips, but it also includes "Captain America" comic books. M. Thomas Inge, Robert Emory Blackwell Professor of Humanities at Randolph-Macon College, introduces the section with "the first successful comic strip specifically set in the South," *Li'l Abner* by the Connecticut artist Alfred Caplin, or Al Capp. *Li'l Abner* appeared in newspapers from 1934 to 1977, approximately forty years of immense turmoil in the United States. For Inge, Capp used the residents of Dogpatch to direct his "satire ... at the national scene rather than at the South, and at man's inhumanity to man rather than at regional characteristics."

Brian Cremins, assistant professor of English at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois, contributed an essay titled "Bumbazine, Blackness, and the Myth of the Redemptive South in Walt Kelly's *Pogo*" to *Comics in the U.S. South*. "If reading a Superman comic book grants you the power to imagine a greater physical self," Cremins declares, "reading *Pogo* would grant you the power to imagine a greater moral self." The essay notes further, "It appears Kelly found in idealized notions of the South a parallel to his own idealized memories of his childhood in Bridgeport," Connecticut. Cremins's fellow contributor, Costello, writes about Captain America, beginning his contribution in the following manner: "The concept of the superhero has been closely linked with a patriotic, even jingoistic, vision of the United States at least since Captain America socked Adolf Hitler on the cover of Captain America #1 in 1941." From 1987 to 1989, Costello adds, "the Captain America No More storyline by writer Mark Gruenwald and several artists ... chronicles what happens when the original Captain America, Steve Rogers—a son of New York and the New Deal—is replaced by a well-intentioned but reactionary southerner, John Walker."

Rogers's original sidekick, Bucky, was a "white teenager who idolized his mentor," while Lemar Hoskins, a muscular African American, is Bucky to Walker. Costello asserts that "Walker's irrational, violent tendencies and complicated relationship with African American partner [reveal] the ways in which the South's fraught reinscription into the national narrative in the 1980s inspired anxieties about how a nation with the South at

the center, rather than the margins, might alter understanding of the United States as a whole." Although Costello's sociopolitical implications about the country's "southernization" are clear and unflattering, probably the most blatant negative observation or frank commentary, depending on one's viewpoint, about the South comes at the conclusion of his essay. He proposes, "'Captain America No More' and the stories that trace its aftermath ... not only exposes the way in which the South continued to enable a willed amnesia about the nation's ills in the 1980s, but it also offers a cautionary depiction of how ostensibly progressive attempts at symbolic national reunification may have deeply reactionary implications."

For readers who went from Donald Duck and Superman to Mad Magazine decades ago and never advanced beyond that point, parts two through four of *Comics in the U.S. South* are enlightening. Part two, "Emancipation and Civil Rights Resistance," begins with Conseula Francis's reflections in "Drawing the Unspeakable: Kyle Baker's Slave Narrative." Baker's serial comic is based on the 1831 text of *The Confessions of Nat Turner*. "While Baker does not label his narrative as a corrective," Francis pronounces, "it certainly functions that way. Baker's comic book gives context and flesh to this influential figure in American and African American history." "Black and White and Read All Over: Representing Race in Mat Johnson and Warren Pleece's *Incognegro*: A Graphic Mystery," is analyzed by Tim Caron, associate dean of the Macaulay Honors College at the City University of New York. In Caron's words, Incognegro "is the story of a young, ambitious, light-complexioned African American male, Zane Pinchback, who lives in Harlem during the 1930s. While Zane, unlike many characters who inhabit contemporary comics, is not a superhero per se, he does have an alter ego: as 'Incognegro,' he uses his fair skin to investigate and report on lynching in the U.S. South for a large Northern newspaper, the *New Holland Herald*."

Gary Richards, assistant professor of English at the University of Mary Washington, focuses on another controversial issue in the South and the country, sexual orientation. In "Everybody's Graphic Protest Novel: *Stuck Rubber Baby* and the Anxieties of Racial Difference," Richards describes Howard Cruse as a gay cartoonist who uses the graphic novel form "to explore a set of tensions surrounding the racial and sexual politics of the Deep South in the 1960s." Alison Mandavile's essay, "A Visitation of Narratives: Dialogue and Comics in Randall Kenan's *A Visitation of Spirits*," follows the same thematic line in part three of *Comics in the U.S.*, titled "Revisualizing Stories, Rereading Images." Mandaville, a literature and writing instructor at Pacific Lutheran University, tells how Kenan presents the "southern African American queer male embodiment as reflected in the life of Horace Cross."

