

1989

## **Race Relations and Community Development: The Education of Blacks in New Orleans, 1862-1960.**

Donald E. Devore

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College*

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**Race relations and community development: The education of  
blacks in New Orleans, 1862-1960**

**DeVore, Donald E., Ph.D.**

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**Race Relations and Community Development:  
the Education of Blacks in New Orleans, 1862-1960**

**A Dissertation**

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**in**

**The Department of History**

**by**

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## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements . . . . .	ii
Abstract . . . . .	v
Introduction . . . . .	vii
Chapter I: Education and the Politics of Race, 1862-1877 . . . . .	1
Chapter II: Education and the Struggle for Blacks' Proper Place, 1877-1900 . . . . .	53
Chapter III: Education and the Making of a Protest Tradition, 1900-1945 . . . . .	93
Chapter IV: Education During the Jim Crow Era, 1900-1945 . . . . .	129
Chapter V: Education and the Pursuit of the Golden Fleece, 1945-1960 . . . . .	181
Conclusion . . . . .	240
Endnotes . . . . .	246
Bibliography . . . . .	281
Vita . . . . .	291

## **Abstract**

Throughout the history of the United States individuals and groups have used education as a means to improve their status in America--economically, politically, and socially. When slaves gained their freedom between 1862 and 1865, they, too, looked to education as a way to ameliorate the harmful effects of over two hundred years of slavery. In New Orleans freedmen and those free before the war viewed education almost as a panacea to the many problems within the black community. Black New Orleanians realized, of course, that the gains derived from education would take time to filter throughout the entire community.

During the antebellum period New Orleans' free blacks had accumulated a certain degree of wealth and supported educational attainment for its members, and beginning in Reconstruction, led in the struggle for improved education for the entire black population. During Reconstruction blacks won inclusion into the public school system, and for several years many blacks attended desegregated schools. The end of Reconstruction, however, brought eventual disfranchisement and the triumph of a racial ideology that sought to impose on blacks the status of second class citizenship. This view found expression in the type of education whites thought blacks should receive.

This study suggests that many blacks in New Orleans refused to accept the permanency of limited education or

white supremacy. Devoid of political power, however, blacks used a strategy of petition and protest to school officials to gain educational improvements for the black community. Between 1900 and 1945 that strategy produced improvements, but by the end of World War II, black education still lagged behind the educational opportunities given whites. In 1948 black leaders abandoned the strategy of protest and petition and decided to use the federal courts to gain educational parity within a separate school system. Their goals shifted again in 1952, and they filed suit to end school desegregation in New Orleans. The legal assault to desegregate the schools was part of the larger black effort for racial equality.

## Introduction

With the growth of cities during the first half of the nineteenth century, public education assumed a greater degree of importance in America. From its origins in New England, the idea of public education spread west and south. Massachusetts, with its eminent educator Horace Mann, led the way and sent many educators to distant cities and towns to start public school systems. Throughout the nation, community leaders came to view education as a means to produce better workers and more informed citizens, as well as Americanize the immigrants.

In 1841 the crusade gained its first victory in Louisiana. During a period of relative prosperity, the Louisiana legislature appropriated \$7,500 for public education in New Orleans with the stipulation that the city expend an equal amount. After agreeing to accept the offer, city leaders turned to the task of selecting a person to administer the proposed school system. They asked John Shaw, a friend and colleague of Horace Mann, to assume the job of starting a public school system. Although he knew the difficulties he would face, Shaw accepted the challenge and arrived in 1841 to begin his new duties. Many New Orleanians would benefit from his effort, despite the initial reluctance of many of them to support the idea of public education because of its association



with the idea of "charity." Two groups of New Orleanians, however, could not participate in the pioneering effort--free blacks and slaves.

Blacks, some as slaves, others as free men, had been among the first settlers in the New Orleans area. The city's population increased during the colonial and antebellum periods, and slavery grew as well. In that sense, New Orleans was a typical southern city. New Orleans differed, however, because in addition to an increase in slaves, the city had experienced an increase in its free black population. The racial policies of the French and Spanish contributed to the growth of the free black population; the granting to them of certain privileges not given to slaves then produced color and class divisions within the black population.

But the transfer of Louisiana to American control and the arrival of Anglos and immigrants between 1820 and 1850 led to a decline in the privileged position of free blacks. When the public school law went into effect, free blacks along with slaves were excluded. Nevertheless, both slaves and free blacks knew that city leaders had taken an important step toward progress. Two decades later they would have a chance for inclusion. Their struggle for inclusion, of course, had to await the Civil War and the liberating guns of Union soldiers.

New Orleans' brief participation in the Civil War provided blacks with an early opportunity to seek that which had been denied to most of them during slavery-- education. They possessed few doubts that public education was crucial to black advancement. During federal occupation, beginning in April 1862, Union soldiers started teaching black soldiers and civilians. The Army increased its role in 1863 and 1864 and established schools for blacks. In 1865 the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands assumed the task of coordinating black education. Two years later Bureau officials transferred most of the Freedmen's Bureau schools to the New Orleans public school system. Over the next century black education in New Orleans became inextricably linked to questions of race and politics.

The New Orleans black community was fortunate that it contained a large number of blacks who had been free before the Civil War. The antebellum free black community already had a tradition of education and, after the war, provided leadership in the black struggle for education in New Orleans. That leadership, along with the fervent desire of the freedmen to learn, helped to establish an educational tradition within the entire community. In addition to the indigenous members of the black population, blacks from other cities and rural parishes settled in New Orleans after 1863. Although largely poor and uneducated,

many of these new immigrants possessed leadership qualities and some formal education. With enfranchisement following the 1868 Constitutional Convention and the subsequent increase in political participation, the aspirations and expectations of the black community soared. Blacks existed in an environment, however, that remained hostile to their complete civil and political emancipation. Even in a less threatening setting blacks would have labored under severe handicaps. They had to contend with the emotional and psychological adjustment to freedom and their new independence. Their status remained unclear; white leaders continued their attempts to prevent them from voting. Moreover, with little political tradition, or experience to call on, blacks seldom translated voting strength into political power. Nonetheless, political participation, economic advancement, improved race relations, and educational opportunity formed the crux of their agenda for progress, and they pursued it assiduously.

Their four-point agenda revolved around access to quality education. Sharing the larger community's belief that education was important for advancement, black leaders adopted strategies to increase the educational opportunities of the black community. They formed various organizations to promote improved education. The educational campaign also served as a cohesive element in the black community. Tactics and strategies changed over

time, and in part, reflected the tenor of race relations within the city. But the struggle for educational opportunity remained constant for over a century. In improved education resided the hopes and aspirations of the New Orleans black community.

Although some blacks in New Orleans attended private or parochial schools, the vast majority attended public schools. Between 1862 and 1960 blacks experienced exclusion, segregation, and integration within the public school system. Several distinct stages and themes characterized black education in New Orleans between 1862 and 1960. In the first stage, from 1862 to 1869, blacks sought inclusion into the public school system, but primarily relied on the Union Army and the Freedmen's Bureau for education. During the second stage, 1869 to 1877, blacks gained suffrage, and used their new political power to demand and receive improved, as well as, desegregated schools. The next stage, though not well defined, lasted from 1877 until the turn of the century. In this period blacks lost suffrage and had to return to petitioning officials for educational improvements. The fourth stage spanned the years 1900 to 1945 and started with the familiar petitions. As the period progressed, however, the number of petitions increased and featured more assertive language. Black leaders and parents also organized themselves in an effort to win concessions from

school officials. During the fifth and final phase of this study, from 1945 to 1960, blacks abandoned mere petition and persuasion and resorted to the federal courts to gain a quality education for blacks.

This study will essentially focus on the century long attempt by black New Orleanians to acquire a public education that would enable them to combat racism, oppression, and develop their community. It is a study of people and a community and their reasons for and attempts to receive a quality education. It is a study more about black aspirations and organized resistance to racism and discrimination than it is about the legal and extra-legal efforts by whites to keep blacks in a subordinate position in society. It will also examine the endurance of black protest in New Orleans and advance the argument that black New Orleanians never fully accepted the inferior status that whites attempted to assign them.

Efforts by white leaders to deny blacks an adequate education were symptomatic of the larger effort to define the appropriate position for blacks in the city's social order. Therefore race relations and their impact on black education will also form a part of this study, as well as, how blacks perceived education as the foundation for a strong and viable black community. Blacks made important educational and community gains by surmounting adverse conditions brought on by slavery and discrimination.

