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"A BEACON OF HOPE": THE AFRICAN AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCH AND THE ORIGINS OF BLACK HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN KENTUCKY

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“A BEACON OF HOPE”:
THE AFRICAN AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCH
AND THE ORIGINS OF BLACK HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN KENTUCKY

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By
Erin Wiggins Gilliam

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Gerald Smith, Professor of History

Lexington, Kentucky

2017

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

“A BEACON OF HOPE”:
THE AFRICAN AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCH
AND THE ORIGINS OF BLACK HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN KENTUCKY

This dissertation focuses on the African American Baptist church as a vital architect of black higher education in Kentucky. In keeping with the historiography of black education, my research focuses on the often-forgotten component of religion and its impact on the development of post-secondary education. More specifically, my work explores the dynamics of race, class and gender in shaping the origins of black higher learning institutions in the state. I contend that Kentucky was home to a growing and progressive African American middle class who sought racial uplift to solve the “negro problem” through education. I also reveal that African American religious leaders in Kentucky served as examples for other African Americans who were promoting black higher education during the period of segregation.

As a border state, Kentucky offers a unique opportunity to examine the educational challenges and opportunities African Americans faced during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Kentucky was home to one of the few African American Baptist controlled institutions in the nation, Simmons College. Therefore, this study offers historians an expanded lens for analyzing African American agency in developing higher learning initiatives while combating racial inequality in a state with a reputation for poorly funding public education.

KEYWORDS: Historical Black Colleges, Black Education, Black Baptist Church, Simmons College, The Negro Problem

Erin Gilliam

________________________________________

________________________________________ December 13, 2017
Date
“A BEACON OF HOPE”:
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DEDICATION

To my girls Averie Michelle and Addison Marie: My Greatest Joys and Creations

To my Daddy Edward Wiggins, who inspired me to finish
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The focus of this dissertation is on the black Baptist Church and its endurance that was only possible with God. And this dissertation was only possible because of my faith in God. When I was tired and confused, He gave me energy and focus. But With God All Things Are Possible.

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The University of Kentucky not only provided wonderful mentors and advisors but it also introduced me to an invaluable friend and colleague. Ashley Sorrell, thank you for reading every single word of my dissertation and offering suggestions and encouragement! You are a blessing!

I am product of Kentucky State University and it will always have a special place in my heart. As a young woman coming into her own, KYSU was intricate to my development as a person and a lifelong learner. My undergraduate experience demonstrated to me the importance of historically black colleges. The "small college on the hill" saw the best in me and exuded the essence of black education and self-help. I work hard to pay Kentucky State University back as a proud alumna and now as a history professor. My students teach and encourage me everyday. Thank you to my colleagues who have offered words of wisdom and helped me to find my balance as full-time professor and scholar.

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Introduction

According to noted African American scholar W.E.B. Du Bois, “Public education for all at public expense was, in the South, a Negro idea.” Du Bois was implying the African American demand for public education and whites necessity of segregated schools forced southern whites to construct a public school system. The passage of the thirteenth amendment marked an economic change in the South and was a social and educational catalyst for newly emancipated African Americans. Former enslaved African Americans demanded a formal education and maintained a "deep seated desire to control and sustain schools for themselves and their children."  

African American education was predicated on the values of self-determination and liberation from white oppression. In some instances, African Americans accepted support and assistance from white missionary societies such as the American Baptist Home Mission Society and most notably the Freedmen’s Bureau. Congress established the U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands in 1865 to help an estimated four million former black slaves and poor whites in the South in the aftermath of the Civil War. The Freedmen’s Bureau provided food, housing, medical aid, legal assistance, and helped to establish schools for former slaves. Northern missionaries and governmental agencies such as the

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Freedman’s Bureau made significant strides toward building an educational system for African Americans following the Civil War. Notwithstanding, the African American community and their churches were the true architects of education for African Americans.

Scholarly studies that analyze the founding of educational opportunities for African Americans post-Civil War primarily focus their analysis in former Confederate states. This study *compliments these works* by focusing on the influential role of African Americans in the border state of Kentucky regarding the movement for racial uplift through education. The unique history of the Commonwealth of Kentucky offers insight on the intricate and significant role the African American Baptist church played in the founding of black higher learning institutions that have persisted through the 21st Century. Indeed, the African American Baptist church was a major architect of education for African Americans in Kentucky.

**Themes**

The history of education for African Americans involves various themes. One of the most overlooked precepts is the role the Baptist church held in advancing educational opportunities. Historically, the African American church operated as the center of African American life. It served as a refuge for not only worship as well as, social, political and educational awareness and activity. As a center of civic engagement, education became one of the church’s primary priorities. According to historian William E. Montgomery, "The cooperation of churches in educational activities was so strong that black congregants pooled together meager resources to
pay teachers’ salaries, purchase books, or rent additional space for classrooms.”

The spirit of dedication and self-sacrifice among African Americans in the Baptist church served as the impetus for launching schools on the primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. The African American church prioritized education as a necessary facet of the spiritual well-being for the community.

Unique among other southern states, African Americans in the Commonwealth of Kentucky began the movement for educational opportunities during slavery. On December 7, 1841, in the basement of Fifth Street Baptist Church, the oldest black church in Louisville, Pastor Henry Adams founded the first institution of formal education for African Americans in Louisville, Kentucky. This school symbolized the importance of education to the African American community and it established the ongoing commitment of the Baptist church would have for African American education before and after slavery. Consequently, Pastor Adams later became one of the founders of the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute (hereafter referred to as Simmons College) owned by the African American Baptist church and an autonomous institute of higher learning. The General Association of Colored Baptists in Kentucky created the small Baptist institution, served as the only post-secondary institution for African Americans from 1879-1886. The school offered degreed programs in liberal arts, theology, law and medicine. In Black Higher Education in Kentucky, 1879-1930: The History of Simmons University, historian Lawrence Williams posits, "the cause of black higher education in

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Kentucky is still indebted to Simmons College and black Baptists for the role they played in the preservation of black higher education in Kentucky during a difficult period." According to Williams, Simmons College was one of the greatest accomplishments of African American Baptists in Kentucky.

Lawrence Williams' account evinces the monumental heights of the Institute as being an independent and autonomous university that trained large numbers of Kentucky's African American middle class. Its success and independence inspired other African American schools throughout the south, such as Virginia Baptist Theological Seminary, and Arkansas Baptist College, as well as the prestigious Howard University in Washington, DC. These colleges and universities emulated qualities and specific goals of Simmons College. Specifically, applying the precepts essential for an independent Christ-centered educational experience for African Americans. Simmons College laid the educational foundation for liberating African Americans from a discriminatory society linked by the oppression of slavery and segregation. In *Rage For Order: Black–White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation*, Joel Williamson argues that an organic society solidified itself following emancipation. According to Williamson, "In the organic society, people would know their own places and functions and those of others around them." Heightened racial tension marked the post-Civil War era, as white supremacy sought methods to ensure the subjugation of African Americans. Through

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separatism, violence, and economic and political dispossession, southern whites effectively created an organic society that reached its nadir with the rise of the Black Codes and Jim Crow south after Reconstruction.

The post-slavery years for African Americans in southern and Border States were tumultuous. Yet, the expansive scholarship on race relations, black agency, and movements for social, economic, and political rights tend to focus predominately on former Confederate states. Therefore, Kentucky serves as an important state study because of its ambiguous location and struggle with border state identity. African Americans in Kentucky and the role of the Baptist church in higher education are imperative to the historical narrative that places black agency at the center for the demand of quality education. Historian Tracy K'Meyer argues that Kentucky is considered the “gateway” between the North and South, which allowed for the development of characteristics that are unique from other southern states. Border cities such as Louisville had an attachment “to the South and that region’s pattern of segregation” that “combined with a more northern economy, population diversity, and politics.” This combination of demographic, political, and economic factors created complex dynamics that was unique to the border state.\(^6\) Whitney M. Young Jr., a native of Kentucky who identified himself and his native state as southern, expressed the ways in which Kentucky was no different from states in the Deep South. "Jim Crow was deeply entrenched in this border state as it was anywhere in

\(^6\) Tracy K'Meyer, *Civil Rights in the Gateway to the South: Louisville, Kentucky 1945-1980* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2009), 11. K'Meyer argues that segregation was a factor in the Border city of Louisville, Kentucky but because of its border city position and progressive claim, it was ambiguous and complex.
the Old Confederacy,” recalled Young. “Segregated housing, schools, restaurants, libraries, and other public facilities were as much as part of Kentucky’s racial landscape as they were Alabama’s or Mississippi’s.” Yet, the historical narrative of black higher education in Kentucky is often negated or neglected for more visible southern examples of black education, similar to that of Tuskegee University in Alabama and Hampton University in Virginia. However, this work is not a comparative study; furthermore, it focuses on Kentucky in the national scope of black higher education from the cusps of emancipation to the passage of the Brown decision. In keeping with the black education historiography, this research emphasizes the role of the Black Baptist church and the confluence of race, gender, and class, while highlighting the often-forgotten component of religion and its impact on the development of post-secondary education in the Commonwealth.

An analysis of efforts for higher education among African Americans by focusing the historical lens on Kentucky, influences a view on the role and agency of African Americans in their demands for equal education. For example, African Americans’ desires for a formal education were sometimes met by the generosity of white philanthropy. However, it was the grit, tenacity, ethic, and ingenuity of African American leaders that drove the success and development of black institutions of higher education. Their persistent work and vocal demands for education led to the development and growth of schools for African Americans and influenced the expansion and improvement of Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

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(HBCU’s). Indeed, the establishment of HBCU’s served as beacon of hope and light in the African American community during the nadir of the Jim Crow south.

James Anderson is among the early scholars to argue that African Americans in the south and "ex-slaves" initiated their own education and fought against white control, which sometimes resulted in victory. In his book, The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1934, Anderson writes, "The subject matter of black education reflected the ex-slaves' intent to restructure and control their lives." Anderson readily acknowledges African Americans’ strong desire and heroic measures in achieving education in their newly formed committees. However, he argues that after Reconstruction, African Americans lacked political and economic power, which stymied the movement for black education. This dissertation departs from Anderson’s argument by highlighting the political and economic influence that the African American middle class, or talented tenth, wielded in Kentucky in their quest for quality higher education.

Anderson is the foremost scholar on African American education south. However, other historians have contributed to the scholarship and research, which help to lay the foundation of this study. Perhaps the largest synthesis of Education in Kentucky, A History of Education in Kentucky by William Ellis paints the picture of education in the commonwealth from the onset of the Civil War until the mid-1980s. Ellis’ work is not solely based on African American education in Kentucky but he demonstrates to truly have a grasp of education in Kentucky you must understand the political, social, economic, and ethnic implications of the state. However, Ellis

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does briefly analyze key African American institutions, leaders of education, and desegregation of secondary and higher school systems. This book is necessary to the historiography of because it illuminates the lack of research of black education in the state and it provides background information for the scholar wishing to explore educational structures in African American communities in Kentucky.  

Gerald Smith’s *A Black Educator in the Segregated South: Kentucky’s Rufus B. Atwood* uses the adult and professional life of Kentucky State University’s pre-Civil Rights president as a lens in which to view the roles of African American presidents at historically black colleges and Universities in the south. Smith argues that scholars have give much research and attention to Booker T. Washington and his influence at Tuskegee, but college presidents that did not receive national attention or reputations are neglected from the historical research. Similar to Vanessa Walker’s *Hello Professor*, Smith argues that black college presidents represented power while often serving as representatives to their white counterparts. They also struggled to educate black children with inadequate funds and facilities without angering white leaders. Smith demonstrates that Rufus B. Atwood and other HBCU presidents often used carefully crafted and sometimes inconspicuous plans and political moves to navigate society and procure funds for their institutions from government entities and other white influenced organizations.  

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In *Fifty Years of Segregation: Black Higher Education in Kentucky*, John Hardin argues that black Kentucky schools and leadership were often faced with internal struggles and divergences on the issue of classical-liberal education vs. Hampton-Tuskegee industrial training model. However according to Hardin, black Kentuckians held an ambivalent attitude concerning segregated schools and he poses his argument using the Kentucky Day Law and the *Brown v. Board of Education* as bookends. Hardin provides a lens to black education in Kentucky and the intraracial conflict but he neglects to discuss the impact of white and black philanthropy and especially the significance of religious organizations had on historically black colleges and universities in the commonwealth and throughout the region.\(^{11}\)

The most current study Gerald Smith's "Straining To Hear Their Thoughts and Desires": Researching and Writing the African American Experience in Kentucky," argues that is imperative that this study and other researching black Kentuckians demonstrate the non-monolithic study of African Americans because "Kentucky African Americans had varied experiences that were determined by time, place, and circumstances. In keeping with Smith, this study seeks to validate "how African Americans negotiated their lives in these kinds of environments, overcame racism, and created communities of which they could be proud."\(^{12}\)

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Chapter Organization

Chapter one examines the historiography of African American education and the establishment of a precedent for black education prior to emancipation. This chapter also focuses on the relationship of religion and education at the onset of the Civil War, arguing that the African American Baptist church was at the foundation of black higher education in Kentucky.

Chapter two centers on how Kentucky’s leading African American church and community members embodied W.E.B. Du Bois’ “talented tenth” argument — the belief that exceptional members of the African American race would uplift the entire race through education and prestige. Furthermore, the "talented tenth" concept also emphasized what Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham termed the “politics of respectability” to describe how African Americans self-policed morality and propriety in order to better reflect themselves to white America.\(^{13}\) This chapter identifies the state’s leading African American educators as they embraced a politics of respectability that depended upon "bourgeois values such as hard work, temperance, thrift, piety, perseverance, as well chastity and domesticity, especially for women... And Blacks practiced these values as an extension of their own religious beliefs."\(^{14}\) Black Kentuckians felt that they could challenge the stereotype of black intellectual inferiority by demonstrating to whites positive behavior that was reinforced through formal education.


Throughout the nation and the state of Kentucky, African American and white leaders had different solutions to address the "negro problem," or African Americans’ place in society. These debates and ideologies shaped education and race relations in the early twentieth century. As examples, chapter two highlights the educational and life's work of Charles and Mary Parrish and William and Elizabeth Fouse. The success of these powerhouse couples demonstrates that despite gender inequalities, women were the backbone to racial uplift efforts. Black women were, indeed, necessary to the educational and religious movement in Kentucky that ultimately became responsible for the establishment of the Kentucky talented tenth. Oftentimes, women formed, led, and worked in the trenches of these movements for equality for African Americans. The first statewide convention for black Baptist women was organized in Kentucky and it begun because of issues surrounding black education. Thus, Kentucky served as an example and influenced other state’s black Baptist women’s conventions.

It is no surprise that initially the Kentucky black Baptist women convention primarily focused on education. Once emancipated, African Americans top priority was to form churches and schools that were free of white control. Yet, historians have overlooked Kentucky black Baptist women’s movement and their influence on black education in the state. Kentuckian black Baptist women were heavily involved in education as teachers, advocates, leaders, and fundraisers.

Higginbotham’s foundational analysis of the intersections between gender, race, and religious history informs the analysis applied in this chapter. In her work
Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920, she argued:

Women were crucial to broadening the public arm of the church and making it the most powerful institution of racial self-help in the African American community. During these years the church served as the most effective vehicle by which men and women alike, pushed down by racism and poverty, regrouped and rallied against emotional and physical defeat.15

In Kentucky, William J. Simmons was influential in connecting male and female African American leaders who sought to uplift the race through racial self-help. Simmons’s influence helped to establish the small Baptist College. Chapter three places the struggles and growth of Simmons College in context with other historical African American colleges and universities throughout the nation. It examines the factors that led to the anomalous growth of a black-owned and controlled institution in the South. This chapter further reflects on the personal and professional life of William J. Simmons, the second and most successful president of Simmons College, and his other organizations of influence such as the publication, American Baptist and The Baptist Women’s Education Convention of Kentucky. Simmons College and other African American Baptist agencies are indebted to the work and dedication of William J. Simmons.

In contrast to the private support from the Baptist Church and the General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky given to Simmons College, there were other African American institutions of higher education that capitalized on white

philanthropic support and state dollars. Chapter four analyzes the social and racial politics that surrounded institutions that were dependent on white philanthropic support. Black colleges in Kentucky struggled with the notion that black education was best directed and instructed by black teachers and leaders. But many African American schools were in need of white philanthropic dollars, which were often intermarried with white control. Thus, African Americans often had to acquiesce black desires for liberal arts education and learn to employ their dual consciousness to navigate white politics and policies. Historians Eric Anderson and Alfred Moss describe white philanthropy as "Either an example of the richness and vitality of American life, a sign of the nation's potential for renewal, or it is an illustration of America's broken promises, a crafty form of 'generosity' designed to prevent real reform." 16 White philanthropy and competition with other African American institutions were sources of contention for black educational intuitions. However, the racial desegregation of post-secondary schools ultimately caused decreased enrollment and in some cases, the demise of many black colleges and universities across the nation.

Chapter five, focuses on the implementation and fight over school desegregation in Kentucky. Lyman T. Johnson's lawsuit against the University of Kentucky's graduate school is central to this chapter as well as the Brown decision. The true essence of this chapter lies in the negative and positive impact of racial desegregation of African American institutions of higher education including

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Simmons College. An epilogue concludes this work in analyzing the contemporary placement and purpose of historical black colleges and universities in the twenty-first century within historical context. Furthermore, it describes the revival of Simmons College by the black Baptist church and its enduring purpose of maintaining the black Baptist church’s continued commitment to African American education in Kentucky.

The importance of the African American Baptist church and the role of religion in black education is often neglected. Therefore, this dissertation places the African American Baptist church at the center of the movement for black higher education by demonstrating the correlation between freedom, education, and religion. The Christian tradition of organizing is submerged in the establishment of formal education. African American Baptist churches became an inclusive place for African American civic and social engagement. In Kentucky, the Baptist church demonstrated its ongoing commitment to African American spiritual and moral development by elevating the race through education.

In a span of almost a century from emancipation to the Brown decision, historically black higher learning institutions served as beacons of hope to the black community. Whether enslaved or free, African Americans — like so many Americans — viewed education as a key to changing and elevating their societal status. With the black Baptist church at the helm, African American communities in Kentucky banded together to establish and support institutions of higher education. And despite many obstacles fueled by racism and discrimination, African Americans’ quest for education established a long-lasting legacy and tradition of achievement.
"Education is that whole system of human training within and without the school house wall, which molds and develops men."
—W. E. B. Du Bois

Chapter 1

The Church-house and the Schoolhouse: The Early Beginnings of Black Education in Kentucky

Throughout much of the South, white masters and overseers prohibited their slaves from learning to read or write. By doing so, they sought to repress the ability and agency of African American slaves to organize and protest their condition of servitude. The fear of uprisings and rebellions prompted southern states to enact laws that forbade the education of enslaved African Americans before the Civil War. According to historian Carter G. Woodson, blacks saw education as a “forbidden fruit.” They “stole away to secret places at night to study under the direction of friends.”¹ But many whites were determined to deny blacks opportunities to learn and thereby passed laws to prevent blacks from learning to read or write. Laws against teaching enslaved African Americans were erected in all southern slaveholding states except Tennessee, Maryland, and Kentucky. Blacks pursued educational opportunities with passion and persistence and at the forefront of this effort was the black church. The African American church has been the cornerstone

of African American life and culture from slavery to freedom. It has been the oldest 
and most visibly active institution to address the challenges and concerns facing 
African Americans. Therefore, comprehensibly, the roots of African American 
education in Kentucky are found in the early nineteenth century black churches.

**Early Roots of the Baptist Church**

The early roots of the Baptist Church began in New England, where its 
founder Roger Williams settled. But many of its early missionaries and evangelists 
settled in the southern part of the United States. Some of the oldest religious 
institutions for both white and black Baptists are in South Carolina. The First Baptist 
Church of Charleston was founded in 1682 and is the second oldest white Baptist 
Church in the nation and the oldest Baptist Church in the South. In some southern 
cities and plantations, African Americans were granted their own church gatherings 
because of the rapid growth of African American attendance due to the increase of 
slavery in the region. Religion gave African Americans hope as well as a feeling of 
empowerment that they believed could only be given to them by a relationship with 
God.

An enslaved African American, George Sharp, also known as George Leile, 
founded the first African American Baptist congregation in Savannah, Georgia in 
1773. The first church structure was not erected until 1859, but the property was 
purchased in 1793 and is believed to be the oldest piece of real estate continuously 
owned by African Americans. First African Baptist Church was one of the major 
stops on the Underground Railroad and was instrumental in helping to establish 
Georgia Industrial College for Colored Youth (now Savannah State University).
African Americans used church gatherings as means to not only teach and understand the word of God, but also as a way to meet and support each other during the institution of slavery and harsh racial realities of the time.²

In 1793, there were an estimated 18,000 to 19,000 African American Baptists in the United States. By 1800, the Protestant Revival energy of the Second Great Awakening encouraged membership numbers across denominations to soar. The largest camp meeting of this great revival had an estimated attendance of over 25,000 people and was held in Cane Ridge, Kentucky.³ It is no coincidence that one of the largest Protestant revivals was held in Kentucky, because time and time again the state would prove that the church and religion were deeply embedded in all aspects of its society. In 1890, there were 23,462 African American churches in the United States. Of these, 12,533 were black Baptist churches and the seating capacity of those edifices was more than three million, with an estimated membership total to be 1,348,989 saints. The property value of black Baptist churches in the United States was appraised at $9,038,519. Kentucky had 816 African American church organizations and 786 church edifices, with an approximate seating capacity of 212,796, and a reported membership of 92,786. The estimated church property value was $1,143,390. There were 378 African American Baptist churches, 359 church edifices, and a seating capacity of 109,030. Documented membership was

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reported as 50,245 members, with an estimated church property value of
$406,949.4

**Early Black Baptist Churches in Kentucky**

The first African American minister and pastor in Kentucky was a resident of
Lexington. His name was Peter Durrett, but his owner and members of the Fayette
County community affectionately called him Old Captain. Old Captain was essential
to the development of African American Baptist churches in Kentucky. He was born
into slavery in Virginia in 1733. At the age of 25, he repented his sins and became a
Christian with the hopes of retribution and the conversion of other slaves to
Christianity. J.H. Spencer writes, “Immediately after he was baptized and received
into a Baptist church, he began to exhort from house to house.”5 Upon his arrival in
Kentucky, Old Captain joined a small organization of a small Separate Baptist Church
in Fayette County. Unfortunately, the church dissolved shortly and Old Captain and
his wife were hired out to a new master in Lexington. His new owner John Maxwell
wanted to help him to continue to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to African
Americans in Fayette County and its surrounding areas. Though of different racial
and social class, the two remained friends until Maxwell’s death.

According to one of Kentucky’s first documented religious historians,
minister J.H. Spencer, the first formally established churches in Kentucky with
constitutions were of the Baptist denomination and initially African Americans

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5 Ibid., 653.
generally attended the same churches as their “white brethren” or slaveholders.\(^6\) Spencer was born in Allen County, Kentucky on September 9, 1827. He served as a pastor of numerous Baptist churches in Kentucky and held revivals in surrounding states. He writes that at the onset of the Civil War there were seventeen African American Baptist churches in Kentucky with approximately 5,737 members and it is believed that they had African American pastors. These churches were located in Maysville, Mayslick, Danville, Harrodsburg, and several churches in Louisville that included locations on Fifth Street, Green Street, and York Street. There were also African American Baptist churches in Frankfort, Tates Creek, Madison County, Stamping Ground of Scott County, Hillsboro of Woodford County, and Paducah. African Americans also attended their own Baptist churches in Paris, Versailles, and Nicholasville, which were only a half-a-day’s horse ride from downtown Lexington.\(^7\) Hopkinsville, Henderson, and Georgetown were all homes to black Baptist churches, and there were most likely other historically undocumented African American churches in other Kentucky counties and cities.

The First African Baptist Church in Lexington asserts itself to be the home and spirit of Captain. First African Baptist Church is the first documented African American church west of the Allegheny Mountains. Captain's first church was located on the corner of Lexington and Euclid streets in downtown Lexington.\(^8\) 

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\(^7\) Ibid., 1.

1825 annual minutes of the Elkhorn Association of Baptist Churches states that the white congregation of First Baptist of Lexington was to oversee the First African Church and its 323 members.⁹

Lexington African Americans, both free and enslaved, gravitated towards the church. In the church, they found spiritual growth and a place for cultural and social development. First African Baptist Church leaders were important to the growth and dynamics of the church because they encouraged a sense of community and agency. At the beginning of the Civil War, total membership reached as high as 2,223 members.¹⁰ Its second pastor London Ferrill was said to be the greatest preacher in Kentucky because of his strong, effective, and clear sermons. He reportedly baptized more than 5,000 African Americans in his thirty-one years of pastoring at the First African Baptist Church.¹¹ When Pastor Ferrill died, it is rumored that his funeral processional was the second largest attended behind Kentucky politician Henry Clay. In 1878, The Kentucky Gazette wrote, "the colored people of Lexington are under a lasting debt and obligation to brother

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⁹ Minutes of the Elkhorn Baptist Association (Louisville, Kentucky: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Library), 1824-1825. Pleasant Green Baptist Church of Lexington also claims to be the oldest Baptist Church in Lexington and the original home of Peter Durrett. In 2017, Pleasant Green Baptist Church argues (1) For the first time in the church's history, the pastor and trustees, on behalf of the church, by court law, obtained a clear title and deed to the church land, which Captain and his people purchased, then African Baptist Church; (2) On July 25, 1987, an official State Historical Marker was unveiled on the church's property. It is a living testimony recognized with documents by the State of Kentucky, if people (while in slavery) - who secured land deeded for worship and continually owned to this date.

¹⁰ Spencer, p. 656.

¹¹ H. E. Nutter, "A Brief History of the First Baptist Church (Black)," (Lexington, Kentucky: Baptist History, 1940), 7-8.
Ferrill...worshiped him as almost a saint and are never weary of telling of his good deeds."12

The First African Baptist Church was instrumental in molding religious, educational, and social aspects of African American life in Lexington, as well as Kentucky. First African Baptist Church asserts itself as the mother church and much political and social organizing has taken place within its walls. The General Association of Kentucky Baptists held its first meeting in the First African basement. Several of its members were influential to the foundation of The Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute (Simmons College), which was the black Baptist owned institute of higher learning. Dr. William Simmons, sixth pastor of the church, and Charles Parrish, church clerk, later became presidents of Simmons College. The first three graduates of Simmons College were members of First African Baptist Church, Dr. C.H. Parrish, Dr. Charles Sneed, and Sarah Nelson. The first president of the Baptist Women’s Educational Convention of Kentucky, Amanda Nelson, was a faithful member of First African Baptist Church.13

Lexington was also home to Pleasant Green Baptist Church. Pleasant Green Baptist Church was a faction of First African Baptist Church, but there is no indication of why the two congregations separated in 1822. Like most African American Baptist churches, Pleasant Green Baptist Church facilitated education formally and informally within the community. The Pleasant Green Baptist Church basement was the home of the George Washington Carver School. In 1883 the

12 "Ferrill Death," *The Kentucky Gazette*, March 6, 1878, 7b.
13 H. E. Nutter, "A Brief History of the First Baptist Church (Black)." (Lexington, Kentucky: Baptist History, 1940), 12.
school had an impressive enrollment of 108 students. In 1903, due to the community's enthusiasm and overwhelming attendance, the school relocated to a larger location in downtown Lexington.14

Fifth Street Baptist Church of Louisville, Kentucky was formed less than twenty years after the formation of the major city. This church of enslaved and free blacks was formed under the supervision of the white congregants of First Baptist Church of Louisville, which is today known as Walnut Street Baptist Church. Initially, African Americans attended church with the white congregation, but the black population began to outnumber their white counterparts. One congregant stated, "Somehow or other the white people's worship just 'didn't suit us.'"15 In late October of 1829, eighteen enslaved and free African Americans petitioned the white Baptist church to form their own church; founded on the first Sunday of November 1829.16

Initially, white preachers from the community preached to the free and enslaved African Americans. However, in 1833, Dr. Henry Adams, the first African American pastor of Louisville, was called to lead the Fifth Street Baptist Church. A free man himself, he saw Louisville as the city that would help "loosen the grip of slave-holding power in Kentucky during the antebellum years."17 He was well

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15 William Howard Ballew (moderator), Diamond Jubilee of the General Association of Colored Baptists in Kentucky: The Story of Seventy-Five Years of the Association and Four Years of Convention Activities, (Louisville, American Baptist Publisher, 1943,) 185.
16 "Historical Sketch of Fifth Street Baptist Church," Box 4, Fifth Street Baptist Church Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.
educated and sought ways to make a quality education available to his congregation and other blacks in the city. He fostered the growth of black Baptist congregations in the region and arguably converted 10,000 people to Christianity. Reverend Adams was married to a free woman from Ohio and at any time could have chose to live in a free state, but he truly believed that Louisville was his chosen place of ministry. Charles Parrish wrote that Henry Adams "was a lover of his people."

Separate houses of worship gave Louisville blacks a strong sense of ownership and independence from whites that ultimately enabled them to live their daily lives in somewhat less restrictive environment. During Reconstruction, African American pastors under the leadership of Reverend Adams, reopened black schools that white officials had forcefully closed. The schools offered general education classes that taught former slaves how to read, write, and the principles of American citizenship. One of the schools was housed in the basement of Fifth Street Baptist Church and another operated at St. Mark’s Colored Episcopal Church of Louisville.\(^\text{18}\) It is suspected that these schools were originally closed because of the lack of funds, and more importantly, many whites in Louisville did not believe that black education was a top priority. Reverend Adams thought differently and to further the cause he allowed northern teachers to stay in his home and offered his church as a place of instruction. Annie Lee and Mary Jones Richardson, members of Fifth Street Baptist Church, were the first teachers of the school and they taught letters and

reading. Initially, the school consisted of only five students of free status. Because of the diligent work of Adams, members of Fifth Street Baptist Church, along with other African America Baptist churches in the city and surrounding counties, the school steadily grew in size, and witnessed success in educating African Americans.

Since 1890, Fifth Street Baptist Church has awarded college scholarships to its congregation and the community in Henry Adams’ honor. His work in education demonstrated the power a pastor embodied in advocating for the education of his flock regardless of white support or funds. Indeed, Adams foundational effort placed Fifth Street Baptist Church at the forefront of black education in the city and the pastoral influence continued after Adams. Under the leadership of Reverend Andrew Heath, Fifth Street Baptist Church acquired a loan of Seventy dollars to be given to Simmons College.¹⁹

Fifth Street Baptist Church did not only seek to develop and improve black education, in some regards it served as its own governing body. Members of the church were expected to behave in a moral way that was pleasing to both Christ and the Church. They had to confess their sins to the church and the pastor and the deacons voted to accept their confession of immorality and allow re-admittance into the Church. On December 11, 1883, Sister Amanda Yeager confessed that she had been absent from the church for thirty years and "during that time she had not lived right, and that she had attended several dances but in the future she intended to reform and live a better life." She asked the Church to forgive her and on motion her

¹⁹ "Fifth Street Baptist Church Minutes, May 1866, December 1872, August 1882," Box 1 and 2, Fifth Street Baptist Church Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.
request was granted. After much debate and discussion the church also forgave Brother Thomas Morton for holding a party at his home for the collection of rent money.\textsuperscript{20}

The church addressed similar cases and also dealt with alcohol consumption, adultery, and other infractions such as not "keeping a clean house." This type of self-governance was important in the African American private sphere as it helped develop organizational structure and autonomy. This organizing spirit and independence was the foundation that helped to propel African Americans through the quest for a quality education and other historical movements of achievement. In her work on black women and faith, Marla Frederick argued, "African Americans, experiencing exclusion from public debate, have historically cultivated space in black churches, women's clubs, and various social and political organizations to address openly and critically issues pertaining to themselves."\textsuperscript{21} Church debates and governing activities prepared African Americans for future movements that were fought in the public sphere with the black church at the forefront.

Fifth Street Baptist Church continued to be a leader in not only education but also in the political and social arena, as it addressed many issues that affected African Americans in Louisville and across the state. During the economic recession of 1873, the church set up a fund to provide monies to its members in financial need and it provided clothes to the poor regardless of their denomination. In 1890 the

\textsuperscript{20} "Church Minutes 1883," Box 3, Fifth Street Baptist Church Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.

church donated seventy dollars to the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute for "educational purposes." In the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century Fifth Street Baptist Church made conscious efforts in dedicating to educational and progressive organizations. They designated alternating Sundays for collection of funds for organizations like the Women’s Educational Convention and scholarships that supported state institutions. The church remained steadfast in their giving and maintained their tradition well into the middle twentieth century by taking up special church offerings and donating to organizations such as The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Urban League, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). In 1951, at the 122nd Fifth Street Baptist Church anniversary service, Reverend A.R. Lasley, pastor of the Virginia Street Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, preached about the invaluableness of the Church and its service to the city of Louisville and the state of Kentucky:

This anniversary is concerned with one hundred twenty-two years of progress of this church and the influence that it has exerted on the social, ethical, legal, economical, political, and religious life of the city [Louisville], state, and nation...The contributions of this church have been unlimited. It has served as an educational center in that it has given support to the principles of education as first striving after the truths, which were made in the name of religion. It has been a form of government in that it has striven to serve mankind in a democratic way. It has been a home in the sense that it has proposed to make the neighborhood a brotherhood. This Church has weathered the storm. She has come through the ages unscathed and unharmed. She has brought relief, happiness, and joy to the hundreds and thousands.23

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22 "Fifth Street Baptist Church Minutes, 1873, 1962" Box 1 and Box 3, Fifth Street Baptist Church Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.
23 "Fifth Street Baptist Church 122nd Anniversary Sermon," Reverend A.R. Lasley: November 4, 1951, Box 4, Fifth Street Baptist Church Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.
Fifth Street Baptist Church laid the foundation for other successful African American churches in Louisville, Kentucky. Out of the membership and support of Fifth Street Baptist Church and with permission from the white Walnut Street Baptist Church, Green Street Baptist Church, also located in Louisville, established itself as the Second African Baptist Church on September 29, 1844. Kitty Anderson, Jacob Hite, Minerva Lewis, James Walton, York Shipp, Achilles Hutchison, Milly Anderson, Clary Jones, Henry Smith, Peter Fountain, Lidia Hutchison, Pluto Walker, Polly Woodfolk, Simon Pitman, Peggy Taylor, Aimy Shipp, Allen Carter, James Reeves, Ben Reindhart, Mahalia Fry, Malinda Fountain, Bird Bullet, Phillip Simco, Amelia Davis, Anna Terrell, and Pinder Grubb were the twenty-six enslaved African Americans that started Green Street Baptist church. The first building structure of the church was a livery stable but its first pastor, George Wells, and its members created a welcoming place for both the free and enslaved. After six short years, pastor and organizer George Wells increased membership to over three hundred and the former stable would serve the church until 1930.

**Slavery, Civil War, and Religion**

Slavery and the Civil War caused a unique set of dynamics at Green Street Baptist Church and the African American church as a whole. The church’s third pastor, Richard Sneathen, performed marriage ceremonies for enslaved African Americans. In the ceremony, he changed the saying of “‘Til death do us part,” to

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24“Trustee Board History,” Box 6, Green Street Baptist Church Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.
25“1981 Anniversary History Report” Box 6, Green Street Baptist Church Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.
separation of more than three years that was beyond the slaves’ control. His goal was to convey that remarrying would not be considered a sin of adultery due to spouses being sold to other masters outside of the area. Reverend Sneathen’s friend and deacon of Green Street Baptist Church was the first member to purchase his freedom. After completing work for his owner, Deacon Aaron Payne worked night jobs and took in extra work to pay $1,200 for his freedom.

The Civil War placed strict limitations on the church’s enslaved members. With the encouragement of Sneathen, the church voted to only worship together six times a year. Church minutes also indicated that some of its members served in the Union Army, influencing the establishment of the Green Street Baptist Congregation for Soldier Aid Society.26 The African American church was more than a religious institution. The evidence presented above demonstrates how the black church adapted to the unique needs of its members. Church rules and traditions became fluid and amendable to fit the needs of the often-transient members of enslaved African Americans. Even with the restrictions and obstacles of slavery, the Baptist church and its leaders sought ways to normalize life for their members.