Joseph Michael Sommers's essay "Crooked Appalachia: The Laughter of the Melungeon Witches in Mike Mignola's *Hellboy: The Crooked Man*" delves equally as deeply into race and culture in the American South. Sommers, assistant professor of English at Central Michigan University, acknowledges: "To accurately discuss the Melungeons, a group once identified by Library of Congress researchers as the largest 'little race' of miscegenated people in the 1960s ... or even to discuss the accuracy of Mike Mignola's representations of them in his 2008 comic book mini-series *Hellboy: The Crooked Man*, is a daunting task. The Melungeons are a people somewhat shrouded in mystery, mythology, and, until recently, a history composed more of reportage and conjecture than of rigorous anthropological or ethnographic investigation." By Sommers's judgment, demystifying lore associated with Appalachian witchcraft was Mignola's key scholarly contribution.

On the whole, the essays that compose *Comics in the U.S. South* cover a subject that some academicians do not take seriously, comics. As such, the essays serve the general purpose of shedding considerable light on comic art about the South from the 1930s into the twentieth century. As regards African American and Africana studies in particular, the essays "upset traditional configurations of heroism through carefully crafted counter-narratives that reframe black enslavement, segregation, and Civil Rights resistance through the voices of insurrectionists, activists, and bystanders."

Francis "makes a strong case for Baker's visual rendering of the fugitive slave narrative form through a strategically violent aesthetic that takes issue with Thomas Gray's 1831 account." In looking at passing and lynching, Carson illustrates how *Incognegro* critiqued "socially constructed ideas of race during Jim Crow." Richards deals not only with

race but also with sexual identity. Together, his and the other essays in the volume under review show how "explorations of African American life in graphic narratives have undergone a fascinating resurgence in the last two decades, with the prevailing trend emphasizing the historical antagonisms of the United States South as a brutal social, cultural, and spiritual landscape."

With the unexplained exception of Mandaville's "A Visitation of Narratives," which has no illustrations, the graphics included in *Comics in the U.S. South* are effective. Especially worthwhile are the pictures accompanying a description of the *Pogo* comic strip, which examines the mythical "role of the 'redemptive South' in the national imagination." Kelly's first strips featuring Pogo the Possum and Albert the Alligator also involved a black youth named Bumbazine. He does not show up in *Pogo*, the series, but his gentle spirit is carried on in the form of the main character (Pogo).

Most modern readers probably have never seen or even heard of Bumbazine, but his goodness was central to the general *Pogo* plot. Taking an ethical cue from Bumbazine, Pogo confronted some of the darkest forces in the South, including the Ku Klux Klan, and hence served as a "guide to ... American fantasies of race, identity, and geography" in the middle twentieth century and onward. Though some readers, especially conservative white Southerners, might find a few of the conclusions in *Comics in the U.S.* troubling, this reviewer thinks the book is destined for a spot on the bookshelves of comic fans. It also will be a required or supplementary text in numerous comic studies syllabi, especially African-American and Africana studies courses.

Johnson, Andre E. *The Forgotten Prophet: Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and the African American Prophetic Tradition.* **Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2012. Pp. 127.**
Reviewer: Allezo N. Owens

Although much has been written and said about Henry McNeal Turner as a leading bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC), Andre E. Johnson conveys even more about him in *The Forgotten Prophet: Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and the African American Prophetic Tradition.* Specifically, Johnson looks at Turner's life through the prism of four important speeches delivered from 1866 through 1895. According to Johnson, who holds the position Dr. James E. Netters Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Religion and African American Studies at Memphis Theological Seminary, these selections help contemporary readers understand Turner's prophetic rhetorical trajectory regarding the future of blacks living on American soil. As many other scholars have shown, his trajectory became increasingly pessimistic as he aged. Johnson, however, maintains that Turner adopted a prophetic persona to speak to increasingly difficult situations for former slaves.