## **Chapter One**

### **Education and the Politics of Race, 1862-1877**

On 26 April 1862, a year after the start of America's Civil War, Union military forces under the command of Commodore David G. Farragut captured the important Confederate port city of New Orleans. The brevity of their city's participation in the war chagrined New Orleans whites and astonished its blacks. One of the city's leading newspapers perhaps best captured the sentiments of white New Orleanians: "We have devoted freely of our men, our substance, and our exertions, to the defense of our beloved city, and have nothing wherewith to reproach ourselves, in the way of dereliction or neglect of duty, to accomplish that object. We have not succeeded."<sup>1</sup>

The entire fabric of the New Orleans community would eventually experience the transforming effects of the victorious Yankees, who condemned not just slavery but all facets of southern life. The northern critique of the South extended to its economy, which they considered stagnant; the social structure, which they considered rigid; and its politics, which they believed the bastion of a slaveowning elite.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, northerners charged that the South's agrarian economy and reliance on slave labor contributed to a neglect of education. They noted that

poor, uneducated whites retarded the South's growth as much as the uneducated slave.<sup>3</sup> The increased urbanization of New Orleans during the antebellum period, however, meant the city diverged from the common southern pattern. It had established a public school system in 1841. Under the energetic leadership of John A. Shaw, an educator recommended by Horace Mann, the system overcame initial apathy, hostility, and financial problems, and by the start of the Civil War its stability and permanency were no longer in doubt.<sup>4</sup> Thus, when reform-minded northern soldiers and, later, missionaries arrived in New Orleans, they found a system of public education modeled after the idea of universal education prevalent in many northern cities, especially those in New England. The problem in New Orleans, unlike other southern cities, was not entrenched widespread opposition to public education, but rather whether support for public education could be extended to include blacks.

Before the fall of New Orleans in 1862, the institution of slavery precluded any debate or consideration of public education for free blacks and any education for slaves. Although it was true free blacks enjoyed many privileges in antebellum New Orleans--the right to own property, enter contracts, inherit and will property, and legally marry--they could not attend public schools.<sup>5</sup> Free blacks in New Orleans managed to amass a

certain amount of wealth and supported several private academies. Additionally, some free blacks sent their children to study in France or hired tutors.<sup>6</sup> Many less prosperous free blacks benefited from the generosity of Madame Bernard Couvent. A free woman of color, Madame Couvent willed several thousand dollars for the formation of a school for impoverished free black children. This school eventually became the Institution Catholique des Orphelins Indigents. Other free blacks received instructions from a small group of black nuns, the congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family, as well as at a school run by Carmelite nuns.<sup>7</sup>

Many slaves in the New Orleans area risked their safety in an attempt to gain an education. Since education remained a dangerous, furtive enterprise, it is difficult to assess accurately how many slaves achieved a degree of education. In New Orleans the limited autonomy that came with city life probably facilitated the black quest for an education.<sup>8</sup> Scholars estimate that at least five percent of the South's slave population had learned to read by 1860, although the historian Eugene Genovese suggests that the number exceeded five percent.<sup>9</sup> Given the greater freedom of New Orleans slaves and their interaction with the area's free blacks, slave literacy in New Orleans probably did surpass five percent. But as another scholar



concluded, "the overwhelming majority of the Negroes in New Orleans during this period were illiterate."<sup>10</sup>

Such figures and an environment hostile to black education meant that in the spring of 1862 black New Orleanians faced a daunting task.<sup>11</sup> Although after the fall of New Orleans whites accepted the termination of slavery, they remained resolutely determined to preserve a social order erected on the rock-solid foundation of white supremacy. The quantity as well as the quality of black education became an important issue in determining the shape and texture of post-Civil War New Orleans. Despite the obstacles, blacks embraced the challenge with vigor and optimism.

Beginning in 1862 black New Orleanians embarked on their lengthy, trouble-filled journey to acquire an education. Although some free blacks had supported and had been exposed to education before 1862, the number of illiterate blacks seeking education far surpassed the ability of the black community to provide it. The small private schools continued to exist and even increased in number after the federal occupation, but public education quickly became more important than private schools in meeting the educational needs of the black community. The reason was simple; most blacks could not afford to pay the tuition required by private schools. Black education in New Orleans during occupation and Reconstruction benefited

first from the initiatives of the Army and the Freedmen's Bureau and later from inclusion into the public schools.<sup>12</sup>

Almost immediately after their arrival in April 1862 Union soldiers joined the movement to provide education for blacks. The effort lacked direction and structure until Union officials, responding to the requests of Army Chaplain Thomas Conway and black leaders, began to consider the establishment of black schools. A decision by Union officials in September 1863 to allocate 3,000 dollars to defray the cost of educating 250 indigent students marked the start of direct financial involvement in black education. In October 1863 and March 1864 Major General Nathaniel P. Banks gave black education a significant boost by first authorizing the creation of black schools and later by ordering creation of a Board of Education to take charge of black education.<sup>13</sup> The chairman of the Board of Education, B. Rush Plumly, voiced satisfaction with the initial start and believed, "the aptitude to these Colored children to learn is equal to that of the men of color for the act of war. Neither of them is excelled in their respective places, by any race on record."<sup>14</sup> Black parents shared Plumly's enthusiasm; the number of students continued to increase. In all, 3,220 blacks attended school by December 1864, only nine months after Bank's initial decree. Clearly blacks had taken advantage of this educational opportunity.<sup>15</sup>

The schools established by the Union Army represented the first organized attempt by a public agency to educate southern blacks. And Plumly would not be the last official to speak glowingly of the freedmen's determined capacity to learn. A year later, another Board of Education official, Mortimer A. Warren, wrote favorably about an advanced grammar school class. "I wish that this room of the Lincoln School might have a visit from all scoffers of Negro education. I shrink from no comparison with any other school of children, of the same age of any other color, of any other city, of any other clime or time."<sup>16</sup> Warren did not reserve his comments only for some budding educational elite. Capturing the educational mood of the black community, Warren noticed: "A thirst for knowledge has been kindled in young and old which will not soon die out. It is talked of at home, it is preached from the pulpit.... In passing along the streets one not infrequently hears groups of dusky children rehearsing to one another, or to delighted parents their progress...."<sup>17</sup>

During the first year of operation most of the schools were single classrooms in rented houses. They usually bore the name of the teacher who had started them: Miss Strong's School, Miss Buggie's School, Miss Clarkson's School, or Mr. Williams' School. Most of the teachers labored alone as teacher and principal. Enrollment, attendance, and classroom decorum varied tremendously

during the first year of operation. Few, if any, of the students had been exposed to the structure of a formal classroom. Nonetheless, the rod, a fixture in nineteenth pedagogy, and the threat of dismissal soon produced acceptable classroom behavior.<sup>18</sup> "The children are remarkably attentive in class and making progress," reported J.H. Ford, one of the school site inspectors.<sup>19</sup>

Ford, a school inspector hired by the Board of Education, continued to dutifully submit his weekly reports, commenting on such things as the instructional program, attendance, behavior, and school needs. He was generous with his praise and unsparing in his suggestions and criticisms. Overcrowding remained a concern at some schools, but apparently Board of Education officials managed to alleviate the worst of it by opening additional schools. Board records fail to reveal what officials believed represented an acceptable class size. The prevailing wisdom, however, seemed to have been influenced by the dimension of the classroom. Cramped quarters, rather than a predetermined teacher-pupil ratio, indicated overcrowded conditions.<sup>20</sup>

The schools visited by Ford during that typically hot New Orleans summer stressed the traditional three "Rs", reading, writing, and arithmetic. The classes were ungraded, coeducational, and often included students who ranged in age from six to eighteen.<sup>21</sup> Individual student

performance cannot be gleaned from the reports of Ford or other officials. Only statements such as "The pupils know their lessons well" and "Mr. Williams' school is in a flourishing condition," indicate the students' educational progress. On one occasion, Ford noted, "at no time during the last three months have they been doing so well as this week. The teachers are constantly on the alert, order generally prevails, and the drowsiness which invaded many of the schools at the commencement of the warm season, has been succeeded by a lively activity. The progress of the pupils is very satisfactory."<sup>22</sup>

Not all students progressed, unfortunately. To obtain a more objective assessment of student performance, the Board of Education for Freedmen directed school officials to administer a common examination. School officials held the examination on 24 September 1864, but chose to test not all of the students, but only a randomly selected sample. Through misinformation, incompetence, or unavoidable circumstances, some of the students scheduled for testing missed the exams. Moreover, one teacher "had performed her duty so remissly during the three months preceding the examination, that not one of her scholars was sufficiently qualified to take part in the proceedings of the day."<sup>23</sup> Still, in the opinion of Ford, who compiled the report, the "result of this first exhibition was deemed highly satisfactory by the Examiner."<sup>24</sup> One hundred and seventy-

five students took the exam, which tested their knowledge in reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography. Several teachers and their students garnered specific praise, among them Mr. P. M. Williams, a black principal and his wife. Ford expressed some concern with the achievement in writing and arithmetic and targeted those subjects for increased emphasis in Board of Education schools. On the other hand, many students scored well in reading, spelling, and geography. Considering the substantial handicaps under which students, teachers, and school officials labored, the September exams were cause for praise. If queried, many blacks would have undoubtedly shared Ford's conclusion that, "notwithstanding the many drawbacks and difficulties with which the schools have had to contend during the year...the first exhibition must be regarded as highly successful, honorable alike to teachers and pupils...."<sup>25</sup>