The black Baptist church worked to serve its community in all social and civic aspects. Other than religious sanctification, the churches other goal was educating its members. Despite the threat of retaliation and danger in educating African Americans, formal black education existed in Kentucky prior to the Civil War. Many of the students of these uncommon institutions were the children of free African

26 "Rev. Sneathen Historical Sketch," and "1867 church minutes," Box 6 and Box 1, Green Street Baptist Church Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.
Americans or were given permission by their slave masters to attend. In 1820, a day school was opened in the capital city of Frankfort. Jane Washington, a free black woman in Lexington started a school to teach African Americans of all ages how to read and perform basis mathematics. Freestanding African American schools were rare in the border state. Therefore, most black schools operated in the compounds of churches. Whites viewed education at churches as less threatening because of their religious and moral composition of the lessons taught. For example, Fifth Street Baptist Church, the first documented formal education for blacks in Louisville, was formed in 1829 by Pastor Henry Adams and operated without a lot of interference from whites. A host of other African American churches in the Jefferson County area operated schools prior to the Civil War. Green Street Baptist Church, Ninth Street Methodist, and St. Mark’s Episcopal Church established African American school prior to the end of the Civil War. First African Baptist Church of Lexington opened a school in 1831. A white man who was paid by offerings collected by the church and fees assessed to the attendees of the school taught the rudimentary lessons.²⁷ The churches and schools faced scrutiny and opposition from white Kentuckians. For example, in the 1850s, a law was passed in Paris that prohibited black churches from meeting after 9pm. In Jefferson County African American churches were not allowed to meet without white supervision.²⁸

White opposition to black education in Kentucky was strong even though no laws were passed denying blacks the right to learn prior to the end of slavery.

²⁸ Ibid., 138.
However, in 1866, the Kentucky General Assembly required that "all taxes derived from the property of Negroes were set aside to be used to provide for taking care of their paupers and the education of the children." The law further stated that African American schools were to be supervised by white trustees and all teachers must hold a state certification. This law left black schools underfunded and without teachers because black teachers did not have the proper credentials and many white teachers did not want to teach black children. A further dagger to the growth of African American education was that the 1866 law also prohibited the educating of black and white children together.29

On the surface, this kind of opposition seems unlikely considering Kentucky's geographical location as a border state and close to freedom for runaway slaves. Yet as historian Tracy K'Meyer argues, it is Kentucky's location resulted in a "mix of both southern and northern characteristics — its attachment to the South and that region's pattern of segregation combined with a more northern economy, population diversity and politics."30

Prior to gaining its statehood in 1792, the Commonwealth of Kentucky was legally a county of Virginia.31 Slaveholders who migrated to the Commonwealth bought their enslaved Africans with them. At its highest point, enslaved African Americans in Kentucky represented about twenty-four percent of the population. By

30 K'Meyer, 11. K'Meyer's work focuses on the modern Civil Rights Movement in the Louisville area, however; her analysis provides a lens of the state, its' culture, and location.
31 Fannie Cassidy Duncan, When Kentucky Was Young: Pen and Ink Sketches of Log Cabin Days From Virginia Ownership to Kentucky Statehood (Louisville, KY: University of Louisville Press, 1928), 3-5.
1860, Kentucky had the third largest number of slaveholders in a southern state and at least one-fourth of Kentucky families owned a slave. In 1860, the population was 1,115,651 and of that number, 919,584 represented white Kentuckians and the African American population was comprised of 236,167 with 225,483 being enslaved.32

Some slave-owners taught their enslaved African Americans to read because their own religious convictions led them to believe that all Christians, regardless of race and status of servitude, should be able to read the Bible. Elijah Marrs, a slave in Shelby County, Kentucky was taught to read by his white slave-owner. His owner, a religious man, felt it was a sin against God if a person could not read the biblical scriptures for himself. This early education and indoctrination of religion heavily influenced his life because he became the first president of the Baptist established institution of Higher Education, Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute.33

Most enslaved Africans Americans were not taught to write because of the prospect of being able to falsify passes and notes for themselves and other enslaved Africans. These passes could be used as tickets to freedom or trips to other plantations to visit family members.34 In 1850, there were 288 literate black Kentuckians. However, by 1860, only 208 free African Americans in Kentucky were literate.35 Kentucky Historian Carter G. Woodson argues that there were unknown

33 William J. Simmons, Men of Mark: Eminent, Progressive, and Rising (Cleveland, Ohio: GEO M. Revell and Co., 1888,) 579-582.
34 Ivan E. McDougall, “Slavery in Kentucky, 1792-1865” (PhD diss., Clark University, 1918).
factors that discouraged free and educated blacks in making Kentucky their permanent home. But, he twenty-eight percent decrease in the free and literate African American population could have easily been caused by a northern migration of blacks seeking to escape the harsh racial realities of Kentucky and the rest of the South.36

In comparison, the bordering free state of Ohio in 1850 had an African American population of 7,521, and of that number, 2,531 were literate and considered educated. By 1860, Ohio had a black population of 11,857, and 5,671 were literate. The free African American population in Ohio increased six times faster than in Kentucky. The influx of educated African Americans into Ohio was due to the state’s no-slave holding policy and perhaps less oppressive atmosphere.37 Also, legally, free blacks had a greater opportunity to gain an education than African Americans who had a fugitive or enslaved status. Ohio was not the ideal racial utopia. Located across the Ohio River from Kentucky, Ohio enacted many oppressive laws that continuously reminded African Americans of their second-class citizenship. The Ohio State Constitution abolished slavery in 1802, but an influx of newly emancipated slaves and runaways encouraged the state to enact black laws in 1804 and 1807. These laws required African Americans entering the state to post a bond of $500 guaranteeing good behavior and to produce papers documenting their free status. Fear of the potential increase in the African-American population led

one Ohio Congressman to proclaim, "the banks of the Ohio ... would be lined with men with muskets on their shoulders to keep off the emancipated slaves."\(^{38}\)

Although Ohio was not a slave state, it sought a solution to its unique "Negro Problem."\(^{39}\) Sarah Lucas, a free black woman in Ohio stated, "I was born to free parents in Ohio, but that just means I’m "free" from being a slave. They have laws against teaching us. They figure if we get educated, there will be no stopping us."\(^{40}\)

Concerning slavery, Kentucky and Ohio had different statuses, but African Americans faced similar obstacles in their quest to gain an education.

Along with Ohio, Kentucky officially remained a Union state during the Civil War; however, of the 100,000 Kentucky soldiers that fought in the Civil War, one-third fought for the Confederate Army. During the Civil War many white Kentuckians disagreed about politics and loyalties; yet, in the postwar period they united again on racial issues. Historian Anne Marshall argues, "The same whites who had disagreed over the question of secession in 1860 found new common ground in the aftermath of federal intervention and the end of slavery."\(^{41}\) The Commonwealth was important at the onset of the Civil War because of its location as a gateway state to both freedom and slavery. In January 1861, an anonymous congressman published a letter in the *Louisville Daily Courier* urging Kentuckians to evaluate their loyalties, because soon they would have to make a weighty decision.

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\(^{39}\) Interview with Kentucky Underground railroad and slavery historian of Kentucky, Gore, Jerry interview by Erin W. Gilliam, Oral interview, Mason, County Ohio, October 10, 2014.

\(^{40}\) "Sarah Lucas", WPA Slave Narrative Collection, Library Congress, Manuscript Division.

He predicted that by March 4, 1861, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and Texas would leave the Union and cause a separation between the border states and their "sister slave states." He argued, "Kentucky cannot remain passive. She cannot fold her arms and be swept on, or overwhelmed by these events. She cannot avoid them if she would." The politician continued to inform the people of Kentucky that because of its border state location "she may become the battleground of the contending powers…. Her interests, her sympathies, her destiny inseparably connect with her sister slave States of the South. Any other position would be death, shame, and dishonor upon her."42

Kentucky's decision to remain a part of the Union did not ease racial discrimination toward blacks as soldiers or equal citizens. At the onset of the Civil War, enslaved Kentucky African Americans were not permitted to fight for the Union Army. However, when Louisville slaveholders feared a Confederate Army invasion, it was the enslaved African Americans who dug the ditches and trenches to protect the city from the Confederate army.43 In a letter to President Abraham Lincoln, Union Army Major General Ambrose E. Burnside highlighted the concern related to enlisting free African Americans in Kentucky.

The enrollment of the free negroes properly belonging to the State will not yield 1,000 men subject to draft. If draft is required in Kentucky the number required from this class will not be over 300; for this small number we will lose a much larger number of good white volunteers and give the secret enemies of the Government a

42 "To the People of the Eighth Congressional District," Louisville Daily Courier, January 5, 1861, 2.
weapon to use against it.... The enrollment of these Negroes is what
the loyal people fear will do the harm. 44

General Burnside further suggested that if free African Americans wanted to serve
in the Union Army their only responsibility should be to complete menial labor tasks
and work alongside enslaved African Americans. This action degraded free African
Americans and further confirmed their second-class status in Kentucky society.

Lincoln responded back to both Generals Ambrose Burnside and Richard Boyle who
were in Cincinnati, Ohio that he would refrain from enlisting African Americans in
the Union Army until he understood the case better.45

However, on March 3, 1863 President Lincoln signed what would later be
known as The Enrollment Act of 1863, a military draft that required all male citizens
ages 20-45 to enlist in the Union Army. This Act drastically changed the direction of
the war, while confirming that the Union Army could potentially lose the war
because of shortage of soldiers. The act signaled that African Americans were no
longer needed as just laborers; they were needed on the front lines.

Kentucky military leaders and politicians resisted the notion of blacks
serving as soldiers. Despite this resistance, by September 1863, 14,000 black
Kentuckians had joined the Union Army and only Louisiana boasted more black
enlisters.46 Most African American regiments guarded supply lines, served as prison

44 "Correspondence between Major General Burnside to President Abraham Lincoln, June 1863,
accessed in Humanities Web Database, December 8, 2014.
45 United States War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the
1880-1901.
46 Col L. G. Brown to Capt. J.B. Dickson, July 23, 1864, 117th United States Colored Infantry,
Regimental Papers, National Army Archives. Microfilm Publication: Colored Infantry. Anne E.
guards, and hunted Confederate guerilla fighters. Despite their military service, enslaved African American soldiers could not escape their servitude status. Soldiers and their families were required to have passes that allowed them to travel throughout the state. And further illustrating the ambiguity and complexities of race relations in Kentucky and her Southernism was the Kentucky legislature recorded position on the Emancipation Proclamation: “Kentucky regarded the Emancipation Proclamation, issued January 1, 1863, as unwise, unconstitutional and void. Legislation was passed to nullify its execution." In Black Reconstruction in America, W.E.B. Du Bois writes, "in 1864, slaves (in Kentucky) were still being sold for $350 to $500 apiece."47 It was not until the end of the Civil War and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 that enslaved African American men, women, and children in Kentucky were free of their servitude status. In Life Behind a Veil: Blacks In Louisville, Kentucky, George Wright contends that a legitimate claim can be made that Kentucky was the last state to free its slaves because the final battle for slavery was fought in Kentucky.48

The post-Civil War period was a time of rebuilding for all Americans, especially for former slaves. At the forefront of the Reconstruction phase for blacks


Historical note: The Emancipation Proclamation was a presidential proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, as a war measure during the Civil War directed to all of the areas in rebellion. It proclaimed the freedom of slaves in the ten states that were still in rebellion, thus applying to 3 million of the 4 million slaves in the U.S. at the time. The Proclamation was based on the President Abraham Lincoln’s constitutional authority; it was not a law passed by Congress. The Proclamation also ordered that suitable persons among those freed could be enrolled into the paid service of United States’ forces, and ordered the Union Army (and all segments of the Executive branch) to “recognize and maintain the freedom of” the ex-slaves. The Proclamation did not compensate the owners, did not itself outlaw slavery, and did not make the ex-slaves citizens.

was the quest for a quality education. The foundation of African American formal education in the South began with the freedman’s innate and overpowering desire to gain an education that was independent from white establishments. Educational institutions by and for African Americans would give them the power to dictate their educational development. In *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, James Anderson argues that former enslaved African Americans developed an educational system to defend and extend their emancipation. The pursuit of black education was simultaneous with freedom from the institution of slavery.

Early black education was a cooperative endeavor involving many benevolent organizations, such as the Freedmen’s Bureau and the American Baptist Home Mission Society. The U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands was established in 1865 by Congress to help an estimated four million former black slaves and poor whites in the South in the aftermath of the Civil War. The Freedmen’s Bureau provided housing and medical aid, established schools, and offered legal assistance.\(^49\) It is estimated that the Freedmen’s Bureau spent anywhere between four to five million dollars on African American education. Despite the promise of uplift and progress as it pertained to the mission of the Freedman’s Bureau, black cooperation with the Freedmen’s Bureau and assistance was not always an easy endeavor. African Americans sometimes suffered repercussions for working with the Bureau. The Freedmen’s Bureau office in Kentucky expressed concern about mob violence and retaliation from white

Kentuckians who opposed the agency and the upward mobility of African Americans. One Bureau agent reported, "Butcher was assaulted, threatened, and driven from his home for giving information to the agents of the Bureau.... Another Kentucky Freedman Ceasar Crowdus was severely whipped for refusing to give information to the white mob."50

Former Confederate white southerners saw the Freedmen's Bureau as an intrusion on southern lifestyle and culture. These southerners resorted to violence in attempts to control the newly freed population. In her study of post-Civil War Kentucky Marshall, argued that the state sank into lawlessness and violence similar to that primarily associated with states of the former Confederacy. Further, "Violence was a form of control that was designed to teach African Americans their lower-class place in post-Civil War Kentucky and to assert conservative values, Democratic politics, and most of all, white supremacy."51 Confederate white southern attitudes and violence towards African Americans discouraged some black Kentuckians from working with the Freedmen's Bureau. However, it was these negative southern white attitudes that encouraged the establishment of African American churches and educational institutions that were independent from white

50 "Kentucky, Office of the assistant Commissioner, inspection records received concerning Freedman Conditions and the Operations of the Bureau of Kentucky," MM roll 48, The United States National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

51 Anne E. Marshall, Creating a Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory In A Border State, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010). 4. In her study, Anne Marshall reveals the "Kentucky Mind" a single shared consciousness among Kentuckians, these activities reveal that that there was no one memory on the war in Kentucky but rather divergent memories belonging to many Kentuckian, which competed with one another over time for cultural primacy. While white confederate memory dominated the historical landscape of postwar Kentucky on the surface, a close look reveals an active political and cultural dialogue that included white Unionist and Confederate Kentuckians, as well as the state's African Americans.....(4) A major theme is also historical memory and how it changes overtime.
institutions. Nonetheless, African Americans selectively worked with some white-controlled institutions that benefitted the African American community and its institutions.

The American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS) was an essential agency in shaping and supporting black education in the nation and Kentucky. The ABHMS, a Christian Missionary Society formed in New York City in 1832 with the commitment "to preach the Gospel, establish churches and give support and ministry to the unchurched and destitute."\(^{52}\) By 1836, one hundred and fifty home missionaries were at work in fourteen states, two territories and two provinces. Throughout the century, the ABHMS contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to black education and religious development. In 1882 and 1883, the ABHMS spent $4,521.24 and $5,731.82 respectively on African American mission activity. From 1881-1883, the ABHMS collected $92,079.59 in the ABHMS trust fund that was solely to be used for the "Freedmen work and Schools."\(^ {53}\)

The American Missionary Association was a branch of the ABHMS and they were very influential in the development of Camp Nelson, a federal camp to American refugees of the Civil War. Camp Nelson was originally intended to serve as a supply camp for Union operations in eastern Tennessee and a recruiting station for African American soldiers. Presumably because it was considered a safe place for former enslaved African Americans, Camp Nelson remained a black community for a short period after the Civil War. White Kentucky Missionary, abolitionist, and the


founder of Berea College; John Fee was instrumental in aiding Camp Nelson and its residents. He collected donations and supplies for the community and encouraged the development of African American churches and schools in the area.\footnote{Marion B. Lucas. \textit{A History of Blacks in Kentucky: From Slavery to Segregation, 1760-1891}, 2nd ed. Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society, 2003.}

White women served as teachers and missionaries and were at the center and backbone of change and service for the organization. They wanted to help with the work of answering God’s call, but in the paternalistic male-dominated society of the nineteenth century, the American Baptist Home Mission Society unsurprisingly refused to appoint single women as missionaries. The ABHMS and other religious organizations patterns of sexism and paternalism were consistent with the era. Women’s religious and educational works were praised as long as they followed society’s rules of male leadership. The religious and societal thought was that women were supposed to be subordinate and unfortunately, men were unwilling to concede their power in the religious organization. Women who pushed societal norms could easily be considered disrupters of God’s plan for the family, community, religious organizations and the church.

In response to sexism and recognizing the value and need of a Christian organization, the Women’s Baptist Home Mission Society (WBHMS), based in Chicago, was founded on February 1, 1877. A decade later, another women’s religious society, the Woman’s American Baptist Home Mission Society (WABHMS) was founded on November 15, 1887 in Boston “to extend the kingdom of God among
the women and children of America.”55 In 1909, the two organizations merged together as the Home Mission Society because of their similar ideals and purposes. Mary Parrish, a Kentucky African American leader in the Baptist church wrote that the Purpose of the WABHMS “is the evangelization of the women among the freed people, the Indians, the heathen immigrants, and the new settlements of the West, and to support teachers wherever, on this continent, schools should be established by the Home Mission Society.”56 Both male and female African American Baptist organizations used the Home Mission Society’s framework and fundraising techniques for the building of quality educational institutions, fortifying the black Baptists churches in their communities, and uplifting the black race.

Many white missionaries from the north were drawn to these organizations and migrated south to help in the mission to “uplift” the freedmen through education and religious instruction. But not all white involvement came from northern religious “carpetbagger” relationships. There were some white Southern Baptists who felt a paternalistic obligation to assist in the development of black education. Reverend J.B. Hawthorne, President of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention believed that all white Baptists, both Southern and Northern, wanted an “elevation of the colored people.” He articulated this belief in the 1895 Annual report of the American Home Baptist Mission society, writing, “The white Baptists of the South have always felt the obligation imposed upon them to

care for the religious interests of the Negroes.” Reverend Hawthorne also
acknowledged northern Baptists’ financial contribution of more than three million
dollars to southern black education. He linked the education of African Americans to
church leadership in black communities by emphasizing the importance of a well-
educated and cultured black preacher. “The Baptist Preacher is held by the Negro to
be infallible. His word is law.”

Northern and Southern white Baptists wanted African Americans to
participate in the Baptist denominational teachings and congregations as a way to
maintain some sense of control over Biblical and social instruction. They enticed
blacks with the appeal of financing religious-based education. However, this allowed
whites to influence the curriculum being taught in African American schools, and the
black Baptist church schools were no exception: “The foundation of the Freedman’s
educational movement was their self-reliance and deep-seated desire to control and
sustain schools for themselves and their children.” Despite white Americans’
desire to control African American institutions, blacks did manage to establish
educational institutions free of white finances and control. The Kentucky Normal
and Theological Institute of Kentucky and Alabama Baptist University were two
schools established solely by black Baptists. These schools were considered pillars

Reports. Valley Forge, PA.
58 ABHMS, 25.
story of the intricate public and private education that was developed by and for black southerners
between 1860-1935. Anderson looks at white influence but focuses and examines the structure,
ideology, and content of black education as part and parcel of the larger political subordination of
blacks, for it was the social system in which blacks lived that made their educational institutions so
fundamentally different from those of other Americans.
of pride for their communities and African Americans across the South. The notions of self-help and self-determination were major facets of former slaves’ educational movements. African Americans accepted help from northern missionary societies, Freedman’s Bureau, and other white organizations, but it was the actions of African Americans that brought education to the newly freed men and women and their children. As W.E.B. Du Bois writes, “Public education for all public expenses was, in the South, a Negro idea.”

Kentucky African Americans followed the national trends and rushed to establish educational systems with and without the help of white benevolent organizations. In 1873, less than ten years after the conclusion of the Civil War, there was an estimated 1,500 school-aged African American children in Lexington, Kentucky, which required three African American schools in the city. The financial appropriation for white schools was $13,546, and the black schools were allotted $3,418. The Lexington African American community furnished and maintained three blacks schools that were located on Church Street, Corral Street, and Fourth Street. The city government agreed to pay the salaries of the teachers and principals. The stark unequal expenditure per pupil motivated the black church and community to supplement and fund the black education system in Fayette County. In 1874, an educational legislative act of Lexington was passed to legally segregate all school

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61 “City Council Record of Law and Fayette County School Records, 1870-1873”, (Lexington, Kentucky), 80-92.
funds and made African Americans responsible for their own education. With the passage of this act, the Lexington black community and churches began feverishly raising money for black education.

Arguably, the black community and churches of Louisville set educational trends in the establishment of black schools. Former enslaved African Americans rushed to enroll themselves and their children in school. By 1870, there were at least fifteen schools in Louisville that provided education to 5,000 African American children and adults. White officials of the Freedmen’s Bureau were astounded that African Americans were willing to pay tuition and sacrifice potential earnings from their children for an education. The Freedmen’s Bureau General inspector, John Alvord commented that Louisville black schools "compare well with other places I have visited." He also noted there were at least 8,000 documented African American students that were being educated across the state.62

Black Kentuckians’ quest for a quality education fits the argument and ideals of W.E.B. Du Bois and James Anderson. At the root of the many of these educational institutions was the black church. The black church in Kentucky was instrumental and necessary in building the African American educational system. Often times church basements were used as the first schools, ministers allowed out of town missionaries and teachers to stay with them, and special collections on Sundays were taken up for educational purposes. Du Bois writes, “the Negro Church is the only social institution of the Negroes which started in the African Forest and

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survived slavery; under the leadership of priest or medicine man, afterward of the Christian Pastor, the Church preserved in itself the remnants of African tribal life and became after emancipation the center of Negro social life." The African American church has always been the cornerstone of the black community and its organizing spirit. Black churches were not only focused on the teachings of Christianity, but they faithfully relied upon the pulpit and auxiliaries to address social issues that affected their members and their communities.

Slavery and the Civil War were an intense threat to black churches in the South and Border States. But these were just two of the significant hurdles the African American Church encountered. Black churches struggled with meeting financial obligations and maintaining church facilities. Even at the conclusion of the Civil War, its parishioners struggled to maintain a livelihood with their newfound freedom. In the South, most former enslaved African Americans remained on their former or surrounding plantations where they worked as tenant farmers and sharecroppers. Sharecropping and tenant farming was a form of economic slavery as it kept freedmen subservient and at the economic mercy of their white landlords and bosses. According to Leon Litwack, "Most of the laborers had fallen victim to a system that crushed hopes and stifled ambition."

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63 W.E.B. Du Bois, editor, "The Negro Church," (Atlanta: Atlanta University Press, 1903), introduction. This report was presented at the Eight Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems, held at Atlanta University, May 26, 1903. Du Bois was the corresponding secretary of the conference. The Atlanta Cycle of Studies in the Negro problem aims at exhaustive and periodic studies of all these subjects as they relate to the American Negro (in the preface of the report). The investigation was based on United State census of 1890, Catalogues of Theological Schools, one hundred and seventy five special reports from laymen.

64 Leon Litwack, Trouble In Mind: Black Southerners In the Age of Jim Crow, (New York Vintage books, 1998,) 114-123. Litwack's work is a study of the daily lives of African Americans at the
Some southern white planters wanted to ensure that African Americans remained close to the land and in their place at the bottom of the social hierarchy. To achieve this goal white southerners often resorted to terror. The white planter class was instrumental in developing and directing the Ku Klux Klan's violent acts of terrorism. Racism and the concentrated political power of African-Americans in the church solidified African-American churches as the central targets for racial violence waged against the entire Black community. In the face of white violence, black churches remained a strong and central force in the development of educational opportunities and "...blacks had a right to be proud of their schools and churches."\(^{65}\)

Financial woes and the threat of white retaliation was a looming threat for many African American churches in Kentucky. However, similar to First African Baptist Church of Lexington and Fifth Street Baptist church, the leadership of Green Street Baptist church understood that the church was not only a place for religious development, but also necessary for providing education, and political and economic development that focused on activities for the uplift and prospering of the African American community. On November 15, 1893, Green Street Baptist Church called a special meeting to address the Separate Coach Law, a legislative act that

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segregated railroad cars. Passed in May 1892, the law "marked the first significant confrontation between black Kentuckians and Jim Crow." It signified black Kentuckians inferior position in society and aligned Kentucky with southern states culture of de jure and de facto segregation. Green Street Baptist Church Pastor D.A. Gaddie encouraged his congregation and community to fight against this law as it represented a form of racial discrimination. He practiced what he preached and was an active member of the Anti-Separate Coach Movement of Kentucky. Black Baptist and other black leaders of the Anti-Separate Coach Movement hired attorneys to fight the new law and declared Friday, February 22, 1895 "Anti-Separate Coach Thanksgiving Day." The movement issued a call for "every colored church, College, school, secret society and community throughout Kentucky, assemble together and offer unto to God thanks for the decision [to protest] and at the same time raise a large contribution to our Fund. The 1893 meeting was not only open to church members and leaders; it was also a community meeting; however, it began with prayer and Bible reading which signified the importance of religion to social movements. The Green Street Baptist Church minutes indicated that at least seven men spoke and the meeting had to be called to an end because of expired time. The church elected to create a committee solely to address the separate coach law.

African Americans found their own self-empowering methods to protest and create momentum for future movements. Respectability was the most common form

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of protest in the black community. They made deliberate efforts to dress and act
with a certain form of decorum acceptable to the white middle-class in the public
sphere. Black respectability was subtle yet, a powerful statement to whites about
African American upward mobility. According to William Steward, one of the most
formidable forms of black respectability was gaining an education and blacks
owning their own property. Those factors were simultaneous with upward mobility
and gaining the acceptance of whites. According to historian Evelyn Brooks
Higginbotham "the politics of respectability equated public behavior to with
individual self-respect and with the advancement of African Americans as a group.
They felt certain that respectable behavior in public would earn their people a
measure of esteem from white America."67

Some African Americans preferred a more direct approach to confronting
racial oppression and discrimination. For example, Kentucky State University
professor Chapman Monroe lost his job for his role in organizing the boycott of the
segregated trains and calling attention to acts of discrimination in the city of
Frankfort. In another example of direct action, church minutes indicated that a
woman member of the church refused to continue washing the clothes of whi~e
officials.68

67 Higginbotham, 14.
68 Wright, 129; Ritterhouse, Growing Up Jim Crow: How Black and White Southern Children Learned
Race 41; Ritterhouse argues that For how could whites maintain the argument that blacks were
naturally inferior if some blacks demonstrated that they most certainly were not? Addressed to
other blacks, as well as to white racists, respectability was thus a strategy that many blacks employed
in a discursive contest over black identity that was raging, especially in American popular culture.
She posits that Black respectability was not only taught in homes but in churches and schools as well;
Also see, Blair M. Kelley, Right To Ride: Streetcar Boycotts and African American Citizenship in the Era
of Plessy v. Ferguson (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Kelly argues that
The African American Baptist church in Kentucky was at the foundation of all activities across the state. It was the beacon of hope and direction for political, economic, and especially educational matters. Fifth Street Baptist church remained one of the most prestigious and influential Baptist churches across the state. In part, its influence was driven by the free status of many of members when other African American Baptist churches membership was mostly comprised of enslaved African Americans. Fifth Street boasted to be the home of the elite, leading, and oldest black families in Louisville. Their offering, tithe, and missionary collections indicated their ability to make larger financial contributions to the African American community in Louisville. Perception and reality created an aura of elite social and class status that produced a sense of separation among the black Baptist churches in Louisville and surrounding areas. Because of their economic position and occupations as physicians, lawyers, teachers, and other influential professions; members of Fifth Street Baptist Church were less likely than Green Street Baptist Church members or other churches to get involved in civil rights protests because they felt that they had more to lose in the sense of jobs, economic footing, and their image in the eyes of influential whites of the city.

Pastor Henry Adams of Fifth Street Baptist Church encouraged his members to reconcile with old masters and foster relationships with whites in influential positions; thus indicating he did not want to agitate his white supporters and city leaders. One of Fifth Street Baptist Church’s most prominent members, William

some middle class African Americans used black respectability and class as the justification for being able to ride the public system.
Steward, a longtime member and one of the first students of Fifth Street Baptist Church basement school, encouraged African Americans to maintain a friendly and working relationships with important whites. Most of Steward's influence was because of his close and working relationship with prominent whites of Louisville. He encountered and cultivated these relationships when he became the first black mailman of Louisville. Coincidentally, his route serviced upper-class white residential areas and business establishments. Because of his relationship with whites he was able to recommend fellow African Americans for important positions such as city patronage positions, policemen, firemen, and school officials. Louisville whites believed that he was the most influential black man of his time. The local newspaper *The Louisville Herald Post* wrote, "Steward has been a factor in every movement in the city looking at the improvement of the colored people and of the city generally during his long and useful life, and is probably better known to more white people of the city than any other colored man now living." 69 Many black Kentuckians such as Steward and other black leaders learned to navigate and gain favor from influential whites. He and others felt that for upward mobility African Americans must self-reflect and become educated as a means of acceptance.

Regarding black religious life, African American Baptist Churches had the largest membership and the highest property value in the state, but they were not the only African American religious denomination involved in the black community.

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In 1866, white Episcopalians helped African Americans of Louisville form St. Mark’s Colored Episcopal. Under the direction of a generous white Bishop, Thomas Dudley, the white Episcopalian missionary group donated money to start a school led by northern educators. The school offered day and evening programs of basic education. Bishop Dudley invested not only his funds but his time as well. Described as an aristocratic Virginian, he felt that blacks and whites should not be separated. His paternalistic, but perhaps sincere, thoughts were expressed in his 1885 essay "How Shall We Help the Negro?" In this essay, he charged other ministers and pastors to care and remain active in the social, spiritual, and physical life of African Americans. According to Dudley, "the Negro needed more contact with the white man so that the latter, through the church, might lift up colored Christians." 70

The school lasted for only three years and the Episcopalian denomination never gained a semblance of momentum similar to the Black Baptist Church in Kentucky. Perhaps blacks flocked to the Baptist Church during Reconstruction because of the new sense of independence from white leadership the church provided. Black Baptists were able to be self-autonomous in the private sphere of the Black Baptist church. They governed themselves, made decisions, and were free to be themselves in a space away from the prying eyes of whites. In this sense, Dudley’s paternalistic approach was off-putting and reflected, in essence, the master-slave like relationship that African Americans had sought to escape for generations.

Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal church was the mother church of the AME movement in Kentucky, and it impacted the city of Louisville and the state of Kentucky dramatically. The AME Movement of Kentucky began in 1838 and Quinn Chapel was established in 1854. In its first ten years the Kentucky AME population doubled but its numbers never reached half of the African American Baptist numbers of Kentucky. In 1890, the number of Black Baptists in Kentucky was over 50,000 compared to 13,000 African Methodist Episcopal members. Quinn Chapel AME was small in numbers but big in heart. Many of its members were at the center of the streetcar boycott in Louisville and Quinn Chapel was the headquarters for the 1920’s Marcus Garvey Universal Negro Improvement Association. The legacy of fighting for equality has continued for generations and is intricate to the denomination and the black community. 71

Similar to the African American Baptist churches, Quinn Chapel also worked to educate African Americans in their community. With the help of Quaker friends, Quinn Chapel opened a school for newly freed slaves. Similar to most AME churches in the South, Quinn Chapel membership numbers never mirrored the major Baptist churches in the city of Louisville, but they remained a factor in uplifting the perception of black morality and educating the community with traditional schooling, while also empowering the community to fight for civil rights.  

Despite their denominational differences, black churches maintained striking commonalities. African American churches were consistently at the social and

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religious centers of Black communities. Secular and ecclesiastical factors were interwoven into every entity of African American churches. Thus, black religious institutions created a system in which African-Americans could organize politically and persist spiritually. In other words, African American churches did not only have the responsibility to teach the tenets of Christianity, but the church was also faithfully relied upon to address the specific issues that affected their members.

The Baptist churches of Kentucky were influential, but to be even more effective, they needed an organization for collaboration. The African Methodist Episcopal churches, the oldest Protestant denomination in the United States, began congregational meetings in 1848. And perhaps, the Baptist denomination followed their counterpart’s example. In 1865, on the third Wednesday of August, at Fifth Street Baptist Church of Louisville, representatives from Kentucky Baptist churches met to establish the State Convention of Colored Baptists in Kentucky. The following churches were represented: Fifth Street Baptist Church (Louisville), Green Street Baptist Church (Louisville), York Street Baptist Church (Louisville), First Baptist Church of Danville, Baptist Church of Greensburg, First African Baptist Church (Lexington), and Pleasant Green Baptist Church (Lexington). Reverend Henry Adams of Fifth Street Baptist Church of Louisville served as the first president and initial organizer, Brother Vincent Helm of Green Street Baptist Church was the Vice-President, Reverend Hansbrough and Peter Smith, both of Frankfort, Kentucky,
served as secretary and treasurer respectively.\textsuperscript{72} These men "established an organization for the religious development of their people and had founded an institution for their intellectual training, shows that they must have been divinely guided."\textsuperscript{73} Their first act was to establish a Baptist College in the state before the next convention, which was to be held at the First Baptist of Frankfort. Convention trustees John H. Thomas, Robert Martin, Tabb Smith and Henry Samuels purchased property for two thousand dollars in Frankfort, Kentucky with the intent of building a school.

**General Association of Colored Baptists**

The convention continued to grow in numbers and productivity. By 1869, the State Convention for Colored Baptists in Kentucky merged into the General Association of Colored Baptists in Kentucky. The General Association church membership numbers surpassed twelve thousand, making it one of the largest organizations for African American Baptists nationwide. The first historic meeting was moderated by Reverend Henry Adams and took place at the First African Baptist Church of Lexington. The General Association minutes do not indicate the purpose of this merger, but it is clear that representatives from the American Consolidated Convention of Baptists of western Kentucky, the South District Association of Lebanon, Kentucky, and the Anti-Slavery Baptist Association attended


the first official meeting. The American Consolidated Convention of Baptists of western Kentucky, the South District Association of Lebanon, Kentucky, and the Anti-Slavery Baptist Association attended the inaugural meeting. Rev. S. F. Thompson, corresponding secretary of the General Association of White Baptists of Louisville, sent a letter encouraging the General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky to continue their work uplifting and building the African American Baptist Church. The Convention's objective was to establish missions and Christian education, specifically the establishment of a Baptist college with the goal of training future ministers. Simmons College formed from this inaugural meeting. This institute educated African American Baptist ministers and teachers. Its curriculum and independence from whites was monumental and an example to other African Americans across the South.

Sadly, this was the last public meeting moderated by Reverend Henry Adams. Old age and sickness caused him to withdraw from public life and he died at 2:15 in the afternoon on November 3, 1872. William Simmons said, "His bright light has been cut down," but his legacy of Baptist denominational work was celebrated and imitated in the General Association and across the state. Kentucky Educator and President of State University Charles Parrish said of Adams:

Verily he was a lover of his people; deeply impressed with the worth of souls; an earnest and humble man. A man of faith and prayer, and above all, a man of pure life. No ministerial defection ever stained his garment: a true leader of his people in practice as well as in doctrine,

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74 General Association of Colored Baptist Minutes, 1869, Simmons Bible College Papers, Box 2 Folder 8, University of Louisville Special Collections.
his own bright life illuminated the path in which he would have the people to walk.\textsuperscript{75}

The General Association and Adams’ dream of a theological and educational institution came to fruition in 1879 with the opening of the Kentucky Normal Theological Institute, now Simmons College of Kentucky.

The General Association proved successful. It continued to grow in membership and auxiliaries in order to better meet the needs of the African American Baptist community in Kentucky. Baptist Women’s Educational Convention of Kentucky, Consolidated Baptist Educational Association, State Baptist Women’s Missionary Convention, \textit{The American Baptist} newspaper, and a host of other auxiliaries formed from the General Association of Colored Baptist in Kentucky.\textsuperscript{76}

The legacy of slavery, Reconstruction, segregation, and religious fervor created unique dynamics for black Kentuckians and their pursuit for a quality education. The African American Baptist church was well aware of its commitment to its congregations and communities, which encompassed much more than a spiritual development and stewardship. The churches and its leaders had a moral obligation to uplift and advance the race through education.

Black Baptists of Kentucky took on the responsibility of filling the void left by state and local governments that refused to equally fund black education. They also acted as autonomous as possible, in order to instill a sense of independence and pride in black Kentuckians. The African American church served as a safe haven and

\textsuperscript{75} Simmons, 798.

gave members a voice, opinion, and a sense of self-autonomy that most blacks had never experienced in their second-class citizenship status in a white dominated society. African American Baptists of Kentucky were successful because of their ability to organize and feed the desire for education that exuded from the black community. Thus, oftentimes the "church house and the schoolhouse" overlapped and were often one and the same. The establishment of higher education institutions in Kentucky became a priority for many African Americans and was made possible by not the only the Baptist church, but the development of black leaders.
Figure 1.1. Picture of Elder Sneathen, third pastor of Green Street Baptist Church. Green Street Baptist Church Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.

Figure 1.2. Picture of John Henderson Spencer, estimated to be taken between 1867-1877. John Henderson Spencer Collection, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives: Nashville, Tennessee.
Figure 1.3. Green Street Baptist Church, 1955. Building erected in 1903. Green Street Baptist Church Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.