Several prophetic streams existed in the African-American religious tradition of the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction eras. Johnson looks at four streams that coincided with the speeches surveyed in his book—namely, celebratory prophecy, prophetic disputation, mission oriented prophecy, and pessimistic prophecy. For Johnson, each stream served as an index of Turner's prophetic rhetoric. Turner, Johnson writes, was "grounded in the sacred and rooted in a community experience that offers a critique of existing communities and traditions by charging and challenging society to live up to the ideas espoused while offering celebration and hope for a brighter future."

Johnson defines celebratory prophecy as one "typically grounded in a sacred covenant that calls the people to celebrate an event that leads the people to celebrate the sacred covenant." He uses Turner's Emancipation Day address of January 1, 1866, as an exemplar of this tradition. As the keynote speaker for the event, which took on the first New Year's Day following passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, Turner engaged in a reinterpretation of American slavery and the country's recent civil war. He told listeners that slavery was a divinely allowed, not a divinely ordained, institution that elevated blacks and tested southern whites' obedience to God. Enslaved Africans were held in *trust of the white man* for the benefit of God. Hence, slaves would be exposed to the civ-

ilizing influence of Christianity and thus become productive members of American society once freed. Southern whites abused that trust by maltreating blacks, Turner said. In doing so, they defamed the image of God. The Civil War, he elaborated, had to be fought to remedy the abuse. Moreover, the war was not simply a struggle between the North and the South; it was a war in which blacks proved their humanity by gallantly fighting for the cause of universal equality. For Turner, a Union veteran, his and other blacks' wartime service proved they deserved to share in the sacred covenant of liberty.

As a result of Turner's postwar reinterpretation of slavery and the Civil War, his prophetic hope was that the United States could, and indeed would, become the shining light of freedom for all since the "horrid monster and curse" of slavery no longer existed. Blacks and whites now could live peacefully together by forgetting the past or by holding all things in common. Turner was especially confident that this laudable goal could be achieved if freepersons let "by-gones be by-gones" and moved forward with whites as American citizens. He, of course, was quixotic.

Prophetic disputation is the second stream that Johnson explores in his book. A prophet, he notes, explicitly quotes an erroneous opinion of a people, corrects that opinion, and announces judgments if the people do not adhere to the prophecy. In 1868, two years after the Emancipation Day speech, Turner used prophetic disputation to counter the majority opinion of the Georgia House of Representatives. On August 8, representatives introduced a resolution to deny all African Americans the right to serve in the Georgia legislature. According to Johnson, the resolution was based on a triadic opinion: Blacks had made no contribution to history, Congress did not give them the right to hold office, and no specific enactment conferred the rights of African Americans to hold office.

Turner responded to the abovementioned resolution in September 1868. Amid an address before the Georgia House, he disputed the unseating of the African-American representatives. The address, called "I Claim the Rights of a Man," centered on the personhood of African Americans. Turner argued that blacks were created in the image of God and that the United States Constitution conferred manhood status on them. Addressing the three claims raised by the House majority, Turner replied that African Americans had contributed greatly to human endeavors. (Johnson asserts that his subject engaged in "vindicationalism," an African-American tradition of defending against the charge of non-contribution to history). Turner furthermore asserted that Congress, through its Reconstruction measures, made no racial distinctions about who could hold elective office. In relation to the third dubious point of the House, Turner asked, "Were we ever made slaves by specific enactment?" In Turner's view, just as there had been no specific enactment to create the enslavement of African Americans, there need not be a specific enactment to allow African Americans to engage in politics or perform any other public service for which they were fit.

Turner recognized the unseating of black representatives was a foregone conclusion. He therefore issued prophetic judgments against the House. At the same time, however, he offered hope to black legislators. Even though the American covenant may have failed in Georgia, he averred, God would one day rectify the injustice.