After the Civil War ended in April 1865, the Board of Education became a part of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.<sup>26</sup> A significant consequence of the absorption of the Board of Education was a complete reorganization of the schools. The reorganization occurred in September 1865 just before the start of the 1865-1866 school year. Three of the changes involved the creation of the Office of the Superintendent, graded classrooms, and the establishment of school districts. School principals reported to the City Superintendent, who in turn reported

to the General Superintendent of Education in Louisiana. Instead of the previous practice of many small schools in close proximity to each other, under the district plan school officials consolidated the small schools into large units in the hopes of gaining greater efficiency and control.<sup>27</sup>

New Orleans comprised one of the state's seven divisions and possessed nineteen schools after the completion of the September reorganization. The overwhelming majority of students received instruction at the primary and intermediate levels, which generally consisted of grades one through five. Indeed, only four schools--Garrison, Lincoln, Sumner, and Douglas--had grammar school students, a total of 167. Three of the schools, Conway, Lincoln, and Banks, offered night classes, although they only accounted for a small percentage of total enrollment. The Bureau also sponsored a Normal School to train teachers and a school for industrial training. Two hundred and sixty students attended the Industrial School.<sup>28</sup> Instructors continued to emphasize reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography. In the main, students made satisfactory progress, drawing praise from teachers and school officials.

**Table 1**  
**Freedmen's Bureau Sponsored Schools**  
**in**  
**New Orleans Area After Reorganization.<sup>29</sup>**

<b>Schools</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Number of Teachers + Principals</b>
Lloyd Garrison	534	10
Conway	798	13
Sumner	155	3
Lincoln	762	14
General Howard	376	7
Frederick Douglass	691	12
General Banks	609	11
General Butler	186	5
Bayou Bridge	40	1
Chase	270	5
McDonogh	197	4
Durant	82	2
Horner	48	1
Soule Asylum	51	1
Industrial	260	4
Gretna	217	4
LA Avenue	119	3
Cadiz Street	181	3
Greenville	48	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5624</b>	<b>104</b>



Between April 1864 and November 1865 schools for blacks in Louisiana had cost the federal government 333,165 dollars.<sup>30</sup> Reorganization, satisfactory progress, nor lavish praise, however, prevented the enactment of a measure calling for a monthly tuition fee. The new tuition policy, adopted by the board in January 1866, went into effect on 1 February amidst concern that enrollment might drop by more than fifty percent.<sup>31</sup> Money to finance the schools had come from a five percent state tax on assessed property.<sup>32</sup> The tax, imposed and collected by the federal occupying forces, encountered determined opposition from whites who resented taxes that financed black schools.<sup>33</sup> Whites also believed that the withholding of tax payments would undermine the federal occupation and hasten the departure of the federal troops. The failure of Bureau officials to collect sufficient taxes to pay for the schools doomed the idea of free education.

Under the tuition plan each principal received a monthly allotment of tickets priced at \$1.50 each. In theory, students unable to purchase tickets were to be excluded from school. In actuality, many teachers with kind hearts allowed students who paid part or even none of the tuition to remain in class. For example, the principal of the General Banks School sold a ticket for a dollar "to a poor boy who could get no more."<sup>34</sup> Such generosity was not an isolated incident. In the month of June, the

Frederick Douglass School had an average attendance of eighty-six, yet only seventy-five students paid tuition.<sup>35</sup> The tuition policy, as well as the practice of allowing students to evade it, continued until the local public school system absorbed the Bureau schools. Nevertheless, as some had feared, the tuition policy did contribute to a marked decrease in enrollment, only 1,359 students attended schools in February 1866 compared to 5,330 in December 1865.<sup>36</sup> The decrease in enrollment convinced black leaders and Bureau officials that black education would not grow without inclusion into the city's public school system.<sup>37</sup>

The New Orleans public school system had somehow managed to remain in operation during the war years and the peace that followed. Although the school house doors remained open, the school system did experience some problems. In September 1862 the city council approved an ordinance that authorized the establishment of a Board of Education comprised of the mayor, the chairman of the Bureau of Finance, the chairman of the Bureau of Streets and Landings, and the City Treasurer. The Bureau of Education exercised complete control over the public schools and delegated responsibility to four Boards of Visitors, each representing one of the four city districts.<sup>38</sup>

By August 1866 the school system had experienced three more reorganizations. In June 1864, a city ordinance

abolished the Bureau of Education and created a 13 member Board of Directors elected by the city council. A subsequent ordinance, approved in August 1865 created a twenty-four member Board of Directors appointed by the mayor. Half of the members received one year appointments; the remaining twelve served for two years. Not satisfied with this plan, the council in July 1866 passed an ordinance that provided for still another structural change. Board membership remained at twenty-four, but now six members had to come from each district. The Commission Council, rather than the mayor, received the power to appoint all of the members. One constant remained throughout the several organizations--city coffers financed the school system.<sup>39</sup> That arrangement created conflicts between the Board of Directors and city officials regarding school expenditures, maintenance, and construction. Only on rare occasions did the Board of Directors receive the appropriations they thought necessary to manage the school system. The successive reorganizations and budget battles had little direct effect on blacks. From 1862 to 1867 black New Orleanians remained outside the public school system. Their exclusion, of course, represented the will of the white community, not the choice of blacks.

Blacks used subterfuge and petitions in seeking inclusion in the city's school system. Some fair-skinned blacks simply attended all white schools and returned after

school to their black communities. Some blacks of lighter hue passed undetected and permanently into white society. "Passing" to gain access to public education had its perils. White New Orleanians in general and school officials in particular remained vigilant in their efforts to keep their world and schools free from black encroachment, despite the fact that some blacks were fairer than those who protected the bastions of white supremacy. School board minutes for the 1860s revealed several references to school children suspected of "passing." In September 1862 the Board of Directors, by nine to one, voted that principals should forward cases of doubtful race to the board. Two weeks later the board reversed itself, fearing the number of cases would be too high. Instead they gave principals the authority to determine the racial status of students suspected of "passing." Some principals still referred specific cases to the entire board for consideration.<sup>40</sup>

The practice of "passing" was only available to a small number of blacks. The majority of the black population needed a more direct and effective method to attain public education. Then, too, "passing" no matter how laudable the purpose, represented a rejection of a black identity. And black leaders in the 1860s took pains to stress the dignity and worth of the black race and strenuously denounced attempts to label blacks as inferior.

Blacks were in an assertive mood and wanted, as well as expected, to share fully in New Orleans' social order. For them the Civil War marked a new departure; they wanted change and opportunity, not later in some distant land, but immediately and in New Orleans.

Among other things, blacks wanted inclusion in the public school system. During the state Constitutional Convention of 1864 it appeared that blacks would indeed receive a public education. The delegates voted to establish a dual public school system but refused to stipulate the manner of funding. A plan based on allocating the taxes each race paid to the separate school systems encountered opposition from black leaders and General Banks.<sup>41</sup> The delegates decided to leave the matter of funding to the legislature, but the legislature refused to act. In New Orleans the local school board also rebuffed appeals by blacks for public funds to assist private educational efforts. In September 1865 black representatives of the Colored Indigent's School asked the board for \$4,000 to help meet expenses for the 1865-1866 school year. After referring the request to the Committee on Finance, the board voted no, maintaining it had "no right to appropriate funds for any purpose other than the support of the public schools proper of this city."<sup>42</sup>

The board's and the state's refusal to finance black education occurred, in part, because of the continued

political powerlessness of blacks. Black leaders like Dr. Louis C. Roudanez, publisher of L'Union and the New Orleans Tribune, had fought without success for suffrage. They even presented their case in person to President Abraham Lincoln who later privately expressed the opinion that educated blacks with property and military service should receive the vote.<sup>43</sup> Black suffrage remained a request unanswered because most whites shared the view of J. P. Montanot, a state representative from New Orleans. "I am a native of Louisiana," Montanot asserted, "and when this state extends to the Negroes the right of suffrage, I shall leave it forthwith and go to China."<sup>44</sup> But the Congressional elections of 1866 brought more enlightened men to national office, the political climate changed perceptively, and both affected black education.