Figure 1.4. Martin Luther King Jr. visiting Green Street Baptist Church, 1967. Green Street Baptist Church Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.
"The Talented Tenth of the Negro race must be made leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among their people."

**Chapter 2**

**The Kentucky Talented Tenth: The African American Community and Its Educational Leaders**

In 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois published an essay titled The Talented Tenth," in an anthology edited by Booker T. Washington in his anthology entitled, *The Negro Problem*, Du Bois posited that the African American race was “going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races.” The core of Du Bois’ argument was that an elite class of African Americans would uplift the race through education and black respectability, demonstrating their fitness for citizenship to white America. The talented tenth concept is perhaps one of Du Bois most well-known arguments, but he did not create the phrase. Henry Lymen Morehouse, a white Baptist minister and corresponding secretary for the Baptist Home Mission Society, coined the term and concept in an article almost a decade earlier. He argued, “The tenth man, with superior natural endowments, symmetrically trained and highly developed, may become a mightier influence, a greater inspiration to others than all the other nine, or nine times nine like them.” Morehouse’s work and legacy was influential to the African American Baptist community and his legacy lives on through one of the most
prestigious historical African American colleges, Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.¹

Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois were strong proponents of black education and were the embodiment of upward mobility of the black middleclass with talented tenth tenets. Both men visited Kentucky on several occasions and were familiar with the unique struggle of black Kentuckians. Washington considered William Steward, the first black mail carrier of Louisville and the Chairman of the Board of trustees for Simmons College, a trusted friend and resided at the Steward’s home when passing through Kentucky. Both men were considered accommodationist and believed progress would be achieved by maintaining well-balanced relationships with whites.

In 1890, William J. Simmons and Charles Parrish Sr. opened Eckstein-Norton Institute, an industrial school in Cane Springs, Kentucky. Booker T. Washington, a mastermind of industrial education, visited the school on several occasions and mentored Charles Parrish Sr. upon the untimely death of Simmons. In 1906, Washington was a special guest speaker at the twentieth anniversary of Kentucky Normal and Industrial Institute (Kentucky State University) in Frankfort, Kentucky. The Indianapolis Freeman wrote that a tremendous crowd and special trains from Danville, Louisville, and Shelbyville, greeted Washington, and other cities carried

African Americans into the capital city to hear and see one of the most famous leaders of their time.²

Booker T. Washington’s words, "to do a common thing in an uncommon manner," were the foundation of industrial education and training. He thought it was necessary for African Americans to learn basic techniques in farming, carpentry, brickmaking and bricklaying, print shop, home economics, and other practical subjects, as well as basic secondary school concepts. Washington's system of discipline and self-help approach encouraged African American progress without antagonizing whites. He served as the founder and principal for almost thirty-five years at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. The school served as a model for industrial education for other historical black colleges and institutions.³

W.E.B. Du Bois also visited the commonwealth on one documented occasion. During the week of February 11th, 1939, he visited Kentucky State Industrial College for Colored Persons (Kentucky State University). He spoke to the students about the celebration of "Negro history week." And despite the differing opinions of the two leading African American scholars of the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, Kentucky historian George Wright contends that, "Louisville black leaders saw no inherent contradictions on supporting both Washington and his leading critic, the Harvard-trained black educator W.E.B. Du Bois. To them Washington, a man of


action, had great prestige and influence and a realistic program. Du Bois, a highly respected intellectual, pointed out the potential of the race..." They and other scholars addressed the issue of the role in the United States for African Americans who were no longer enslaved, but who had no specific social, educational, economic, and political place within American society. Their ideologies and approaches were different, but each had the critical objective of advancing the African American race. Industrial education, traditional classic education, and black respectability were proposed solutions for the "Negro Problem."4

**The Negro Problem**

Washington and Du Bois were both strategic in dealing with problems of poverty and discrimination. Washington believed that blacks could advance themselves faster through hard work rather than by demands for equal rights and Du Bois declared that African Americans must speak out constantly against discrimination. Washington focused on economic goals and advised African Americans to accept social discrimination temporarily. During the late 19th century the principle of segregation by race extended into every area of Southern life. Their respective mindsets were a reflection of their upbringing that represented different economic social and economic classes.

Booker T. Washington was born around April 5, 1856 to an unknown white father and an enslaved mother who was a cook on the plantation of James Burroughs outside of Franklin County, Virginia. As a young slave child, he

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4 “W.E.B. Du Bois Papers,” *General Correspondence*, Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to Kentucky State Industrial College, November 29, 1939, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries; Wright, 156.
experienced extreme poverty well into freedom where he worked in the salt mines of West Virginia and a houseboy for the mine owner. His climb to economic dependence and as a race leader began with his 1872 admission to Hampton Institute. Under the leadership of Samuel Chapman Armstrong, Washington rose to prominence and the president of Tuskegee Institute by 1881.\(^5\)

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was born on February 23, 1886 in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. His mother, Mary Silvina was a descendant of a small free black people who owned land in the small mostly European community. In his autobiography, Du Bois experienced small struggles of racism in his community but because of his mixed ancestry and his academic excellence at the local integrated schools public schools in his community he was often able to bypass the racial nature of the time period. His academic achievement propelled him to be the first African American to graduate with a PhD from Harvard University and to fight for civil rights as a member and perhaps founder of the "talented tenth notion."\(^6\)

History has intertwined the lives and arguments of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois and often making their positions dichotomous. And despite their different strategies in achieving civil rights, they each had a goal of African American advancement in the era of segregation. Their different childhood upbringings that reflect substantial class and economic distinctions shaped their philosophies on countering racism.


Black respectability demanded that African Americans' hold each other accountable in policing morality and behavior that reflected a positive image to white mainstream society. "These middle-class black men and women saw themselves as ambassadors to the white power structure." For most African Americans, the middle-class status symbol signified success within American culture and society. The middle-class status is best identified by the acquirement of a higher education, a variety of employment opportunities, and perhaps easier manipulation of racial and socioeconomic barriers that often afflicted poorer African Americans. One of the goals of the African American middle class was to demonstrate to white Americans that African Americans were their equals and not inferior as often portrayed by white society. They also wanted to serve as an example to which lower class African Americans aspired.

The challenges facing African Americans were on the front page of black newspapers, and the center of debate in both black and white private and public spheres. One of the most influential black newspapers in the United States, The New York Age, was printed from 1887-1953. It was also once the journalistic home of both W.E.B. Du Bois and African American feminist and educator Gertrude Bustill Mossell. Almost weekly, it published at least one article addressing the "Negro Problem." The May 9, 1907 issue discussed the Philadelphia race problem, for instance, as "not a Hopeless Task: Social Question of Maladjustment between race as

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a group and Its American Environment." The article argued that the Negro problem was a social problem of maladjustment between the Negro group and its American environment. It further discussed unemployment, poverty, the lack of education and other social issues. The author posited that these issues were not synonymous with the African American people but other groups as well. Immigrants, first generation Americans, and poor working-class whites also faced these issues that were considered a symptom of the Negro Problem. The article negated the idea of a Negro problem and insists that it was, perhaps, an "American" problem.

Kentucky had its own unique debates and solutions to the Negro Problem. The talented-tenth in Kentucky sought to solve the Negro Problem in the Commonwealth through a racial uplift narrative that emphasized education, civic duty, and Christian morality. In 1899, a Kentucky pastor of a Maysville Christian church advertised his sermon topic "Murder and the Negro Problem of the South" in the local paper. The advertisement did not specify the argument or narrative of his sermon but clearly the Negro Problem was center stage. The Bourbon News

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10 "Philadelphia Race Problem: Insistence Upon Right to Work and Progress," The New York Age (New York, New York), May 9, 1907, 8. Gertrude Bustill Mossell was an early African American feminist and journalist. Her most widely recognized work was The Work of the Afro-American Woman, which was a feminist and political collection of original essays and poems by a diverse group of black women who sought ways to uplift their communities. She praises the work and accomplishments of African American women like Harriet Tubman and Phillis Wheatley and credit them for their race work. She encourages the black women to make wise choices in education and family life, as it is a way to view African American progress.

11 "Where Religious Exercises Will be Held Sunday," The Public Ledger (Maysville, Kentucky), October 7, 1899.
advertised the publication of *The Negro Problem* by Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, Charles W. Chesnutt, Wilford H. Smith, H. T. Kealing, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and T. Thomas Fortune. The newspaper referred to the authors as "the most eminent citizens of the United States of Negro blood." These men were educated and well known by both blacks and whites across the United States and were believed to have plausible methods of racial advancement.

Kentucky was not without its own educators and leaders who sought ways to improve the lives of black Kentuckians and offer solutions for the Negro Problem on the state and national levels. An important factor in their leadership development was the African American Baptist church. Religion and education are inextricably linked in early Kentucky educational history. Most of these individuals, churches, or educational programs did not receive national attention, but their impact and leadership in the realm of education influenced the state and nation directly and indirectly.

In 1890, when former United States President Rutherford B. Hayes was asked about his opinion of Negro education, he said, "their number is not over six and a half million in this country; but it is a matter of great importance how to improve their condition morally and educationally." He believed that the highest performing African American students that could demonstrate reading abilities or special aptitude of education and learning resided in the Ohio, Virginia, and Kentucky region or as he referred to the area as "Virginia Land." Hayes told reporters “a careful examination of that region will show a considerable advance in the good

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qualities of civilization and a proper appreciation of citizenship."\textsuperscript{13} This distinction is a reflection of the quality of teachers and leadership that supported the African American community within the region. Kentucky was a rural state that was faced with financial woes and white resistance to black educational advancement but it evolved into a place of learning and teaching that served as a training ground for African American leaders and teachers that influenced African American education nationwide.

**Charles Sr. and Mary Parrish**

Charles and Mary Parrish of Louisville, Kentucky are prime examples of Kentucky’s talented tenth as they dedicated their entire lives to elevating the African American race through educational activism and leadership. Charles Henry Parrish, the son of Hiram and Harriet Parrish, was born a slave in 1859 on the Fayette County Kentucky farm of Jeff Barr and Beverly Hicks, that bordered Kentucky and national politician Henry Clay’s larger plantation. The Baptist church was a fixture in Charles Parrish’s life and between the years of 1862 and 1873, he was baptized at First African Baptist Church of Lexington by its fourth pastor, Reverend James Monroe. His parents engrained religious commitment to him and his siblings at an early age. Young Charles regularly attended Sunday school, church services, and community events hosted by the church. His father, Hiram Parrish served as a deacon at the First African Baptist Church of Lexington under the first pastor, London Ferrill. Seeing his father and other prominent African American men work

\textsuperscript{13} "R.B. Hayes Talks: He Gives His Views Regarding Negro Education in the South," *The Courier Journal*, November 2, 1890, 4.
and dedicate their time and talents to the Baptist church impacted Charles for a lifetime. The early influence of the Baptist Church and education guided and influenced the professional and personal choices of Parrish.\textsuperscript{14}

The church and places of education were the two most important institutions in the African American community. Once emancipated, Hiram and Harriet Parrish exercised their newly freed status by enrolling their son in a Baptist Home Mission School and then later in Lexington public schools. It is clear that Charles showed great educational promise and for that reason a prominent African American attorney, John Gillis, mentored Charles and taught him to read and write.\textsuperscript{15}

Unfortunately as the oldest of three children, Parrish was forced to leave school because his parents’ occupations as a teamster and seamstress did not meet the financial needs of the Parrish family. As the oldest of three, Charles worked full-time in a dry foods store and other side jobs he could find to help support his family.

Understanding the value and necessity of an education, his circumstances did not discourage him from continuing his education in non-traditional school settings. For example, in the store where he worked he taught himself math by weighing produce and other goods. But it was within the African American Baptist church that Charles gained the most in understanding the value of education and civic duty.

\textsuperscript{14} McIntyre, \textit{One Grain of the Salt: The First African Baptist Church West of the Allegheny Mountains}, 37-38.
Parrish’s tenacity to learn was not lost on the elders of the church who appointed him to numerous leadership positions at First African Baptist Church of Lexington. His first exposure to teaching was as a Sunday school teacher and his other church responsibilities included Sunday school secretary and church clerk. Conceivably, it was the teaching experiences at church that ignited Charles Parrish’s passion for teaching and encouraged a lifetime of working for the improvement and uplift of African Americans through education. Outside of his church stewardship responsibilities, Parrish assisted black educator W.A. Steward in teaching, reading, and writing at a Fayette County night school that catered to working class African Americans.16 The sources do not indicate who funded the night school. However, it is likely that local Lexington African American churches influenced and maybe donated money and space for the operation of the night school. The purposes and goals of educational and religious institutions often intersected and overlapped. Parrish’s early educational journey exemplifies ways in which the black Baptist church and community worked to educate its congregants and promising young pupils. Charles Parrish watched as successful African American men in his community accomplished the feat of achieving a formal education. He knew in order to be a well-respected teacher that he would eventually need to pursue higher education.

William J. Simmons, father figure and mentor to Charles Parrish, wrote a glowing and favorable essay entitled *Men of Mark* about the rising and important influence of Parrish to Kentucky Baptist education. He writes that Charles prayed

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16 Simmons, 1062
continuously for the opportunity to attend college and he finally prevailed when his father gave him permission to quit his job and further his education. Parrish and his father agreed that he would attend the Nashville Institute, which was the largest African American bible college during this time period.\textsuperscript{17}

Unfortunately, tragedy struck and Charles Parrish never had the opportunity to attend the institution because his father unexpectedly passed away. After his father’s death, Parrish became the primary breadwinner for his mother, younger sister, and brother. Death and sadness returned when Parrish lost his mother in 1879 and then his sister in 1880. These dire circumstances were a low point in Charles Parrish’s life, but they were also a turning point. According to his mentor and teacher, William J. Simmons, "he [Parrish] saw no ray of hope which he might carry out his plans at this critical stage in his life."\textsuperscript{18} Coincidentally in 1880, Simmons resigned as pastor of First African Baptist Church of Lexington and was appointed President of Simmons College. Simmons thought of Charles as a protégé and saw great potential in him; and without hesitation he asked Parrish to join him in Louisville, where Charles began his liberal arts studies. This act of kindness forged an important relationship between Simmons and Parrish that laid the

\textsuperscript{17} Simmons, 1063; Joe M. Richardson, \textit{A History of Fisk University, 1865-1956} (University of Alabama Press, 2002), 8-17. The Nashville Institute was the largest African American Bible College in the area during this time period and was later renamed Roger Williams University who was considered the founder the first Baptist Church. It sought to give newly freed slaves a religious and liberal arts education. Due to financial hardships the institution the school closed its doors in 1904. Today, Roger Williams University has now merged with Lemoine-Owen University. And it was also the sister school and foundation to the American Baptist College of Nashville, Tennessee which was located on what is now a portion of Vanderbilt University.

\textsuperscript{18} Simmons, 1066.
foundation for African American Baptist education in Kentucky and was at the heart of the education solution to the "Negro Problem" in Kentucky.

Simmons College was a golden opportunity for Parrish and the other two students of his cohort: Amanda Nelson and Charles Sneed. Parrish understood the value and necessity of higher education and was not a stranger to hard work. He paid for a portion of his education by working as a janitor for the school and the city of Louisville. He also served as the school secretary and a student teaching assistant in the high school sector of Simmons College. Those odd jobs helped him to pay his tuition and living expenses. His intellectual prowess and leadership skills also caught the attention of white northern philanthropists who presented him with scholarships.

Simmons College was founded and controlled by African Americans Baptists; however, it was not unusual for northern white philanthropists to support African American students and educational institutions with scholarships and donations. White endowments were a way to ensure some type of control, though minimal, over African American funded and controlled institutions. Some educational scholars have argued that northern education reformers used African American educational philanthropy as a social engineering tool of control and a solution to the "Negro Problem," arguing, "Northern white religious philanthropy is either an example of the richness and vitality of American life, a sign of the nation’s potential
for renewal, or it is an illustration of America’s broken promises, a crafty form of ‘generosity’ designed to prevent real reform.”  

Despite the drawbacks of Northern philanthropic scholarship opportunities, the financial gifts allowed Parrish more time to participate in school organizations on campus. He served as the president of the Young Men’s and Women’s Christian Association for two consecutive terms and was also the president of the Athenaeum club, a literary society that focused on the promotion of learning and teaching. Parrish’s participation in civic and school organizations were vital, because club work and involvement in non-religious organizations taught him the interworking of organizations and he used many of those observed and learned strategies in influencing African American education in Kentucky. His role as a critic and editor in the State University paper *The Normal Weekly* helped him develop into a prolific writer, which later became evident in the plethora of essays and articles in which Parrish wrote about the African American Baptist Church and black education.  

Charles Parrish graduated from the Simmons College high school department in 1882. Throughout his tenure in the University program, Charles outperformed his peers academically, which earned him the prestige of being named valedictorian for the class of 1886. His studies propelled him into a career of higher education and dedication to social uplift. Parrishes’ solution to addressing the needs of the African American community was through education. His academic and leadership zeal was

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20“Simmons College Yearbook,” Charles Henry Parrish Jr. Papers, Box 21, folder 7, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
not unmatched by his classmates. The 1886 class salutatorian, Charles Sneed, also served a term as the president of the Athenaeum and president of the Ciceronian club, which encouraged students to dedicate their time to philosophy and divinity. Sneed's hard work and education was not without rewards. He became a popular physician in Louisville and even treated Charles Parrish on one documented occasion. Another member of Parrish's cohort, Sarah Nelson graduated third in Parrish's class, and similar to Parrish, as a teacher and administrator she dedicated her life to educating African American students in Louisville.21

The 1886 graduates of Simmons College exhibited the talented tenth notion that Du Bois described as a necessary component to elevating the African American race. They gained a quality education and returned to their communities as educated and influential pillars of society that served as examples to working class blacks of the possibilities of education. They also demonstrated the ability of black progress to skeptical white Americans who were in doubt about African American achievement.

Charles Parrish served the Louisville community, the Baptist denomination, and his alma mater in multiple ways until his death in 1931. While working on his Bachelors of Arts degree, he was asked to pastor at least six churches, but wanting to focus on his studies and his extracurricular campus activities, he declined all offers. Parrish remained committed to the Baptist Church, which was always the one

constant in his life. His mentor, William J. Simmons, pastored Berea Baptist Church
where Parrish served as the superintendent over the missionary services and
Sunday school. Upon graduation from Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute,
Parrish accepted a pastorate position at Calvary Baptist Church in Louisville,
Kentucky. Calvary Baptist Church is the first African American Baptist church in
Louisville, Kentucky that was started by the legendary Dr. Henry Adams. Parrish
served as Pastor from 1886 until his death in 1931. As Pastor, he worked to ensure
that the church was out of debt and increased membership to well over a thousand
members.  

He balanced his pastoral ministry while serving as treasurer of his alma
mater and teaching a course on Greek at the school in 1887. As a teacher and
mentor Parrish demonstrated his desire to uplift the race through education.
A former student of Parrish’s followed in his footsteps and became a teacher and
principal in Hickman, Kentucky. He wrote a letter of appreciation to Parrish in 1884
and thanked him for "showing him the way." In 1892, another former student
credited his success as a pharmacist to his parents, work ethic, and the guidance of
Parrish throughout his collegiate career. In so doing, he was an example of what
would become the National Association for Colored Women mantra, "lifting as we
climb." William J. Simmons gave Parrish the ultimate compliment by noting his
achievements in 1887. "These positions he has ably and satisfactorily filled," wrote
Simmons. From janitor to secretary—from firemaker to treasurer and professor,

,46; Simmons, 1063-1065.
from poverty to honor among the faculty and fellow students, is an achievement worthy of record. The world will yet hear more from this rising young man.”

Parrish’s life was a ringing example of an African American elevating himself through education regardless of his humble beginnings and misfortunes. Though his story is more similar to Booker T. Washington’s — a generation from slavery who worked his way through school — his life and achievements exemplified the talented tenth argument of Du Bois.

Parrish understood the "Negro Problem" because he lived his life addressing the issue and his solution to the problem was education. In his oratorical contest at Simmons College Parrish presented a speech entitled, "The Analysis of Thought." In it, he argued:

In solving knotty problems affecting our immediate welfare, prejudice and often discouragement and our enemies’ last phantoms of hope, are now grasping in the last throes of death, and amid the amazement of those who thought our ruin complete, rings out the truth, 'Brains, not color, must settle rank.' The Negro is a man endowed with the moral sense and every other faculty that goes to make God’s crowning piece of mechanism.

Parrish never reached the national prominence of W. E. B. Du Bois, Carter G. Woodson, or William J. Simmons, but he was a key and necessary figure in Kentucky African American education and its partnership with the African American Baptist Church. In 1890, alongside William J. Simmons he helped to establish Eckstein Norton, but perhaps his biggest legacy is his tenure as president of Simmons College  

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23 Simmons, 1065. *Charles Parrish Sr. Correspondence*. Box 21, folder 5, Charles H. Parrish Jr. Papers, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.

24 Charles H. Parrish Speech—"The Analysis of Thought," Charles Henry Parrish Jr. Papers, Box 21, Folder 6, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky. The speech was given in class in the spring of 1886.
for almost fifteen years from 1918-1931. His son, Charles Parrish Jr. said that his father's greatest contribution to Kentucky and society was his generosity and his determination to fight for the rights of all African Americans "without bitterness because he believed in the essential goodness of people."25

His work was not complete without the support and work of fellow educator and activist, his wife, Mary Cook Parrish. Activism and education was often a collaborative effort between African American men and women. African American women of Kentucky understood the necessity of a quality education and worked within the constraints of gender and racial expectations to elevate African American education in Kentucky. Historian Glenda Gilmore argues, "In a racially charged atmosphere, black women knew that private acts and family-based decisions could be used against them. They carefully considered each move, since a fleeting whim, if acted upon could furnish whites 'proof' of the capability or deficiency of an entire race."26 Charles and Mary Parrish are an exemplary illustration of how African American women and men worked with one another to achieve the common goal of educating African Americans.

Charles Parrish’s marriage to the equally astute Mary V. Cook Parrish helped him to achieve many of his goals and accomplishments throughout his career and life.

On December 3, 1897, after the death of his last living relative, his aunt, Charles

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26 Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996). Gender and Jim Crow examines an important time-period in American race relations from the perspective of African American women who were involved in the Christian work and club work in North Carolina during the early twentieth century.
Parrish wrote the mother of Mary Cook and asked for her hand in marriage: "I am alone now and have made up my mind to make your daughter my wife. I have so informed her. And hope this will be acceptable to you?" It is unclear whether her parents were ever married and what type of early childhood Mary Cook experienced. There is speculation that she was born into slavery in Western Kentucky. Her son, Charles Parrish Jr. never met his maternal grandfather, but did meet his maternal grandmother and maternal great-grandmother who he believed were full-blooded Indian.

Despite little known information about Mrs. Parrish, it is clear that she exhibited great academic prowess in Bowling Green, Kentucky, a place of limited educational opportunities for African Americans. As a young girl and budding scholar, she received many awards for her writing and spelling abilities, which garnered the attention of William J. Simmons and local and national Baptist women’s organizations and leaders. Recognizing her potential, President Simmons and Baptist Woman’s Hope Society of Boston committed to paying her tuition to Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute (Simmons University). The generous scholarships influenced and motivated her throughout her career. The generosity and work of white women mission groups inspired Cook to become heavily involved with missionary work and establish a working interracial liaison with white women.

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27 Charles H. Parrish Sr. letter to Ellen or Allen Buchard, 3 December 1897, Box 21, folder 5, Charles H. Parrish Jr. Papers, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky. Because of his handwriting it is unsure if Charles Parrish was writing to an Ellen Buchard or an Allen Buchard. There are no historical resources of Cook’s early life or of her parents.

28 Charles Henry Parrish Jr., interviewed by Dwayne Cox and William Morison, Oral History Center, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, February 21, 1977. Interview 108. Biographical sketch of Mary V. Cook Parrish, Charles Henry Parrish Jr. Papers, Box 21, folder 5, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
mission groups such as the American Baptist Home Mission Society and the American Baptist Woman’s Hope Society of Maine and Massachusetts.29

Similar to Charles Parrish, Mary Cook did not solely rely on white philanthropic donations to fund her education. She also offset her expenses by teaching in the high school department at the institute while over-achieving in her collegiate classes. In 1883, she graduated valedictorian from the normal department. The following year she graduated from the collegiate department with honors. After graduating at the top of her class, she taught Latin and literature full time at Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute (Simmons College), where she was praised as a magnificent teacher and orator. Simmons appointed her as the principal of the normal division of the institute while simultaneously serving as the principle fundraiser of the school. In 1892, she left the institute to follow her mentor William J. Simmons to Eckstein Norton Institute, there she taught Latin and mathematics.30

Upon marrying Charles Parrish in 1898, Mary Cook Parrish worked as the church secretary at Calvary Baptist church where her husband served as the pastor for almost forty years. She was an inaugural member and corresponding secretary for the Kentucky Baptist Educational Convention. In 1893, she was elected to recording secretary of the National Baptist Educational Convention. She continued to focus much of her scholarly energy on journalistic efforts because that was something that could be accomplished at home while raising their only child. Much

29 Alice Dunnigan, Comp and ed. The Fascinating Life Story of Black Kentuckians: Their Heritage and Traditions, (Washington, D.C: Associated Press, 1982); Lawrence H. Williams, "Righteous Discontent: Mary Virginia Cook Parrish and Black Baptist Women," Baptist History and Heritage 42 (Summer/Fall 2007).
30 Biographical sketch of Mary V. Cook Parrish, Charles Henry Parrish Jr. Papers, Box 21, folder 5, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
of the parenting responsibilities fell on Mary because her husband devoted most of his time to his work as pastor and president of Eckstein-Norton Institute and later Simmons College beginning in 1918. Her son, Charles Henry Parrish Jr. writes, "My mother had varied outside interests, too, but her own family was the center of her loyalties. No sacrifice was too great for those she loved. Her devotion has had a profound influence in shaping my evaluations and beliefs."31

Her ability and talent with the pen was perhaps her most influential gift in raising issues affecting the African American community. Her written work often contained the two major themes of racial self-help and the importance of Christian education. She believed that African American women were at the center of the church and had a moral obligation to encourage education and portray the values of respectability and Christianity. Mary Parrish used her multiple leadership positions to encourage women to become involved with the Baptist church and its supporting organizations. She helped to shape the role of African American women in the Baptist church during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She demanded that the patriarchal and the oppressive male-dominated society of the African American Baptist church "Emancipate Woman from the chains that now restrain her admonishing who can estimate the part she will play in the work of the denomination."32

32 American National Baptist Convention, Journals and Lectures of the Second Anniversary of the Second Anniversary of the 1887 American National Baptist (August 25-28,1887), 48-49. This collection of journals and sermons are held at the Third Street Baptist in Mobile, Alabama.
As an outspoken woman who represented piety and middle-class values, she was often asked by leaders of churches and religious organizations to lecture or write about the proper role of African American women. Her most well-known lecture and published piece was "The Work For Baptist Women" in which she argues that it is the duty of African American women to represent Christian values in all aspects of their life and then the improvement of their race will happen.

Christ found among his followers faithful women to do him service....They have been ready to lend a helping hand, and when they were free to do all their hearts desire they formed societies and organizations, that they might be able to develop and enlighten those in utter darkness, and to assist the brethren in their well-begun work. The organizations formed by women for the extension of the kingdom of the Christ are becoming the potent factors in taking this country for Jesus.33

Her journalistic talents, analytical skills, and leadership capabilities continued to serve the Baptist denomination and the plight of African Americans throughout her lifetime.34

African American Women effectively managed to form women's clubs, missions, and training schools to support the advancement of the race and their fellow black women in society despite the lack of leadership equality in the Baptist church and other male-dominated organizations. Mary Cook Parrish joined non-religious organizations as a way to uplift the African American community and, perhaps more importantly, it was an opportunity to reach those who were not a part

34 Papers and memorial service of Mary V. Cook Parrish, " Charles Henry Parrish Jr. Papers, Box 21, folder 7, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
of the Christian faith and were considered the "lost." The most influential organization that she and other influential women belonged to was the National Association of Colored Women (NACW). Cook served a term as president of the NACW where she campaigned for women's rights, protested lynching, and advocated for other issues in support of civil rights for African Americans. Yet, black education remained a priority for Cook. She organized the first Parent-Teacher Association at Central High School in Louisville, Kentucky since African American parents were not permitted to join the previously established association.

The community and religious work was not without sacrifice that impacted the Parrish family. Like most great public leaders, Charles Parrish's dedication did not come without a cost. He sacrificed time with his family for the greater good of Kentucky African American Baptist education. Charles Parrish Jr. recalls his father being absent the early part of his life because most of his father's time was dedicated to the development of Eckstein Norton Institute and later Simmons College. Parrish Sr. also did not negate his responsibilities as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Louisville. Eckstein was twenty-nine miles from Louisville and the distance only allowed Parrish Sr. to visit his family on weekends. It was only after Parrish Jr. returned from college that the two men forged a close relationship. Parrish Jr., however, was understandable of his father's sacrifice and respected his father greatly. He used his father's early life of humble beginnings and struggle for education as a motivating factor. "The details of my father's early life have always been a source of inspiration for me. It was a life of struggle. A childhood of poverty
and death that motivated him to provide beyond measure for his family, the Parrish family enjoyed sufficient prosperity and his family never wanted for anything."

Charles Parrish Sr. made sure that his son never had to worry about being able to afford college. For his undergraduate studies, Charles Parrish Jr. did not attend Simmons College like his parents. His parents opted to send him to the present-day Ivy League school of historical black colleges and universities and alma mater of William J. Simmons, Howard University. At Howard University, Parrish Jr. studied under Berea College of alum Carter G. Woodson. Parrish Jr. recalled, "The reason I went to Howard was because of the fact that Simmons himself graduated from Howard." Simmons was widely respected throughout Kentucky and greatly revered in the Parrish household, as he was a mentor to both Mary and Charles Sr. The Parrishes wanted their son to study where "the Father of Baptist Higher Education" studied. Still the Parrishes may have harbored some doubts about the quality of education that Simmons College offered. They clearly know all to well the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Then again they may not have wanted their son to experience of the pressures of attending an institution where his parents were instrumental forces on campus.

According to Charles Parrish Jr., Simmons College was never considered. The only institutions on his radar were Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee and Howard University of Washington, D.C. Charles Parrish Jr.’s interest in Howard

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University was also piqued by W.E.B. Du Bois admiration for Howard, Fisk, and Atlanta Universities as having higher expectations for African American students in the early twentieth century. Howard University laid a fortified foundation for Parrish Jr. because he continued his education at Columbia University where he earned a Master of Arts degree in Sociology. He continued to follow in the footsteps of W.E.B. Du Bois by earning a Ph.D. in Sociology.37

Charles Parrish Jr.’s parents and their lifelong journeys as educators undoubtedly influenced him, because he taught in higher education in Louisville for twenty-nine years. Like his parents, he was affiliated with Simmons College as a sociology professor and football coach from 1921 to 1930. He continued to advance in his career of higher education and built on his family's legacy by becoming the first African American professor at the University of Louisville in 1951.38 His quest to integrate the University of Louisville was guided by the teachings of his father.

In 1886, Charles Parrish Sr.’s, Simmons College commencement speech stated, "out of one blood created all the nations of men, and the same blood that courses through white veins also courses through Negro veins."39 Ironically, the quest for integration would be the paralyzing factor that hurt African American institutions in Kentucky, including his beloved Simmons College.

39 Ibid. interview. “1877 Charles Parrish Sr. Commencement Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute oration” Charles Henry Parrish Jr. Papers, Box 21, folder 7, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
William and Elizabeth Fouse

The Parrishes, however, were not the only influential African American couple of the late nineteenth century that championed quality education and racial equality in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. William and Elizabeth Fouse of Lexington were also esteemed Baptist church-going members of the Kentucky talented tenth who navigated the racial constraints of their time period and worked in a collaborative effort of education and love to ensure the progress of African American advancement.

William Fouse, an Ohio native and Kentucky educator, was born in 1868. His parents were born illiterate slaves in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Throughout his childhood, his father stressed the importance of family, education, and church and these were the qualities that fostered William Fouse and his legacy. Fouse was the first African American student to graduate from Westerville High School located outside of Columbus, Ohio. In 1893, he continued that tradition and was the first African American to graduate with a liberal arts degree from Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio. His collegial graduation success was not without rigorous academic work, and similar to Charles Parrish Sr., he simultaneously worked manual labor jobs as a tile factory worker, a shoeshine boy, and a waiter at a local restaurant to pay his tuition.40

As an avid reader and follower of W.E.B. Du Bois, Fouse championed traditional academic education. He believed that economic doors would remain closed to African Americans who lacked education. He felt that African Americans needed an education to be active politically, economically, and socially within their communities. Fouse continued his tradition of historical firsts by starting the first all-black high school in Corydon, Indiana. He remained at Corydon High School for eleven years as a teacher and principal; however, Fouse’s heart led him to Kentucky, the home state of his wife, Elizabeth Fouse. His school leadership roles did not cease once in Kentucky. He served as principal of William Grant High School, an all-black institution in Covington.

William Fouse’s actions and influence were limited by a time period that was marred by racism and segregation. African Americans in Kentucky and other southern states lacked economic and political power; thus, white community leaders were able to control many aspects of the African American educational system. However, William Fouse and others persevered in their struggle to develop an educational system that met the needs of the African American community. Fouse worked within the racial segregation constraints of the early twentieth century and convinced white politicians and community leaders of Lexington,

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41 Jennifer L. Pettit, “Consuming, Organizing, and Uplifting: Elizabeth B. Fouse and the Production of Class Identity,” (Master thesis, University of Kentucky, 1998), 2-5. For more information about the Fouses’ see Pettit’s thesis. She argues that Elizabeth Fouse “challenged racism through the reciprocal production and significance of her perceived status of a prosperous, African –American woman untitled to unmitigated citizenship.” Her club work participation and consumer purchases suggest that she strategically pursued middle class respectability to counter racism (in Pettit’s abstract of her thesis.)
Kentucky to temporarily come from behind the veil of racial separation and use both white and black tax dollars to build an African American high school. Fouse’s ability to convince white officials of Fayette County to build a school for African American children required an analytical and politically calculating mind that made white officials see the perceivable positives of building an all-black institution. He demonstrated dual consciousness in his ability to successfully navigate in and out of white racial constraints while uplifting the African American community.42

In 1892, there were only two African American high school students in Lexington. By 1912, there were 75 students enrolled in the high school program, demonstrating the increase in interest and necessity of a high school education. This growth encouraged the construction of Dunbar School.43 William Fouse’s dedication helped to build Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in 1922. Understanding the political fortitude and allegiance needed to maintain relationships with both the white officials and the black community, Fouse served as the first principal of the high school. Under his supervision, in 1930, Dunbar High School became the first African American School in Kentucky to be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Dunbar had one of the most diverse curriculums in Kentucky. Students were required to take courses in English, typing, Negro History, trigonometry, banking, and zoology. The Dunbar High School curriculum challenged

42 The veil and double consciousness is a central theme in much of Sociologist and educator W.E.B. Du Bois works. Double consciousness refers to African Americans living with two identities: the African American identity that was for the African American community and private spheres and the “American” identity forced onto African Americans for navigating in public spheres and white aspects of society. For more information see: Du Bois’ The Soul of Black Folk.

African American students and encouraged them to look at multiple career paths. His hard work and ability to negotiate with white officials propelled him to the position of supervisor of African American schools in Lexington, Kentucky in 1913.