As things grew increasingly worse for black Georgians, as well as for African Americans throughout the South and the country, Turner became quite pessimistic about their "manhood" status. In 1893 he called for a "Negro convention," to use the language of the period, whose delegates would consider emigrating from the United States. According to Johnson, a word spoken during the convention revealed Turner's mission-oriented prophecy, which Johnson defines as a call for the people to "participate in a divine mission by reconstituting the people from their perceived identities." Turner encouraged delegates to forget any perceived notion about citizenship. Nostalgically violent whites' constant acts of reprehensible conduct against blacks, both legal and extralegal, he said, prevented any real expression of citizenship among African Americans. Hence, emigration was the only viable option for Turner, and hesupported his case by reconstituting American history. While people of African descent had contributed to the building of the United States, he recalled, their current predicament compelled them to seek other quarters.

Irrespective of the American apartheid of the early 1890s, Turner's call for mass emigration garnered no strong support from the country's black communities. He consequently changed his prophetic persona once again, Johnson recounts. This time, Turner engaged in pessimistic prophecy—that is, a lament in which the prophet speaks of the pain and suffering shared by the people and the prophet alike. As Johnson explains, Turner's hope was to show the people they were not alone.

At the 1895 Congress on Africa held in Atlanta, Georgia, Turner delivered a speech called "The American Negro and His Fatherland." It illustrated his continued pessimism on account of Jim Crow. Conservative white Americans' staunch opposition to citizenship status for African Americans was the main problem of the era, which the black scholar Rayford Logan described as the nadir. Similar to the "Negro" convention address in 1893, Turner continued to call for African-American emigration from the United States. However, unlike the previous address, his Congress speech specifically called for African Americans to move to Africa, the "Fatherland." Because he knew a majority of African Americans agreed with the anti-emigration positions of such notable blacks as Frederick Douglas and Booker T. Washington, who delivered a more famous (Turner would say infamous) address in 1895, Turner expressed frustration over the plight of African Americans. In closing, Johnson points out that Turner expected nothing to change in America. Therefore, the only feasible option was to "speak out on behalf of others and to chronicle their pain and suffering as well as his own." But Turner's lament was not to God. Instead, it was to the people, especially black Southerners. He likewise called on them to share his frustration. In that regard, Turner's hope was to be heard, Johnson reasons.

Overall, *Forgotten Prophet* offers a fresh perspective on the prophetic life of Henry McNeal Turner. Johnson takes a look at some of Turner's most important speeches and considers them beyond their oratorical suasion. As Johnson acknowledges, it would be hard for one to legitimately argue that Turner's speeches had much persuasive impact on his varied audiences. But as prophetic rhetoric, the speeches introduce modern readers to an aspect of Turner's life and milieu not considered before now. Besides that contribution to scholarship, the relative shortness of Johnson's book makes it a very accessible read for those who may know little about Turner, his speeches, or his prolific life as a religious and social leader of his era.

Johnson, Tekla Agbala Ali. *Free Radical: Ernest Chambers, Black Power, and the Politics of Race.* **Lubbock, Tex.: Texas Tech University, 2012. Pp. 285.**
Reviewer: Charles E. Jones

In 1970, long before the historic ascendancy of an African American to the White House, black elected officials gained increased access to the corridors of state legislatures across the country as a result of the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Tyson King-Meadows and Thomas Schaller's seminal 2006 study, *Devolution and Black State Legislators*, explains how voting rights act "increased the total number of black elected officials (BEOs) across all levels of government federal, state, county, education, municipal, and judicial. State legislators are no exception to this trend." By 1970, the number of African-American state legislators increased from sixty-four to 168. Approximately thirty years later, in 2009, a reported 628 black lawmakers occupied seats in the nation's respective state legislative bodies. Indeed, Barack Obama launched his landmark campaign for president after serving two terms in the Illinois state legislature.

Nebraskan Ernest Chambers joined the ranks of African-American state legislators in 1970. He subsequently spent nearly forty years, 1970-2008, in Nebraska's unicameral legislature. He served the Eleventh District, representing the black community of North Omaha. Chambers assiduously employed the powers of his legislative seat in conjunction with the "pressure politics" of grassroots activism to empower Nebraskans of African descent.