On 3 April 1867 the Board of Directors passed a motion to establish a five member committee to study the possibility of providing public education to black students.<sup>45</sup> Board members also agreed to petition the Commission Council for authority and sufficient funds to establish black schools. Having refused for several years to provide any financial assistance for black education, why did the board change its position? The November 1866 Congressional elections sent a clear but unheeded message to local and state officials that the moderate, pro-South phase of Presidential Reconstruction had run its course.

The Reconstruction Acts in March 1867 sent a signal that Louisiana white leaders could no longer ignore. The state legislature responded with a law authorizing the establishment of separate public schools for blacks. By April 1867, black leaders were not only discussing inclusion, but integrated education as well. Therefore, the board's action represented an attempt to at once follow a legislative mandate but also preempt the integrationists and gain control of black education.<sup>46</sup> The ploy worked, at least for a time.

Nevertheless, the board's proposal immediately became embroiled in a political tempest. The Commission Council approved the school board's request to establish separate black schools, but Mayor Edward Heath vetoed the measure.<sup>47</sup> He did so because he considered it "unjust to a very large number of citizens of New Orleans." Heath wanted the membership of the board increased to include blacks, "or a new board elected in which they should be fairly represented by their own race." He also maintained that the Council's 70,000 dollar appropriation was inadequate.<sup>48</sup> The Council managed to override the mayor's veto, and after both sides reached a compromise, the Council gave the school board authority to establish black schools and appropriated \$70,000 for the effort.

The action of the Commission Council represented the time-worn gesture of closing the barn door after the horses

had escaped. The Council vote in October 1867 merely acknowledged what had transpired over the previous two months. In August school officials had agreed on a plan to incorporate black schools. The board passed a motion empowering its president to appoint a committee composed of two men from each district "for the object of opening schools for the education of Colored children." The motion passed by the slim margin of eight to six. Some of those who voted against it explained that they opposed the motion because they doubted whether the board had the legal authority to establish black schools.<sup>49</sup>

Further support for the conclusion that the board's decision to educate blacks stemmed from a desire to forestall a drive for integrated schools came later. On 4 September the board passed a resolution authorizing an investigation of "all the schools now in operation for the education of Colored children in the city to ascertain and report to this board the number and location of said schools; the number and salaries of teachers; the number of pupils; [and] how said schools are supported." To conduct this study the president selected a committee, "the Committee of Colored Schools." The committee received the additional task of determining what black school supporters--teachers, parents, patrons, and directors--thought about joining the public school system. Finally



the board asked it to ascertain black sentiment concerning "mixed schools."<sup>50</sup>

The committee discharged its duty thoroughly and quickly. Only twelve days later, the president called a special meeting to hear the committee's report. Lengthy and detailed, it contained considerable information on black schools in the city. Of prime importance to school board members, the report disclosed the attitude of the heads of black schools pertaining to integrated schools. Most respondents, black and white, thought that separate schools were best and believed blacks favored them. Reverend Steptoe, a black teacher in charge of a school housed at the Fourth Baptist Church, stated "separate schools were best for the present." William Finney, the black principal of Soule' Chapel School, also favored separate schools and ventured that "mixing the Colored and White in the same schools will excite prejudices and create ill-feeling and dissension between the races." John H. Collins, the white principal of a school on Gravier Street, spoke in favor of separate schools and charged that "the only people clamoring for mixed schools were black politicians and mulattoes."<sup>51</sup>

The contention that audacious black politicians and frustrated mulattoes were the only segment of the black population "clamoring" for integrated school deserves attention. Admittedly, most respondents favored separate

schools, but several of them affirmed the principle of common schools or offered what they thought were adequate rationales for separation. For example, P. M. Williams, the head of the School of Boys and Girls on Gravier Street, initially stated "that the Colored children have a right to go to any public school...." He then tempered that bold statement with the observation that "under the circumstances existing in the city at present, it is advisable and for the best interests of all classes that separate schools should be established for white and colored children...." Other principals used the term, "best interest," or like Reverend Steptoe, "best for the present," in explaining their support for separate schools. Their caution reflected the fact that black New Orleanians lived in a hostile environment, with many whites antagonistic towards black education and adamantly opposed to integrated schools.<sup>52</sup>

Nonetheless, board interrogators encountered several other individuals who spoke out forcefully for mixed schools. Most notable among them was the irrepressible Miss Edmonia G. Highgate, a black woman from Syracuse, New York. Miss Highgate admitted that "mixing the races now may create difficulties and injure the cause of education for the time being." She expressed confidence, however, in the eventual success of integration. She added that, in her opinion, intelligent black parents viewed integrated

schools as their right. Despite her views, she gained the respect of the committee which thought her "a very intelligent, and apparently; highly educated lady." E. Tinchand, a black Creole educated in France and the principal of a school in the Second District, also supported integrated schools, as did Bertrand Aggeret, the white principal of a small school on Ursuline Street.<sup>53</sup>

Ignoring the views of dissenters and buoyed by the comments favorable to separate schools, the board busied itself with establishing black schools. The school board Committee contacted and reported on seventeen black schools. Each of the city's four districts contained at least two.<sup>54</sup> The first and second districts had six schools for blacks, the third district had two, and the fourth district had three. The size, affiliation, and sponsor of each school varied. At least eight of the schools were somehow affiliated with the Freedmen's Bureau, seven were private schools associated with an organization or an individual, and two were church affiliated. The financial support of the Freedmen's Bureau had been reduced substantially. Eleven of the seventeen schools charged tuition, ranging from \$1.50 to \$3.00 a month. The Bureau only provided funds for rent and textbooks at cost to the eight Bureau schools contacted by school officials. The importance of education to black families and the black community was poignantly dramatized by their efforts, from

meager incomes, to pay the cost of their children's education.<sup>55</sup>

The board empowered the Committee on Colored Schools to assume responsibility for securing teachers and locating buildings for the black schools. The board intended to establish the schools within the structure of its system but did not commit itself to employ teachers presently in the black schools they contacted or to use current school buildings. Several newspaper announcements calling for teacher applications and buildings suitable for schools produced good results. Between 17 September and 2 October the board received ninety applications. Slightly less than half of the applicants enjoyed board certification and were eligible for immediate employment. The remaining forty seven had to take a competence exam for certification. Unfortunately, only six of them passed the exam. Still, the board had a sufficient pool of applicants, and the high failure rate did not hinder recruitment.<sup>56</sup>

The work of school officials and the educational aspirations of many blacks merged in October 1867 with the opening of the first public schools for blacks in New Orleans. During the same month, school officials established nine black schools. The Committee on Colored Schools also took measures to gain supervision over black schools still controlled by the Freedmen's Bureau. Committee members met with Ephraim S. Stoddard, City

Director of Freedmen's Colored Schools. At the meeting, described by one participant as "most pleasant and cordial," the conferees reached an agreement to transfer the schools to the Board of School Directors of the City of New Orleans.<sup>57</sup> The transfer, completed on 15 November, included teachers, buildings, furniture, and equipment. The Bureau transferred eleven primary schools to the board which brought the total number of new black public schools to twenty. Average daily attendance at the schools stood at sixteen hundred. Obviously pleased with the initial venture into black education, Superintendent William Rogers pronounced "the results thus far...most satisfactory" and requested authority to "expand departments as necessary." Superintendent Rogers, as well as the black community, expected and anticipated increased black enrollment. And concerned black citizens must have been optimistic when a board member proudly proclaimed "nothing has been omitted to make them [black schools] as efficient as any of the schools of corresponding grade in the city."<sup>58</sup>

By the close of 1867-1868 school year, black enrollment had reached thirty-five hundred and, with consolidations and closings, the number of black schools stood at fifteen. Black parents thought the figures encouraging; some school officials, however, held a different view. Reporting to the school board in May 1868 Assistant Superintendent Alexander Dimitry cautioned the

board that it "may have created a situation that will get out of hand by establishing education for blacks, it fuels interest and expectation." Dimitry added that the number of applications increased daily, which put a strain on existing classroom space. In fact, he disclosed, black students had already been turned away because of overcrowding.<sup>59</sup>

Dimitry's statement on overcrowding might explain the continued effort of blacks to gain entry into white schools. Blacks with few or no Negro features continued to circumvent the system of race segregation. One school, Bayou Road, in the downtown section of the city, reported twenty-nine students suspected of belonging to the "other" race. Even with inclusion, the idea of "passing" remained an option for many blacks. Their actions, in part, reflected the substandard condition of black education. Blacks realized that the white schools received, and would continue to receive, the largest share of the board's educational dollars. For example, the 1868 projected school budget submitted to the City Council totaled 396,900 dollars. School officials planned to allocate only 65,000 dollars of that to black schools.<sup>60</sup> The continued inequitable distribution of school funds gave additional impetus to the push for desegregated schools.