William Fouse demonstrated his historical expertise on black education in Lexington through his University of Cincinnati master’s thesis entitled "Educational History of The Negroes of Lexington, Kentucky." His goal was to, "pursue such historical channels as will [sic] give a well balanced, integrated picture of the present educational growth made by the Negroes of Lexington, Kentucky."44 William Fouse celebrated the educational success of Kentucky and its leaders in his Master’s thesis. In his own talented-tenth-related argument, Fouse writes that state education leaders such as William Simmons, Charles H. Parrish, and William Wells Brown “became moulders [sic] of character and active workers in the elevation and freedom of their own race.” He considered them to be the best-educated and most influential African Americans in the state of Kentucky. His graduate work on Lexington is valuable not only because it provides a historical lens of early educational trends of black education in Kentucky, but because it also offers a first-hand account of an African American educator in the state.45

Fouse was extremely proud of his thesis and other accomplishments. He shared his achievements with well-known African American historian, educator and one-time Kentucky resident Carter G. Woodson. Fouse thanked Woodson for his groundwork in the field of black education and informed him that he referenced his

work throughout his own research. Fouse also boasted to Woodson that he was awarded an honorary degree of pedagogy from Otterbein College and that he would be the first African American to receive an award of this magnitude from the institution. In 1937 Fouse wrote to Woodson describing his "landslide" Kentucky National Education Association presidential victory where he received more votes than the other candidates combined.46

Outside of the Midwest region, Fouse's scholarly and community work may not have been known, but he did have the attention of and constant correspondence with well-known African American educators like Woodson. It is not surprising that Fouse was influenced by Carter G. Woodson and other talented tenth leaders of the African American educational community, but perhaps, Woodson and other national figures were influenced and encouraged by Fouse's own Kentucky talented tenth status and his ability to build a high school with both black and white tax dollars. That feat, occurring in a southern state during Jim Crow, would be considered a grand accomplishment for any state and African American educational leader. The Lexington Herald called Fouse a "Pioneer of Negro Education." Fouse's work, guidance, and life were the epitome of Kentucky educational leadership that was exhibited by a few great men and women of the state. His actions demonstrated his belief that the way to solve the "Negro Problem" was through education in formal settings.47

Fouse was not alone in his quest for a quality African American education. According to Fouse, Lexington was the home of a number of African Americans who were first educated during slavery and worked to ensure that future generations had even better opportunities. By 1935, seventy-six percent of Lexington’s African American teachers held college degrees compared to seventy-eight percent of white Lexington teachers.48

William Fouse never received national attention, but his approach to education made him a revolutionary champion and leader of education in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. His upbringing and multiple leadership roles shaped his educational philosophy into a Du Boisian and Washingtonian-combined approach of gaining a quality black education in Kentucky. Kentucky journalist John F. Day writes, "born just three years after the end of the War Between the States, he [Fouse] has observed the growth of Negro education from the time when it was nothing short of a felony in the South to assist a Negro to become literate in the days scientific and industrial schools and colleges."49 His work was not complete without the support and work of fellow educator and activist, his wife, Elizabeth Fouse. The Fouse’s were not national figures but they altered and influence African American education in Kentucky.

Elizabeth Beatrice Cook Fouse was born on May 14, 1875 and was considered a bright young lady with a thirst for learning. In 1884, she entered the Model Division at Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute in Louisville, Kentucky.

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and by the next year, she advanced to the collegiate level. However, in 1890, she made the decision to follow the leadership of Charles Parrish and transferred to Eckstein-Norton University where she graduated with a liberal arts degree two years later. At both institutions she was active in many student organizations. Her leadership roles and participation introduced her to civic activism through religion and education. After graduation, Mrs. Fouse began her teaching career at Constitution Street School in Lexington, Kentucky and in 1898; she joined her husband in the Corydon, Indiana public schools. In 1913, she returned to Kentucky to accompany her husband when he accepted the position as supervisor of "Colored Schools" in Fayette County. Upon returning to Lexington, Mrs. Fouse no longer taught in a formal educational setting, but she remained involved directly and indirectly with education for the remainder of her life by dedicating her energy and life's work to her church and club organizations that were committed to the uplift of the African American community. Elizabeth Fouse was supportive of her husband and worked on many of his initiatives, but she also had her own agenda for African American advancement.  

In 1920, Elizabeth Fouse, Eliza Jackson, and other black women of Lexington were instrumental in the founding of the Phyllis Wheatley Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in the city. The national purpose of the YWCA was "to promote growth in Christian character and service through physical, social, mental, and spiritual training and to become a social force for the extension of the Kingdom of God." Aligned with many of the goals of the middle class African Americans,

50 Williams, 85.
the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA of Lexington took special interest in educating African American students who were behind in their studies, or interested in learning a trade, while also providing informal classes that engaged the African American community of Lexington. The Phyllis Wheatley YWCA was a jewel of the Lexington African American community and it was also one of the few African American agencies that purchased its own property without debt.51

Mrs. Fouse's involvement in community service was a constant thread throughout her life. In 1903, she was charter member of the Kentucky Association of Colored Women's club (KACW). The KACW was an organization that united women's clubs in their racial uplift efforts. Its motto "Looking forward not downward, outward not inward, forward not backward," describes Mrs. Fouse's approach to community service. Mrs. Fouse served as the corresponding secretary for the Lexington branch of the NAACP while simultaneously being actively involved in the Women's Christian Temperance Union, National Association of Colored Women and a member of the Baptist Women's Educational Convention.52 Fouse's involvement in the movement for racial uplift was not well known nationally. However, in 1926 an Oakland, California newspaper, The Oakland Daily Tribune requested a picture of Mrs. Fouse to accompany an article written about her attendance at interracial national meetings on women's issues. The journalist, Delilah Beasley, also asked for permission to feature Elizabeth Fouse in a book she

was writing, entitled, *The History of Negro Suffrage*. Beasley felt that the state of Kentucky "had some fine women of our group, so very many of them have actually arrived as the saying goes."53

The civic activism lives of William and Elizabeth Fouse demonstrate ways in which the institutions of church, school, and community organizations intersected. They were not only involved in community organizations but they also believed that uplift happened through morality and church membership. The Fouses were active tithe-paying members of First African Baptist Church of Lexington that was once under the pastorate of William Simmons, the father of African American Baptist higher education. They dedicated their time, gifts, and monies to their Baptist church. In one example of their dedication, the Fouses purchased an organ for First Baptist church of Lexington because the church did not have additional funds. In 1942 and 1943, they pledged twenty-five dollars to the *American Baptist*, the longest-running African American newspaper in Kentucky. It was also not uncommon for William Fouse to hold school meetings concerning Dunbar School and other educational opportunities in the basement of First African Baptist Church.54

The Fouses' efforts were essential to the development of early black education in Kentucky. Their participation in civic and religious organizations reflected their commitment and belief to the uplift of the black community through

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54 Fouse Family Papers, Box 4, "July 2 1942 ledger," Special Collections, University of Kentucky.
education. Their influence reached, across the state. Upon William Fouse’s retirement from education, the Courier Journal called him a brilliant pioneer and at Elizabeth Fouse’s death in 1952, the same paper described her as a "prominent leader and educator." It is likely that their reception with the African American community was met with little resistance and great esteem. In a segregated school community, educators in the African American community were usually reverred with great veneration and admiration. Black educators and community leaders across the nation and the state of Kentucky played a significant role in combating white supremacy and promoting black equality through their role as teachers in their segregated schools and community.55

The Fouse and the Parrish families represent the early African American middle class and its core values of racial uplift through education, religion, and civic activism. Their lifestyles fought against negative stereotypes and aimed to solve the "Negro Problem" by uplifting the African American community through education and respectability. The education and influence of the talented-tenth African American couple in Kentucky was not a trend, because many African Americans struggled socially and economically; thus, experiencing limited mobility in the Jim Crow South. Although an anomaly, the collaborative efforts of husband and wife

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teams were instrumental to the improvement of the African American educational system and community.

The stories of Mary Cook Parrish and Elizabeth Fouse are imperative to the Kentucky narrative on black education because their efforts often transcended gender and racial boundaries in the pursuit of advancement through education and religion. Black women as mothers, schoolteachers, and Sunday school teachers were essential to the development of educational improvement. Even though marriage changed the occupational lives of Elizabeth Fouse and Mary Cook, their middle-class status afforded them the ability to focus on their family and home lives while simultaneously dedicating their time to club and church organizations. The community work of middle-class African American women was central to racial uplift. Historian Jacqueline Jones argues that that gender, racial, and professional dynamics of middle class African American women are unique and complex:

Black middle-class women have worked for pay outside their homes to a much greater extent than their white counterparts, and, as social workers, school teachers, and church and club members, often perceived themselves as civil rights activists in a way that middle-class white female professionals and reformers did not. Black women’s community work had a subversive component, for it served to defy a white society that not only saw blacks as exploitable labor, but also withheld from them the benefits of public and private social-welfare programs.\(^5\)

Mary Cook Parrish, Elizabeth Fouse, and other African American women were important agents of change because they were seen as less intimidating to white society. African American men were perceived as a threat to the social, economic,

and cultural power of white America because they often battled the historical stereotype of the over-sexualized lazy brute whereas black women had the less-threatening historical image of a mammy, cook, and caretaker. These often-contrived images of black women granted them the ability to better navigate the racial constraints of the time period. And when not depicted as caretakers, African American women were portrayed as prostitutes, thieves, liars, and the antithesis of “pure” white womanhood. Indeed, one southern journalist drew on these stereotypes claiming, "the Negroes of this country are wholly devoid of morality, the women are prostitutes and are natural thieves and liars”

Despite white society’s thoughts and circulated images, African American women were activists, educators, wives, mothers, and bearers of culture and tradition. Parrish, Fouse, and other African American women fought to combat these stereotypes with their involvement in The National Association of Colored Women, a powerful voice and organization for African American women. The NACW fought to restore the virtue and character of African American women. The birth of the NACW represented the beginning of a new era in African American womanhood and provided another vehicle for action through organized effort.

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58 Mary Church Terrell Papers, Box 47, Reel 2, Library of Congress Archives and Special Collections, Washington, D.C. In 1895 James Jack, President of Missouri Press Association wrote these words in a letter to Florence Balgarnie, secretary of the British anti-lynching committee. He was attempting to disrepute the rapport Balgarnie had with African American civil rights activist and journalist Ida B. Wells who led a successful campaign against lynching.
The National Association of the Colored Women began in 1896 as an umbrella group for local and regional Black women’s organizations. During the early years of the organization, the largely educated and middle-class constituency supported temperance, positive images of black women through moral purity, and women’s suffrage; these were issues also pursued by white women’s groups. However, unlike their white counterparts black women saw their organization in terms of gender and race, viewing their women’s movement as a way to uplift black women, men, and children. Margaret Murray Washington, the wife of Booker T. Washington and the first vice-president of the National Colored Woman’s Congress, was one of the biggest supporters of the NACW because of its community building aspect. She believed that the black woman was at the center of the black home and nation and was the "deliverer, for through her will come the earnest, faithful service for the highest development of home and family that will result in the solution of the so-called race problem." 59

Mary Church Terrell and Nannie Helen Burroughs

The NACW was built on the backs of women nationally known, like Mary Church Terrell and Nannie Helen Burroughs, and Kentuckians Elizabeth Fouse and Mary Parrish. In one of her eloquently written essays, founder and first president Mary Church Terrell writes, "Negro women have always had high aspirations for themselves and their race. From the day when the shackles fell from their teetered

limbs till today, as individuals they have struggled single handed and alone against the most desperate and discouraging odds."\(^{60}\)

Members of the National Association of Colored Women were “urged to interest themselves in civic affairs-to study the conditions under which they lived in their respective cities and towns and to do everything they could to put the right men into places of trust and power long before the amendment granting suffrage to women was passed.”\(^{61}\) Unquestionably, the organizing efforts of the black church in the late nineteenth century inspired the women of the organization. It is not a coincidence that the NACW’s first organizational meeting took place at the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., further illuminating the relationship between education, uplifting the black race, and the black Baptist church.\(^{62}\)

Mary Church Terrell and Mary Parrish’s work and passion had a strong semblance; however, Terrell reached national prominence that Parrish never achieved. Like Mary Parrish, Terrell was the daughter of former slaves and was taught to value education at an early age. Terrell attended Oberlin College in Ohio where she was the first African American woman to earn a college degree in the United States. She served as the president of the Negro Association of Colored Women for three terms while also working as a professor and principal at Wilberforce University. Similar to most middle-class women of financial means,


\(^{61}\) Mary Church Terrell Papers, Box 23-Reel 16. Library of Congress Archives and Special Collections, Washington, D.C.

\(^{62}\) Mary Church Terrell Papers. Ibid.
after marrying her husband, Robert Terrell, the first African American municipal judge of Washington, D.C., she resigned from teaching in the public school system and dedicated her life to organizational and religious work with the sole purpose of upward mobility of the African American community.

Mrs. Terrell argued that black women had an obligation to gain an education and unite to help other African American women elevate themselves and their communities. Expressing herself in a brilliant prose at the birth of the National Association of Colored Women, she elaborated on the purpose of the organization and the responsibility that black women had to uplift their race:

The National Association has chosen as its motto: Lifting as We Climb. In order to live strictly up to this sentiment, its members have determined to come into the closest possible touch with the masses of our women, through whom the womanhood of our people is always judged. It is unfortunate, but it is true, that the dominant race in this country insists upon gauging the Negro’s worth by his most illiterate and vicious representatives rather than by the more intelligent and worthy classes. Colored women of education and culture know that they cannot escape altogether the consequences of the acts of their most depraved sisters. They see that even if they were wicked enough to turn a deaf ear to the call of duty, both policy and self-preservation demand that they go down among the lowly, the illiterate and even the vicious, to whom they are bound by the ties of race and sex, and put forth every possible effort to reclaim them. By coming into close touch with the masses of our women it is possible to correct many of the evils which militate so seriously against us and inaugurate the reforms, without which, as a race, we cannot hope to succeed.  

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Terrell, an active member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, encouraged African American women to work within their church organizations for racial uplift. Mary Church Terrell’s faith and dedication to racial uplift was evident in her writing and shaped her life’s work.

Understanding the value and necessity of working across denominational lines and with national organizations, black Baptist women of Kentucky worked with Mary Church Terrell and other national leaders on several occasions. One of the most important organizations that offered a chance of collaboration for African American Baptist woman was the Woman’s Convention, an auxiliary of the National Baptist Convention. In Righteous Discontent, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham argues that the convention allowed "Black Baptist women to challenge many of the real and symbolic barriers that others—white Americans in general and even black men—sought to impose upon them in church and larger society.” In 1904, Terrell was invited to speak by the executive board of the National Baptist Woman’s Convention at the time that Parrish was a member of the executive board. It is conceivable that Parrish played a part in inviting Terrell to speak because Terrell enthralled both her and Fouse, as they had attended several lectures featuring the dynamic woman speaker. Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute also recognized the prominence of Mary Church Terrell and advertised her visit to the historical Quinn Chapel A.M.E. Church in Louisville, Kentucky.64

64 "National Association of Colored Women, Inc.,” 1904 July 22-1950 November 25.” Fouse Family Papers, Box 3, Folder 1, Special Collections, M.L. King Library, University of Kentucky, Lexington. In her papers Elizabeth Fouse left behind a Constitution of the National Association of Colored Women in which she scribbled and made notes to herself. "Mrs. Mary Church Terrell Advertisement at State
Kentucky Baptist African American women leaders worked with national leaders to foster change on local, state and national levels. One of the most well-known leaders, Nannie Helen Burroughs is synonymous with black women’s club movement. Burroughs was active during one of the most significant pre-modern Civil Rights Movement shifts in the quest for equality in the African American community and she believed that the black church was the cornerstone for cultural production and black organizing. Her early organizing efforts began in Kentucky; however, her connection to the Commonwealth is often left out of her story. Her Kentucky connection is a necessary component because it served as a place of educational training ground for local and national leaders who influenced the upward mobility of African Americans through Christian education. The African American Baptist traditions of Kentucky influenced Burroughs as she studied under Charles Parrish at Eckstein Norton Institute. After completing her studies, she wanted to teach in Washington D.C. public schools but never secured a position because her training at Eckstein was considered vocational and not liberal studies. Burroughs returned to Louisville, Kentucky where she worked for the Foreign Mission Board of the National Convention. Her newfound position influenced her to offer typing, bookkeeping, home economics, and other training to young black women throughout the South. This grassroots early beginning was the foundation for Burroughs’s lasting legacy — The National Training School for Women and Girls that opened in Washington, D.C. in 1909. The curriculum included industrial
training and liberal arts with the foundation of a Christian education. This formalized educational institution promoted the continuous theme of black self-help and it attempted to erase the class lines that often-separated black women during the Progressive Era.

Similar to Mary Cook Parrish, Burroughs was a skilled writer whose work was published in African American newspapers and journals. However, her true gift was in her phenomenal speaking abilities and she was often asked to speak to both male and female audiences of the National Baptist Convention. When Mary Cook Parrish served as the president of the West–End Republican League of Colored Women of Louisville, Kentucky she invited Burroughs to speak and said, "I am a worker, but not much of a speaker. If I could speak like you I would drop my husband and take the stump, but as it is, I must hold the ropes while the others go down." The women respected each other and recognized each other’s talents, but that is not to say they did not occasionally disagree. On several occasions while Mary Parrish served as the treasurer of the Baptist Woman’s Convention and Burroughs held the position of corresponding secretary, the ladies exchanged strained communications that were centered on finances and debts for the organization. In 1931, Burroughs wrote to Mary Parrish "You are saying a great many petty things that are unbecoming to Mrs. Parrish whom I have known. I have never said or done one thing against your methods nor have I questioned your intentions. I simply needed the money and wrote for it." This small "petty" quarrel was most likely a

65“Mrs. Mary V. Parrish to Miss Nannie Helen Burroughs, October 23, 1924.” Nannie Helen Burroughs Papers, Box 46 –folder 2 "Kentucky." Manuscript Collection. Library of Congress Archives and Special Collections, Washington, D.C.
reflection of the economic strain and pressure of the Great Depression, which was at its height during this exchange. Their friendship remained intact and the next year Mary Parrish traveled to Washington D.C. to support the commencement of Burroughs’s school.66

Burroughs, however, did not shy away from confrontation. Before the start of the National Baptist Woman’s Convention, she delivered a speech in which she accused the misogynistic and patriarchal National Baptist Convention of preventing Baptist women from participating whole heartily and equally in the Baptist church. She felt that she and other women had a "righteous discontent" and if they were given the permission they could and would play a primary role in the convention. Her speech "How Sisters are Hindered From Helping," was perhaps the cornerstone for the launch of the Woman’s Convention, which was the missionary and auxiliary component of the National Baptist Convention.67

Despite gender inequality, especially in religious organizations, black women leaders accomplished achievements that benefitted the entire African American race. Burroughs rose to national prominence as an educator and suffragist. Her rise to national fame did not come without sacrifice, for she never married or had children of her own. She dedicated her entire life to the education and uplift of the African American community.

Burroughs understood that there was not a monolithic African American community, thus she offered training and encouragement to all African American women and men regardless of their social status. Historians Kenneth Goings and Gerald Smith’s late nineteenth century examination of Memphis, Tennessee, posits that the city had three different African American groups, each with their own priority or "Duty of the Hour." The first group resembled Kentucky leaders and members of the affluent talented tenth who dedicated their lives to racial uplift and morality and sought out the political and judicial system to fight against oppression. The second group contained accommodationists, which included the black professionals that could be considered part of the talented-tenth, but they believed in racial harmony and refused to challenge segregation unlike their equally educated counterparts who used the political and judicial system to confront racism. The third group was comprised of migrants whose duty was to ignore the racial caste system by participating in individual acts of resistance. Goings and Smith borrowed the phrase "Duty of the Hour" from an essay by Julia Hooks, a schoolteacher and a member of the Memphis talented tenth. She argued that teachers were obligated to teach morality and character building to their pupils, stating, "Every child has the possibilities of becoming a blessing or a curse." Each group had its own "duty of the hour;" moreover, there was no inclusive tactic in gaining racial equality. While not a study of a Louisville, Kentucky, Memphis is a comparable urban southern city with a similar representation of diversity of thought among African Americans. This study demonstrates that the talented-tenth
approach was not the only response to racial injustice in Kentucky and other southern cities.\textsuperscript{68}

W.E. B. Du Bois said, "the Talented Tenth of the Negro race must be made leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among their people. Kentucky was not without its own educated leaders who lived up to the notions of the talented tenth middle class values and were often mirror images of better-known race leaders. These trailblazers understood that an indoctrination of racial pride and morality were necessary components to educational and religious curriculum of African American institutions. They believed they had the moral responsibility to educate and elevate their race and the solution to Negro Problem in Kentucky was found at the intersections of education, civic duty, and Christian morality.\textsuperscript{69}


\textsuperscript{69} W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," 31-76.
Figures 3.1. William H. Fouse. Picture and article found in the Fouse Family papers. Article of his service and retirement in the February 6, 1938 Lexington Herald. “After 45 years of Service to Negro Education, Prof W.H. Fouse, Pioneer, Will Retire in the Spring Left inset picture represents his start as a young teacher in Indiana. The larger picture represents how he looked at 70 years old and a few weeks prior to his retirement from Fayette County Public Schools.

Figure 3.2. Elizabeth B. Fouse pictured in the Kentucky Association of Colored Women scholarship fund. Fouse Family Papers, Box 4, Folder 2. Newspapers and Journals cut out by Elizabeth Fouse. Special Collections, M.I. King Library, University of Kentucky, Lexington.
Figure 3.3. "Mrs. Mary Church Terrell Advertisement at State University," Kendrick Moore Collection, Box 1, loose papers and Photographs. Special Collections and Archives-CESKAA, Jackson Hall, Kentucky State University. Frankfort.
"I wish the book to show to the world—to our oppressors and even our friends—that the Negro race is still alive, and must possess more intellectual vigor than any other section of the human family, or else how could they be crushed as slaves in all these years since 1620, and yet to-day stand side by side with the best blood in America, in white institutions, grappling with abstruse problems in Euclid and difficult classics, and master them? Was ever such a thing seen in another people? Whence these lawyers, doctors, authors, editors, divines, lecturers, linguists, scientists, college presidents and such, in one quarter of a century?"—William J. Simmons

Chapter 3

The Baptist Jewel of the Bluegrass: Simmons College

The pride and joy of the Kentucky African American Baptists was the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute (hereafter Simmons College), which opened in Louisville, Kentucky in November of 1879. The opening of the Institution was one of the greatest accomplishments of the General Association of Colored Baptists and a beacon of pride for the African Americans across the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the nation. The Institute reached monumental heights of being an independent and autonomous university that trained African American teachers, ministers, lawyers, and physicians in its college, medical, and law departments. Unparalleled leadership of talented tenth institutions like the African American Baptist Church of Kentucky and its prominent educators of William J. Simmons and Charles Parrish laid at the foundation for Simmons College’s achievements.

At the end of the Civil War, African Americans celebrated their freedom and immediately pursued independence from white institutions and control. In August

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of 1865, a few short months after the conclusion of the Civil War, the Kentucky State Convention of Colored Baptists, which later merged into the General Association of Colored Baptist for Kentucky in 1869, proposed the establishment of Kentucky’s first post-secondary educational institution for African Americans.\(^2\) It was no coincidence or happenstance that the fruition of an African American institution for higher learning happened the same year as the conclusion of the Civil War. In essence, it was the Kentucky Black Baptists declaration of independence. As with other acts of independence initiated by African Americans, the building of Simmons College came with fear and apprehension. However, the black Baptist church had little choice but to lead the education efforts of African American education. According to historian George Wright, the African American church "sustained black folk during slavery and the early days of freedom and continued to provide valuable assistance during the last decades of the nineteenth century" and "several of the churches would lead the first black assault on Jim Crow."\(^3\)

Black churches were on the frontline in the post-Civil War fight for African American rights, specifically the right to education. In 1890, Reverend Edward Brawley, a Baptist educator and president of the independent Alabama Baptist Normal and Theological School (Selma University) wrote, "The great need, therefore, of our colored churches, is instruction in our denominational principles... Much has been done by the living voice to train and lead the people, but the time has

\(^2\) Wright, 20.
\(^3\) Ibid., 37, 126.
come when the pen must also be employed. Our trained leaders must write."⁴ Therefore, ministers were trained in preaching and in the spiritual aspects of leading the church but were lacking an education in the elementary basics of reading, writing, and mathematics.

African American leaders placed significant value on the role education could play in challenging the racial system in Kentucky and other southern states. In 1869, Reverend Henry Adams was the moderator of the General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky. Their new constitution established their purpose: "The object of this Association shall be the promotion of purity of doctrine, union fellowship and cooperation in promoting Sabbath schools and missionary operations and advancing the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ, throughout the entire State by meeting annually for mutual and religious counsel."⁵ The Association’s top priority was the establishment of an autonomous African American educational institution with the goals of educating ministers and teachers who could promote and encourage the growth of Christianity outside of the church.

Simmons College was successful and inspired other African American institutions such as Virginia Baptist Theological Seminary, Arkansas Baptist College, and even the Mecca of African American institutions, Howard University. These institutions emulated qualities and specific initiatives of the Institute, especially

⁵ Minutes of the First General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky, 1869, Simmons University Papers Box 2 Folder 8, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
Kentucky’s African American Baptist community’s ability to build and provide an independent Christ-centered educational institution.

After visiting Simmons College in 1880, Phillip F. Morris and delegates of the Virginia Negro Baptist State Convention founded the Virginia Baptist Theological Seminary six years later during the 1886 session of the Virginia Negro Baptist State Convention in Lexington, Virginia. In 1890, the school opened its doors in Lynchburg, Virginia. The delegation’s visit to Simmons College ten years earlier represented an opportunity to gain an understanding of how the school functioned unconventionally independent and efficiently without much influence and support from white Americans. Indeed, the Kentucky school was the model institute for Virginia Baptist Theological Seminary.6

The state of Virginia was also home to Richmond Theological Seminary for Freedman, which was established in 1865 with the help of major donations from the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Similar to the Virginia Baptist Theological Seminary and Simmons College, the small institution in Richmond had the primary goal of educating future African American ministers and teachers. It also sought to offer courses and provide a curriculum that accommodated all educational levels and goals. However, Richmond Theological Seminary for Freeman was not independent of white leadership. The institution was often described by blacks as the "White Baptists’ gift to Negroes" because it functioned through the leadership of White Baptists and their monetary donations. Unlike Richmond Theological Seminary, Simmons and the Virginia Baptist Theological Seminary wore their self-

6 Higginbotham, 44,58.
sufficiency as a badge of honor and distinction. Some independent African American institutions benefitted from scholarships and donations provided by white philanthropists, but most institutions sustained themselves without the assistance from white benefactors.\(^7\)

Howard University is one of the most well-known historically black college and universities. It sought to represent the best ideals of American higher education of past and present.\(^8\) Yet, Simmons College and other historically black educational institutions were important contributors to black higher education. They established independent and autonomous denominational institutions that had goals of racial uplift and educating future ministers and teachers. In contrast, white missionaries of the First Congressional Society and Union Civil War hero General Oliver Howard founded Howard University in 1866. Prior to serving as the inaugural president of Howard University, General Howard was the commissioner of the Freedman's Bureau and always considered himself sympathetic to the plight of African Americans. Initially, Howard University's sole purpose was to train African American ministers; however, within a year it expanded its curriculum to


\(^8\) In *Blacks in College*, scholar Jacqueline Fleming argues that there is an elite class of "Black Ivy League" which includes Fisk University, Hampton University, Clark-Atlanta University, Tuskegee University, Dillard University, Spelman College, Morehouse College, and Howard University (the inclusion of other institutions such as Cheyney University and Lincoln are often an argument of contention). According to Fleming, historically and presently these institutions were able to recruit the brightest and privileged class of African American students. Many of these institutions share similar historical characteristics. During the early 20th century, students who attended these elite schools were able to learn trades, skills, and a liberal education, which placed them in a different social and economic class for African Americans. Thus, their attendance in these institutions perpetuated their upward mobility. For more information see: Jacqueline Fleming, *Blacks in College: A Comparative Study of Student Success in Black and White Institutions* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing, 1984).
include a liberal arts component to train teachers and future leaders of the African American community.\textsuperscript{9}

Despite the success of the prominent university for African American education and the subsequent growth that occurred in the black community, the white founders, benefactors, and presidents influenced the policy and design at Howard University. "The white founders and supporters of the black colleges were reluctant to entrust control of the institutions to black people. In addition it was correctly believed the white college presidents would be far more successful in raising money for the institutions among foundations and white benefactors."\textsuperscript{10}

Thus, white leadership and benefactors controlled the curriculum and major functions of the university with the hopes that the African American graduates returned to their own black communities as ministers and teachers in their churches and schools. In a paternalistic sense, white benefactors wanted to ensure that they had "raised" productive black citizens that would uplift the black population at the turn of the twentieth century and not fulfill the stereotype of the listless and lazy African American.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{9} Walter Dyson, "The Founding of Howard University," (Washington, D.C., Howard University Press, 1921). This work is an article written by a Howard University history professor and his students at the time. The purpose of the article was to inform those about the early history of Howard University and to demonstrate how to conduct primary research.


\textsuperscript{11} Joel Williamson, A Rage For Order: Black and White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation (Oxford University Press, 1986). Williamson confronts the awful irony that the war to free blacks from slavery also freed racism. He examines the shift in the power base of Southern white leadership after 1850 and recounts the terrible violence done to blacks in the name of self-protection. He argues in the last decade of Slavery and into the Civil War built a stereotypical image of African Americans as perpetual children who were manageable and needed constant looking-after to prevent them from getting into trouble and being lazy.
Howard University did not have its first African American president until 1926. Until that time, perhaps the black faculty and students envied the self-sufficiency and racial pride of Simmons College and other independent African American institutions. After the Progressive era and World War I, there was a rise in African American consciousness and confidence that propelled African American students and faculty of white-dominated institutions to demand a say in their education and institutions. For example, in 1926, the relationship between African American faculty and the white president of Howard University, Stanley Durkee, was delicate and especially tense as black leaders called for a more active role in the development of the University. Thus, the following president, Mordecai Johnson, was the first of a continuous line of African American Presidents at the premier institution.12

**Early History of Simmons College**

The early history of Simmons College paints a picture of sacrifice, determination, and independence. Henry Adams, the first president of the Kentucky State Convention of Colored Baptists, was not alone in his quest for an African American institution of higher learning. Twelve other prominent pastors and ministers of black Baptist churches in Kentucky joined Adams in not only establishing an institution but a governing body for African American Baptist churches. Among them were Elisha W. Green, Richard Sneathen, Richard Dupee,

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Richard Adams, and Frederick Braxton — all well-established black preachers who influenced the growth of the black Baptist church in Kentucky.\textsuperscript{13}

For instance, Reverend Elisha Green, a former slave, was one of the most respected preachers in the state. In 1818, Green was born into slavery as property of Jane Dobbins in Bourbon County, Kentucky. At the age of ten he was separated from his family and sold to a farmer in Mason County. Being torn from his family at a young age guided and impacted many of his later decisions in life. Elisha was one of the few enslaved African Americans who purchased his freedom as well as the freedom of his wife and three children for $850. He was never able to purchase his oldest son John who was sold at a slave market in Old Washington, Kentucky.\textsuperscript{14}

Like many African American ministers of the South, Elisha Green saw his position as a pastor as a way to influence and positively change his community. In 1883, while traveling to Paris, Kentucky to conduct church business, Elisha was attacked because he refused to give up his seat on the train to a white man. His attacker, a white man and a fellow minister from Millersburg, Kentucky caused multiple lacerations to Elisha’s head and hands. Reverend Green successfully filed suit against the man in a court of law for assault and was awarded twenty-four dollars in punitive damages. The life of Elisha Green demonstrates the fortitude that Kentucky African American leaders of the Baptist church possessed and needed for creating an independent institution of higher learning during an era when slavery

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\textsuperscript{14} Elisha Green, \textit{Life of the Reverend Elisha Green: Written By Himself}, (Louisville: The Bradley and Gilbert Company, 1895). I viewed a first edition in a private collection held by Jerry Gore of Maysville, Kentucky. Elisha Green is a hero of Maysville, Kentucky and I was able to take a private tour of the site of his pastoral home and his former church Bethel Baptist Church of Maysville, Kentucky.
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remained a recent memory. He is remembered as an electrifying minister (having reportedly baptized 6,000 African Americans), founder of Bethel Baptist Church of Maysville, an agent of change, an educator, and one of the founders of the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute.\textsuperscript{15}

Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute (Simmons College) opened its doors in 1879 with thirty-nine students. And with its opening Kentucky’s General Association of Colored Baptists proclaimed, "We thank God that those old dark days of slavery have passed away, and that we have lived to see the day that the doors of the school-houses and colleges are standing wide open for the reception of all who will come and receive classical education."\textsuperscript{16} The founding of the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute represented years of dedication and work on the part of the black Baptist community.\textsuperscript{17} At the 1869 Kentucky General Association of Colored Baptists meeting, Elder A. Allenworth urged his fellow clergymen to support an institution that "connects with our churches as a fit place to send our children, and that our pastors will give it their hearty support." However, the establishment of a Christ-centered institution for higher learning in the nation and the Commonwealth was not without trial and error. Prior to the 1879 opening of Simmons College, there

\textsuperscript{15} Green, \textit{Life of the Reverend Elisha Green: Written By Himself}, 2.
\textsuperscript{16} Minutes of the First General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky, 1886-1887, Simmons University Papers Box 2 Folder 14, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
\textsuperscript{17} Prior to the doors of Kentucky’s institution opening, most of the Commonwealth’s Baptist ministers attended the Nashville Institute of Tennessee. The General Association of Colored Baptists understood the importance of a formal education and thus they awarded scholarships for young male ministers to attend the Baptist school in Nashville. However, the ultimate goal was an institution in the Bluegrass.
were at least two documented attempts at schools or properties supported by the General Association of the Colored Baptists.\textsuperscript{18}

Originally, the Kentucky Baptist institution of higher education was to be located in Frankfort, Kentucky. In 1866, under the leadership of Reverend Henry Adams, the newly organized state convention of the Colored Baptists of Kentucky purchased property in the capital city. Members of the white First Baptist Church of Frankfort sold the fifty-acre property to the Colored Baptists of Kentucky for $2000. The Convention referred to it as the Hill property. African American Baptist churches across the Commonwealth worked hard to pay off the debt of the Hill property. Pastors belonging the State Convention of Colored Baptists were asked to request each member of their congregation to donate five cents to the school building fund and each church was obligated to pay a maximum of one hundred dollars depending on the size of their congregation. Because of the collective organizing power of black Baptists, the Hill property debt was quickly eliminated within a two years time span and the State Convention of Colored Baptist of Kentucky immediately began to focus on establishing educational buildings on the Hill property.\textsuperscript{19}

From 1866-1869 the state convention made plans to establish a brick and mortar representation for the school on the Hill property. However, in 1869 the new

\textsuperscript{18} Minutes of the First General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky, 1869, Simmons University Papers Box 2 Folder 8, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.

merger of organizations — State Convention of Colored Baptists and the General Association of Colored Baptists in Kentucky—voted twenty-five to twenty-four to locate the proposed school in Louisville. The General Association of Colored Baptists voted to make repairs to the Hill Street Property with hopes of renting out the small house and use any profit to help finance the building of the new school in Louisville. The maintenance and the leasing of the Hill Property, however, became an arduous task that distracted the General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky from focusing their educational finances and energy on establishing the Simmons College. In May 1879, the General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky sold the Hill property for $2,000, allowing the association to concentrate its efforts on establishing a campus in Louisville. Prior to instituting the Louisville campus, the General Association started a school in southwestern Kentucky.20

On November 24, 1874, in McCracken County, Olivet Baptist Church opened its doors as the first Kentucky General Association of Colored Baptists supported school. The Association attempted to garner attention and support by advertising the school in The Baptist Herald of Paducah, other local papers, and through the distribution of circulars in the African American community and churches. Unfortunately, after only five months the Olivet Baptist Church School closed its doors because of poor attendance and lack of support from Baptist constituents throughout the region. The school at Olivet Baptist Church amassed $333.60 in debt because of the salaries of the principal, its only teacher Elder A. Barry, and school

20 Minutes of the First General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky, 1870-1879 Simmons University Papers Box 2 Folder 6 and Folder 12, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
administrator Ms. Sexton. Expenses were also spent on boarding for Principal Barry, the students' needs, as well as materials necessary for the day-to-day operation of the school. The Kentucky General Association of Colored Baptist had $249.00 in the treasury, which they liquidated to payoff the debt of the Mount Olivet Baptist School. Pastor D.A. Gaddie of Green Street Baptist Church in Louisville paid off the remaining balance of the school debt on behalf of his church.  

The lack of success of the institution was a disappointment to the leaders and originators of the Baptist School. Perhaps, the Kentucky General Association of Colored Baptists felt that the Mount Olivet School would be successful in the southwestern part of the Commonwealth because of its location and close proximity to other states. McCracken County is located halfway between St. Louis, Missouri, to the northwest and Nashville, Tennessee, to the southeast. The region is also located at the confluence of the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers; thus, it was considered a major area for trade and travel. However, the Mount Olivet School was in close vicinity to the Nashville Institute, a fellow Baptist institute and the largest African American Bible College during this time. The Nashville Institute had a history of serving Kentucky and Tennessee residents.

The humble Mount Olivet Kentucky school also had to compete with Wilberforce University of Ohio; an institution established by the joint efforts of the

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21 Minutes of the First General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky, 1869, Simmons University Papers Box 2 Folder 11, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.