Tekla Ali Agbala Johnson, assistant professor of history at Salem College in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, adroitly chronicles the political odyssey of Ernest Chambers in her well-researched political biography titled *Free Radical: Ernest Chambers, Black Power, and the Politics of Race*. Johnson offers a perceptive account of a Black Power activist (Chambers) who operated skillfully in the legislative arena. She provides an astute portrayal of Chambers, a fiercely independent black lawmaker with a nonpartisan affiliation who eagerly assumed the role as the "voice of the voiceless." Johnson utilizes extensive archival data, oral interviews, and government documents to produce an impressive narrative of Chambers's efforts to "fight ... for equal rights on multiple fronts and in several theaters." In doing so, she situates Chambers in the broader national and international Black Freedom struggle.

Biographical studies of black elected officials greatly enhance readers' knowledge of the character, dynamics, and limitations of African-American politics. Heretofore, the overwhelming majority of these studies centered on black candidates who captured gubernatorial, congressional, or mayoral posts. *Free Radical* is a welcome addition to fewer than five political biographies of African-American state legislators. In addition to broadening this small cohort of literature, Johnson's book informs the understanding of Black Power dynamics in the electoral process by expanding the protest foci of the emerging Black Power Studies subfield.

Free Radical opens with a detailed discussion of the African-American community in Omaha, Nebraska, where Chambers was reared. Chapter one analyzes the confluence of family, education, and political mentors on the development of Chambers's commitment to social justice and the maverick political style that would later define his legislative tenure. Chapter two examines his extensive community activism prior to being elected to the state legislature. Johnson demonstrates that Chambers's grassroots activism was anchored in Black Nationalism. As a result, he actively supported a host of issues pertinent to Omaha's black community. Initiatives included fair housing, quality education, and the legal mobilization efforts to exonerate two local Black Panther leaders arrested for the bombing death of a police officer. Chambers likewise spearheaded opposition to numerous incidents of police brutality, an injustice that would remain a consistent focal point during his political career.

Johnson recounts Chambers's decision to seek elective office, as well as the strategies of his inaugural campaign, in chapter three. The chapter further unearths the core elements of Chambers's subsequent legislative style through an examination of his first term in office. It was during this time that he developed and refined his maverick approach. Chambers frequently utilized the filibuster to thwart legislation. His preparation was meticulous. He had superb oratorical skills and exhibited a mastery of parlia-

mentarian rules. Of equal significance, Chambers displayed a willingness to buttress his formal legislative maneuverings with grassroots activism. This inside (legislative corridor)-outside (grassroots politics) tactical strategy would become a signature feature of his political style. Oftentimes, a fervent opposition to police abuse was the connective thread between the inside-outside theaters of politics.

Chapters four through seven primarily focus on Chambers's tenure in the Nebraska legislature, commencing with his activities from 1972 through 1982. Johnson shows that Chambers was an effective lawmaker despite being the sole African American in the Nebraska's forty-member unicameral body and an advocate of Black Nationalist politics. Chambers, however, was not able to accomplish every goal that he set for himself and his constituents. In chapter five, Johnson examines Chambers's inability to capture formal institutional power. After his first term in office, he was denied a chair's position and handily lost a bid for a statewide office. In retrospect, these occurrences do not diminish Chambers's role as a successful politician and an important local black activist. His cosponsorship of legislation in 1980 that divested state funds invested in South was one noteworthy accomplishment. The pivotal role he played in securing district rather than at-large elections for school board members in Omaha was another.

Chapter six examines the expansion of Chambers's Black Nationalist outlook to include populist issues. Johnson illuminates the manner in which Chambers used his legislative office to advocate on behalf of farmers who faced foreclosures. He also worked on behalf of Native Americans who wanted the remains of their ancestors returned to them. Chambers likewise fought for the rights of members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

Free Radical concludes with an analysis of Chambers's final four terms in office, 2000-2008. The conclusion furthermore explores the personal and political costs of Chambers's maverick style, which was accented by his forthright advocacy on behalf of the "voiceless" black and white residents of Nebraska. As of 2000, Johnson notes, Chambers was still championing several longstanding issues from his days as a local community activist. His advocacy continued over the next eight years. Chambers was a constant advocate of quality education and an ardent critic of police abuse. Consequently, he became known as one of the most influential members to occupy a seat in the state's legislative body. Johnson recalls that "before the end of his career, Chambers would sponsor upwards of 500 bills, offer over 350 amendments and more than a dozen constitutional amendments, and would stop many pieces of what he felt was bad legislation from becoming law." He retired a forceful voice for Omaha, Nebraska's downtrodden, regardless of race.