There were no polls conducted in the 1860s and 1870s to ascertain what the masses of black New Orleanians

thought about desegregated schools. The city's black leadership, however, made its views very clear. The most successful black newspaper in the 1860s, the New Orleans Tribune, which articulated the agenda and ideology of black leaders, strongly favored integrated schools. A typical editorial supporting mixed schools declared: "Separation is not equality. The very assignment of schools to certain children on the ground of color is a distinct violation of the first principles of equality."<sup>61</sup> Political developments soon demonstrated that many in the black community agreed.

The refusal of white leaders between 1862 and 1864 to extend suffrage and civil equality to wealthy and educated blacks, who were free before the Civil War, forced free blacks to form a bond with their less fortunate brethren. Therefore, in the 1860s white racism helped unite the black community, and segregation institutionalized it for the next one hundred years. New Orleans' free black population, eighty percent of which was mulattoes, out of necessity linked its political and civil liberation with that of the former slaves. That is not to say, however, that cleavages did not exist within the black community. Blacks, both formerly free and newly freed, carried certain cultural traits into post-Civil War New Orleans, not least of which was a language difference. Many free blacks spoke French exclusively or were bilingual. Indeed, their first

newspaper appeared in French, L'Union. Their relative wealth also separated free blacks from freedmen.

The free blacks initial attempts to distance themselves from the former slaves, however, had less to do with skin color than perceived status based on wealth and education. Free blacks had no more inclination to associate with poor whites than they had to associate with poor blacks. In the main, wealth and education determined leadership in the black community during Reconstruction (and, of course, in the white community as well). Light-complexioned Creoles worked and associated with black-Anglos without dissension related to skin color. Disagreement over tactics, strategy, and conflict over the spoils of victory contributed more to black disunity than color prejudices.

For both the wealthy and the poor, the much awaited, and long campaigned for, black political participation arrived in 1868. Political empowerment enabled black leaders to alter their strategy. Instead of petitioning and supplicating public officials from a position of weakness, black leaders now had the political power to demand. Although black voters did not possess the numerical strength to dominate city and state politics, blacks nevertheless became a force and elected officials had to address their demands. High on the list stood a quality, integrated public school system. Blacks believed



that continued race segregation in the schools reinforced the prevailing system of white superiority and black inferiority. That belief, coupled with the very tangible evidence of discrimination in school expenditures, helped to sustain the desegregation effort.<sup>62</sup>

During one of Louisiana's many constitutional conventions, this one in 1867, blacks managed to secure the inclusion of a measure prohibiting segregated schools. This convention, convened under congressional oversight, contained a total of ninety-eight delegates.<sup>63</sup> Fifty of them were black, with twelve of those from New Orleans.<sup>64</sup> As a group they possessed talent and diverse backgrounds. They represented "firm Republican party men who had support from the party and shared many of the same attributes: education, shrewd natural ability, military service, business ownership, and professional careers."<sup>65</sup>

The convention met in New Orleans on 23 November 1867 and completed its work approximately fifteen weeks later. The delegates, both black and white, brought certain ideological and pragmatic objectives to Mechanics Institute Hall, the convention site, and they hoped to put a definite imprint on Louisiana's future. Ninety-six of the delegates were Republicans, but events during the course of the convention demonstrated the utter uselessness of party labels.<sup>66</sup> The convention, historian Roger Fischer has argued, contained three distinct-factions. Sixteen members

from the country parishes he considered white Unionists, and approximately thirty, mostly non-native whites, he labelled Radicals. The fifty black delegates formed a third faction.<sup>67</sup> It would be a mistake, however, to suggest that any of the factions, especially the black group, was homogeneous. Generally, though, black delegates coalesced around two principles: universal suffrage and elimination of legal distinctions based on race.<sup>68</sup> They hoped to codify in the constitution a new racial era for Louisiana. "Many of the convention delegates had little experience in exercising political power and had worked in an unfriendly atmosphere," observed a student of the subject, but "these limitations did not prevent them from establishing a workable structure of government."<sup>69</sup>

The black delegates played an important role during the convention, chairing or sitting on all of the various committees. They helped to produce one of the more enlightened and democratic constitutions in the state's history.<sup>70</sup> In the true spirit of American constitution-making, compromise and moderation prevailed. Although the provisions granting suffrage to blacks and assuring them equal treatment alarmed many members of the white community, given the mood of Congress expressed through the Reconstruction acts and visible in the form of federal troops, most whites realized black enfranchisement represented a *fait accompli*. Then, too, some whites had

heeded the words of the ex-Confederate war hero, General Pierre G. T. Beauregard who "urged Louisianians to accept the facts that Blacks would vote and work at influencing that vote."<sup>71</sup> Despite the charges of "Africanizing" the state, whites resented the increasing political power of northerners more than the potential voting strength of the freedmen.<sup>72</sup>

Blacks were also interested in leadership, or rather who would lead, but were most concerned with securing "radical" legislation to promote civil and political equality.<sup>73</sup> Prior to and during the constitutional convention, the New Orleans Tribune implored the black community and its leaders to remain focused on the stated objectives of universal suffrage and equality before the law.<sup>74</sup> Commenting on the potential of the convention as an means for change, a Tribune editorial stated:

In a community where we have been so long laboring under a denial of justice, in a community where customs rather than laws perpetuate a constant discrimination between White and Colored children, it is a matter of necessity to provide in the new Constitution for the enforcement of impartial treatment to all men, women and children. This is the peculiar feature that the Constitution of 1867 will have to bear, a feature determined by the very spirit and the perverted customs of the Community for which that Constitution is to be made.<sup>75</sup>

Several of the delegates at the convention wasted little time in attempting to negate, through constitutional enactments, "the perverted customs of the community" regarding separate schools. James Ingraham from Caddo

Parish and Dr. George Wickliffe of New Orleans introduced measures pertaining to public education. Ingraham wanted "the establishment of at least one Free Public School in every parish of the State" and thought black and white students should "attend school in the same school houses."<sup>76</sup> Wickliffe proposed a more comprehensive plan, encompassing higher education, funding, and governance. Wickliffe's "ordinance" contained eleven articles. Article one of his proposal embodied the basic principles of civil equality which blacks hoped to achieve.

The Legislature shall establish free public schools throughout the State, and shall provide for their support by taxation or otherwise. All children of this State between the ages of six and eighteen, shall be admitted to the public schools in common, without distinction to race, color, or previous condition. There shall be no separate schools established for any race.<sup>77</sup>

Without recorded debate, the president of the convention, James G. Taliaferro, referred Ingraham and Wickliffe's proposals to the Committee on Education. This thirteen member committee, chaired by John Lynch, a white northerner and former major in the Union Army, contained six black and seven white delegates.<sup>78</sup> In addition to Lynch, one other white member had recently migrated south, Peter Harper. Enough disagreement existed among the members that it proved impossible for them to reach a consensus. The most important, but not the only, hinderance to unity was the issue of whether or not the state should conduct its public schools "without

distinction of race, color, or previous condition." Four members opposed the idea of desegregated schools and issued a minority report. Two of the four were transplanted northerners, Lynch and Harper, the other two, John Barrett and G. Snider had lived in the South before the war. Their minority report not only revealed their opposition to desegregation, but also to state control of education. For example, they wanted the members of the legislature to have the power to abolish the office of State Superintendent of Education by a two-thirds majority "whenever, in their opinion, said office shall be no longer necessary."<sup>79</sup>

Seven members, five blacks and two whites, signed the majority report. In scope and specificity, the proposal closely paralleled the measures introduced by Wickliffe. It, too, forbade segregation in public schools; created, empowered, and set the salary of a State Superintendent of Education; and mandated the establishment of a state university in New Orleans, a normal school for teacher training, and institutions for persons insane, visually and audio impaired, and mentally deficient.<sup>80</sup> The report was in harmony with the thinking of many black New Orleanians "that in order to have only one nation and one people, we must educate all children in the same public schools."<sup>81</sup>

After receiving the committee's report the entire convention voted on various articles pertaining to education. Most of them aroused little debate or

opposition and gained quick acceptance by the delegates. As anticipated, however, the issue of desegregated schools aroused considerable discussion. By a vote of sixty-one to twelve, the delegates adopted article 134 which, except for two significant changes, mirrored the proposals of Wickliffe and the committee. Unlike Wickliffe's proposal, the bill that passed mandated the opening of "at least one school in every parish throughout the State," and raised the school age limit to twenty-one.<sup>82</sup> All of the black delegates, present and voting, cast their ballots with the majority. Six of the fourteen northerners serving as delegates and the six white southerners voted against Article 134.<sup>83</sup>