22 John E.L. Roberston, *Paducah, Kentucky: A History* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014); Minutes of the First General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky, 1870,1879 Simmons University Papers Box 2 Folder 8, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Wilberforce University began in 1856 and is the first private historical black college in the United States. By 1863, Wilberforce University was solely owned and operated by the African Methodist Episcopal Church and home to the first African American president of an institution of higher learning, Daniel A. Payne. President Payne worked hard to acquire state funds for Wilberforce and by 1887; the institution received more than thirty percent of its funds from the state. Ohio was considered a safer place for African Americans to reside and gain an education because it was not considered a southern state with racial tensions tied to violence and Jim Crow laws like its conjoining state to the south, Kentucky. The obstacle of segregation made it difficult for the Kentucky General Association of Colored Baptists institution to compete with Wilberforce University and other northern schools of higher education that admitted African Americans. Therefore, The Nashville Institute and Wilberforce University had a "head start" in prestige and finances.  

Simmons College eventually reached a level of prestige because of the foundation provided by its first president and manager, Reverend Elijah P. Marrs, who was born a slave to a free father and enslaved mother on a small plantation in Shelbyville, Kentucky. In contrast to many enslaved African Americans, he was taught to read by his Christian master who felt it was sin if a believer could not read the scriptures for himself. While serving in the Civil War, Marrs was quickly

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promoted to Sergeant of Company L. Twelfth United States Heavy Artillery unit of Louisville because he could read and write. Both white and black soldiers asked Marrs to write letters home on their behalf.

I had in camp some reputation as a writer, though I had little confidence in myself, coming as I did just out of the bondage of slavery. I appeared, however, to be above the average of those in our quarters, and many former friends who had joined the army before me employed me to do their writing. Soon the officers learned that there was a little fellow from Shelby County that was skilled in the use of the pen, and they sought to find me. They found me surrounded by a number of the men, each waiting his turn to have a letter written home. The officers soon made known their wishes, which was to find a man who was a penman who they wished as a Duty Sergeant.24

At the conclusion of the Civil War, Elijah P. Marrs briefly attended the Nashville Institute.25 In 1869, he returned home to Shelbyville, Kentucky to rent a farm and take care of his aging parents and grandmother. Eventually, at the encouragement of his friends and family, he began a career as a teacher. Marrs did not have any formal education but because of an owner with a conscious and his own innate talent, Marrs taught primary school in the Kentucky cities of Simpsonville, LaGrange, Louisville, and Beargrass. However, his greatest educational legacy was serving as the inaugural president of the Simmons College from 1879-1880. Marrs did not believe he was qualified enough for the position but thought, "Why can't I? Surely

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25 Ronald Roach, "American Baptist College Designated as a Historically Black Institution, in Diverse Issues in Higher Education (April 24, 2013). The college was named for Roger Williams, the founder to the First Baptist Church in America. The institution educated numerous African-American teachers and other leaders in the South throughout the 19th century. In the 1920's the small private university merged with a private historical black college Lemoyne-Owen College in Memphis, Tennessee.
God will aid me. And although there are many disadvantages hanging over it, yet most every great enterprise is started under difficulties."26

On November 29, 1879, under the leadership of President Marrs, Simmons College opened its Louisville doors for the first time. The Institute was on a two and a half acre lot located in the southwest corner of Seventh and Kentucky streets in the heart of downtown Louisville. The 1879 General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky minutes described the land as "a handsome piece of property lying high and dry. And well shaded and ornamented with a very fine selection of fruit and shade trees that would provide places for innocent amusement." This picturesque plot was purchased for $1,783.85. The General Association opened their 1880 meeting with gratitude for the initial year of the institution and the leadership of Marrs. "We Thank God that those old dark days of slavery have passed away and that we have lived to see the day that the doors of the school-houses and college are standing wide open for the reception of all who will come and receive a classical education." They also asked pastors to encourage their local parishioners to "drop the axe and drawers of water" and seek a higher education.27

The Church and the pastor were at the center of power and influence of the African American community. A pastor of a black church had to engage his members while being able to appeal to and effectively communicate with whites within their community. Hence, it was necessary to have some tenets of classical or liberal

27 Minutes of the First General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky, 1870,1879 Simmons University Papers Box 2, Folder 12, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
studies education. African American ministers were known for their oratorical skills but they also needed to be able to read biblical scriptures and have the intellectual prowess to analyze and interpret their readings. Consequently, many of the first attendants of Simmons College were Kentucky pastors. The first class at the Institute had thirty-nine students and it encompassed seven pastors from Kentucky churches: Rev. E. J. Anderson, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Georgetown; Rev. T. M. Faulkner, pastor of a Baptist Church in Louisville; Rev. John Thompson; Rev. George Patterson, of Midway, pastor of Bethel Church of Frankfort; and Rev. G. Ward, pastor of Eminence Baptist Church. President Marrs remained at the Institute for one session only before leaving to serve as the pastor of Beargrass Baptist Church in Louisville. Perhaps, throughout his brief tenure as president Marrs wrestled with his inadequacies of never gaining a formal education. However, he served the institution and the church at its inception and provided a foundation for Baptist education in the Commonwealth.28

**Early Beginnings of William Simmons**

In 1880, President Marrs invited one of the most influential and well-educated African American educators of the time, William J. Simmons, to serve as the inaugural commencement speaker at the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute. At this time, Simmons was a young pastor at the first black Baptist church in the region, First African Baptist Church of Lexington. In *Black Higher Education in Kentucky 1879-1930: The History of Simmons University*, Lawrence Williams

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contends that it was Simmons' provocative and powerful graduation speech that garnered the attention of William Steward and other leaders of the General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky. "[William] Simmons inspired the people by giving the history of many great universities and concluded that what was possible with them was also possible with their school, though born in weakness and poverty."29

The General Association of Colored Baptists and President Marrs directly faced their shortcomings as educators and higher education administrators by recognizing their weaknesses and invited a more educated person to facilitate the progress of the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute. In 1880, which marked the second session of the Institute, the General Association appointed William J. Simmons as president of the institution that would eventually bear his name.30

William Simmons was born a slave in Charleston, South Carolina on June 29, 1849. His mother, Esther Simmons could no longer tolerate the brutalities of slavery. She was determined to not allow her three children, William, Anna, and Emeline, to live as enslaved African Americans. Therefore, at a very early age Simmons, his mother, and siblings escaped to the northern city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His mother's tenacity and perseverance instilled in him a desire to fight back against an oppressive system that was designed to hinder and prevent African American progress. Life in Philadelphia was not easy as the Simmons family

30 Simmons, 4.
faced extreme hardships. Simmons writes, "Without protection of a husband and father, they began a long siege with hunger and poverty." The family moved throughout Pennsylvania to different hiding places because of the constant fear of slave traders who daily sought the capture of runaway slaves. Simmons credits much of the family’s survival to his uncle, Alexander Tardiff, a shoemaker who later became a seaman to help support the Simmons family.31

As a fugitive slave, William J. Simmons could not earn a formal primary education. Fortunately, his Uncle Tardiff could read, write, and perform basic arithmetic; therefore, he taught the Simmons children the fundamental basics of an early education. As a young boy Tardiff attended school in Charleston, South Carolina, under tutelage of Bishop Daniel A. Payne of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Payne was the first African American president of Wilberforce University and the first bishop of the A.M.E. Church to have a formal theological education. Simmons credits the teachings of his uncle as laying the early underpinning for a love of education and "laying a foundation so broad and exact that college studies were comparatively easy."32

Initially, William J. Simmons did not have any intentions in pursuing a formal education because he had a successful apprenticeship with a prominent white dentist, Dr. Leo H. DeLange of Bordentown, New Jersey. In 1863, Dr. DeLange was elected the first mayor of Bordentown, which took him away from his duties as a

31 Ibid., 1-6.
dentist. However, he was confident in the abilities of Simmons and periodically left him in charge of the dental practice. Simmons performed dental work on some of the most successful white families in Bordentown and regularly offered his services to black families who did not have access to dentists. Wishing to remain in the career field where he had amassed experience, Simmons applied to dental school before the Civil War, but was rejected presumably because of the color of his skin. On September 18, 1864, he enlisted in the 41st United States Colored Infantry. He was present for the infamous siege of Petersburg and the unconditional surrender of Confederate General Robert E. Lee in Northern Virginia on April 9, 1865.33

In the fall of 1867, Simmons returned to Philadelphia where he briefly apprenticed for an African American dentist, Dr. William Longfellow. However, he returned to work for Dr. DeLange because he was able to offer better wages due to his clientele being white and better able to pay for dental services than their newly emancipated counterparts. It was during this time that Simmons joined the white congregation of First Baptist of Bordentown. He felt welcomed as a member of the church and received support when he announced his call to preach and be a leader within the Baptist denomination. Recognizing his potential, the all-white congregation financially supported his education at Madison University of New York. For undocumented reasons, in 1868, Simmons transferred to Rochester University of New York where he paid for his tuition by performing odd jobs at a

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local white Baptist church. In Rochester, he also became heavily involved in missionary work and working with the African American Baptist community.

It was not unusual that local white leaders and missionaries helped to pay Simmons' tuition. White church missionaries drew on the tradition of humanism or a system of values and beliefs that were centered on the idea that people (African Americans) are inherently good and the best way to address the "Negro Problem" and issues plaguing the African American community was with religion, education, and a paternalistic-like uplift. In many ways the missionary and educational efforts of white philanthropists were successful. Their efforts helped finance and build new churches and schools for newly emancipated African Americans of both the north and south. The assistance of white missionaries facilitated a remarkable increase in African American access to a formal education, and as in the case of William J. Simmons and other African American talented-tenth members, it promoted the rise of many African American leaders.34

Simmons matriculated through two institutions in upstate New York; however, it was not until he attended the historical black college of Howard University that he completed his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1873. Throughout his early life Simmons consistently struggled with poverty. In his autobiography, he recalls only eating cheese and crackers for weeks at a time and having to miss school because his only shirt was not dry enough to walk the seven miles to school. His humble experiences as both a fugitive slave and a struggling student did not deter him from being successful, as he graduated salutatorian of his class. His

34Watkins, 14-15.
experiences were beneficial because it gave him the ability to mentor students like Charles Parrish and others whom also came from humble beginnings.\textsuperscript{35}

William J. Simmons success as a student in higher education encouraged him to dedicate his life to black education. Since his 1867 Christian conversion, Simmons was interested in missionary work and evangelism. He felt that he had the moral obligation of uplifting and improving the African American race through education and to spread the Christian message to as many prospective believers as possible. Paul Tillich, a Christian philosopher and theologian contends that the Christian Church has three primary functions: education, missions, and evangelism. As teacher, minster of God’s word, and later president of a growing institution, Simmons was able to accomplish these tasks simultaneously.\textsuperscript{36}

Simmons began his teaching career at a grade school in Bunker Hill, Washington, D.C., where, because of his aptitude and conscientious nature, he was quickly promoted to principal. On August 25, 1874, he married Josephine Silence and their marriage produced seven children. Presumably not wanting his children to experience the hardships of his childhood of poverty and hunger, Simmons briefly left teaching in an attempt to earn more money as a citrus farmer in Ocala, Florida. While living in Florida, he became a deacon at a small Baptist church and was licensed to preach.

Husband, father, farmer, and church officer were the many roles of William Simmons; yet, he still managed to be involved in local and national politics of the

\textsuperscript{35} Simmons, 40-43.
late nineteenth century. He served as the chairman of the Marion County Republican campaign committee and was a member of the district congressional committee. Because of his political leadership positions he was at the center of the 1876 presidential election of Republican Rutherford B. Hayes and Democrat opponent Samuel Tilden. Simmons diligently worked to help register African Americans in northern Florida to vote. And despite Democrat attempts to intimidate Republicans from voting, Simmons helped Marion County raise the number of registered Republican voters from 525 to 986. The compromise of 1877 confirmed Hayes’ victory, but the consequences of the compromise deeply impacted the lives of African Americans, causing reversal of racial, political, and economic progress. The compromise returned southern leadership to former slaveholders and Confederate soldiers whose first task was to ensure the disenfranchisement of African Americans and the loss of all the promises of Reconstruction. Most African Americans such as Simmons and other members of the talented-tenth lost their newly gained rights. However, the leadership experience achieved during Reconstruction politics offered Simmons the experience of working across interracial lines to strengthen Republican politics.

His leadership role in politics also gave Simmons the opportunity to work across class lines with African Americans who did not possess a formal education, as he carefully explained the election process and candidate information. Although William Simmons was born a slave, he spent most of his childhood and young adult life as a free man with a limited access to a formal education. This likely caused tension between him and former slaves in the South. Historian Laurie Maffly-Kipp
argues that education and differences in politics and religion often caused tension between northern and southern African Americans. "Not all ex-slaves welcomed the "help" of the Northerners, black or white, particularly because most Northern blacks (like whites) saw Southern black practices as hopelessly "heathen." Despite resistance he may have encountered, Simmons still managed to work across racial and class lines in the North Florida political world. These learned skills and life lessons of navigating racial, social, and ideological differences proved valuable when Simmons was asked to improve the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute as president of the struggling school. Indeed, Lawrence Williams described Simmons as a "Savior who reinvigorated and transformed the school into a college that would later receive some recognition from white and black denominational and educational agencies."37

Prior to accepting the leadership role at Simmons College, William J. Simmons was asked to pastor First African Baptist Church of Lexington in 1879, which is considered the first African Baptist church west of the Allegheny Mountains. As pastor, he left his mark on the historic church by eliminating all debt that was associated with the Church and it is believed that he donated his salary to balance the church budget. First African Baptist Church prospered under the leadership of William J. Simmons. In return, he gained valuable experience with

37 Williams, Black Higher Education in Kentucky: The History of Simmons University, 78.
fundraising and budget management that proved to be an asset in his work as an administrator in higher education.\textsuperscript{38}

In 1881, when William J. Simmons was elected principal of the small Baptist College there were only thirteen students, two teachers, and the school was in a dire financial situation. In his personal memoir, Simmons stated that the treasury was empty and the campus was dirty and sparse of furniture. Reverend Eugene Evans of Warren County, Kentucky, also indicated the dismal state of the institution in an editorial piece for \textit{The Bowling Green Watchmen}, "Few Men of Professor Simmons' ability and standing would have been willing to risk their future in an enterprise like the Normal and Theological Institute; an enterprise without capital and but a few friends."\textsuperscript{39} In 1880, the year prior to William Simmons arrival to the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute there were 157 students and 139 staff members. The significant drop the following year indicates that there were issues that discouraged enrollment. Perhaps, the issue was financial and prospective attendees were skeptical about the longevity of the Institution. Even more probable, was the idea that the curriculum and education of Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute was inferior to other African American institutions.

In the nineteenth century, the quality of education at Simmons College did not compare to many white institutions of learning in the American South. And most southern universities were considered mediocre in comparison to universities in


\textsuperscript{39} Reverend Eugene Evans, \textit{Wm. Simmons and The School} (Bowling Green, KY), July 1881.
the North. It was not until the educational reforms of the Progressive Era that the Southern public school system and universities improved and attempted to compete with northern institutions. Educational reforms arrived late to the South because the institution of slavery stunted the growth of urbanization and manufacturing. In contrast, modernization in Northern cities squelched the growth of agrarian society, and according to many protestant middle-class white northerners, modernization caused social problems that led to issues of morality such as gambling, alcoholism, prostitution, among other perceived moral vices. The formation and expansion of the public education system in the North addressed the political, social, and economic impulses of the time period. Prior to the Progressive Era, most prosperous southerners and wealthy planters relied on private schools and home schools to educate their children. Thus, southern institutions including the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute had a late start in creating a quality curriculum and addressing societal needs. The Institute was further disadvantaged because white state leaders did not consider the African American institution a priority and even though the General Association of Colored Baptists in Kentucky had sole control over the struggling institution, its private status often prevented Simmons College from collecting state funds.40

President William J. Simmons first sought to create a uniformed and professional-looking curriculum guide that was sent to African American churches

in the region. Upon receiving this guide, prospective students and parents were awed by the transformation of the institution and felt that it was taking a new direction by offering an improved quality education. The 1882 catalogue boasted the institution’s ability to prepare all students regardless of their educational levels and offered classes ranging from grammar school to professional training. Students were taught the traditional basics of writing, reading, arithmetic, American history, and spelling. In keeping a middle-class value system and in attempts of racial uplift, the board of trustees and President Simmons ensured that there were mandatory etiquette, hygiene, and cooking classes. The cooking classes and similar classes in bookkeeping, household cleaning, and home economics were taught not to prepare servants for white homes or "cooks for hire" but to ensure that young women were successfully prepared to be homemakers in caring for their children and husbands. These principles espoused middle-class ideals of womanhood and women’s responsibility as moral influences in the community and in their homes, as they were considered the backbone and the bearers of change. The Baptist College’s curriculum and purpose were more aligned with the Du Boisian liberal arts curriculum; however, to appeal to a broader selection of potential students, the school offered industrial courses. Students who gained a vocational education often worked in shoe making, sewing, farming, maintenance, and other industrial-related fields. The academic department was steeped in the classics of Caesar, Cicero, and

41“Fifth Street Baptist Church Minutes, 1883 ”, Box 1, Fifth Street Baptist Church Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.
42“Simmons University Course Catalogue”, Simmons Bible College Records, 1869-1971, Box 3 of 9, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, "If It Wasn’t For the Women": Black Women’s Experience and Womanist Culture in Church and Community,” (Maryknoll: New York: Orbis Books Press, 2001,) 15-17.
other Greek intellectuals. The scholars were also taught biblical history and the New Testament, rhetoric, and logic. Most graduates of the honors department went on to pursue teaching careers or other professional careers that were the underpinnings of the African American middle-class.

William J. Simmons' ultimately wanted to gain national recognition for the independent Baptist College. Thus, in the late 1880s the Institute established an affiliation with the Louisville National Medical College and the Central Law School. The college department of the Institute was a successful recruitment pool for the newly minted professional training schools. During the late nineteenth century it was rare for African American institutions to house a medical and law school. Howard University, Shaw University of Raleigh, North Carolina, and Meharry Medical College of Nashville, Tennessee were the exception to the rule. However, in contrast to the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute, these respective institutions were controlled and financed by white administrators.

During this time period, the curriculum of most historically black colleges and universities were primarily on a secondary level and truly only offered limited college courses and curriculum. Yet, African American teachers and students took great pride in their institutions and utilized their resources to the best of their abilities. In 1910, the Carnegie Foundation published a report that called for stricter admission, graduation standards, and a uniform required course of study for medical schools. The racial overtones of the time period and this report were detrimental to the Louisville Medical College and other African American institutions such as Shaw University’s medical department. When Louisville Medical
College closed in 1910, it left a void for affordable medical school education for African Americans in the region. Unfortunately, twenty years later the Central Law School at Simmons College experienced a similar fate and commenced its last graduate in 1940 because of accreditation and new standards enacted by the National Bar Association. Even though the Medical and Law departments were forced to close, their short existence was phenomenal in itself as a black-owned and controlled institution of higher learning. It also speaks to the academic and organization foundation laid by William J. Simmons.43

Not surprisingly, the largest department of the Institute was the Theological department whose purpose was "to prepare students to teach the word of God acceptably." Theological studies included courses on Exegesis, Sermonizing, Systematic Theology, Rules of Interpretation, Baptist Apologetics, Doctrines, Pastoral Theology, Church Discipline, Mental and Moral Philosophy, Extemporaneous Sermons for Criticism, Rhetoric, and Vocal Culture.

Understandably, a school started by African American Baptists had an extensive

43 “Simmons University Course Catalogue 1892-1893”, Simmons Bible College Records Box 2 of 9 folder 11, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky. "State University Bulletin, 1907-1908", Simmons Bible College Records (loose paper) Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky. 43 Williams, Black Higher Education in Kentucky: The History of Simmons University, 101-107; Meharry and Howard Medical schools are still viable institutions and were able withstand accreditation woes because of their white financial support. The Howard school of Law graduates often graduates the largest classes of African American attorneys. Shaw School of medicine and law closed its door in 1918 and 1916 respectively for similar reasons of Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute. For more information: Thomas Ward, Black Physicians in the Jim Crow South, Fayetteville, Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press).
course of study in Theology and its departmental success was the top priority of the General Association of Colored Baptists in Kentucky.\textsuperscript{44}

Most historical black colleges and Universities including Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute believed it was their responsibility to teach students the rudimentary basics of education but also viewed moral education as a part of their educational mission:

To build, fashion, and develop young men and women intellectually and morally for the higher vocation and duties of life-and particularly to secure an educated ministry and competent teachers. This is no place for the lazy and indifferent. Each student is expected to reflect honor on the Institute... to all who are willing to live up to these aims are welcome, regardless of religious belief and denominational convictions.\textsuperscript{45}

Regardless of students' course of study they were all required to attend church and Sunday school every week unless excused by the president. Students could be dismissed from the university for continuously being late to church services or classes. And in keeping with the values of a religious-based institution, profanity, gambling, weapons, use of tobacco and alcohol, and attendance in an "unholy" place such as a dance club or a place with live secular music were strictly forbidden in the school's rules and regulations. The school's leaders forbade any type of demonstration of extravagance; thus, they required all spending monies sent to students from family and friends be sent to the president for disbursement to the intended recipient. The administration even went to the extent of forbidding women

\textsuperscript{44}Simmons University Course Catalogue", Simmons Bible College Records, 1869-1971, Box 1 of 9, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky. Lawrence H. Williams, \textit{Black Higher Education In Kentucky 1879-1930}, 36-37.

\textsuperscript{45}"Simmons University Course Catalogue 1881-1882", Simmons Bible College Records, 1869-1971, Box 1 of 9, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
from wearing dresses from home, requiring that they only wear plain flannel
dresses that were made in the sewing shop of the Institute. An overindulgence in
"earthly things" not only exhibited un-Christian like behavior but it also had the
potential to cause separation among socio-economic classes; thus, creating an
unnecessary hierarchy among students.46

The moral and social demands of Simmons College were consistent with
Christian social norms of the late nineteenth century. Christian men and women had
an obligation to behave in a way that upheld religious moral expectations. Along
with their academic studies students were encouraged to participate in university
sanctioned organizations or clubs such as the Athenaeum department and Young
Men and Women’s Christian Missionary Association. Like American society, the
Institute’s behavioral expectations changed with the prospective time periods.
President Charles Parrish Sr. often chaperoned groups of female students to the
movie theater. Some Baptists expressed their outrage of not only the president’s
approval of students attending movie theaters, but also his accompaniment.
However, Parrish believed that given the proper guidance students would make the
right decisions.47

William J. Simmons and Charles Parrish Sr. were the most influential
presidents of Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute. Simmons died of a heart
attack on October 30, 1890. However, his ideas and legacy continued to flourish not

46 “State University Catalogue-Rules and Decorum”, Simmons Bible College Records, 1869-1971, Box 3 of 9, Folder 1, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
47 Oral History Interview with Charles Henry Parrish Jr., Interviewed by Dwayne Cox and William Morrison, Tape 210, February 21, 1977, Oral History Interviews of African American Community, University of Louisville Archives and Record Center.
only though the work of his protégé Charles Parrish Sr., but also by leaving his mark on several organizations associated with the Simmons College and black Baptists throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the nation.

**American Baptist Newspaper**

Another great legacy of the General Association of Colored Baptist in Kentucky was *The American Baptist* newspaper, which reached its height of readership under the helm of William J. Simmons. *The American Baptist* is the second consistently published African American newspaper in the United States. Only the African Methodist Episcopalian denomination had an older periodical, *The Christian Recorder*, which began publication in 1846. *The American Baptist* was the successor of *The Baptist Herald*, a newspaper established in 1873 by George W. Dupee, a former slave, pastor of Pleasant Green Baptist Church of Lexington, and prominent member of the General Association of Colored Baptist. William J. Simmons estimated that Dupee baptized over eight thousand people, pastored twelve churches, and married over thirteen hundred people. Of Dupee, William J. Simmons said, "Certainly no man lives in Kentucky who has done more to develop her (Kentucky) spiritual interest."  

In 1879, William J. Simmons and William Steward were the associate editors of *The Baptist Herald*. William Steward, Chairman of the board of trustees for the Simmons College changed the name of the paper to *The American Baptist* and added in-depth coverage of the black Baptist churches across the state, the Institute, and

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developments in African American education. Simmons was named the President and lead editor of the newspaper in 1882. Steward, however, remained the greatest influence on the paper as the city editor, associate editor, business manager, and owner. The American Baptist’s stated its purpose to its readers:

Because it keeps you and your family and neighbors informed of the doings of the greatest Negro organization that ever existed in all the history of the world.

Because you and your children become acquainted with the greatest and most outstanding leaders of this great organization, and their teachings, and doings.

Because it is utterly free from the trash. Only that which is educational, uplifting, inspiring, and edifying, can enter its pages.

Because it is the only religious paper and the only church paper of your denomination published here in your community and state.....

William J. Simmons used The American Baptist as a vehicle to recruit students to Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute. Editors Simmons and Steward urged its readership to fulfill their Christian duty in supporting their Baptist institution. Most issues were focused on the institution and were very specific in ways that the school could benefit from donated funds. One advertisement for Simmons College read:

1. You can give money to be used as you direct.
2. You can give household goods of any kind.
3. You can send your own child, and encourage your neighbor to do the same.
4. You can speak of the school to your neighbor.
5. You can insist on young men, candidates for the ministry, studying in the Institute.
6. You can write and tell where to send a Catalogue.
7. You can send books, papers, pictures-only good needed
8. You can talk for us.
9. You can pray for us.

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10. You can work for us.⁵⁰

Simmons College was an offspring of the General Association of Colored Baptists; thus, in essence an extension of the African American community. In order for the independent Baptist college to survive it was necessary to have the financial and enrollment support of the African American community who were the most powerful recruitment tool for the Institution. This advertisement reached to a large readership of The American Baptist, which was the most effective tool of communicating for the Baptist church and was ultimately the voice of the black Baptists of Kentucky. The newspaper also served as a family journal that was "devoted to the moral, social, and intellectual development of the colored people." The paper was published every Friday and was circulated in Kentucky, as well as many southern and western states. In 1889, William J. Simmons sold his interest to start the national Baptist publication Our Women and Children, the first African American women’s magazine. The women’s magazine’s non-denominational goal was the advancement of women and children, as women were viewed as the moral influence in the home and community. The magazine educated women and children in science, poetry, kitchen, true religion, and other valuable anecdotes with the intent and purpose of uplifting the African American community with black respectability values of morality and education. On the magazine’s front cover, William J. Simmons demanded, "We shall defend woman from wrongs and demand

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⁵⁰ "How to Help the School," The American Baptist, August 21, 1900, 3.
for her Justice." Simmons knew that at the heart of the community and its influence, was the African American woman.

Aside from Simmons’s involvement in expanding black education and publications targeted toward black audiences, he also formed the American Baptist Convention. Simmons drew inspiration from the establishment of the Foreign Mission Baptist Convention of the United States, which was formed on Wednesday, November 24, 1880. One hundred and fifty-one African American Baptist delegates from across the United States gathered at First Baptist Church of Montgomery, Alabama in "hopes to know more of each other’s work, each other’s plans, each other’s views and desires; and by counseling one with the other to better carrying forth the work of their common Savior and Lord." This historical meeting laid the foundation for other African American organizations with the purpose of organizing the black churches throughout the nation.

This historical organization established a framework, which William J. Simmons emulated in 1886 with the formation of The American National Baptist Convention in St. Louis, Missouri. The American Baptist was a critical outlet for recruiting of churches to join the new organization. At its highest membership peak, the American National Baptist Convention had 130,000 members. In comparison to the Foreign Mission Baptist Convention, Simmons’ new convention welcomed

51 "Our Women and Children Advertisement," Minutes of the Baptist Women’s Educational Convention for the years 83, 84,85, and 86, American Baptist Historical Society Special Collections and Manuscripts at Mercer University, Atlanta, Georgia.
members outside of Baptist church leaders. Simmons utilized his political relationships and skills that he had established and honed while working with the Republican Party in Florida. The American National Baptist Convention emphasized the importance of interracial collaboration with southern whites and opened its membership ranks to former politicians, members of the talented-tenth, and anyone who had a genuine interest in the progress of the African American Baptist church. These skills also helped Simmons to garner the position as a district secretary for the white-operated American Baptist Home Mission Society.54

In 1895, at the historical Friendship Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, the Foreign Mission Baptist Convention, The American National Baptist Convention, and the lesser-known National Baptist Education Convention merged to form the National Baptist Convention. Unfortunately, William J. Simmons did not live long enough to see this collaboration come to fruition because of his untimely death of a heart complications on October 30, 1890. However, he was instrumental and perhaps the architect in organizing the first meeting of all three conventions in Nashville, Tennessee on September 16, 1888. Furthermore, the newly established National Baptist Convention invoked the spirit of Simmons by making education one of its top priorities.55

As made evident by the creation of the National Baptist Convention, the late nineteenth century was a time of growth and productivity for African American

54 The Baptist Home Mission Monthly, 8 (August 1887) 206-207, Williams, The Charles H. Parrishes: Pioneers In African-American Religion and Education, 1880-1989, 16; The American Baptist Home Mission Society began in 1832 and one of its primary goals was to support ministry and education among former enslaved African Americans.

Baptists across the nation. And Kentucky was no exception. At their 1882 summer meeting, the General Association of Colored Baptists in Kentucky made the conscious decision to change the name of the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute to State University. The name was a reflection of anticipated growth, while also being a recruitment tool for both students and white philanthropic funds. Members of the General Association felt that a name, which contained "university," invoked a spirit of prestige and placed the struggling black Baptist school on par with white universities.56

Perhaps, the name change was the reason why the American Home Mission Society pledged up to three thousand dollars a year for salaries for two teachers and the scholarships for "several deserving young women" at State University for at least three years. President Simmons also secured donations from the once supervisory organization of many Kentucky black Baptist churches, the white Kentucky Baptist Association. In Black Higher Education in Kentucky, Lawrence Williams argues that white philanthropic organizations like Rockefeller’s General Education Board and the American Baptist Home Mission Society were hesitant to fully support independent institutions like Simmons College because many benefactors felt that African American leadership was inadequate and financially incompetent. Thus, most of the financial burden was placed on the African American Baptist churches of Kentucky. In 1886, the General Association of Colored Baptists

Kentucky collected $578.08 from black Baptist churches throughout the Commonwealth. This total superseded Rockefeller's $500 donation in 1884.57

The Rockefeller donation was used to make internal improvements to the deficient facilities of the newly minted State University. The 1881 trustees report presented to the General Association of Colored Baptists in Kentucky described the state of the grounds as "entirely inadequate for the accommodation of the students attending" and highlighted the need for improvement to accommodate current and future students. William Simmons, his wife Josephine and their seven children Josephine, William, Maud, Amanda, Mary, John, and Gussie lived in two uncomfortable rooms on the campus grounds and there was no formal place for President Simmons to entertain guests of the University.58

**Baptist Women's Educational Convention**

William J. Simmons and other influential leaders among the black Baptist educational movement in Kentucky continuously looked for ways to improve the Institute. One of the most important organizations of fundraising for the Institute was the Baptist Women's Educational Convention of the State of Kentucky, created by Simmons on September 19, 1883. The first session was held at the second oldest

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57 Watkins, ,118-129; Williams, *Black Higher Education in Kentucky: The History of Simmons University*, 82-84; In the mid-nineteenth century the Rockefeller family sought to challenge their image as unethical and duplicitous in their business practices. In order to combat these negative images, by 1907, the Rockefeller family and the General Education Board (GEB) donated more than forty-three million dollars to African American education. John D. Rockefeller Sr. founded the GEB in 1902 with the purpose of meeting the educational needs of southern Americans, who in comparison to their northern counterparts, were decades behind in establishing a progressive system of higher education.

African American Baptist Church in Kentucky, Fifth Street Baptist Church of Louisville. Black Baptist women in Kentucky constantly struggled for their voice and place in the church’s male dominated hierarchical system. The power and influence of black women in the Baptist church was limited because similar to other organizations of the period, women’s leadership was discouraged. Yet, President Simmons recognized the influence and collective power that African American women wielded in the black church and community. William Simmons wanted women to have full autonomy within their new organization, as they had constantly struggled with patriarchy and chauvinism in the male-dominated structure of the African American Baptist Church. Therefore, in his first action he nominated Amanda Redd of Georgetown, Kentucky as the chairperson to oversee the inaugural election of president of the Baptist Women’s Educational Convention. It was not a coincidence that the first president of the organization, Amanda Nelson, was a former parishioner of William J. Simmons at The First African Baptist Church of Lexington and a former student. Amanda Nelson was also a classmate of Charles Parrish, one of Simmons’ first students at Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute. President Nelson had a vested interest in education as an alumna of Simmons College and a grade school teacher in Jefferson County, Kentucky.59

Article II of the Constitution for the Baptist Women’s Educational Convention of Kentucky stated that the object of the Convention shall be to encourage attendance of students in The Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute for

59 "Minutes of the Baptist Women's Educational Convention of Kentucky, 1883-1884" American Baptist Historical Society Special Collections and Manuscripts at Mercer University, Atlanta, Georgia.
Christian Education, to contribute to funds for operation of the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute and to develop in its members a greater missionary spirit." On September 20, 1883, the second day of the inaugural convention, the new members of the Baptist Women's Educational Convention of Kentucky, accompanied by William J. Simmons and William H. Steward, spent the morning touring and taking notes of the needs of the Institute. Their report stated, "that the work seems in a state of progression and as education is one of the main hinges of our future prosperity, it behooves us to push to the front." At that inaugural meeting, the Women's Convention collected over seven hundred dollars.

The Baptist Women's Educational Convention of Kentucky continuously demonstrated their fundraising abilities and persuasion tactics. An example of their fundraising initiatives was the corporation dinner, which was held at the end of each spring term in May on the campus of Simmons College. The inaugural dinner not only celebrated the class of 1855 but it also served 450 clergyman and Baptist supporters. The first corporation dinner profited twenty-six dollars after all expenses were paid. The Baptist Women's Educational Convention was by far the largest financial contributor to the Simmons College. In 1887, the Women's Convention collected $1,207.70, which was almost double of the $800 collected

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61 Session One of the Baptist Women’s Educational Convention, "Minutes of the Baptist Women’s Educational Convention of Kentucky, 1883-1884" American Baptist Historical Society Special Collections and Manuscripts at Mercer University, Atlanta, Georgia.
from the black Baptist churches that same year. From 1883-1914, the Baptist
Women's Convention raised almost $35,000 dollars.62

In 1908, all the hard work and fundraising of the Women's Convention came
to tangible fruition with the building of a girl's dormitory. The dormitory also served
as the domestic science building and it contained modern luxuries of coal-powered
heat, electricity, and indoor plumbing. The construction of the girl's dormitory cost
the General Association of Colored Baptists $20,000. Fortunately, the American
Baptist Home Mission Society donated five thousand dollars. However, it was the
fundraising and organizing efforts of the Women's Convention that successfully
eliminated any debt associated with the girl's dormitory in less than a year.63

The building of the women's dormitory happened under the leadership of
Mamie Steward who was the longest serving president of the Women's Convention
and served from 1900 to 1930. She was the wife of Charles Steward, chairman of the
board of trustees for the Institute and the music teacher for over thirty years at
Simmons College. Mamie Steward demonstrated her belief in the mission and
purpose of the Women's Convention. On March 5, 1898, at the twenty-fifth
anniversary celebration of the granting of the school's charter, Mamie Steward gave
a rousing speech titled "The Women's Convention as an Adjunct in the Educational
Work." She proclaimed that woman were the backbone of the Baptist church and
demanded respect for their efforts. "It is safe to say that nine-tenths of the teachers

62 Mamie Steward, "Baptist Women's Educational Convention of Kentucky in The Golden Jubilee of the
Colored Baptists in Kentucky: The Story of 50 Years' Work From 1865-1915, ed. Charles Parrish
(Louisville American Baptist Publisher, 1915), 138-148.
63 Mamie Steward, "Woman in the Church," National Baptist Magazine 6 (August-October 1898): 145-
146; Lawrence H. Williams, Black Higher Education In Kentucky, 55-61.
in our Sunday schools are women. The Sunday school, being a part of the church work, makes the woman an important factor, not only in engaging in the work of the church as it is commonly understood, but also places her where she can even make the future church what she desires it to be...." Due in part to Mamie Steward’s speech of conviction, the Women’s Convention collected almost two hundred dollars at the celebration.

The Baptist Women’s Educational Convention of Kentucky served as an example to other women’s conventions across the nation. Reverend Edward Brawley, President of Alabama Baptist Normal and Theological School (Selma University), was a contributing writer and editor for *The American Baptist* who traveled throughout the South observing and reporting on African American Baptist churches and institutions. The growth and development of the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute (Simmons College) motivated him in his work and leadership at his own institution. Perhaps, the most valuable lesson he learned was that the strength and longevity of an institution was contingent on its fundraising ability. He recognized the often-understated power in the work and financial campaigning abilities of the Baptist Women Educational Convention of Kentucky. Upon returning to Alabama, Brawley encouraged the women of his state to form their own educational convention. On January 27, 1886, the Baptist Women

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65 "State University Quarto-Centennial Bulletin," Simmons Bible College Records, Box 3, Folder 5 Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
Educational Convention of Alabama modeled the Kentucky plan and launched their own educational convention.\(^66\)

William J. Simmons was a life member of the Baptist Women's Educational Convention of Kentucky. The Women's Convention was perhaps his greatest legacy outside of the small Baptist college. However, the Women's Convention was not the first time that Simmons and other members of the General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky attempted to create an organization with the sole purpose of fundraising and encouraging attendance at Simmons College.