Ernest Chambers's long, respectable legislative career garnered him numerous awards. They include the Dr. King Humanitarian Award, the Hero of the First Amendment Award, and the Peacemaker of the Year Award. The National Organization of Women sponsored an Ernie Chambers Appreciation Day in recognition of his defense of a woman's reproductive rights. Although Chambers received these and other accolades, he endured both personal and political prices for his willingness to speak truth to power. For example, he did not become wealthy and his uncompromising activism triggered harassment from both the local police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Moreover, Chambers never ascended to the chairmanship of the Nebraska Senate's judiciary committee, even though he was the most senior member of the body. Finally, he failed to secure substantial voter support when he sought the state's attorney general post. Nevertheless, as Johnson poignantly observes, when Chambers left the state legislature in 2008—thirty-eight years after he entered it and only because of term limit restrictions—he remained a "free radical." He could not be bought or co-opted to abandon his commitment to the politically and economically disenfranchised.

Tekla Agbala Ali Johnson's *Free Radical: Ernest Chambers, Black Power, and the Politics of Race* undoubtedly will stand the test of time. While the book would have benefited from greater attention to the backroom political maneuverings and tradeoffs of Chambers's legislative victories and defeats, as well as the addition of tables to accentuate his prodigious legislative output, Johnson's study nonetheless makes important contributions to multiple sets of literature. It informs the scholarship of African-American politics, Black Power studies, and local African-American history, particularly in the Midwest. Johnson's book is destined to become a model work in the study of the quest for African-American self-determination. Therefore, the volume is recommended highly for scholars and general readers alike.

Umoja, Akinyele Omowale. *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement.* **New York: New York University Press, 2013. Pp. 339.**
Reviewer: Tekla Agbala Ali Johnson

Akinyele Umoja, chair of the Department of African-American Studies at Georgia State University, offers a new paradigm for understanding the black freedom struggle in the American South in his groundbreaking volume, *We Will Shoot Back.* An exhaustive study of black self-empowerment in Mississippi, the book presents armed self-defense as the only rational combatant to white supremacist violence in the state from the 1950s through the 1970s. Umoja builds on scholarship that questions the efficacy of nonviolence in civil and human rights movements. He posits that nonviolence in Mississippi might have operated primarily as a strategy for managing publicity.

The many strengths of this seminal work include its ethnographic methodology. The author is the descendant of Mississippi sharecroppers, and he relays having grown up listening to narratives about black armed resistance. In Mississippi, as in much of the South, conservative whites effectively controlled black labor, and they dominated the state's economic and political systems. Umoja argues that from 1950 to 1964, black Mississippians carried out armed self-defense on an ad hoc basis. In 1965, however, they became emboldened to develop formalized systems of resistance aboveground.

Umoja shows that black armed resistance was the essential element in ending disenfranchisement and segregation in Mississippi. Though always present, white terror intensified in the state after 1965 in response to "black power" demands for equal rights. Consequently, self-defense became a necessary part of movement protocol. It was, Umoja found, armed resistance that allowed the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee to carry out major campaigns in Mississippi and elsewhere in the South. No longer aberrations, by virtue of their advocacy of retribution to white violence, Robert Williams and the Deacons for Defense appear in *We Will Shoot Back* as forbearer and organizational prototype, respectively.

Umoja's research is both intensely local and national. He focuses on virtually unknown revolutionary actors in Mississippi but links those persons to better-known activists in key national organizations. Umoja, for example, reveals the personal political philosophy of Medgar Evers and other freedom fighters who saw nonviolence as an auxiliary strategy that was publically palatable but of little use in Mississippi's small towns and backwoods. Umoja makes clear that "local [black] people," or ordinary civilians, insisted on being armed. They, not white law enforcement officials, protected their families and visiting civil rights workers. With very limited federal intervention, ordinary blacks had to actualize the rights that were affirmed through the passage of civil rights legislation.