Several of the dissenters explained their negative votes. G. Snider of DeSoto Parish maintained Article 134 "will be the great means of defeating the Constitution on the day of ratification." George Dearing refused "to inaugurate a system of schools in the present immoral state of society which I am forced to believe will have such a demoralizing influence." W. Jasper Blackburn, of Claiborne Parish, claimed to be "a friend of all men, and more especially of all children, regardless of race or color," Nonetheless, as a pragmatist he thought mixed schools would "break up our free public school system, or at least virtually exclude the Colored children from all participation therein." Another dissenter, William

McMillen, before the Civil War a resident of Ohio, believed the inclusion of Article 134 would "defeat the organization of a complete and thorough common school system in the State."<sup>84</sup>

The comments of McMillen, Blackburn, Dearing, and others contained a few common threads. They knew that the sixty-one yes votes to the contrary notwithstanding, most whites in New Orleans and throughout the state opposed the idea of mixed schools. Indeed, as Dearing pointed out, many whites opposed free public schools of any type. The delegates who voted no thought that insistence on mixed schools would lead to resistance and a general revolt against public schools. At the time of the convention, only New Orleans had more than a rudimentary public school system. And its system faced chronic financial difficulties. White apathy and hostility against mixed schools, they reasoned, would doom public education. To dissenters the choice was not between mixed schools or separate schools, but between separate schools or no schools. Peter Harper, who had served as a captain in the 99th United States Colored Infantry, summed up that view when he declared: "I vote no, being anxious that a system of schools might be established whereby all the children of the State may be educated, and being confident that this article of the Constitution will do much to defeat a desirable result."<sup>85</sup>

Deference to white southern sensibilities, no matter how pragmatic, and allegiance to the "too soon" theory had by 1867 become a familiar refrain to the black community. In one of several perceptive editorials criticizing the "too soon" advocates, The Tribune raised the rhetorical question, if not now, when? "When will the right time come? Is it, per chance, after we will have separated for ten or twenty years, the two races in different schools and when we shall have realized the separation of this nation into two peoples? The difficulty, then, will be greater than it is today."<sup>86</sup> By the summer of 1867, five years had elapsed since the arrival of federal troops and the euphoric expectations that the Civil War was more than an epic conflict to restore the Union and end slavery, but also a battle to make the principles of democracy and equality a reality for six million black southerners. Five years had passed and many blacks shared the sentiment that "too soon" was rapidly becoming "too late." But hope is the enemy of cynicism, and as the delegates met in Mechanics Hall during the winter of 1867-1868, hope ruled the day. When the delegates finally adopted the constitution, including an article prohibiting separate schools, it appeared that maybe "too soon" had given way to "now."<sup>87</sup> In April 1868, Louisiana voters went to the polls and voted 51,737 to 39,076 in favor of ratifying the constitution.<sup>88</sup>



The constitution provided Louisiana with a new system of government; legislators, however, had to transform the principles embodied in the document into workable laws. Anticipating the eventual adoption and ratification of the constitution and the subsequent call for statewide elections, Republican leaders in early December 1867 expressed a need for a nominating convention to select candidates for state office.<sup>89</sup> The Republicans convened in January 1868 and produced a bi-racial slate of candidates headed by Henry Clay Warmoth for governor and Oscar J. Dunn for lieutenant governor. In selecting Dunn, the party attempted to placate a group of blacks, headed by Dr. Louis C. Roudanez, who had insisted on the selection of a black candidate, Francis E. Dumas, for governor.<sup>90</sup>

To many white New Orleanians, the new state constitution and subsequent laws were too enlightened and democratic, especially the ones pertaining to desegregated schools. Attempts to bring about mixed schools produced massive opposition. The school board refused to institute desegregation and continued to assign students to race specific schools. In fact, opposition forces managed to delay the effective start of desegregation until January 1871.<sup>91</sup>

The city's white press vehemently opposed all efforts that undermined the dominant position of the majority population. But nothing enraged the shapers of public

opinion more than the thought and prospect of integrated schools. Even the sharing of political power failed to elicit the same degree of editorial virulence. None of the newspapers exercised restraint or adopted a wait and see position. "The schools now established in this city have been founded by white people for white children," stated the New Orleans Times.<sup>92</sup> A letter to the Times from "Fair Play" considered it "unjust to us poor people who cannot afford to send our children to private schools," to face the choice of mixed schools or no schools.<sup>93</sup> By 1867, the white press, as well as citizens like, "Fair Play," stated they did not object to the idea of educating blacks, but they wanted it done in separate schools.

Not just the actions of rabid racists, but the caution of white Republicans delayed the start of desegregated schools in New Orleans. Many persons in favor of a unified system of public education urged caution in pursuing desegregated schools. Thomas W. Conway, State Superintendent of Education from 1868 to 1872, was one such individual. Conway gained his position as part of the Republican electoral surge of 1868. A former Chaplain in the Union Army, the New York native had held various positions related to freedmen between 1863 and 1868--at one time serving as Superintendent of the Bureau of Free Labor and Assistant Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau in

Louisiana.<sup>94</sup> He had also aided the struggle for black suffrage.

Conway, along with many others, believed that support for public education rested on fragile ground and the entire common school effort could collapse under the weight of too stringent a demand for mixed schools, especially in the rural parishes. In Conway's opinion, "the question of mixed or separate schools, however important in itself, must be conceded to be secondary to that for which alone schools, either mixed or separate, exist. The end is greater than the means."<sup>95</sup> His views, of course, closely resembled the statements made at the constitutional convention by opponents of school desegregation. Conway thought the public schools suffered because of "the indifference, amounting to virtual opposition, which, in large sections of the state, has obstructed every endeavor for the establishment of public schools."<sup>96</sup> He predicted that time would lessen the prejudices and passions of men and separate schools would suffer the fate of slavery.

The seductive allure of time itself as an agent of positive change did not appeal to New Orleans' black leaders. They consistently and repeatedly demanded mixed schools. Neither the abolition of slavery nor the acquisition of the ballot had resulted from a change of heart among southern whites. Union guns had secured the former and Republican ideology the latter. Armed with the

vote and buoyed by the presence of federal forces, blacks saw little reason for gradualism. Then, too, little evidence existed in New Orleans to indicate a softening of white attitudes towards the freedmen. The haunting spector of the 30 July massacre at Mechanics Hall, where a white mob wounded or killed hundreds of blacks, persisted years after the event.<sup>97</sup> Democrats, pledged to the status quo, controlled city politics, and the white press remained hostile. After fighting for six years to gain the vote and an opportunity for a public education, blacks doubted "time" would favor their cause.

The refusal of the board to institute desegregation eventually made Conway discard his cautious stance on mixed schools. He wrested control of the schools from the board by allocating state education funds to ward boards. The incumbent board unsuccessfully appealed Conway's decision to the Eighth District Court of Judge Henry C. Dibble, "a Northern-born Radical." In March 1871, at the urging of Conway, the state legislature passed a bill that restructured the school board. The new bill created a thirteen member board with one representative from each of the city's thirteen wards and the city's treasurer served as an ex-officio member. The State Board of Education appointed the members and selected Judge Dibble to represent the Second Ward. The new board also contained three blacks--P. B. S. Pinchback, John R. Clay, and Blanc

F. Joubert. With this reorganization and "friends" of black education in power, the administrative impediment to desegregation disappeared.<sup>98</sup>

In January 1871 the experiment in desegregated education began. Just how many schools actually had students of both races is impossible to determine. During this period, school officials reported enrollemnt figures without regard to race. Moreover, there are no extant minutes of the school board for the period July 1869 to January 1875. Comments by contemporaries, however, indicate that at least one-third of the public schools experienced some desegregation between 1869 and 1877.<sup>99</sup> "Some of the schools of the city are almost wholly white, others are partially mixed, while some of the best grammar schools are about half and half," reported a Methodist journal, "Colored scholars are in our high schools, and also in our State Normal School."<sup>100</sup> Several months later the Weekly Louisianian stated that one-third of the schools were mixed.<sup>101</sup> Interest by blacks in desegregated schools remained high throughout the period.