The first attempt was the creation of The Consolidated Baptist Educational Association of Kentucky, which began on July 14, 1880, just a few short months after the opening of Simmons College. The Consolidated Baptist Educational Association's stated purpose was "to aid in the great work of the intellectual, moral, and religious culture of our race." William J. Simmons opened the first meeting in prayer at First Baptist Church of Covington, Kentucky. Simmons College and educational missionary work were at the center of the Convention's focus. The 1880 minutes discussed the importance of supporting the Baptist institution because, "the times demand an educated ministry for and progress in membership which constitute our churches, and, whereas, these ends can be reached in no way so easily and thoroughly as by sustaining an institution of higher learning." The Convention pledged to donate forty dollars a month to the institution. The Consolidated Baptist Educational Association minutes do not indicate what role Simmons had in securing

\(^66\) "Minutes of the Sixth Annual Session of the Baptist State Women's Convention, June 25-28 1891" Special Collections held at Second Baptist Church of Eufaula, Alabama.
consistent funds from the Convention but the minutes indicate that he was present throughout the entire inaugural session. The Consolidated Baptist Educational Association never rose to the prominence of the Women's Convention and its fundraising abilities. However, it laid the foundation for other conventions and was without a doubt influenced by Simmons.67

William J. Simmons' influence was embedded in every entity that served African American Baptist education in Kentucky. In 1890, in a surprise to most, Simmons left Simmons College to establish an industrial school in Cane Springs, Kentucky, Eckstein Norton Institute. His departure was worrisome for the African American Baptist educational system in Kentucky. With President Simmons at the helm, the institute added normal and college departments and developed professional schools. Such additions and partnerships caused the enrollment and prestige to dramatically increase.68 Therefore, the college's board of trustees was reluctant to lose the guidance of Simmons. They offered him a position on the board of trustees, which he accepted.

Simmons' departure was further exacerbated as his protégé and most able successor, Charles Parrish, followed his mentor to Eckstein Norton Institute. With Parrish gone, the Board of Trustees was forced to look at applicants outside of the Kentucky African American Baptist network. The Kentucky Normal and Theological

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67 "1880 Minutes of the Consolidated Baptist Educational Association of Kentucky". Kentucky African American Baptist Collection, American Baptist Historical Society Special Collections and Manuscripts at Mercer University, Atlanta, Georgia.

68 M.B. Lanier, Diamond Jubilee of the General Association of Colored Baptists in Kentucky: the story of seventy-five years of the Association and four years of Convention History(Louisville: Kentucky, American Baptist, 1943) 45-51; 1890 minutes of the General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky, Simmons University Papers Box 2 Folder 12, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
Institute named former Arkansas Baptist College President, James Garnett as the new president. Unfortunately, William J. Simmons did not live long enough to see the continued growth of Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute (Simmons College) or Eckstein Norton Institute because of his death in 1890.

The influence and philosophy of the "Father of Negro Baptist Education of Kentucky," William J. Simmons, underpinned the Kentucky Baptist Educational Movement and the growth of an independent black Baptist college that was a leading example for African American colleges throughout the United States. As a member of the Kentucky talented tenth and the influential Baptist community, Simmons believed that the solution to the Negro problem in Kentucky was found at the intersections of education, civic duty, and Christian morality. His greatest work, Simmons College was named in his honor in 1918. Henry McNeal Turner, a prominent African American politician and Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, wrote, "The name William J. Simmons will be as familiar to the millions as that of Herodotus, Josephus, Pliny, Plutarch, and other historians enshrined in the gratitude of the world."

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.”
–Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Chapter 4


The development of historical black institutions of higher education was a major cornerstone of African American progress at the turn of the twentieth century. Many of these institutions would not have existed without the steadfast desire and push from the African American church, which served as a catalyst for an education-centered African American community. African Americans were instrumental in founding historical black colleges, and the first generation that attended these colleges were often children of slavery or just one generation removed from slavery. The new group of recognized citizens lacked the financial stability and economic gains to adequately fund black education.

Therefore, black institutions across the nation and the Commonwealth of Kentucky often negotiated for white dollars and philanthropic support in order to establish and maintain African American institutions of higher education. Of course, white financial support did not come without conditions. In *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, William Watkins argues that white philanthropists controlled the development of black formal education in
order to maintain power over the social, political, and economic aspects of African American life.¹ During the twentieth century in Kentucky, African American institutions were forced to compromise their curriculum and sometimes their stance on racial issues. Despite constant struggle, independent and public historical black colleges remained a beacon of hope and progress for African Americans.

In 1837, there was only one official historical black college in the United States, Cheyney University of Pennsylvania. On his deathbed, Richard Humphreys, a Quaker who was sympathetic to African Americans donated $100,000 to the establishment of Cheyney University, which was founded on February 25, 1837. In his will he charged thirteen of his fellow Quaker friends to design an institution with the purpose "to instruct the descendent[sic] of the African Race in school learning, in the various branches of the mechanic Arts, trades and Agriculture, in order to prepare and fit and qualify them to act as teachers."² Originally named, The Cheyney Training School for Teachers, the institution served as an accessible training ground for aspiring African American teachers who often chose Cheyney University because of its tuition-free program. Students were only required to pay one hundred dollars per academic year, which was allocated for room, board, and electricity. Black newspapers and most notably the NAACP’s publication, The Crisis, advertised Cheyney's initiative throughout the black community.³ By 1937, there were one hundred historical black colleges and institutions and at one point Kentucky had at

¹ Watkins, 20.
³ "Cheyney Advertisement in The Crisis, November 1914 Vol. (9)-1," Whitney M. Young, Sr. Papers, Box 1, The Center for Excellence for the Study of Kentucky African Americans, Kentucky State University; Frankfort, Kentucky.
least five institutions to include Simmons College, Eckstein Norton Institute, Lincoln Institute, Louisville Municipal College, and Kentucky State University. But there were ulterior motives to supporting the development of black institutions.

According to educational scholar, Jacqueline Fleming, "the majority of black public colleges, then, evolved out of state’s desires to avoid admitting blacks to existing white institutions." 4 Kentucky was not an exception to the practices of de jure and de facto educational segregation. However, some African Americans in Kentucky had the opportunity to receive an advanced training in industrial and liberal education because of the donations of white philanthropists and the negotiating efforts of influential African Americans.

Under the direction of William J. Simmons, Simmons College saw its greatest growth in enrollment and vast improvement in curriculum and program offerings, which laid the foundation for its professional studies programs that Charles Parrish was instrumental in expanding into the twentieth century. Simmons was instrumental in establishing Simmons College into a model institution that African American Baptists and other black institutions held in high esteem because it represented the autonomy of a successful small college. When he resigned in 1890, the General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky expressed sadness over the loss of his leadership and guidance. The minutes from the 1890 spring session of the association recorded the magnitude of Simmons departure, "William J.

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Simmons...who had served faithfully for ten years, has resigned to engage in a work which has been near his heart for many years."\(^5\)

But not all members of the General Association and Simmons College Board of Trustees had well wishes for President Simmons and those who followed him. According to historian George Wright, President of the Institute’s Board of Trustees, William Steward, the first African American mailman of Louisville and editor for the *American Baptist*, felt that Simmons’ establishment of Eckstein Norton University was an attempt to dismantle the already fragile and mostly independent Baptist school. He felt the new school would hurt enrollment at the institute and fostered unnecessary competition. Steward never truly recovered from what he considered an act of deceit and betrayal and in 1918, he attempted to block Charles Parrish Sr.’s appointment as president Simmons College. Despite Steward’s protest and wielding favor among Simmons’ College Board of Trustees and African American Baptists in Kentucky, Parrish’s campaign to rename Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute to Simmons University eventually came to fruition in 1918.\(^6\)

William Simmons may have chosen to leave the his namesake because of challenges of raising funds and the increased emphasis on industrial education among those persons black and white aligned with Booker T. Washington’s interest. During his tenure at the small Baptist college, President Simmons spent the majority of his time soliciting funds and implementing plans to financially support the

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\(^5\)“Minutes of the First General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky, 1890,” Simmons University Papers Box 2 Folder 11, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.

\(^6\) Wright, 161-162, 166.
As the primary fundraiser and chief representative of the university, Simmons was well aware of the various means of funds available for African American education and he noticed the trend in greater giving to industrial education.

**John F. Slater Fund for Education**

The John F. Slater Fund for the Education of Freedman was one of the largest educational funds that supported black education and its giving extended to both Simmons College and Eckstein Norton University. The Slater Fund represented the early beginnings of educational philanthropy, which was important to educational development for African Americans at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1882, John Fox Slater, a northern philanthropist and wealthy businessman, who had empathy for the newly emancipated African Americans, placed a million dollars in an educational trust with the purpose of "Uplifting the legally emancipated population of the Southern states and their posterity." John Slater’s motives were not all altruistic. The Slater family owned several textile mills in Rhode Island and Connecticut. Therefore, they depended on southern agriculture and industry that was dominated by cheap African American labor. Not surprisingly, the Slater fund

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7 The General Education Board began in 1903 when industrialist John Rockefeller Sr. made the initial contribution of one million dollars. The General Education Board had the mission of "the promotion of education within the United States of America, without distinction of race, sex, or creed. The GEB had four tenets of focus: promotion of practical farming in the United States, establishment of public high schools in southern states, promotion of institutions of higher learning, and investing in African American education. By 1921, the GEB had amassed almost a $130 million; however, by 1960 the General Education Board was subsumed by the Rockefeller Foundation. For more information see: The General Education Board, "The General Education Board: A Self-Published Report, An Account of Its Activities, 1902-1914" (New York, 1915); Watkins, 118-131.

was more inclined to donate to African American institutions of industrial education and training. Historical Black Colleges such as Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (now Hampton University), Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (now Tuskegee University), Spelman University, Fisk University, Winston-Salem State University of North Carolina (originally named State and Normal and Industrial School) and Eckstein Norton Institute benefited from the John F. Slater Educational Fund. The small Kentucky institute operated for twenty-two years and the John F. Slater Fund donated an estimated $5200 by its 1912 closing.9

By 1909, the Slater Fund had a balance of $1.5 million and most of its funds outside of operating costs and special scholarships for African American recipients were given to aid industrial education and to ensure Christian posterity in the black community. In a few special cases the Slater Fund donated to promising young black scholars regardless of their area of study. Due to scholarships from the Slater Fund, leading African American scholar and defender of classical education, W.E.B. Du Bois studied abroad in Germany from 1891-1894.10

A board of trustees consisting of influential white businessmen and philanthropists controlled the foundation. Rutherford B. Hayes, the former

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9 Anderson and Moss, Jr., 4,86. Dangerous Donations is a revisionist look at the relationship between Northern philanthropy and southern black education in the early twentieth century. Anderson and Moss argue that the blacks that accepted northern finances accepted "Dangerous Donations," and therefore lost some control and influence over their institutions to racist southern whites and northern corporate elite collaborators.


president of the United States was the most well known trustee of the Slater Fund. Despite ending the federal government’s commitment to Reconstruction policies through the withdrawal of troops, he considered himself, "A long friend of the Negro." Prior to the Civil War, as an Ohio attorney, Hayes defended fugitives slaves against extradition back to southern slave-holding states and "acquired a widespread reputation for his hostility towards slavery." According to John Slater, Rutherford B. Hayes, and other trustees who served on black education funding initiatives, the only true way to improve the life and citizenship of African Americans was through education.11 In its 1894 meeting, the chairman of the Slater Educational committee board, J.L.M. Curry read a quote from Booker T. Washington in which the race leader and advocate for education stated, "We believe education, property, and practical religion will eventually give us our every right and privilege enjoyed by other citizens, and, therefore, that our interests can best be served by bending all of our energies to securing them...." Curry felt that this statement was the "gauge of our (The Slater Funds) progress " and the foundation was morally bound to help African American advancement through education.12

11 Rutherford B. Hayes, Teach the Freedman, The Correspondence of Rutherford B. Hayes and the Slater Fund for Negro Education 1881-1887, edited by Louis D. Rubin Jr., (Louisiana State University Press, 1959), 17. Rutherford B. Hayes was the 19th President of the United States of America. His first major act of president was the end Reconstruction policies and army occupation in the southern states. He believed that the interventionist polices were encouraging the violence against African Americans and their progress as citizens. His plan backfired as it resulted in a democratic hold on southern states and the border state of Kentucky for almost a century. This democratic stronghold resulted in the loss of suffrage and basic human rights for African Americans. For more information and President Rutherford and Post-Reconstruction Policies see the classic: C Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South 1877-193 (Baton Rouge: The Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 42-49; Edward Ayers, The Promise of the New South (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8-11.
12 "The 1894 Proceedings of the Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund for the Education of Freedman," Archives and Special Collections Digital Collection, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
Simmons College touted itself as a Liberal Arts institution. Yet in 1886, the Slater Fund donated $1000 to the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute. However, the donation was given with the stipulation that the money be used to support the new industrial education course offerings that included shoemaking, carpentry, and painting. The Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute continued to offer classical courses in addition to industrial offerings. The 1887 course catalogue exhibited a diverse curriculum of classics such as Latin, English Literature, Greek Philosophy and a foundational course in Christian principles. Moreover, the General Association of Colored Baptists of Kentucky and the school officials believed that, "the time has come for art and trades to be taught in connection with literary courses." This demonstrates and reveals the importance that African American educators placed on their students receiving a classical education, the necessary components of a liberal arts education. In his autobiography, Up From Slavery, Booker T. Washington, wrote:

I would set no limits to the attainments of the Negro in arts, in letters or statesmanship, but I believe the surest way to reach those ends is by laying the foundation in the little things that lie immediately about one’s door. I plead for industrial education and development for the Negro not because I want to cramp him, but because I want to free him. I want to see him enter the all-powerful business and commercial world.

13 "Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute Catalogue, 1886-1887," Simmons University Papers Box 1 Folder 3, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky; "Letter Copy Books of Eckstein Norton Institute, Cane Spring, Bullitt County Kentucky," Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Special Collections and Manuscripts, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, Louisville, Kentucky.
Washington was a product of one of the first industrial training schools for blacks as he attended Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (now Hampton University). He was one of the most successful graduates of Hampton Institute and his matriculation at the school propelled his life-long career as an educator and spokesperson for the educational rights of African Americans. He was the chief innovator and principal of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (now Tuskegee University) from its founding on July 4, 1881 until his death in 1915. Washington was a true champion and believer in industrial education. In his work on Washington, historian Robert J. Norrell argues, "Perhaps no other man in the United States had a better command of contemporary events and issues-certainly those that pertained to the South-than Washington."\(^{15}\)

The African American community challenged Booker T. Washington’s ideology concerning industrial education. Educational leaders and scholars often belittled Washington and his accomplishments in expanding industrial education opportunities as being accommodationist. William Monroe Trotter and W.E.B. Du Bois did not parse words when they labeled Washington as an "Uncle Tom who sold out his own people to secure his power and delay the coming of black freedom."\(^{16}\) An editorial in The Crisis stated, "Booker was more level-headed before than he is since he dined at the White House. What earthly reason is there in trying to cater to and


humiliate oneself before people who talk and think like Mr. Washington?" The Crisis was the official magazine of the NAACP and its founding and chief editor was the oft-painted biggest threat to politics as usual, W.E.B. Du Bois. The foundation of The Crisis was predicated on the promotion of higher education and was often used a forum or "soapbox" for Du Bois to express his thoughts about social and political progress through his notion of the "talented-tenth." Not surprisingly, publications by Du Bois and other race leaders strongly expressed their opposition of Washington and his seemingly passive and accommodationist approach to African American progress in the south.

Norrell, a scholar of Booker T. Washington, argues that historians overlook Washington's accomplishments; focusing instead on the criticisms he received from his peers. Norrell posits that Washington was not only a champion of industrial education, but was also a man of hope and optimism who had "the ability to imagine a better future that was what African Americans needed most in Washington's time." For Washington, a better future hinged upon industrial education. "Though largely overlooked, his effort to sustain blacks' morale at a terrible time must be counted among the most heroic efforts in American history, Booker T. Washington told his people that they would survive the dark present, and, as far as possible, he showed them how to do so."
The critics of Booker T. Washington's time and many contemporary scholars placed him in a dichotomist position of industrial education juxtaposed against classical education. Washington's ideology was complex and his works and thoughts cannot easily be put in a simplistic category that defines him as an accommodationist. In 1909, for example, Booker T. Washington wrote a series of articles for The Outlook titled "The Story of the Negro." In this series, Washington consistently defended African Americans, writing, "It does seem to me, however, that the Negro in the United States has done on the whole, as well as he was able, and as well as, under all the circumstances could be reasonably expected."20

In the public eye Booker T. Washington stressed the importance of an industrial education; however, his students at Tuskegee Institute were exposed to a classical education. Many of Tuskegee's teachers were graduates of Fisk University, Washington's wife, Margaret Murray's alma mater. This was a calculated move on behalf of Washington because the curriculum at Fisk University was steeped in a liberal arts education that was considered the antithesis to industrial education. In the public arena, Washington played down the quest for political rights and social equality for African Americans by not concentrating on the politics, but he often lobbied for African American education to well-known political leaders. He also secretly supported civil rights initiatives and court cases.21 The work and

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20 Booker T. Washington, "The Story of the Negro: The African At Home," The Outlook, September 4, 1909. The Outlook was a weekly magazine published from 1893-1928. Its focus was on religious, social, and political issues of the time period. Theodore Roosevelt was the associate and contributing editor.

complicated ideology of Booker T. Washington and his push for industrial education encouraged William J. Simmons; especially in the latter phase of his career and in the founding of Eckstein-Norton Institute.

**The Eckstein-Norton University**

The Eckstein-Norton University campus was located in Bullitt County in the city of Cane Spring, Kentucky, which is twenty-nine miles south of the urban city of Louisville, Kentucky. The school sat on seventy-five acres of land and was easily accessible from the railroad depot that ran east towards Bardstown, Kentucky. Its close proximity to the railroad was not unusual given the University's close relationship with Louisville and Nashville Railroad President Eckstein Norton and executive Milton H. Smith. The railroad executives also wielded their power and helped the accessibility of the Institute by financing the construction of a convenient Louisville and Nashville Railroad stop that was just 1.3 miles from the campus. However, their greatest contribution was the initial financial donation that allowed Eckstein Norton to open in September of 1890. Railroad executives and other influential white Louisvillians donated $3,050 for the construction of the first building and other early expenses. Simmons expressed his gratitude by naming the school in honor of its largest benefactor, Mr. Eckstein Norton. Simmons and Parrish also selected December 16, the birthdate of benefactor Eckstein Norton, as Donor’s

represented the Du Boisian Intellectuality and a further contradiction of Booker T. Washington’s public image of a traditional education. Quietly Washington was committed to a liberal arts education. He sent all four of his children (an adoptive daughter) to liberal arts institutions. They attended Oberlin College, Spelman College, Fisk University and Wellesley School for Boys. For more information on the Booker T. Washington and his private life as the wizard see: Louis Harlan, Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader, 1856-1901 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).
Day to honor the memory of the first sponsors of the University. This large donation was a prime example of why President Simmons left his beloved Kentucky Simmons College. Throughout his presidential tenure, Simmons spent the majority of his time and energy imploring for funds for his former institution. On many occasions the independent Baptist school was not eligible for some endowments because of their liberal arts curriculum and more so for their desire to remain autonomous and not under white control. Oftentimes this left the institution with a massive debt and unable to pay their faculty members. Simmons grew exasperated and overwhelmed with constant fundraising with low returns. Perhaps, transitioning to industrial education and its larger donations allowed him to concentrate on the educational aspects of "schooling" and less on seeking funds to keep the school door’s open.

Sympathetic white executives made the tangible campus possible, but William J. Simmons and his unceasing protégé, Charles Parrish, drove the heart and mission of the school. Lifelong educator, Professor G. F. Richings studied African American progress in his world-renowned analysis, Evidence of Progress Among Colored People: Originator of Illustrated Lectures on Race Progress and he believed that Eckstein Norton University was "founded by one of the most successful educators of the race, the late Rev. Wm. J. Simmons, D.D. and his associate, Rev. C.H.

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23 Oral interview of Willie L. Holmes, President of Simmons College in 1973, interviewed by Lawrence H. Williams on December 7, 1973, Louisville, Kentucky.
Parrish, who is its worthy president. Richings stated that each year the school "...succeeded beyond the sanguine of its friends."24

Eckstein Norton University opened in September of 1890 with one main building and six unfinished structures that were completed the following year with assistance of students. Under the direction of Charles Parrish, several newspaper ads advertised the university as offering, "Industrial training will set to motion ten thousand wheels." Thus, gaining an industrial education was imperative to the economy and an industrially progressive Kentucky. The vocational university offered courses in photography, tailoring, agriculture, barbering, poultry raising, cooking, cabinet making, blacksmith, plain sewing, dressmaking, carpentry, business calligraphy and expenditures, work shop in woods and metals, shorthand and typewriting, painting in oil and water and musical conservatory. The curriculum was designed for non-traditional students who perhaps had a family and jobs and could not complete the course work in consecutive terms. The vocational university advertised room, board, fuel, tuition and washing for eight dollars a month. To further garner appeal from non-traditional students, pupils could register and attend courses anytime throughout the semester. "Our classes and studies are so arranged that students may study what is the most desirable, leave off at any time to

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24 G.F. Richings, Evidence of Progress Among Colored People: Originator of Illustrated Lectures on Race Progress (Philadelphia, PA: G.S. Ferguson Company, 1903), 216-230. After Emancipation, Professor Richings spent nearly twenty years travelling throughout the United States observing African Americans at church, school and their home life. His personal examination, Richings pays particularly close attention to the establishment of African American schools. As an educator, he believes that education is the foundation of progress.
manage their time, health, or finances and return to complete their courses at any further time.25

Students who were not able to pay the eight dollars a month had opportunities to apply for campus positions. That was quite possibly how the remaining buildings were built and other labor-intensive tasks were completed on campus. The seventy-five acres of rural land of mountains, streams, and plenty of forests was the ideal location for an industrial training school in central Kentucky and the countryside appealed to the mainly agricultural and trade centered students of the commonwealth.26

The inaugural class had twenty-four students and sixteen teachers. Most of the teachers, including Charles Parrish and Mary Cook Parrish, followed President Simmons from Simmons College. Another noted teacher of distinction at Eckstein Norton University was Hattie A. Gibbs Marshall. She was the first African American to receive a diploma from Oberlin Conservatory of Music, which she did at the tender age of fifteen. Marshall's mother was from Kentucky; however, Marshall returned to Kentucky for the sole purpose of establishing the Eckstein Norton Conservatory of Music. Richings stated, "The women of the race should be proud of her (Marshall). The people of Kentucky should be proud that one so able has placed her services within reach."27 Hattie Marshall and her training was an asset to

Eckstein Norton University not only for recruitment purposes, but also for

27G.F. Richings, Evidence of Progress Among Colored People: Originator of Illustrated Lectures on Race Progress, 227.
fundraising. The University’s musical company toured throughout the country performing in benefit concerts and fundraisers. When Eckstein Norton closed in 1912, Gibbs Marshall became the director of Music for African American Schools in Washington, D.C. and she opened the Washington Conservatory of Music. Similar to many black men and women, Marshall’s educational training and foundation began in Kentucky under the leadership and tutelage of William J. Simmons and then Charles Parrish Sr.28

By 1911, Eckstein Norton University had taught almost 2000 students and awarded 189 bachelors of Arts and Science Degrees while simultaneously teaching rudimentary courses in their primary departments. A Howard University educated man; president Simmons understood the necessity of offering liberal studies courses regardless of students’ degree choice. Moreover, he did not completely compromise some aspects of classical education at Eckstein Norton University, as there were literature and diction. Unfortunately, Simmons never saw fruition of his dreams and hard work. At the early age of 41, he died of a heart attack after struggling for years with high blood pressure. Upon his passing, the newspaper of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, The Home Mission Monthly wrote, "We

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28 "Eckstein Norton Institute Conservatory of Music, Cane Springs, KY," The Church in the Southern Black Community, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina Digital Heritage Center. It is quite possible, with approval from Charles Parrish that Hattie Marshall emulated the famous Fisk Jubilee Singers. Professor George White was Fisk University’s treasurer teacher in the school of music. He had first hand knowledge of the dire financial needs of the institution. Thus, he created a nine-member chorale-touring group. They would eventually grow in size and perform in front of predominately white audiences throughout the United States and Europe. They performed at the White House as guests of Ulysses S. Grant and for Queen Victoria of England. They were the largest fundraising entity for Fisk University. Many other institutions including Eckstein Norton attempted to capitalize on the system and success of the Fisk Jubilee singers. For more information about the History of Fisk University: J.B.T. Marsh, F.J. Loudin, The Jubilee Singers and Their Songs (Dover: Dover Publications, 2003), 4-9.
have lost the foremost Baptist Negro in the world, and one of the greatest Negroes that ever lived." Ironically, twenty-five years later, at the age of 59, Booker T. Washington died from complications caused by high blood pressure. One can speculate that the daunting task of being presidents at African American institutions that consistently struggled financially caused stress and contributed to their premature deaths.29

For well over ten years, William J. Simmons groomed and prepared Charles Parrish Sr. for the responsibility of eventually playing a major role in African American education in Kentucky. This was a responsibility that Parrish did not take lightly and he spent most of his career by honoring Simmons. Parrish's son, Charles Parrish Jr. says that his father considered Simmons "outstanding and revered in his [childhood] home." In 1918, Charles Parrish Sr. and the General Association of Colored Baptist bestowed the highest honor by renaming now State University Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute to Simmons University.30

The most challenging obstacle that Charles Parrish Sr. faced was fundraising and ensuring that the largely industrial education school, Eckstein Norton had enough in the operating budget to sustain itself throughout the year. Parrish Sr. was a man of few words and systematic. In describing his father's preaching style, Parrish Jr. wrote, "you knew in advance what his sermon was going to be about ...

Sunday School began at 10:00 on Sunday mornings and church was out at noon. In

29 The Home Mission Monthly, 12 (December, 1890), 7; Daniel Buxton, "African American Education in Bullitt County," Bullitt County History Museum (Bullitt County Genealogical Society: Bullitt County, Kentucky), 1-3;
other words, two hours, both Sunday School and church. His sermons were never longer than 15 minutes, Sunday morning; at that time it was quite unusual.”

When it came to Eckstein Norton University’s fundraising campaign, Parrish Sr. was very meticulous in his choice of words to potential donors. Perhaps the greatest lesson Parrish gleaned from Simmons was the importance of soliciting white donations. During the early twentieth century, many African Americans learned that white philanthropic dollars were almost necessary in order to keep black institutions afloat. Parrish constantly communicated with Eckstein Norton University’s Board of Trustees and friends of the University because he wanted to update the donors and decision makers on the progress and needs of the industrial School.

Throughout his duration as president, Charles Parrish Sr. wrote numerous letters to northern and mid-western white businessmen requesting funds for Eckstein Norton University. On July 29, 1894, he wrote to the chief benefactor, Mr. Eckstein Norton asking for the additional funds for teacher salaries because the allocated funds were used to pay a carpenter for repairs on buildings that were damaged in a fire. "The employment of a carpenter and a farmer was an additional responsibility, and I have been forced to take off the others to pay them something from their salaries from Feb. to the ending.”

31 Charles Henry Parrish Jr., interviewed by Dwayne Cox and William Morison, Oral History Center, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, December 14, 1976.
In 1902, respected educator G.F. Richings tried to garner support for the struggling university with a plea in his highly circulated analysis of black education, Evidence of Progress Among Colored People: Originator of Illustrated Lectures on Race Progress,

The school is undenominational, and is, of course, without denominational aid. Nor does it have State or general government assistance, but is simply a brave effort dependent entirely upon voluntary aid. Here is, indeed, an endeavor to better the condition of the Negro race along lines, which, in the case of Tuskegee and other similar institutions, are receiving substantial support and much praise from Northern philanthropists.33

On rare occasions, Charles Parrish also solicited the support and funds from influential African Americans. In 1894 and 1903, President Parrish wrote to Booker T. Washington requesting that the leader of industrial education visit Eckstein Norton University and speak at Calvary Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky where Parrish pastored for almost forty-five years. Washington believed in the industrial education mission and purpose of Eckstein Norton University; thus, he consented on both occasions. Ironically during his visits to Louisville, Washington stayed in the home of Chairman of Simmons College Board of Trustees, William Steward, the professional enemy of Parrish and Simmons.34 Ultimately, Parrish was concerned with the business and fundraising aspect of Eckstein Norton University and saw opportunity in the wielding influence and power of Booker T. Washington and his ability to help solicit funds for the struggling university.

33 G.F. Richings, Evidence of Progress Among Colored People: Originator of Illustrated Lectures on Race Progress, 218.
34 Williams, 92-95.
On April 21, 1909, the Louisville Courier Journal published that Eckstein Norton University was "Hampered by Lack of Funds." In the early spring of 1909, Eckstein Norton University and Berea College board of trustees met to discuss a merger between the already established Eckstein Norton Institute and the soon to be established Lincoln Institute. "The prospect of merging Eckstein Norton University is particularly pleasing" and Berea College had already designated $50,000 for the proposed institution. Thus, the white philanthropists and board members believed the combining of efforts and monies would be more productive and "realized that one big institution is to do the work of educating Kentucky's colored population along industrial lines."\(^{35}\)

**Berea College**

John Gregg Fee, a fierce abolitionist and minister, founded Berea College in 1855. Fee was very meticulous in choosing the name and motto for his community and school. Berea College was named after the Berean Jewish group in the New Testament of the Bible and was considered open-minded and obedient to God’s Word in comparison to other Jewish groups. The motto for Berea College represented the inclusive approach to Fee’s thinking: "God has made of one blood all peoples of the Earth."\(^{36}\) At the end of the Civil War, Fee fulfilled the mission of Berea College by being the first college in the southern part of the United States that admitted African Americans as students. The 1866-1867 catalogue offered three curriculums of study: primary, intermediate and academic. The inaugural class


consisted of 187 students and 96 of those students were African Americans. Berea’s first bachelor’s degree was awarded in 1873. Berea College lived up to its mission and educated one of the foremost African American scholars in the early twentieth century — Carter G. Woodson. Woodson is considered the father of African American History and earned his bachelor’s of arts degree in literature from Berea College in 1903. His Berea College education provided a solid educational foundation, as he became the second African American to earn a PhD from Harvard University. African American spokesperson for classical education, W.E.B. Du Bois was the first African American to earn a PhD from Harvard University.

In 1901, John Fee died believing his beloved institution was an interracial reflection and representation of God’s word in the Appalachian Mountains of Kentucky. However, in 1904 the passage of the Day Law halted interracial education at Berea College and any other private or public institution in Kentucky. Democratic state legislator, Carl Day proposed the bill that ended interracial schools in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. After Day thought he witnessed a white girl kissing a black girl at the Berea train station in 1903, he became determined to propose government action preventing interracial mixing. In actuality, he saw a fair-skinned black girl kiss another black student, demonstrating the fluidity of racial

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37 “Berea College Catalogs,” Berea College Catalogs 1866-1892, Box 1, folder 1, Berea College Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea, Kentucky.

38 Carter G. Woodson believed that education and interracial collaborative efforts for racial harmony would help to reduce racism. Woodson established the first black History Week in Washington, D.C., in February of 1926. He earned his PhD from Harvard University in 1912. For more on Woodson’s ideology see his most famous scholarly work: The Mis-Education of the Negro in which he argues that African Americans must be aware of the cultural contributions and then advance their socioeconomic status through education and awareness. Jacqueline Goggin, Carter G. Woodson: A Life in Black History (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1997).
categorization. Day felt that the incident threatened white privilege that relied upon an unequal society created through socially constructed hierarchies of race. Thus, he introduced House Bill no. 25 that prohibited “white and colored persons from attending the same school” and he argued that the purpose of the bill was to “prevent the contamination of the white children of Kentucky.”

President of Berea College, William Goodell Frost felt that the Day Law was a travesty and deeply impacted African American advancement in Kentucky. He believed that "Kentucky had been backward in the matter of Negro education and very much depends upon the proper equipment and support of this institution." Therefore, Frost was instrumental in proposing Lincoln Institute and vowed that Lincoln Institute "shall give prominence to Normal and Industrial Work...It is not proposed to establish a new institution of Collegiate rank, but a school of the Hampton types, which shall be [a] rallying place for the best colored families, and center of right thought for the race. We must give them skill, pride in manual labor, and well-equipped teachers for the colored public schools.”

The passage of the Day Law and the disruption of educational legacy of Berea College gave white leaders and politicians an opportunity to regain control of the narrative of black education in Kentucky. Berea College was an opportunity for Kentucky to be a forerunner in school desegregation and racial progress but

because of white anxiety and the necessity to maintain the status quo of white supremacy, racial desegregation of education was delayed for half of a century.

Clara Porter Colton, a northern white advocate for Lincoln Institute and a self-described "friend of the Negro" felt that African Americans should be satisfied with a vocational education and the prospect of Lincoln Institute. She wrote and distributed a pamphlet in hopes of garnering financial support for the institution from skeptical blacks and whites. She wrote, "The need in Kentucky for such a school as the great institutions which have done so much for the advance of the Negro in the farther South, cannot be exaggerated.... The careful and earnest instruction of students in schools like Lincoln Institute is that they carry the destiny of their race." 41

In 1909, Lincoln Institute was awarded a $200,000 matching grant from the Andrew Carnegie foundation to help support the vision of President Frost and others. Similar to the John F. Slater, Andrew Carnegie was an industrialist who believed that wealthy people had an obligation to help the disadvantaged. During his lifetime, Carnegie donated more than $350 million dollars to charities and other philanthropic endeavors. His largest single donation was to Booker T. Washington and Tuskegee Institute for over $600,000. Thus, it was not a surprise that Carnegie believed in the mission of Lincoln Institute and felt inclined to donate as initially it was advertised as the "Tuskegee of Kentucky." Despite receiving support from white philanthropists, not all whites were in favor of the establishment of the new black

industrial school. Initially, Berea College and Lincoln Institute Board of Trustees wanted the school to be in Lexington or Louisville because of a potential larger recruiting pool of African Americans. However, whites in the Louisville suburb of Anchorage protested the purchase of property because they felt a black school would increase crime and bring down the property value in their community. To settle the dispute quickly and appease African Americans in the community, the leaders in the small white suburb offered $2000 as gift as long as the school was built in another location.42

After a relentless search, school officials finally settled for a four hundred and forty acre farm in the city of Simpsonville. Many of the white citizens in Shelby County were not happy with the building of an industrial school for African Americans in their community. In order to stop the construction of Lincoln Institute, they enlisted their state legislator John Holland to propose and successfully pass a law that required three-fourths favorable vote for the establishment of an industrial school. On May 10, 1910, The Kentucky Court of Appeals declared the Holland Bill unconstitutional and the board of trustees for Lincoln finally won a victory. The State courts made the legal decision; however, the letter of the law did not and could not control the anger and resentment of the whites in Shelby County. As an offer of reconciliation, the board of trustees made Lincoln Institute a residential only campus and this policy prevented students from commuting. Moreover, this policy deterred African Americans from moving permanently to the area and being able to

42 Whitney M. Young Sr. interviewed by George Wright June 11, 1974.
attend Eckstein Norton University because they needed to keep their jobs or farms that were located elsewhere.43

Charles Parrish and James Bond, an African American alumnus of Berea College and a reverend, were critical in helping to raise the matching funds.44 Each hoped to be appointed president of the new industrial college. Reverend James Bond was perhaps the biggest supporter of the establishment of Lincoln Institute. He was a Baptist minister who rose to prominence as a leader in Louisville as the first director of the Kentucky Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC). Bond served as the director of CIC at the will of influential white Louisville leaders. In his position as the director of the CIC he often called for racial harmony and was very positive in his perspective on the potential for interracial cooperation. Bond argued, "Negroes and white people are reaching, throughout the state of Kentucky, a mutual understanding which tends to foster good will and inter-racial cooperation."45

According to Charles Parrish Jr., his father also often spoke openly in favor of integration. In an 1886 speech Parrish Sr. said, "That out of one blood created all the

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43 "Simpsonville Does Not Want New Lincoln Institute," The Indianapolis Freeman, May 9, 1909, page1, 4; George C. Wright, A History of Blacks in Kentucky, Volume II in Pursuit of Equality, 1890-1980 (The Kentucky Historical Society, 1992), 137-139
45 "Portland Preacher Persistent In Interest of Klan as Dr. Bond Writes of Fine Race Relationships; Many Louisville Business Men Members, Says Mayor; City Puts Ban on Public Meetings," The Louisville Leader (Louisville, Kentucky), June 9, 1923. Reverend James Bond was the grandfather of Julian Bond, famed Civil Rights leader and helped to establish the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. And he would go on to serve as the chairman of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People and the first president of the Southern Poverty Law Center. For more information see: Roger Williams, The Bonds: An American Family (New York: Atheneum Press, 1971).
nations of men, and the same blood that courses through white veins also courses through Negro veins.”