Black Mississippians employed the "bad man" and "trickster" motifs from African and African-American folklore to resist white supremacy using psychology and slight-of-hand. The *bad man* feared no one and hence presented a danger to the status quo. The *trickster* appeared to be one thing but actually was another. In the case of apartheid Mississippi, the bad man was the African American who vowed to retaliate against white violence; the trickster was one who pledged to be nonviolent while arming for self-defense.

Umoja's analysis suggests that armed self-defense in Mississippi developed organically, first alongside and later inside the civil rights movement. Local campaigns for freedom were waged across Mississippi, and self-defense played a role in most of the campaigns. Umoja discusses the Regional Council of Negro Leadership (RCNL), an organization formed in the 1950s across the Mississippi Delta. T.R.M. Howard, an African-American physician and businessman who operated a medical clinic, among other operations, led the RCNL. His status in the delta made him an enemy of white supremacists. Their hatred of Howard increased as a result of his insistence that black citizens boycott public facilities that did not serve African Americans.

Members of the RCNL used armed self-defense to protect their leadership and movement. Howard, along with Amzie Moore and Medgar Evers, Mississippi field secretary of the NAACP, practiced personal and group defense after the brutal murder of four-

teen-year-old Emmett Till in 1955. Howard hired bodyguards to protect him and his family. Moore provided security for movement people. Evers carried a firearm. Umoja notes that Evers continued to deliver the NAACP's official stance on injustice when speaking publically—the NAACP relied heavily on litigation to bring about universal equality—even though he sometimes preferred direct action. Evers understood that deviating from the NAACP's chosen path of resistance could be costly. When Robert F. Williams, president of the Monroe, North Carolina, branch of the NAACP, tried in 1959 to alter the protocol of the chapter to include self-defense and retaliatory violence, he was suspended by national NAACP officials for his "unconventional" posture.

Freedom Summer seriously challenged the cant of nonviolence within the ranks of the civil rights movement, as white attacks multiplied. In Madison, Mississippi, CORE workers found support from a black man, entrepreneur, and military veteran named C. O. Chinn. He carried handguns and led an armed security force so that CORE members could register black voters without fearing for their lives. In McComb, another Mississippi locale, blacks created a paramilitary structure to ward off attacks from the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and random white marauders. A group of blacks in Natchez led a consumer boycott and had to be protected lest they be murdered by white terrorists. The local NAACP in Natchez led the boycott and African Americans there provided protection through their paramilitary operation. This arrangement proved successful and was repeated by freedom workers in other Mississippi towns.

By 1965 it had become clear that an effective method of struggle had evolved in Natchez, Mississippi. The method included economic boycotts, armed self-defense, and "Da Spirits" (community enforcers) to ensure blacks did not give in to white threats, convenience, and habit or patronize targeted establishments. According to Umoja, the fact that a successful defense model was created in Natchez was symbolically important. The town was the site of two Klan strongholds, the United Klans of American and the White Knights of the KKK.

To meet the threat of Klan terror and push for black freedom in Mississippi, Charles Evers, Medgar's brother, became NAACP field secretary following Medgar's assassination in 1963. Charles announced publicly that nonviolence would not work in the state. "If a white man shoots at a Negro in Mississippi," he announced, "we will shoot back." The latter half of his announcement constitutes the title of book under review.

To stop bombings by white supremacists and drive-bys of movement workers' lodging, Natchez developed its own chapter of the Louisiana-based Deacons for Defense. Deacons provided organized security for the community and the movement alike after 1965. Once economic boycotts were put in place in Natchez, Rudy Shields, a black Korean War veteran belonging to the Belzoni NAACP, was sent to manage the boycott. Female NAACP members developed strategies to identify and punish informants, while Shields drew on West African traditions of ancestral leadership, judicial decision making, and enforcement. His Spirits whipped and publicly repudiated anyone who broke the boycott.