The number of blacks attending desegregated schools would have been higher if school officials had elected to assign students to specific schools. Instead, school officials instituted an open admission plan.<sup>102</sup> Not realizing the depth of desegregationist sentiment within the black community, school officials hoped their freedom

of choice policy would keep desegregation to a minimum. The open admission policy, however, failed to thwart desegregation. A knowledgeable student on the subject placed the number of black students who attended desegregated schools at 500 to 1,000.<sup>103</sup>

In a study on New Orleans school desegregation during Reconstruction, Louis Harlan identified twenty-one to twenty-five schools attended by both races.<sup>104</sup> Districts two through seven contained eighteen of the desegregated schools in 1872.<sup>105</sup> The concentration of desegregated schools in slightly less than half of the city's thirteen representative districts reflected the residential pattern of the black community. Except for the three high schools opened to students from throughout the city, blacks attended desegregated schools located in their neighborhoods. The cost of transportation, if available at all, caused most students, black and white, to attend schools close to home.

Black leaders championed desegregated schools because they wanted racial distinctions eliminated from post-Civil War society. Enfranchisement gave them an opportunity to transform their ideals into reality; New Orleans maintained desegregated schools from 1871 to 1877. Blacks knew, and later events demonstrated, that desegregated schools and the other vestiges of civil equality depended on the retention of suffrage. Blacks also knew that most whites

wanted them removed from the political arena. As a result blacks welcomed any sign that indicated a softening of white opinion on matters of suffrage and civil equality. During this period blacks did find some whites who expressed a willingness to endorse black suffrage and civil equality.

By 1873 desegregated schools had not led to better race relations, rather a temporary and slight improvement in race relations helped sustain the mixed school idea.<sup>106</sup> The improvement grew out of the convergence of politics and education. Political expediency, not a change in attitude, forced some white leaders to reduce their attacks on desegregated education. White New Orleanians and the city's white press "actually sought to win the Negro's vote on a basis of recognizing his civil rights," explained one historian.<sup>107</sup> Their acquiescence in an issue blacks viewed as a litmus test of the sincerity of whites' intention to treat blacks as equals made an attempted black-white political coalition possible in the 1870s.

The effort at compromise and conciliation culminated in the Unification Movement of 1873. Influential white business leaders believed that continued racial polarization reflected in disputed elections and sporadic violence would lead to the state's ruin. Indeed, many thought the state under Republican party rule had long since entered a state of decay.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, most whites

blamed northern opportunists for what they considered rampant political corruption and mismanagement. Business leaders, acting on the assumption that "the great port metropolis needed political stability to achieve economic prosperity" attempted, albeit briefly, to charter a new course in New Orleans' race relations.<sup>109</sup> Isaac N. Marks, a wealthy New Orleanian with diverse business interests, emerged as one of the leaders of the movement. Other white leaders included General P. G. T. Beauregard, James I. Day, and Judge William M. Randolph.<sup>110</sup>

Attempts at "unification," of course, had to include the participation of blacks. Concerned about the level of violence and racial animosity, many black leaders endorsed and supported the Unification Movement. Louis C. Roudanez, a black physician and recognized leader in the black community, pledged his support.<sup>111</sup> In addition to Roudanez, other black participants included Aristide Mary, Lieutenant Governor Caesar C. Antoine, and George Y. Kelso, a state senator.<sup>112</sup> Not all Republicans were enthusiastic about the movement's potential, though. The New Orleans Republican, for example, questioned the wisdom of joining any political movement other than the Republican Party.<sup>113</sup> With all of its alleged faults and political vices, the Republican Party, in the opinion of many blacks, represented the party of liberation and black enfranchisement. They remained reluctant to venture into uncharted waters. The



architects and supporters of the unification plan thought they had developed the perfect means to achieve political peace and economic prosperity in post-Civil War Louisiana. And perhaps they had. After several months of discussion and planning, a citizen's committee comprised of fifty black and fifty white leaders--a racial composition strikingly similar to that of the 1867-1868 Constitutional Convention--presented its list of recommendations to the public.<sup>114</sup> As a citizen committee devoid of legal legitimacy, the Committee of One Hundred sought widespread public support and presented its views as "An Appeal for the Unification of the People of Louisiana."<sup>115</sup> Commenting on the proposals contained in the "appeal," one scholar noted, "no group of Southerners in the Reconstruction era was willing to go farther in harmonizing race relations than the authors of this document...."<sup>116</sup> The unifers hoped to secure black support for a political alliance dedicated to honest government, free from out of state influence. In return, blacks would be guaranteed political and civil equality.<sup>117</sup>

The Unification Movement, centered in the city and led primarily by New Orleanians, received little support outside the area.<sup>118</sup> Except for a well attended mass meeting on 15 July 1873, the Movement failed to produce a viable black-white political coalition. Ushered in during the promise of spring, the Movement losts its momentum

after the July meeting. Why did the Movement fail? Blacks doubted the ability of white leaders to make good on their promises. The shouts of one white participant at the meeting questioning whether Marks would send his children to mixed schools did not allay their fears. The shouting spectator, more than Marks, reflected the sentiments of white New Orleans. The primary cause of the Movements' failure, however, rested with the refusal of whites to accept racial equality.<sup>119</sup> The rejection of the principles of equality also affected black education.

The same fear of, or better aversion to, racial equality also undergirded white opposition to desegregated schools. The conservative disavowal of violence and other extra-legal means of popular protest eventually waned in the face of the seemingly intransigent radical Republican governments. Failure to reach a quick settlement during the disputed state elections in 1872 resulted in the establishment of rival governments, both claiming legitimacy.<sup>120</sup> Para-military gatherings became an accepted form of political expression. The White League grew in strength and boldness, and the level of violence increased during the spring and summer of 1874.<sup>121</sup> The term massacre became a familiar one to the black community. In September 1874, at the "Battle of Canal Street," the tide turned perceptively and permanently in the direction of the White League and the Democrats.<sup>122</sup> Within that milieu of violence

and distrust the public schools existed, some still desegregated.<sup>123</sup>

To many black New Orleanians, desegregated schools represented the promise of black enfranchisement and civil equality. To whites they illustrated its perils. On 14 December 1874 some whites turned to mob violence to accomplish what they could not as yet do legally--resegregate the schools. Initial signs of unrest occurred at the Girls Upper High School located in the uptown section (above Canal Street) of the city. Several black students and their teachers from Coliseum School came to the school to take their high school entrance exams. The principal refused to allow them to do so, stating it violated a directive she had received from Superintendent Charles Boothby. The students, all white, demonstrated their agreement with the principal by threatening to boycott the school until they received assurances that school officials would not admit blacks. The graduating seniors went even further and signed a petition vowing not to accept their diplomas until school officials settled the matter.<sup>124</sup>

The disturbance at Girls' Upper High School quickly spread, fueled by the white press. On 15 December, a group of men physically attacked Superintendent Boothby for allegedly insulting several students from Girls' Upper High. Boothby denied the accusation, and the principal,

teachers, and students at Girls' Upper High corroborated his statement. As Superintendent of the Schools, Boothby had become a prime target for whites who were dissatisfied with desegregated schools. The attack resulted from frustration, and the alledged insult to female students, was merely an excuse.<sup>125</sup>

Blacks at several other schools also experienced violent manifestations of white discontent. When black students attempted to apply at Boys' High School, a group of whites prevented it. By this time the whites, most of them students, had gained approving names like "youthful regulators" and "young board of directors," from the white press. Spurred on by their new notoriety, the group visited the Girls' Lower High School, located below Canal Street, and attempted to expel the black students in attendance (in a community where many blacks were indistinguishable from whites, the young toughs had a difficult task determining racial identity).<sup>126</sup> They succeeded in disrupting the attempts of blacks to enter or remain in the high schools. Their success then led to similar disturbances at several primary and grammar schools, and continued white harassment led eventually to fights between blacks and whites.<sup>127</sup>

During the several days of unrest, the police could not restore order; faced with the prospect of escalating violence, the school board closed the schools. They

reopened on 11 January 1875 amid relative calm. The board thought it wise to give Superintendent Boothby authority to close any school threatened with disturbances.<sup>128</sup> Minor and sporadic clashes continued throughout the remainder of the school year, but there is no evidence that Boothby closed any of the schools.<sup>129</sup> He did contend, however, that "the violent attacks upon many of our schools in December," contributed to a higher than normal rate of absenteeism in January and February.<sup>130</sup> New Orleans' experiment in desegregated schools, unique to the South, continued despite the upsurge in violence in December 1874. Some schools remained desegregated until the administration of Governor Francis T. Nicholls.

Did the reality of the desegregated system equal the expectations blacks had for the system? Did black students in fact receive a "better" education in mixed schools? The available evidence supports a qualified yes to these questions. During the period of desegregation, blacks attended all of the city's high schools. After the absorption of the Freedmen's Bureau schools, and before effective desegregation, the city only provided blacks with schools through the grammar level. Moreover, "nearly all the mixed schools were classified as Grammar A Schools, which had more teachers and a higher salary scale, and sent more graduates to the high schools than the Grammar B Schools and Primary schools."<sup>131</sup> Desegregation, at least in

theory and to a degree in practice, expanded over three-fold the number of schools available to blacks.