Parrish Sr. and Bond were selective with their words and actions to ensure that they did not lose the attention, favor, and donations of white Louisville leaders. Thus, both men compromised their stance on integration and racial advancement in order to see progress in education; even if that meant segregated institutions. Unfortunately, neither of their efforts helped to get them appointed as the inaugural president of Lincoln Institute. That honor went to Reverend Eugene Thomas, a white minister and pastor of the Berea Union Church in Berea, Kentucky. Parrish and Bond were instrumental in facilitating the establishment and opening of Lincoln Institute. Yet, the white benefactors and board of trustees were not confident in the leadership abilities of the Parrish and Bond. Thus, Lincoln Institute’s curriculum and ideology were a reflection of the white leadership and philanthropists that held a paternalistic and perhaps condescending view of African Americans, predicated on racial prejudices of the early twentieth century.

Not all black Kentuckians were enthusiastic about Lincoln Institute. African Americans who were not as easily persuaded as Charles Parrish and James Bond felt that Lincoln Institute was a not a true reflection of Berea College and classical education curriculum. In 1909, Julia Young, the editor The Kentucky Standard, a black weekly newspaper in Louisville argued, “The thing that is puzzling the colored people of this city and state is why is it that the Negro can’t have an academic,

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46 Charles Henry Parrish Jr., interviewed by Dwayne Cox and William Morison, Oral History Center, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, February 21, 1977.
normal, and college training as well as toting the wood and digging the soil...These things they claim are now taught at the old Berea and why can’t they be taught at the New Berea?”47 In attempts to persuade blacks to support Lincoln Institute, President Frost and James Bond organized a train trip from Berea to Lincoln Institute for the black critics of the school. In The Lincoln Institute Worker, James Bond described the visit as a "pleasant one...[The visitors] styled themselves 'spies' and every one of the eighteen had a good word for the 'promise land.'"48 Prominent African Americans who were not vying for a position at Lincoln Institute questioned the true motives of President Frost. They felt Frost was duplicitous in his involvement with the Day Law and created racial tension at Berea College. In the eyes of some, Frost's willingness to establish a Lincoln Institute as a training and industrial school confirmed his feelings of black inferiority and their inability to receive a classical education.49

Indeed, African American educational leaders were often at the mercy of white leaders because they depended on their financial support. White donors were well meaning, but rendered visible the limits to which they would support black equality in education by being willing to only finance industrial education. Unfortunately, most were guided by the systemic racism of their time that resigned blacks to an industrial education and unequal positions in society. Many accommodationist black leaders, such as Booker T. Washington, William Simmons,

48 "A Visit to Lincoln Institute of Kentucky," The Lincoln Institute Worker 3 (1911).
Charles Parrish, and others, acquiesced to industrial training schools because they felt that some educational progress was better than no education at all.

**Lincoln Institute**

Lincoln Institute opened in the late fall of 1912 with 85 students. The school curriculum stressed the importance of learning a trade and developing a strong moral Christian compass; these were considered the foundation of racial progress. President Thomas and members of the Board of Trustees made efforts of reconciliation and perhaps attempted to appease African Americans that were critical of Lincoln Institute by appointing several African Americans in teaching and leadership roles. James Bond and Charles Parrish, who whites viewed as amicable, were appointed to the positions of school financial agent and board of trustees, respectively. 50

Even with the financial support of white philanthropists, President Thomas and subsequent presidents struggled to keep Lincoln Institute open. In the summer of 1913, President Thomas spent most of the spring traveling throughout the Northeast fundraising for the Institute. In 1915 the school paper, The Lincoln Institute Worker wrote, "It is peculiarly unfortunate that the head of such institute should be absent during the school year. Still the school must be financed."51 In the fourth year of operation, Lincoln Institute was forced to close its primary grades because of low attendance and the inability to pay the salaries of the teachers.

50 "Lincoln Institute School Bulletin, 1912," Whitney M. Young Sr. Papers, Loose papers and pamphlets in Box 1, The Center for Excellence for the Study of Kentucky African Americans, Kentucky State University; Frankfort, Kentucky.
51 "The Principal's Vacation and the Fourth Year of School Begins," *The Lincoln Institute Worker* 12 (September 1915), 2, 3.
Similar to The Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute and other African American schools, the Lincoln Institute struggled financially. During the Great Depression the school was facing closure and did not rebound until the appointment of Lincoln Institute's first black president — Whitney M. Young Sr.  

Whitney M. Young Sr. graduated from Lincoln Institute in 1916 with a degree in engineering. He intended to work as the campus maintenance repairman and plumber. However, school officials and teachers were so impressed with Young Sr. that they offered him a teaching position, which eventually led to his appointment as president of the Institute in 1935. During his close to thirty-year tenure as president, the enrollment and endowment of Lincoln Institute increased. He and other African American faculty members forfeited a portion of their salaries to ensure the school remained open. His tireless leadership and sacrifice did not go unnoticed and he inspired his son, famed civil rights movement leader, Whitney M. Young Jr. benefitted from his education at Lincoln Institute, earning his high school diploma from the institution in 1936. Whitney Young Jr. continued to stand out academically at Kentucky State University and graduated in 1940. He later left his occupation as a mathematics teacher and entered into civil service. This established a platform for later advising president Lyndon B. Johnson on racial issues. President Johnson further acknowledged the effectiveness of Young Jr. by awarding him the Medal of Freedom in 1969.  

Whitney Young Jr. held the position of director for the National Urban League from 1961 until his untimely death in 1971. The Urban League sought to enable African Americans to improve their social and economic conditions in urban areas, especially in the northern part of the United States. Ironically, like many black schools, the National Urban League received many grants and funding from white northern philanthropic groups. While growing up on the campus of Lincoln Institute, Young Jr. watched the careful political maneuvering of his father as he navigated around the white stakeholders of the Institute and the progress of African American education. One example of Whitney Young Sr.’s approach is his incorporation of liberal studies courses, which deviated from the industrial education model. However, in his reports to the Board of Trustees he highlighted the industrial training and the profits of the Lincoln Institute farm to not bring attention to the liberal studies direction of the Institute. Like his father, Whitney Young Jr. was a cautious tactician as the National Urban League rose to be a conservative, yet one of the most influential, organizations during the Civil Rights Movement.54

Whitney Young Jr. and his sisters, Eleanor and Arnita were all successful, rising to important positions within society and achieving many African American firsts. The oldest sibling, Arnita Young attended Clark Atlanta University for her undergraduate degree and received her Master’s of social work from the Ivy League

school of the University of Columbia. She became the first director of the Head Start Programs and first director of Social Workers for the Chicago Public Schools. Her sister, Eleanor Young was the first African American librarian at the University of Kentucky and was the first African American dean at the University of Louisville. During their formative years, the Young children gained their foundational education from Lincoln Institute. However, their parents deemed it necessary that Whitney Young Jr. and his two sisters gain a liberal studies education. His sisters both attended Clark Atlanta University, the teaching home of leading classical education spokesperson, W.E.B. Du Bois. Whitney Young Jr. decided to stay close to home and attended the liberal studies institution of Kentucky State University.

Young Jr.’s alma mater was a potential threat to the viability of other black higher education institutions in Kentucky. William Steward, the chairman of the Board of Trustees for Simmons College, worried about competition from other institutions serving the African American population’s educational needs. He felt that the opening of Eckstein Norton Institute threatened the enrollment and could potentially sabotage the longevity of Simmons College. It is quite likely that Steward also felt that Lincoln Institute could impact the success of Simmons College. However, his greatest concern or institution of contention was Kentucky State University because of its rapid growth and state supported funds.

In 1885, at the encouragement of The Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute president, Dr. William J. Simmons, the Colored Teachers' State Association

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55 The Young children were successful due in part to their foundational education at Lincoln Institute and their undergraduate studies at historical black colleges. For more information: John Horton, *Profiles of Contemporary Black Achievers of Kentucky.*
met at the St. Paul A.M.E. Church in Lexington, Kentucky. On October 26, the group adopted a resolution to be given to the Kentucky General Assembly requesting the funds and support of a public college for African Americans. Simmons was elected to give a speech at the Kentucky House of Representatives. Standing before the state representatives, Simmons declared: "We come plain speech, in order to prove that we are men of judgment, meeting men who are really desirous of knowing our wants." In his speech Simmons posits that a public institution was the strongest desire for African Americans across the Commonwealth.

Simmons leadership position in lobbying for a public institution that would serve African Americans demonstrated his true investment in African American progress through education. He passionately advocated for a state-funded institution of higher education regardless of how the establishment of a new black college might affect the enrollment at Simmons College. On May 18, 1886, Governor J. Proctor Knott approved the bill mandating the establishment of the State Normal School for Colored Persons. Governor Knott appointed a board of trustees and established the admissions requirements as such, "Any Pupil to gain admission to the privileges of instruction in the said normal school shall be at least six-teen years of age, possess good health, give satisfactory evidence of good moral character, and sign a written pledge...."

56 "William J. Simmons Speech," Simmons University Papers Box 3 Folder 2, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
Following in the precedent of Berea College, the State Normal School for Colored Persons (Kentucky State University) offered a tuition free program to Kentucky residents with the intention that graduates teach in primary schools throughout Kentucky. The school was built in the capital city under the watchful eyes of the governor and other state officials. The city of Frankfort gifted most of the land to the school. The forty-four acres of land sat on one the highest hills in east Frankfort and was considered barren and not arable. Thus, white decision makers in Frankfort did not see any value in the land and therefore found it suitable for a black school.  

John Jackson, the first African American to receive a Masters degree from Berea College, was selected as the inaugural president of the Normal School. His experiences at Berea College made him a good fit as president, because he had an understanding of a classical education and teacher preparation programs. Jackson and the first fifty-five students arrived on the campus on October 11, 1887. The early curriculum resembled that of "a good high school course." In 1902, the school’s name was changed to the Kentucky Normal and Industrial Institute for Colored Persons and its course offerings were more diverse and reflected an industrial education approach. Kentucky State University was the unofficial flagship historical black college within the state. Unfortunately, its existence prevented the growth of both Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute and Eckstein Norton Institute. From its inception, Kentucky State University had the backing of its most influential supporters — white government officials. Legislative acts and state

58 Ibid., 5.
dollars guaranteed the building of new dormitories and classroom buildings. In 1906, the Kentucky General Assembly appropriated over $20,000 for the completion of a women's dorm, water plant, and the purchasing of a farm. Booker T. Washington even helped to commemorate the celebration of the growth of the institution. At the Franklin County Opera House, he spoke to a black and white audience for over two hours on the importance of education, "Education, to be of value, must be made useful, that it must teach how to save money, and that it should make home life more beautiful and the person who enjoys it more industrious and more conscious of the fact that all forms of labor are honorable and dignified and that all idleness is a disgrace."  

Despite all of its success and attachment to governmental policies and people, Kentucky State University was still considered the "Negro School;" thus, inferior and not a priority for white legislators. In 1904, under the leadership of James Hathaway, a graduate of Berea College and recommended by Booker T. Washington, reported Kentucky State University as being impoverished and in fiscal crisis. Indeed, similar to other historical black schools throughout the nation and the commonwealth, Kentucky State University struggled.

In the face of financial struggles, one of the saving graces for Kentucky State University was the 1890 Morrill Act. Vermont Senator Justin Morrill established the first version of the Morrill Act in 1862 under a federal government proposal. The

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59 "Excerpt of Booker T. Washington Speech," Paul William Lawrence Jones Collection-Clipping Series-Publication Series-Box 1, The Center for Excellence for the Study of Kentucky African Americans, Kentucky State University; Frankfort, Kentucky.  
60 John Hardin, "Onward and Upward: A Centennial History of Kentucky State University, 1886-1986" (Frankfort, Kentucky: Kentucky State University, 1987), 9-11.
Morrill-Land Grant Act provided federal land grants to help states improve public higher education. Iowa State University was the first institution to accept the federal terms of the Morrill Land Grant Act. On October 1, 1866, The University of Kentucky, then called the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Kentucky, became the first land grant institution in the Commonwealth. The land grant required colleges and universities to offer courses in agricultural, engineering, mining, military instruction, and liberal arts courses.61

Many state educational institutions benefited from the Morrill Land Grant Act; however, few African Americans institutions benefited from the grant. In 1890, a second Morrill Land Grant Act was passed to rectify the exclusion of African Americans and it required states using federal land grant funds to allocate money for segregated black schools or to integrate their institutions. Kentucky remained enmeshed in the Jim Crow way of life and rather than admitting African Americans to state institutions, white legislators matriculated Morrill Land Grant funds to Kentucky State University. The funds assisted the fledging institution as it increased the physical size and enrollment of the small black college.62

Under the leadership of President Rufus B. Atwood, Kentucky State University transitioned to a more liberal studies center education. Atwood was a native son of Hickman, Kentucky, but received a classical education from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. His goal as the president at Kentucky State University from 1929-1962 was to focus on the academic departments and teacher

61 Ellis, 111. There are 76 land grant institutions and 15 of those are historical black colleges or universities.
62 Hardin, 5.
preparation programs rather than industrial education. He also wanted to
disentangle Kentucky State University from Kentucky politics, which was an
arduous task as the campus was in the capital city of Frankfort. Rufus B. Atwood
scholar Gerald Smith writes,

> Atwood was trapped in a perplexing position of leadership. Blacks wanted him to serve as a spokesman for racial equality while white state officials expected him to avoid conflicts over racial issues since he depended on their support for school appropriations....He desperately searched for some middle ground-safe ground on which he could continue to build his school and maintain his high profile in the black community.  

Under the direction of Rufus B. Atwood, Kentucky State University became an
accredited four-year institution and the foremost African American institution of
higher education in Kentucky. Charles Parrish Jr. believed that the success of
Kentucky State University and the leadership of Rufus B. Atwood were synonymous.
The early leadership of John Jackson and Rufus B. Atwood established a solid
educational foundation for Kentucky State University. Yet, the growth of the public
institution was partly responsible for the fleeting demise of Simmons College.

Eckstein Norton Institute and Kentucky State University flourished more
than Simmons College. Both institutions benefited from white benefactors and
supporters. However, Simmons College was the cornerstone of African American
control and autonomy in higher education. Charles Parrish Jr. argues that the
Simmons College "qualified as a senior college" prior to Kentucky State University or

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Eckstein Norton Institute. He further argues, "There was some rivalry between Simmons and the Kentucky State College."64

The greatest struggle for African American institutions of higher education in Kentucky was not with one another; but with the meager financial support that often plagued their existence. Black institutions like Eckstein Norton Institute and Kentucky State University struggled financially too but clearly not as much as the strivingly independent Simmons College, which sought to maintain control over its curriculum.

Black educators such as Booker T. Washington, William Simmons, Charles Parrish Sr., and others negotiated terms with white powerful philanthropists. Regardless of the compromising and often duplicitous nature of dealing with white philanthropists and black education, these formidable African American leaders ensured African American progress through education. And while their adaption of the talented tenth philosophy may not have been completely paralleled what Dubois had in mind but they earnestly sought to make a difference in the black community.

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64 Charles Henry Parrish Jr., interviewed by Dwayne Cox and William Morison, Oral History Center, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, February 21, 1977.
Figure 4.1 Image on the right: 1900 Image of Eckstein Norton Institute, Bullitt County History Museum. This image was featured in G.F. Richings, *Evidences of Progress Among Colored People*.

Figure 4.2 Early Image of Lincoln Institute 1912? Whitney M. Young Sr. Papers, Photographic series, Box 1, Special Collections and Archives-CESKAA, Jackson Hall, Kentucky State University.
Figure 4.3. Above Image: "Women Faculty at Lincoln Institute in 1951," Whitney M. Young Sr. Papers, Photographic series, Box 1, Special Collections and Archives-CESKAA, Jackson Hall, Kentucky State University.

Figure 4.4. "Lincoln Institute Fundraising Dinner 1947?" Whitney M. Young Sr. Papers, Photographic series, Box 1, Special Collections and Archives-CESKAA, Jackson Hall, Kentucky State University.
"In so many ways, segregation shaped me, and education liberated me."
Maya Angelou

Chapter 5

The Dagger of Desegregation: The Racial Desegregation of Higher Education in Kentucky

In 1892, Homer Plessy, a black railroad porter refused to sit in a segregated car on a train. His battle with the court system resulted in the Supreme Court decision of Plessy v. Ferguson, which upheld the constitutionality of the racial doctrine of "separate but equal." The ruling established that the Fourteenth Amendment “was not intended to abolish distinctions based on color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political equality, or commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either.”¹ Thus, it was not illegal for blacks and whites to have separate public facilities or restrictive legislation based on race. The dissenting justice, Justice John Marshall Harlan, of the Plessy V. Ferguson decision was a Kentuckian and former slave holder who argued that the Constitution established a caste-less country. “The white race deems itself to be the dominant race in this country...But in view of the Constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior, dominant, ruling class of citizens. There is no caste here. Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among

citizens."² The 7-1 ruling deemed Justice Harlan’s argument of well-spoken words powerless. Nonetheless, the separate -but-equal doctrine strengthened white supremacy and power and legalized Jim Crow segregation, which remained in place for over fifty years.

Ironically, the nature of segregation that encompassed both the Plessy v. Ferguson ruling and the Kentucky Day Law represented a strategic opportunity for African American institutions of higher education. In “Not Harvard, Not Holyoke, Not Howard: A Study of the Life and Death of Three Small Colleges” Linda R. Buchanan argues, "State University was in a position to capitalize on this new law." Simmons College advertised in black Baptist church bulletins and in the 1907 catalogue "If the Negroes of the State are wise they will gain at State University more than they have lost at Berea College."³

Due to segregation, enrollment increased at both Simmons College and Kentucky State University. In 1907, there were two hundred students enrolled at Simmons and thirty-five of those students were in the college program. In 1919, a year after Charles Parrish Sr. became the president of the Institute and almost fifteen years after the passage of the Day Law there were over four hundred students enrolled and more than half were in the college program.⁴

² Ibid., 24.
³ "1907-1908 curriculum Catalogue for State University", Simmons University Papers Box 2, Folder 12, Archives and Special Collections, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky.
⁴ Linda R. Buchanan, Not Harvard, Not Holyoke, Not Howard: A Study of the Life and Death of Three Small Colleges (PhD Dissertation, Georgia State University, 1997), 239-245. Not Harvard, Not Holyoke, Not Howard: a study about the life and death of three small colleges focuses on the duration of Simmons College, Bowdon College, and Mary Sharp College. These small colleges existed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She demonstrates despite the short existence these institutions were vital to their communities and the unique group of people they served.
Kentucky State University was not an exception to the growth in enrollment caused by segregation. According to historian Gerald Smith, KSU president Rufus B. Atwood, believed "if the University of Kentucky admitted black students, there would be less need for Kentucky State."\(^5\) In 1944, Atwood had the opportunity to fight for the repeal of the Day Law, instead he petitioned and supported the Anderson Bill, which called for almost a million dollar increase in the budget at Kentucky State University and the establishment of graduate programs for black Kentuckians. After the Kentucky State Senate passed the Anderson Bill, Atwood responded in an editorial published in the *Louisville Leader*. He wrote, "In time the doors of the University of Kentucky and other similar institutions will be opened to Negro students in those fields of study in which the demand is not sufficient to warrant the creation of separate departments at KSC [Kentucky State College], but we should first develop our own institution as far as the number of anticipated students will justify."\(^6\) Many African Americans accused Atwood of being a "Judas" or traitor of the black community and prioritizing the needs of Kentucky State University over racial desegregation of graduate schools in Kentucky. Charles Parrish Jr. criticized Atwood for his opposition to desegregation. "And I never quite been able to understand the position which he took about this. But he felt it was injurious to his school. In other words, he was actually in favor of keeping

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\(^6\) "Atwood Responds to Anderson," *The Louisville Leader*, October 21, 1944.
segregation because he feared it would jeopardize the role of Kentucky State College."^7

Laws of segregation were a double-edged sword for African American institutions of higher education. This historical period of racial separation guaranteed enrollment of African American students at black institutions because it was the only option for blacks wishing to receive a higher education. Sympathetic white philanthropists often supported black institutions of higher learning. However, despite white philanthropic dollars, public African American institutions of higher education consistently struggled with problems plagued by underfunding and unequal recognition from their state governments. Private and autonomous African American institutions of higher education such as the Kentucky and Normal Theological Institute faced even greater financial challenges, as they could not depend on state funds and were less likely to receive funds from private white philanthropic groups.

Public institutions of primary and higher education endured the reality of "separate but equal" mandates that were not truly equal. The inequality of facilities, supplies, and expenditure per pupil in African American public schools was a constant reminder of blacks’ inferior place in southern society. Separate and unequal schools were the “principal legacies and cornerstones of white supremacy.”^8 Kentucky was similar to other southern states in the implementation

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^7Charles Henry Parrish Jr., interviewed by Dwayne Cox and William Morison, Oral History Center, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, February 21, 1977.
of the separate-but-equal doctrine. On December 2, 1937, African American attorney Harry Jones wrote to Charles Hamilton Houston, the Chief Litigator for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) who was largely responsible for helping to legally dismantle the southern Jim Crow educational system. In his correspondence, he criticized African American higher education in Kentucky. "I am satisfied from my cursory review of this subject that in Kentucky we have a glaring example of perhaps the rottenest bi-racial school arrangement in this country." Therefore, the segregated education system in Kentucky was one of the worst in the nation. In comparison to Kentucky's border state, West Virginia, Jones's analysis was correct. In 1944 West Virginia spent $600,000 on black education compared to Kentucky, which allocated $500,000. At first glance, the difference appears insignificant; however, the African American population was greater in Kentucky than in West Virginia. The 1940 Census showed that Kentucky had a population of 214,031 blacks and West Virginia had a population of about 150,000. Further, Kentucky public secondary schools spent an average of three times the amount of expenditure per pupil for white students than African American students. The same racial discrepancy in funding held true for higher education culture of segregation. He further argues that the Plessy v. Ferguson decision did not have a strong or dramatic impact because prior to the decision African Americans were fully aware of their place in society.

institutions. In the 1940’s, Kentucky State University was worth $317,000 and all five white public universities each had a property value of over one million dollars.\textsuperscript{11}

Unfortunately in 1930, the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute experienced a devastating blow to its institution. The Institute was forced to close its liberal studies program and other college programs. The shuttering of these programs served as a trembling fear to other historical black colleges and institutions of higher learning. By 1925, Simmons College, was in grave danger, caused by the financial turmoil of the Great Depression and the inability to pay a $80,000 debt to the Louisville Trust Company. The African American Baptist community and graduates of the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute were responsible for several statewide and national campaigns to prevent the school from going into foreclosure. Black Baptist churches that were considered the foundation of early African American education movement in Kentucky, such as First African Baptist Church of Lexington, Fifth Street Baptist Church, and Green Street Baptist Church, both of Louisville, promoted fundraisers and special offerings extensively in their church bulletins in attempts to save the beacon of black Baptist education, Simmons University. Unfortunately, the efforts of the Kentucky Black Baptist Churches and other supporters fell short and on August 31, 1930, the small Baptist College was sold to the University of Louisville for $100,000. Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute closed the doors of the college department and for the first time since its inception the school only offered a theological course of study.

\textsuperscript{11}Smith, \textit{A Black Educator in the Segregated South: Kentucky’s Rufus B. Atwood}, 133.
The University of Louisville Board of Trustees voted to renovate the failing campus and opened Louisville Municipal College for Colored on February 9, 1931.\textsuperscript{12} Despite the closing of the liberal arts college of the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute, the General Association of Colored Baptists remained committed in to ensuring the growth of Simmons seminary school and they continued to provide college scholarships to black Baptist youth, proving the African American Baptist church’s continued commitment to black higher education.

**Louisville Municipal College**

Louisville Municipal College (LMC) was the city of Louisville’s solution to the African American demand for a state and city supported public institution of higher education in the urban area. University of Louisville President Raymond Kent saw the unfortunate demise of The Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute as an opportunity to make good on the separate-but-equal promises of black higher education in the city of Louisville. Louisville Municipal College was the only African American institution in Kentucky that was originally created as a liberal arts institution with a four-year liberal arts curriculum. The first dean of the Municipal College was Rufus B. Clement, an African American who dedicated much of his life to the advancement of African Americans through education. He ensured that there were highly qualified African American educators at Louisville Municipal College

\textsuperscript{12} Williams, *Black Higher Education In Kentucky*, 152-154; "Fifth Street Baptist Church Bulletins, 1926," Box 3, Fifth Street Baptist Church Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.
and it is likely that he encouraged Charles Parrish Jr. to earn a PhD in sociology from the University of Chicago in 1944.\textsuperscript{13}

The Parrish family and many other prominent African America Baptist were devastated by the closing of Simmons since at one time it had served as the only African American institution of higher education in Kentucky and was the foundation for African American Higher education in the commonwealth. The closing of Simmons was an indication of the support black public schools received over black private institutions. But this change also influenced the loss of Baptist autonomy. Over the years, Simmons presence as a higher learning institution for black Kentuckians was much needed. It embodied the sacrifice, struggle, and spirit of the Parrishes, Fouses and of course that of William Simmons. In their own way they and other black educators were Kentucky’s Talented Tenth. Charles Parrish Sr. died in April of 1931, less than a year after the closing of his beloved Institute. His son, Charles Parrish Jr. continued to carry the torch of Kentucky higher education for blacks by teaching at Louisville Municipal College and coaching the football team. Parrish Jr. believed "that there was a strong attractiveness to the role of Municipal College because of the bond issue, this was new, it was, it was supported in a way in which The Simmons University hadn’t been supported."\textsuperscript{14} The bond issue refers to

\textsuperscript{13} "Dr. Rufus Clement Wins Atlanta," \textit{Washington Afro-American}, May 19, 1953, 4. Rufus E. Clement became the president of Atlanta University System (Spelman College, Morehouse College, Atlanta University) in 1937 and served in that position for over 20 years. In 1953 he was elected to the Atlanta Board of Education thus becoming the first African American since Reconstruction to be elected to a public office in the city of Atlanta.

\textsuperscript{14} Charles Henry Parrish Jr., interviewed by Dwayne Cox and William Morison, Oral History Center, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, December 14, 1976.
the massive debt collected by Simmons College, which was ultimately their demise and forced them to sell to the University of Louisville.

In 1932, the first graduate of Louisville Municipal College, Florence Johnson received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Chemistry. She recalled her fondest memories being "the dedication and performance of my teachers especially Ms. Emmanuel in Spanish, Mr. Henry Wilson in Chemistry, and William Bright in biology." Georgia Powers, the first African American and woman elected to the Kentucky State Senate attended LMC from 1940-1942 on a two-year academic scholarship from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. She was the first in her large working-class family to receive a college degree, which laid the educational foundation for her later successes and dedication to civil rights. Senator Powers helped organize the 1964 March on Frankfort that featured Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.16

The Municipal College provided not only the academic aspects of college life for its students, but it also offered social and athletic organizations for its students. Alumni of Louisville Municipal College recall fond memories of finally beating Kentucky State University in Football in 1949. This also demonstrates the ever-present competition between historical black colleges in not only sports competitions but also, and perhaps more importantly, in student enrollment.17

15“History of Louisville Municipal College," Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville; "Words from Louisville Municipal Alumni, Florence Johnson Cowan" Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.


17“Graduate Questionnaire of Fred M. William Class of 1951," Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.
Despite its white support and city dollars, LMC was still a reflection of segregation and unequal education that thwarted black schools throughout the South. Class of 1951 LMC graduate Emmett Hatch believed that despite not having the best supplies, he received a quality education from Louisville Municipal College. "I learned from LMC that new books, new equipment and bigness have their place but being challenged to think is never out of style, never out of date and will always be with you." 18

The establishment of Louisville Municipal College was a reflection of African American persistence and their pressure on white government officials to open and fund a higher education institution for blacks in Louisville. African Americans in other states recognized the reserved power of African Americans in Louisville. In March of 1941, W.E.B. Du Bois invited faculty and students to the inaugural Phylon Institute conference at Atlanta University. The purpose of the Institute was to "seek to study the economic condition of American Negroes and plans for their future economic security." The Dean of Louisville Municipal College David A. Lane relayed the information to Charles Parrish, Jr., who was a professor of sociology and chairperson of the Social Sciences department. In his return letter to Du Bois, Dean Lane was doubtful that LMC could send any delegates to the conference because of the all too familiar grapple with limited finances that plagued black post-secondary institutions. Sources do not indicate whether Louisville Municipal College or any other African American institution in Kentucky attended the Phylon Conference, but

18 “Graduate Questionnaire of Emmett Hatch Jr., Class of 1950,” Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.
Du Bois sought the institution’s representation at the conference on the social conditions of African Americans.¹⁹

Louisville Municipal College served the black community in Louisville for twenty years and almost 2,700 students were enrolled at the small black college throughout its existence. LMC had more than five hundred graduates who served Kentucky communities as teachers, lawyers, doctors, and other occupations that answered the call of middle class black respectability.²⁰ LMC held its final commencement in 1951 and was included in the graduation program for the University of Louisville on June 5th. It is unclear if whether the graduations of Louisville Municipal College and the University of Louisville were conducted together to demonstrate the coming of integrated education. The desegregation of education and other public spheres in the south eliminated the need for the black colleges and it was absorbed into the University of Louisville in 1951. According to Charles Parrish Jr., the merger of the two institutions was also a financial decision because the cost of operating two colleges was expensive for the city of Louisville, especially since Louisville Municipal College served such a small number of students. Parrish Jr. estimated that in its final year the small black college had less than three hundred students.²¹

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²⁰ “Commencement Programs,” Records of Louisville Municipal College, University of Louisville Archives and Special Collections, Louisville, Kentucky.
²¹ Charles Henry Parrish Jr., interviewed by Dwayne Cox and William Morison, Oral History Center, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, February 21, 1977.
Segregated African American higher education institutes were often of unequal, as it related to funding and facilities, in comparison to white institutions. However, African Americans took great pride in their institutions and their graduates were prepared for higher levels of education. Regardless of the progress and growth of black institutions in Kentucky, many of these schools lacked graduate programs. Thus, many graduate programs at white institutions were forced to desegregate prior to the *Brown v. Board of Topeka* decision because state institutions were unable to offer "separate but equal" graduate facilities. For a brief period in black educational history, Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute offered limited graduate and professional degree programs. Louisville National Medical College was an entity of the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute that closed in 1912 and was the only option for black Kentuckians who wanted to gain graduate and professional degrees in medicine. Central Law School of Simmons College barely remained open from 1890 to 1940 because the program often faced scrutiny and accreditation issues. In its fifty years of education, Central Law School only graduated 100 students.\(^{22}\) Because of the laws of segregation and white Americans demand of maintaining a status quo position in society, white colleges throughout the South and in Kentucky prohibited African Americans from gaining graduate degrees from their institutions, despite the lack of graduate programs at black institutions.

In Kentucky, state legislators approved tuition payment plans that provided scholarships for African Americans to attend out of state graduate programs.

\(^{22}\)Williams, *Black Higher Education In Kentucky, 1879-1930*, 36-38.
Charles Anderson, an advocate for black higher education and the first African American elected to the Kentucky House of Representatives, thus making him the first black legislator in the South since Reconstruction, attended Kentucky State University and earned his law degree from Howard University. In 1936, Anderson worked closely with white Louisville politician Senator Stanley Mayer to draft a bill that required Kentucky to set aside funds to help African American students attend graduate programs out of state. Anderson felt there needed to be a mandate in place to assist black students in pursuing educational opportunities that were not available at the African American institutions in Kentucky and since blacks were prohibited from attending white institutions in the state. In order to qualify for the Anderson-Mayer tuition plan, students had to meet University of Kentucky admission standards and could not attend an out-of-state graduate programs already offered by African American institutions in the state (Kentucky State University or Louisville Municipal College). By 1939, the state of Kentucky funded 243 African Americans at out-of-state institutions, with a monetary total of $17,371.04. However, the tuition payment plan was taxing the state budget. On several occasions, Kentucky Governor Albert “Happy” Chandler had to borrow from the emergency fund to pay scholarships for African American students. The Anderson-Mayer State Aid Act benefited African Americans, but it also benefitted whites as it

24 “Colleges Can Not Admit Negroes, Chandler Says: State Constitution Cited By Governor; Will Name Committee to Consider Problem,” The Herald-Leader, 12 March 1939, Newspaper clipping Found in the University of Kentucky General Archives, Integration folder, Special Collections, M.I. King Library, University of Kentucky.
safeguarded segregation and white supremacy. The plans permitted some black Kentuckians to attend top universities around the nation, but it was not a solution to the mounting issue of segregation, as it allowed white politicians to neglect issues of integration.

African American educators and advocates for higher education demanded change and access to equal education for blacks in Kentucky. In 1939, in order to appease African Americans and not incur lawsuits that challenged racially segregated education, Governor Happy Chandler called for an interracial conference on higher education in Kentucky. The conference addressed issues concerning the segregated education system in Kentucky. Chandler told the black representatives, “If you insist on going to the University of Kentucky, now you are making a mistake because there are barriers which we did not make but we are responsible for preventing you from going to the University.”\(^\text{25}\) The African American representatives argued that since there was no true plan of equalization, then government officials should permit African American admittance to white colleges and universities for graduate school. University of Kentucky representative, Dean Alvin E. Evans, said that educating “Negroes” and whites together would make the “Negro” uncomfortable. He further stated that “It is not wise to educate the white and colored in the same school in the South. It is not prepared for it yet-you have your traditions and we have our traditions.”\(^\text{26}\) No true action or solution came as a result of the interracial conference.

\(^\text{25}\) Ibid., Newspaper clipping.
\(^\text{26}\) Ibid., Newspaper clipping.
In 1955, Governor Chandler was elected to his second gubernatorial term. In his previous term he had embraced the Dixiecrats, a southern faction that had broken from the national Democratic Party. However, he became alienated from the southern faction, because he was depicted as a man who stood for equality and justice for all. As the second commissioner of Major League baseball, in 1947 he oversaw the desegregation of the Major Leagues by allowing Jackie Robinson to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers and during his second term as Kentucky Governor he desegregated all state parks, all public schools, and appointed more African Americans to high-level state positions than any other Kentucky governor. However, some Kentuckians questioned his sincerity in defending equality and questioned if he truly was a moderate. Governor Chandler’s actions were contradictory because of his early involvement with the Dixiecrats, a socially conservative segregationist’s political party. Also, in 1985 as a member of the University of Kentucky’s board of trustees, the University decided to dispose of its investments in Zimbabwe and former Governor Chandler responded with a racial epithet “You know Zimbabwe’s all niggers now. There aren’t any whites.” This statement proclaims a feeling of white superiority, a feeling that he probably believed in 1956. Kentucky school segregationists also questioned his sincerity. They speculated that Chandler only sent in the National Guard because Union County was home to United States Senator Earle C. Clements. Clements was the leader of the faction within the Democratic

Party that opposed Chandler and his group. African American citizens in Sturgis also questioned Chandler’s stance for equality because he was a close friend of Jerry Waller, the president of Union County’s White Citizen’s Council. Governor Chandler was not consistent with his treatment and actions concerning race relations and equality. However, in the case of school desegregation in Sturgis, he fulfilled his responsibility of protecting Kentucky citizens, regardless of race. There is no doubt that the governor’s actions were a façade, which was necessary in maintaining Kentucky’s progressive mystique and it also helped to promote Happy Chandler as a “Champion of Civil Rights.”

Governor Chandler and other influential white men used the Day Law as their defense to protect the institution of segregation in education. Despite integrating Major League baseball in 1947 and calling in the Kentucky National Guard to protect black students attempting to desegregate Sturgis High School in Union County, Kentucky; Chandler remained was a staunch defender of the Day Law and segregation. The power of the law was evident because it sustained many attacks, but prevented full desegregation in education in Kentucky for decades.