Knowledge acquired in Natchez was incorporated in freedom struggles elsewhere in Mississippi. At Marshall County in the northern part of the state, Umoja argues, gains made by African Americans in the 1970s caused Klan activity to intensify during the same period. To forestall both law enforcement and white terrorist enemies of the movement, freedom workers sought alliances. A relationship was forged with the North Mississippi Rural Legal Services (NMRLS), which backed civil rights and black power organizations under a confederated arrangement called the United League (UL). Lewis Myers, an NMRLS lawyer, became a leading spokesperson for the UL. The NMRLS hired freedom workers as paralegals and support staff.

Henry Boyd and Alfred Robinson, two additional leaders of the United League, were ardent supporters of self-defense. In 1974, following the election of a black woman named Bernice Totten to the previously all-white Marshall County Board of Supervisors, white supremacists fired on Robinson and several other UL members. Robinson shot back. The whites fled, and Robinson's popularity among blacks soared, Umoja recounts. Under Robinson's leadership, the UL protested unlawful police violence, including the deaths of those who succumbed while detained, and the economic repression of black Mississippians.

In Byhalia, a small town in Marshall County, a mid-1970s boycott was started using Rudy Shields's method of enforcement. The boycott succeeded in winning concessions from Byhalia municipal officials. In Tupelo, meanwhile, the KKK threatened violence if a UL boycott protesting police brutality continued. Rather than acquiescing, the UL promised retaliatory violence. Black armed resistance continued there in coming years. In May 1978, for instance, the Klan held a demonstration downtown. For the first time in Tupelo history, a large contingent of armed African Americans surrounded the KKK and heckled its members.

We Will Shoot Back is a study of revolutionary nationalism at the grass roots level. In the broader sense, the book is an intellectual history of the civil rights and black power movements in the South. Written with exquisite detail and accessible language, Umoja's tome is a blueprint of successful black freedom struggles in Mississippi—a blueprint unknown to many young readers. In this reviewer's opinion, *We Will Shoot Back* is an essential volume for every Africana and African-American studies department. The book is painstakingly researched, and its conclusions will force a revision in American history curricula.

Editor's note: We are reprinting Dr. Kolin's poetry from the 2013 issue because of some errors in the spring 2013 issue. Also, the publisher of **The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness** by Michelle Alexander is the New Press. We apologize for the mistakes!

UNDERGRADUATE SUBMISSIONS

The S.C.A.A.S.I. journal *The Griot* is pleased to invite undergraduate student submissions for the issue *inaugural emerging scholar student showcase in the Fall issue of The Griot: The Journal of African American Studies (The Griot).* Please submit articles to Professor Andrew Baskin via andrew_baskin@berea.edu as an email attachment typed in Word for review. This is a wonderful opportunity for undergraduate students to become a published scholar, as *The Griot* is a refereed journal. We look forward to your submissions. For more information, please contact Professor Andrew Baskin or Dr. Tashia Bradley at tbradley@colby.edu.

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S.C.A.A.S.I. had its beginnings in 1979 following a successful statewide Black History and Culture program at Texas Southern University. The program at T.S.U. was held to bring together persons from across the state of Texas who were interested in interpreting and preserving black history and culture. The participants were very responsive. It was reasoned that this venture was such a success that the momentum had to be kept alive and expanded. Even though the southern states contained, perhaps a majority of African Americans, most of the intellectual activities geared at interpreting and preserving African American history and culture were centered elsewhere. This was virtually a virgin field. Here was something that had to be done. It was immediately decided to try to bring together, regardless of color or creed, all who were interested in interpreting and preserving Black history and culture, especially that which had originated in and/or affected the South.

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INQUIRIES:
S.C.A.A.S.I. membership inquiries should be addressed to Howard J. Jones, Secretary/Treasurer, Southern Conference on African American Studies, Inc., P.O. Box 330163, Houston, Texas 77233. The annual membership fee is $50.00. All members of S.C.A.A.S.I. receive the journal free. Single copies are $30.00 each. The library subscription rate is $75.00 per year. The international rate is $100.00.

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Named after the former vice president of S.C.A.A.S.I., the late Yvonne Ochillo of Southern University, the purpose of the award is to recognize and honor the best article published in either issue of **THE GRIOT** during the preceding year. The winner is announced by the editor of **THE GRIOT** at the annual meeting/convention.

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