With the help of the NAACP, African Americans challenged the state of Kentucky’s dual education system and tuition payment plan. In 1938, Alfred Carroll of Ohio attempted to enroll in graduate school at the University of Kentucky but was denied admission because of his undergraduate degree was from an unaccredited historically black college, Wilberforce University of Ohio, and his admission to the

University of Kentucky violated the Day Law. The NAACP counsel, Thurgood Marshall felt that the state of Kentucky should wait for a stronger case. And in 1941 the local and national NAACP was given an opportunity for a test case in Kentucky. Honor student and senior class president of Louisville’s Central High School, Charles Eubanks wanted to attend an institution with an engineering program. Kentucky State University or Louisville Municipal College did not offer degree-seeking programs in engineering. The well-qualified Eubanks sought entry into the University of Kentucky’s Engineering College and not surprisingly, was denied admission “solely because he was a Negro.”

Eubanks filed a lawsuit on the grounds that the state did not provide separate-but-equal training for African Americans wishing to obtain engineering degrees and the rejection of his application deprived him of his rights under the Fourteenth Amendment.

Instead of conceding and allowing Eubanks admission into the University’s engineering program, white politicians and university officials rushed to establish a makeshift program at Kentucky State University which only had one instructor and inadequate engineering materials. Throughout Eubanks’ trial, UK officials argued that a separate-but-equal facility existed at Kentucky State University. On January 8, 1945, the University of Kentucky won their battle. Federal District Judge Ford dismissed the case on legal technicalities. University of Kentucky President Herman

Donovan commented to the press that the case should be dismissed because “it was a moot case with the providing of facilities for engineering study at Kentucky State College.” Donovan also referenced the Day Law and the necessity of upholding the legal mandate. The dismissal of the case represented University of Kentucky’s strategy of using Kentucky’s segregation laws to resist equality.

Lyman T. Johnson

However, the University of Kentucky’s resistance to integration failed with the application of Lyman T. Johnson on March 15, 1948. Johnson, a Louisville resident, applied for admission to the University of Kentucky Graduate School with the goal of pursuing a Doctorate of Philosophy degree in History. In following tradition, the University of Kentucky denied him admission based on his race, citing the Day Law. Johnson, a high school educator and president of the Louisville Chapter of the NAACP, argued that the Kentucky state law and state Constitution were in conflict with the United States Constitution and the protections provided by the Fourteenth Amendment. He and other members of the NAACP were willing to fight the University of Kentucky in disproving the validity of the Day Law.

On June 21, 1948, Lyman T. Johnson filed a lawsuit against the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees because of the university’s refusal to admit Johnson, despite Kentucky not offering separate-but-equal graduate program in his chosen

34 Judge Dismisses Negro’s Suit Seeking Admission to U. of K: Two Term Delay in Prosecution Results in U. S. Court Action., The Louisville Courier Journal, 8 January 1945, p. 2.
35 Copy of Lyman T. Johnson Lawsuit,” Box 16, file 1 “integration,” Herman L. Donavan Papers, Special Collections, M.I. King Library, University of Kentucky.
36 Lyman T. Johnson correspondence with the University of Kentucky, ”The NAACP Papers”, Part 3, reel 12.
field of history. According the *Louisville Courier Journal*, Johnson’s case involved three major points:

1. Whether provisions are adequate for Negro higher education at Kentucky State College at Frankfort.
2. Whether these provisions answer the constitutional requirements for equal opportunity among races.
3. Whether such facilities, established on a basis of segregation, can satisfy the Constitution of the United States.  

In response to the lawsuit, the University of Kentucky acted swiftly and, as before, created graduate school provisions for African American students. The University manipulated a plan to send instructors to the Kentucky State University to teach classes, which were only available at the University of Kentucky.  

Black leaders expressed their frustration about the makeshift plan. The Dean of Howard University Law School, Dr. George M. Johnson, argued that the plan was undemocratic and described the system as a “unique arrangement which admits by implication the existence of discrimination in the past and which is an obvious subterfuge.” An African American member of the Kentucky Board of Education, A.E. Meyzeek, described UK’s strategy as a “subterfuge and an insult to the Negro race.”  

Kentucky State University, President Rufus B. Atwood commented that the

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plan was “not his idea but he was going to try and make it work.” In actuality, Atwood was upset that Johnson filed a lawsuit against the University of Kentucky without first applying to Kentucky State University. If Johnson had applied to KSU first, Atwood would have been in a position to seek more state appropriations for the financially fledgling black institution. Atwood hastily requested two million dollars to meet UK’s plan, but by that time the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees and influential white members were in agreement that “the Kentucky State College at Frankfort has grounds, buildings and equipment comparable in extent and appropriateness with those at this university [University of Kentucky] where white students only are admitted.”

Despite all efforts, The University of Kentucky’s strategy to remain segregated failed. On March 30, 1949, U.S. District Judge H. Church Ford ruled the University of Kentucky violated the Fourteenth Amendment and had to admit African American students to its Graduate school:

That Negroes have the benefit of all such facilities thereto as of now and many here hereafter be provided for white graduate students until the Commonwealth of Kentucky shall provide a separate institution which will afford and make available for Negro students equal or substantially equal opportunities and facilities for such graduate courses of study.

This ruling determined that the dual education system in the state was not truly equal and African Americans did not receive the same quality higher education as

41 Ibid., newspaper clipping.
42 Smith, 140-141.
43“Communication from Lyman T. Johnson,” University of Kentucky Board of Trustee Minutes, 9 August 1948.
44“UK-Negro Case Judgment Filed,” The Lexington Herald, 28 April.
their white counterparts. The historical ruling, however, did not alter the Day Law. Judge Ford contended that the “there is nothing unconstitutional about segregation, but the Federal Constitution requires equal opportunities if there is segregation.” The Day Law remained in effect until the Kentucky General Assembly modified it in 1950. The changes allowed white colleges to voluntarily desegregate. They were not as quick to integrate. Despite the continuance of segregation, the Johnson decision was an important foundational step in dismantling the Day Law and eventual desegregation of public and private schools in Kentucky. Furthermore, the Lyman T. Johnson decision represented the first time a public institution of higher education below the Mason Dixon line disturbed the culture of Jim Crow segregation by allowing African Americans to attend white universities.

After calculated deliberations, the University of Kentucky decided not to appeal the district court ruling. President Donovan told the press that the University would comply fully with the district Court mandate. Donovan, however, let his true feelings known in a letter to an advocate for segregation, "if this matter would have been left to the Board of Trustees, they would not have been admitted." The minutes of the Board of Trustees stated that they would not appeal for "obvious reasons." Perhaps, University officials were aware of the disparities of the dual education system and they also knew that they had exhausted all measures to

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45 “Negro Student to Enroll For U.K. Summer Term,” *The Louisville Courier Journal*, 1 April 1949, pg.2.
47 H.L. Donovan to Dr. R.C. Kash, June 23, 1949, Herman L. Donavan Papers, Box 16, File 1 “Integration,” Special Collections, M.I. King Library, University of Kentucky.
maintain segregation in graduate education. In order to “lose with respect and dignity,” there was no use in appealing and perhaps risk being made a spectacle.48

The Board’s stance on the issue of integration stood in contrast with that of the UK student newspaper, The Kentucky Kernel, which made progressive comments about the ruling and reflected the student body’s supportive stance on integration. On May 27, 1949, The Kentucky Kernel reported that the University made a wise decision in not appealing the Johnson decision and “[t]he stand taken on this most controversial question is one for which UK students can be rightfully proud of their University.”49 In contrast to their University leadership, their progressive stance was a sign of acceptance and steps towards racial reconciliation.

Understandably, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was ecstatic about the decision. After the Johnson victory, prominent Civil Rights leader and NAACP leader, Roy Wilkins commented that after a few more cases similar to Johnson’s “the color line on the graduate and professional level would be licked.”50 African Americans across the state were thrilled about the ruling and saw it as a victory. Henry S. Wilson of Louisville, Kentucky felt that the decision was 42 years late but the decision “helped to lift Kentucky’s head above the morass of ignorance.”51

As in most historical narratives, there is not a monolithic account and the desegregation of the University of Kentucky was not different. Not all Kentuckians

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51 “When Day Dawned,” The Louisville Courier Journal, 4 April 1949, editorial section, p. 11.
and Americans saw the ruling as a victory or were accepting of the decision. Some saw it as threat to topple white supremacy and status. Segregationists felt their rights as white Americans were not being respected and that blacks were getting special privileges in violation of the Constitution. In 1949, the same year as the Johnson decision, the *Kentucky Kernel* advertised a campus tour and lecture by segregationist and States’ Rights Democratic Party presidential candidate in the 1948 election, Strom Thurmond.\(^5\) Receiving only 2.4% of the popular vote, Thurmond lost to Harry S. Truman. In response to President Truman’s commitment to racial desegregation and the formation of the Civil Rights Commission in which he argued, "that segregation is an obstacle to establishing harmonious relationships among groups." In response Thurmond argued,

> We know that the laws dealing with the separation of the races are necessary to maintain public spaces and order, where the races live side by side in large numbers. We know that they are essential to the protection of the racial integrity and purity of the white and Negro races alike. We know that their sudden removal would do great injury to the very people sought to be benefited.\(^5\)

He also authored the Southern Manifesto, which was drafted to counter racial desegregation of public schools and the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. In 1957, as a Democratic Senator for South Carolina, Thurmond held the longest filibuster in opposition to the Civil Rights Act. The Civil Rights Act was the first significant legislative act since Reconstruction that made strides to protect civil rights. It protected voting rights, created a civil rights division in the Justice

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\(^5\) Strom Thurmond, "Thurmond’s Comment on President Truman’s Committee on Civil Rights," 1948, *Strom Thurmond Collection*, Clemson State University Special Collections.
Department and empowered federal officials to prosecute individuals that attempted to deny a person’s right to vote. This mandate was a sign of changing times and the Federal government’s renewed commitment to the plight of African Americans. However, Strom Thurmond’s visit and presence also speaks to the ideologies that were present on the University of Kentucky’s campus and that remained throughout the United States.\textsuperscript{54}

The largest act of opposition to the desegregation of the University of Kentucky occurred on July 7, 1949. On this date, \textit{The Louisville Courier Journal} headline read “Cross Found Burning at U.K.” The article reported that the burnings were a probably a prank and that the police had expressed doubt that it was meant as symbol of hate.\textsuperscript{55} University of Kentucky President Donovan felt the cross burnings were “probably fourth of July pranks.”\textsuperscript{56} However, in a letter to President Donovan, a group of segregationists admitted that the burnings were “reminder to the Negroes we want them out of our schools.”\textsuperscript{57}

Historically, the burning of crosses are “trademarks” of the Ku Klux Klan and symbolizes an ideology of white supremacy and white solidarity. For many African Americans, a burning cross represents a “sinister history of toxic racism that

\textsuperscript{55}“Cross Found Burning at U.K. Main Building: Flaming Symbol Tied to Old Campus Cannon,” \textit{The Louisville Courier Journal}, 7 July 1949, section B pg. 2.
\textsuperscript{56}“Cross-Burning Prank, Dr. Donovan Believes,” \textit{The Lexington Herald}, 6 July 1949, pg. 2.
\textsuperscript{57}A Group of White Citizens to H. L. Donovan, July 19, 1949. Herman L. Donavan Papers, Box 16, File 1 “Integration,” Special Collections, M.I. King Library, University of Kentucky.
reaches back to the Civil War,” and reminds them of lynching, terror, and violence. \( ^{58} \)

However, the Lexington police and University officials claimed that there had not been active Klan activity in the area for years. Regardless of who placed the several crosses on the campus, it is hard to view the display as anything other than a symbol of resistance and contempt for the twenty-three African American students attending the predominately white university. A white alumnus of the University of Kentucky, Fred A. Orth requested his name be removed from any University of Kentucky documents, as he did not want to be associated with a school that admitted Negroes. \( ^{59} \) Others in opposition of desegregation of the University felt that the University of Kentucky was rightfully “white man’s land” and that “Negroes” should be sent back to their native land. In a letter to Kentucky Governor Clements, one man wrote, “It is imperative that we secure the services of some member of the Congress who will bring forward a generous Liberia bill because if the Negro is not given a nation of his own a final blood amalgamation will cut off our posterity from the white portions of mankind.” \( ^{60} \) Despite letters of opposition and the cross burnings, most official reports of desegregation at the University of Kentucky’s graduate school were inaccurately portrayed without conflict. In a press release, President Donovan commented, “From the beginning, [graduate school integration] has gone forward without incident at the University of Kentucky.” He further argued

\( ^{60} \) Earnest Servier Cox to Governor Earl C. Clements, 16 February 1949. Earl C. Clements Papers, Box 146 Folder: Negroes 1947-1950, University of Kentucky Special Collections.
that Kentucky does not have a heavy “Negro” population and integration problems like Mississippi and Georgia, which allowed conflict-free integration at the University. He declared, “There has been a somewhat more liberal attitude prevailing in Kentucky than you will find in those [Deep South] states.”61 His statements were in keeping with a progressive mystique of Border States, such as Kentucky.

UK’s decision to integrate was monumental and intricate to educational reform in Kentucky and was soon followed by the integration of the University of Louisville. Lyman T. Johnson considered bringing his case against the University of Louisville but decided to focus on the University of Kentucky because it was the state school. ”The University of Kentucky solidified its role as the premier school in the commonwealth in the immediate postwar years.62 In the fall of 1950 and following the lead of the University of Kentucky, forty African American students enrolled at the University of Louisville without much interference. Louisville Municipal College remained opened for one final year until it was absorbed into the University of Louisville in 1951. Charles Parrish Jr. was the only faculty member retained from Louisville Municipal College. Thus, becoming the first African American faculty member at the University of Louisville and the first African American professor at a predominately white institution in the South. He credits his success as a scholar to his "token" representation at the University of Louisville. "I

61 “Integration Has Been Successful At UK, With Calm Approach,” The Lexington Leader, 21 May 1956, p. 4.
was there primarily because I was the first black person at a university in the South. Situations as that occurred a lot. I was invited to meetings. I'd get invited to universities to talk on various occasions because of this. And then when, it was rather interesting, you know - I would be sure to be introduced if any visitor came to the campus."  

During the merger of the University of Louisville and Louisville Municipal College, Parrish Jr. recalled the University of Louisville's Board of Trustees receiving letters from white parents who vehemently opposed integration. "The trustees were talking in those terms, and one trustee member, I don't remember who it was, said he had received a thousand letters from parents who said they would take their students, children out school, and didn't want any Negroes to teach out here."  

Charles Parrish Jr. was eventually appointed to chair the department of sociology at the University of Louisville and continued to advocate for equality for African Americans in Louisville and throughout the nation. The University of Louisville considered his research on the African American community groundbreaking and instrumental in facilitating the successful desegregation of primary and secondary schools in Jefferson County, Kentucky. The work and sacrifice of Lyman T. Johnson, Charles Parrish Jr., and others were instrumental in the desegregation of schools and proving the fallacies of separate-but-equal in Kentucky institutions of higher education. The greatest challenge to racially

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63 Charles Henry Parrish Jr., interviewed by Dwayne Cox and William Morison, Oral History Center, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, February 21, 1977.  
64 Ibid, interview.  
65 Ibid, Parrish interview.
segregated schools, however, was the May 17, 1954, Brown v. Topeka Board of Education Supreme Court decision.

**Brown v. Topeka Board of Education Decision**

The Brown decision overturned the 1896 “separate-but-equal” ruling of Plessy v. Ferguson that stated:

> The doctrine of ‘Separate–but-equal’ is an unwarranted departure, based upon dubious assumptions of fact combined with a disregard of the basic purposes of the Fourteenth Amendment, from the fundamental principle that all Americans, whatever their race or color, stand equal and alike before the law. The rule of stare decisis does not give immunity from reexamination and rejection.66

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense Fund and its General Counsel, Thurgood Marshall, argued that the “separate-but-equal” doctrine caused social and psychological damage to African American children. It further proclaimed that “separate-but-equal” facilities were inherently unequal and African American children were not receiving a quality education that resembled their white counterparts. Much of the defense of the NAACP came from the research of Dr. Kenneth Clark, the first African American to earn a doctorate from Columbia University. Dr. Clark’s study argued:

> Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law; for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group. A sense of inferiority effects the motivation of a child to learn.67

67 Ibid., 121.
The *Brown* decision did not set a deadline for the desegregation of racially segregated schools, therefore creating a need for federally mandated actions and timelines for school boards and government officials. The NAACP argued for immediate desegregation of all public schools. Many attorneys for southern school districts argued that the complexities of racial relations within the South required a calculated implementation process for integration. To rectify the problem, in 1955 the Warren Court issued the *Brown II* decision, which mandated that all public schools desegregate “with all deliberate speed.”\(^6^8\) The vagueness of *Brown* II and the inability of the Supreme Court to establish a concrete timeline encouraged white resistance and the opportunity for whites to interpret the school integration process on their own. Some southern states and cities such as Sturgis, Kentucky and Little Rock, Arkansas delayed, resisted, or altogether avoided school integration.\(^6^9\)

Across the nation there were varied responses to the *Brown* decision; whether it was violence, economic intimidation, or acquiescence, the ruling called for a societal change in southern cities and classrooms. Newspapers, as a representation of the conscience of the people, broadcasted southern disdain for school integration to the nation and especially to African Americans. Headlines across southern cities such as a Richmond, Birmingham, Atlanta, Baltimore, Jackson, New Orleans, and Charleston expressed their discontent and disapproval of the *Brown* decision. *The Jackson Mississippi Daily News* expressed the greatest

\(^6^8\) Ibid., 167.

discontent. "The United States Supreme Court decision abolishing segregation in the public schools is the worst thing that has happened to the South since Carpetbaggers took over our civil government in Reconstruction days; Mississippi will never consent to placing white and Negro children in the same public schools...Every possible human effort will be made to prevent this from happening."

*The Richmond News Leader* replied with "this is not time for rebellion. It is no time for a weak surrender either. It is time to sit tight, to think, to unite in a proposal that would win the Supreme Court’s approval. We accept the Supreme Court’s ruling. We do not accept it willingly, or cheerfully, or philosophically. We accept because we have to.” The border state newspaper of Baltimore, Maryland responded similarly as “true southern cities.” *The Baltimore Sun* proclaimed, “That its implications will be painful to many Marylanders no one can deny. The pain felt in our community will be bitter anguish in some of the states to the south of us.”

In *Brown v. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Movement*, Michael Klarman argues that *Brown* was difficult to enforce because resistance was geographically concentrated in the South:

*Virtually all white southerners disagreed with Brown....whites still held most of the political, economic, social, and physical power in the South. This meant that virtually all officials who were responsible for enforcing Brown –school board members, judges, jurors, politicians, and law enforcement officers-disagreed with it. Those southerners who endorsed Brown-were mainly blacks-held little power*.

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Kentucky did not respond to the Brown decision as overtly as the aforementioned Deep South and Border States. The attitudes of segregationists in Kentucky were comparable to other southern cities and citizens, but the newspapers and the government agencies of Kentucky portrayed a progressive stance of acceptance of racial desegregation of schools. The Kentucky Department of Education was proactive in creating plans and mandates to enforce desegregation and the Fourteenth Amendment. However, they were well aware that a “dual pattern of education has existed in the South for three-quarters of a century and obviously the system could not be dissolved immediately without throwing the whole educational organization into chaos and confusion.”

According to The Louisville Courier Journal, “the citizens of Louisville, Kentucky accepted the Brown decision, felt that there would be few conflicts, and had already anticipated the desegregation of the Jefferson County Public School System.”

Despite the accounts of newspapers and the state’s board of education mandates, the desegregation of Kentucky’s primary and secondary public schools faced white resistance that was reminiscent of the desegregation of University of Kentucky, but amplified. On September 4, 1956, nine black students tried to attend Sturgis High School in Union County, Kentucky. They were met by angry mob of five hundred people that was fueled by racism. The white mob carried picket signs

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demanding that the “Niggers go home.”74 Governor Albert "Happy" Chandler sent the National Guard to protect and allow the African American students to enroll at Sturgis High School and neighboring Clay County Schools, which had an identical ordeal. In contrast, on the same day Lafayette High School in Lexington, Kentucky successfully integrated despite a cross being burned on the schools grounds.75

In 1984, Raymond Wolters, Brown scholar, argued that the decision was a misstep of the Supreme Court and because of the southern interpretation of the Brown II decision, most black children remained in unequally funded, predominately black schools. White moderates and minimum compliance theories slowed integration and black students' opportunities to receive an equal education. For example, ten years after the passage of Brown I, only 1.2 percent of black children attended schools with whites in the South.76 In 2008, Wolters amended his argument in Race and Education arguing, “Brown put the nation on the road toward dismantling segregation and removing racial barriers. But, ironically, desegregation has been far less successful in education than in other areas of American life.”77 The desegregation of education was troubled by white flight, privatization of public schools and white resistance. The Brown decision was not perfect; however, it gave

momentum to the modern Civil Rights Movement and proved the power of fighting racism within the court system.

The scholarship on desegregation of public schools in Kentucky and other states often focuses on primary and secondary education because of the density of schools being desegregated and because the fight for these schools to remain segregated was more intense and drawn-out. This scholarly focus omits the leading role of colleges and universities in desegregating public schools. The most well known case of college desegregation was James Meredith and the University of Mississippi in 1962. Despite the federal protection of troops, Meredith was met by a mob of more than 2,000 angry whites. The United States Attorney General, Robert Kennedy was forced to send in federal marshals and was faced with the aftermath of two fatalities and countless injuries. However, James Meredith successfully matriculated though the University of Mississippi.

Kentucky’s Lyman T. Johnson challenged segregated higher education in the commonwealth almost a decade earlier to the Meredith incident. Of course, racism and segregation were quite different in Mississippi in comparison to Kentucky because of the existence of a progressive mystique in the commonwealth. In his book, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro and the Black Struggle for Freedom*. *William Chafe* argues at the foundation of the progressive mystique is the maintaining of civilities or manners. Thus, discord and conflict were frowned upon in dealing with the social and political aspects of race relations. Moreover, “civility

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was what white progressivism was all about - a way of dealing with people and problems that made good manners more important than substantial action." Racial discord in Kentucky existed as it did in Mississippi. However, Kentucky had an image of progressivism that the state fought to maintain as it struggled with its southern state make-up and border state location. The biggest enemy to the desegregation of education was white resistance, but in some ways, desegregation negatively impacted the African American community and their control over their institutions. Black leaders such as William J. Simmons, Rufus B. Atwood, Charles Parrish Sr., Whitney Young, and many others rose to prominence because of their leadership roles at racially segregated institutions of learning. With desegregation, black institutions such as the Louisville Municipal College were no longer needed. President Rufus B. Atwood of Kentucky State University feared that the only historical black college in the state would soon be forced to close because of integration, as it would no longer be considered a priority by white legislators and stakeholders. To keep the doors open, Atwood and Kentucky State University implemented plans and graduate programs to attract state workers and white students. In 1959, sixty-nine white students were enrolled at the night classes at the formerly all-black school on the abandoned hill.\(^79\)

Education remained a cornerstone of the African American community. Blacks learned to navigate the new educational opportunities provided by former traditionally white institutions. Seizing the right to attend historically white

institutions did not preclude the African American community from taking pride in the historically black institutions that welcomed and inspired them. While the *Brown* Decision helped to usher in the modern civil rights movement, the black Baptist church remained an important institution to the struggle for racial uplift. The church was entrenched in the African American community and was the organizing and meeting place for the organizations of the black freedom struggle. In 1967, Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. visited Green Street Baptist Church of Louisville where he helped to rouse supporters of the struggle. The Kentucky black church’s emphasis and examples of self-help, morality, respectability, civic responsibility, and academic achievement through higher education continued to serve as a means of inspiration for black leaders of the twentieth century.\(^8^0\)

\(^8^0\) “Green Street Baptist Church Minutes, November 1893,” Box 2, Fifth Street Baptist Church Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of Louisville.
"At the bottom of Education, at the bottom of politics, even at the bottom of religion, there must be for our race economic independence."  Booker T. Washington

Epilogue:

The Today and Tomorrow of Black Education

Malcolm X said, “education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.” The Muslim minister and human rights activist captured the sentiment of the importance of black education for the African American community. Generations of African Americans have risked their lives for the establishment and progress of black education. They have financially, emotionally, and physically contributed to the educational systems of their communities. Newly emancipated and later generations of African Americans believed education to be a symbol of freedom and upward mobility. “For the freedmen, universal schooling was a matter of personal liberation and a necessary function of a free society.”¹ Thus, later generations sought to improve and maintain a quality education for African American children.

African Americans’ quest for a valuable education was not monolithic. The movement was not without conflict and frustrations. African American teachers, professors, and communities had to negotiate the white resistance to a quality education, politics, and the hierarchical culture of segregation that dictated funds. Scholars and historical accounts prove that education for the black community was worth fighting, sacrificing and sometimes dying for. Since slavery, African

¹ Anderson, 18.
Americans correlated education and freedom simultaneously. To secure educational freedom they paid obligated taxes that supported whites schools, but they also built and financed segregated black schools by any means necessary. The black community and the black schools were inextricably linked. Past and present, education remains a top priority of the political agenda. Black leaders both known and unknown continue to fight for a quality education for African Americans students.

The Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court ruling was more than sixty years ago. African American education has taken many steps forward as well as been plagued by setbacks of racial and political tones of that continue to overwhelm the twentieth and twenty-first century. Racial desegregation of public schools caused an unbreakable relationship between class and race. White Americans who could afford to move left the cities and city schools for the suburbs or entered their children into private schools. This caused the phenomenon of white flight. Educator and director of Georgetown University Center on Education, Anthony Carnevale argues, "that there is contemporary problem of white flight in higher education. He posits, whites are fleeing the underfunded and overcrowded two-year and four-year open-access colleges for the nation's top 500 universities." Thus,

As a result, American higher education has evolved into a two-tiered separate and unequal system that fuels the intergenerational reproduction of white racial privilege. Our racially stratified postsecondary education system serves as a passive agent that mimics and magnifies the race-based inequities it inherits from the K-12 education system and projects them into the labor market.²

The racial desegregation of the K-12 educational system and post-secondary education was a legal and monumental accomplishment for African American education and had a hand in helping to usher in the modern Civil Rights Movement. However, it was not without its own issues that continue to haunt the educational system today.

Historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) continue to struggle in finding their niche in the make-up of post-secondary education as they are faced with underfunding and the constant demand to re-invent themselves in a society where many believe that the historical black college no longer has a role in a racially integrated society. In 2017, there are one hundred historically black colleges and universities. Forty-nine are private institutions and fifty-one are public institutions across the United States and its territories. Enrollment for HBCUs encompasses about 300,000 students. African American attendance at HBCUs has declined from eighteen percent in 1976 to eight percent in 2014. Despite, its struggles the historical black college still serves a purpose by making college accessible to all students of diverse racial backgrounds who perhaps saw attending and graduating college as unattainable. HBCUs are the institutions of second chances and many remain true to their original mission of admitting students who could not be admitted to predominately white institutions. HBCUs often offer a smaller class size and remedial help to those who are not college ready. Their post-desegregation role is helping to close the higher education achievement gap by making a college

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education accessible for all students regardless of achievement or socio-economic status.

Historically black colleges and universities have remained true and committed to providing a quality education to African Americans and other racial groups. The 2013 United States Commission on Civil Rights stated that HBCU’s have produced forty percent of African American members of Congress, forty percent of black engineers, fifty percent of black professors that teach at predominately white institutions, fifty percent of judges, and eighty percent of judges. Thus, historical black colleges are responsible for the continued building of the black middle class.4 A 2014 Forbes Magazine article posits, "HBCUs are diverse and differentiated by their unique culture. They are experts in educating and creating opportunity for black people. They also serve as a place of learning for students of all races...in 2013 non-black students made up 20% HBCU enrollment."5

**Simmons College Today**

Currently, the commonwealth of Kentucky has two historically black colleges, Kentucky State University and Simmons College of Kentucky. Similarly to the national trend, their make-up and purpose has changed in the post-segregation era. Kentucky State University has had to re-imagine itself in a racially integrated educational system. In doing so it advertises itself as having one of the most diverse faculty and student populations in the commonwealth of Kentucky. An estimated 35

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4 "Educational Effectiveness of Historical Black Colleges and Universities," 2016 United States Commission on Civil Rights Report on Historical Black Colleges and Universities, United States Congress Progress.
percent of the undergraduate population is white. In 2013 a U. S. News World reported that Kentucky State University was one of the most diverse historically black colleges in the United States with the third highest percentage of white students. Kentucky State University offers courses and degrees in agriculture and sustainable systems to capitalize on the surrounding rural communities. The small historical black college has also positioned itself as a four-year community college-like institute by advertising small classes that are ideal for non-traditional students. Kentucky State University began as a small normal school to train black teachers for African American schools across Kentucky. In its 130 years of existence the institution has developed into a four-year liberal arts institution; but more so it has adapted to the needs and wants of its students and the commonwealth of Kentucky.

Throughout the years, Kentucky State University has encountered issues of low enrollment, underfunding, and debt that threaten its survival. In 2016, Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin proposed a nine percent budget cut to higher education. In an open letter Kentucky State University president Raymond Burse wrote, “If the budget as proposed is enacted, our options would be to declare financial exigency and/or prepare a closure plan.” At the pleading of President Burse and Kentucky Council for Post-Secondary education, Kentucky State was exempt from all potential budget cuts. Fortunately for other Kentucky colleges and universities, on September 22, 2016, the Kentucky Supreme Court ruled that Governor Bevin proposed budget

7"Vision and mission of Kentucky State University," Kentucky State University Open Records, Frankfort, Kentucky.
cuts to higher education were unconstitutional because he did not have legislative approval.\textsuperscript{8} Kentucky State University has endured the tumultuous times of the segregated south, the Great Depression and other social and economic hardships that tend to hit African American institutions and communities often with more force than their white counterparts. And despite it all, Kentucky State University has survived. The Black Baptist church in Kentucky continues to invest in Simmons College and throughout the years their commitment level has increased which has caused growth and reinvigoration of the independent Baptist College. In 2014, the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute, which is now called Simmons College of Kentucky, gained accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of the Association of Higher Education and received its designation as a historically black college from the federal government. Thus, allowing the institution to be eligible for HBCU specific grants and funds from the federal government. Simmons College offers associates and bachelors degrees in business, sociology, religious studies, and communications.\textsuperscript{9}

The multiple and progressive changes at Simmons College speaks volumes to its leadership. On January 15, 2005, the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky appointed Dr. Kevin Cosby as the thirteenth president of Simmons College. Under his leadership, Simmons College was able to buy back its original downtown Louisville location that they were forced to sell in 1931 to the University of

\textsuperscript{8} Raymond Burse, "Open Letter From the President, " February 8, 2016; "Supreme Court Rules on Governor's Controversial Cuts to Higher Education, Lexington Herald, September 23, 2016.
\textsuperscript{9} Simmons College Mission and Vision Statement, accessed on July 14, 2017
http://www.simmonscollegeky.edu/our-mission/
Louisville because of financial woes that were exacerbated by Great Depression. Dr. Cosby is the pastor at St. Stephen Church, the largest African American Baptist Church in the state of Kentucky. He is dedicated to the mission of Simmons College and has served as the president of Simmons College for over ten years without collecting a salary. He believes that the success of the mostly–black and low-income area in the west–end of Louisville is predicated on the success of Simmons College because "the greatest testament to the success of the college is when education impacts the lives of kids from the impoverished, crime-ridden streets of the west end."  

Black Baptist Churches across the commonwealth of Kentucky continue to invest in Simmons College. The moderator for the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, Dr. C.B. Akins believes that the black Baptist church will continue to invest and believe in the success of the institution because "there are two things that people can’t take from you–your salvation and education." The largest supporter of Simmons College is still the General Association’s women’s organization- Baptists Women’s Educational Convention which was founded in 1883 and throughout the years has contributed more money than any other organization to the success and building of Simmons College. The longevity of the Baptist Women’s Convention is a reflection of their centered and primary focus of fundraising for Simmons College. Valinda Livingston, a retired teacher, former chairman of Kentucky State University

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Board of Regents, and former president of the Baptist Women’s educational convention posits, "We {BWEC} have endurance because we have always had an objective and everything we did was centered on Simmons {College} and education. And majority of our members were quality African American teachers who understood and continue to understand the mission."\(^\text{12}\) The BWEC continues to help President Cosby and the College maintain its mission of creating productive citizens in a Christ-centered educational setting.

In 2016, President Crosby created a "Simmons is Me" fundraising campaign. He asked the Baptist Women’s Educational Convention and his church members to serve as the 500 ambassadors needed for the initiative. The ambassadors are tasked with getting twenty people to donate five dollars. This simple but capable campaign has a potential to generate $50,000 for Simmons Bible College of Kentucky. As a federally recognized historically black college, Simmons College can acquire federal funds and apply for grants that were once not options. In its 140 years as a higher education institution for African Americans, the small college has evolved and opened itself to new opportunities. However, the historically black college continues to rely on the one true and tried method of fundraising in their own communities and churches.\(^\text{13}\)

**Conclusion**

The first chapter of this dissertation, The Early Beginnings of Black Education in Kentucky: The Church-house and the Schoolhouse, began with demonstrating the

\(^{12}\) Valinda Livingston (Retired educator and former Baptist Women’s Educational Convention president) interviewed by the author February 18, 2016.

\(^{13}\) Betty Mosely (BWEC member) interviewed by the author, February 18, 2016.
importance of the black Baptist church as the undergirding of black education in the south. The African American church was and continues to be a place that pushes education. In Lexington, Kentucky, First Baptist Church of Bracktown continues to strive to serve as not only a place to teach Christianity but also a center for academic education that transcends into the community and the schools in Fayette County and its surrounding areas. In 2005, the first lady of First Baptist Church of Bracktown, Roszalyn Akins founded the Black Men Working Academy (BMW). As a former educator and administrator in Fayette County schools for over thirty years, she was concerned that African American male students were the lowest performing student population according to school and state assessments. Furthermore, black males had the highest disciplinary office referrals and most of their focus was on the social and athletic aspect of school. Mrs. Akins is a member of the Baptist Women Educational Convention and life-long member of the Baptist church felt that she had a moral obligation to help these young men.14

The BMW Academy began as academic enrichment program that met three times a month in the meeting spaces of First Baptist of Bracktown. The first volunteers were African American male members of Bracktown or other black Baptist churches in the community. Roszalyn Akins posits, "the church is obligated to take up the slack when the school or community has failed. And just as in history shows: We may not have a lot of money but the black Baptist church has meeting space and willing volunteers."15 In 2012, in a partnership with Fayette County

15 Ibid.
schools and First Baptist Bracktown’s BMW Academy opened a school: Carter G. Woodson Academy. The Carter G. Woodson Academy is named for the father of African American history and Berea College graduate. The success of the all-boys school captured local and national attention. Mrs. Akins says, "Young men who are being successful, young men who are making good grades and doing well on the ACT. So instead of having a pipeline to prison, we have a pipeline to college." In 2010 the average ACT score for BMW Academy attendees was a 15.8 and in 2017 the average ACT score was a 22.

Roszalyn Akins believes "the church is so much more than spiritual place but it has to be seven days a week that offers education to children and their parents. It has to be a safe place and we have to get back to our history of helping all people. If my son is educated then my neighbor's son should be just as educated." Her argument is reminiscent of the early twentieth century talented-tenth argument that was reflected in the ideals of the black middle class and encompasses the Women's Club organization motto, "Lifting as we climb."16

The examples of Simmons College and Carter G. Woodson Academy demonstrate the ever-present role of the black Baptist Church and their women at all levels of education throughout the state. Roszalyn Akins and the continued dedicated work of the Baptist Women’s Educational Convention validates that women are still at the heart of the African American educational movement in Kentucky. This dissertation demonstrates that women were intricate and often the workers and organizers to social and religious movements past and present. In

Marla Fredrick’s analysis *Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith* argues, "spirituality provides a space for creative agency, which give voice to the multifaceted ways in which women interpret, inform, reshape their social conditions."17

The fight for quality education in Kentucky has not been without struggle. Jefferson county public schools continue to face the challenges of busing students to encourage racial diversity in Louisville schools. Many school districts and higher education institutions continue to face the racial disparities in low graduation rates and a wavering academic performance of African American students. Yet, the African American community has attempted to offer solutions and maintain education as a priority in the African American community. Black leaders and white allies continue to fight against the racial disparities in education. However, they are not fighting alone. They have a historical foundation of educational firsts and examples that continue to enlighten and inform the movement on black education in Kentucky.

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Abbreviations

Organizations

ABHMS-American Baptist Home Mission Society.
AME-African Methodist Episcopal.
CIC-Commission on Interracial Cooperation.
BWEC-Baptist Women Educational Convention
GEB-General Education Board.
KACW-Kentucky Association of Colored Women’s club.
KNTI-Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute/
LMC-Louisville Municipal College.
NAACP-National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.
WBHMS-Women’s Baptist Home Mission Society.
WABHMS-Woman’s American Baptist Home Mission Society.
YWCA-Young Women’s Christian Association.

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