Inclusion into the public school system did not, of course, eliminate the myriad of problems related to black education. Many black students, like their white counterparts, attended substandard, overcrowded, ill-equipped schools, often receiving instruction from unqualified teachers. During Reconstruction, the entire system of education in Louisiana was in an experimental stage, made more difficult by the exigencies of war and its aftermath. As recently as 1862, New Orleans possessed four distinct school systems, representing the city's four municipal districts. Only the Second Municipal district had attempted to provide adequate funds for its schools.

During Reconstruction, opposition to taxes for education increased as charges of political corruption became more frequent and vitriolic.<sup>132</sup> Historian Horace Mann Bond's contention that, "In Louisiana, the scarcity of funds for operating the schools resulted in an almost complete absence of public funds outside of the large cities," gave too much credit to New Orleans.<sup>133</sup> In truth, the situation in New Orleans was only slightly better than in the rural parishes. Each of the three superintendents often commented on the lack of school revenues. "For many years the appropriations for public education in this city--always inadequate--have remained about the same, in

disregard of the increase of population," lamented one of them, John B. Carter.<sup>134</sup>

During the period of school desegregation, school officials focused on the many problems associated with administering a growing school system chronically short of revenues. Black leaders and parents also concerned themselves with the larger issue of how to provide the city with good public schools.<sup>135</sup> Enough opposition to the mixed school idea remained, necessitating constant vigilance and defense of the experiment in desegregated education.

The organization of the New Orleans Schools remained the same throughout the 1860s and 1870s, consisting of primary, grammar, and high schools. The overwhelming majority of students attended primary or grammar schools. To meet the demand for them, the city's thirteen districts contained at least two, or often, more schools. For example, in 1872, nine of the thirteen districts had four or more grammar or primary schools. The Twelfth District possessed the most schools, twelve, and had the third largest school age population.<sup>136</sup> Only three schools offered instruction beyond the grammar grade level. Enrollment throughout the period decreased at the higher grade levels. During the 1872-1873 school year, for example, 16,259 of the 19,747 primary and grammar students were between the ages of six and twelve.<sup>137</sup>

**Table 2****Total Enrollment in the New Orleans Public Schools, 1867-1875<sup>138</sup>**

Year	Black	White	Total
1867	4,378	17,190	21,568
1868	3,626	18,379	22,005
1869	5,225	18,059	23,284
1870			17,142
1871			19,091
1872			19,819
1873			20,263
1874			25,215
1875			26,251



Many students entered school house doors for the first time because of the educational initiatives of the 1860s and 1870s. State Superintendent of Education, William G. Brown expressed the new emphasis on universal education, "There is no force as powerful to lift mankind from a position of dependence and narrow, circumscribed life as education. It is the laborers' faithful friend and counselor, standing sentinel to guard his liberties, to render a helping hand in the hour of perplexity and doubt, the good genius that enables him to overcome the difficulties and embarrassments of the hour, and achieve success."<sup>139</sup> Brown's comments represented an appreciation of the role education could play in the development of the black community. When Brown left office in 1877 blacks had taken the first steps toward community development and educational attainment. It was already apparent, however, that each succeeding step would be met with resistance. The first stage of educational attainment had involved a struggle for inclusion and desegregation; the next stage involved the contest to decide blacks' "proper place."

## **Chapter Two**

### **Education and the Struggle for Blacks' Proper Place, 1877-1900**

Recent scholarship has provided a corrective to the belief that the Hayes-Tilden election of 1877 represented a sharp and abrupt change in the decade-old program of Congressional Reconstruction. Hayes' decision to withdraw the last of the federal troops from the South was only one of many significant events that helped return the South to "home-rule." Before 1877 even the staunchest interventionist realized, given the level of white hostility and violence, it would take a major commitment by the federal government to sustain effective black political participation. The nation's leaders, however, thought it best to return the "Negro Question" to the region where the problem resided--the South. Northerners, as well as southerners, turned their attention to what they considered a more important agenda, the building of an industrialized North and a New South with an industrial emphasis. The importance of protecting the civil rights of blacks paled in importance by comparison.<sup>1</sup>

In the mid-1870s public interest in education declined as city leaders--both black and white--concentrated on the raging battle for political control of the city. The competing groups camouflaged themselves with

party labels, but they fought over whether newly enfranchised blacks would continue meaningful political participation. The black community, led by such political stalwarts as P.B.S. Pinchback and C. C. Antoine, eventually lost the battle for political participation and with it some of the educational momentum generated between 1868 and 1877.<sup>2</sup>

Blacks in general, and those in New Orleans in particular, did not passively acquiesce in the decision to reduce them to an inferior status in society. Throughout the last two decades of the nineteenth century, they continued their attempts to vote and to influence political decisions. Nevertheless, the status of blacks deteriorated in small increments, not in one climactic fall. More than the decline in political participation, however, adversely affected black education. The amount of money spent on black schools depended on the health of the city's economy, the attitude of white political leaders, and the level of protest by black leaders and parents.<sup>3</sup> Black education, in other words, remained hostage to white political supremacy, inadequate revenues for the entire system, and racist thought concerning the proper level of education for blacks.

The resolution of Louisiana's second disputed election of the decade brought, along with "home rule," Robert M. Lusher back into office as State Superintendent of

Education, replacing William G. Brown. During the period of the Republican ascendancy, Lusher had served as Louisiana's agent for the Peabody Fund and administered the fund to finance a private school system for whites.<sup>4</sup> He returned to public office in 1877 determined to amend "the anomalous provisions of Articles 135 and 136 of the State Constitution." With the Democrats in power Lusher expressed confidence that the new legislature would not "delay in replacing these articles by more acceptable provisions for the mental instruction and moral training of the two races, in separate schools, with equal facilities and advantages for both."<sup>5</sup>

Lusher, described by one scholar as a "dogmatic white supremacist," had no intention of providing blacks with equal school facilities.<sup>6</sup> In his estimation blacks should receive, at most, a primary school education in preparation for employment as unskilled workers. He was less interested in providing equal education than he was in implementing resegregation. Lusher believed "that nine-tenths of our colored fellow citizens prefer separate schools for the education of their children, and that the desire to enter white schools, in contravention of the natural law, is peculiar to children of mixed white and colored blood, whose parents have always been free."<sup>7</sup> To satisfy the black Creoles, who he thought did not want to associate with dark-skinned blacks, Lusher proposed the

establishment of a three tiered school system with separate schools for whites, black creoles, and blacks.<sup>8</sup> Operating a dual system would prove costly enough and the three tiered system never took hold.

Lusher directed his attention to New Orleans, where desegregation still existed. Before Lusher could implement his plan of school segregation he had to remove the incumbent school board whose members had blocked "the sunlight of peace and reconciliation," by allowing mixed schools.<sup>9</sup> Using the appointive power contained in a new school act of March 1877 and following recommendations made by the state legislature, Lusher appointed eight members to the new twenty member school board. The other twelve members were named by the Board of Administrators (Commission Council). The school superintendent and the city treasurer served as ex-officio members. Four of the new members were black--George H. Fayerweather, Louis A. Martinet, Joseph A. Craig, and Pascal M. Tourne. All of them except Craig had received state appointments.<sup>10</sup> During their bid for control of state government, the Democratic "Redeemers" had promised to assure continued black participation in politics. They made it clear, however, that black participation would be minor.<sup>11</sup> The four black appointees represented an attempt by the Democrats to keep their promise, at least for a time.

The new board organized on 4 April 1877 and elected Thomas J. Semmes president. It named William O. Rogers Superintendent, a post he had held in the 1860s. Rogers, like Semmes, and most of the board members, wanted the schools resegregated as soon as possible. But certain problems, primarily a lack of revenues, forced them to retain mixed schools until the end of the school year. They spent the next two months trying to operate the school system on a 25,000 dollar a month budget.<sup>12</sup>

On 6 June board member Archibald Mitchell moved "that a committee of three be appointed, who in conjunction with the superintendent shall report at their earliest convenience what changes may be necessary to effect a more thorough discipline in the Public Schools...."<sup>13</sup>

Mitchell's motion may have been vague, but his colleagues understood its intent. The appeal for a "more thorough discipline" was actually a call to resegregate the schools.

President Semmes appointed Mitchell, Joseph Collins, and Robert Bartley to the committee. Less than three weeks later the committee had completed its report.

At a special meeting on 22 June the board sought to codify white sentiment for a racially segregated school system. Mitchell outlined the rationale for it in his committee's report to the board. "Personal observation and universal testimony," he stated, "concur to establish the fact that public education has greatly deteriorated since

colored and white children were admitted indiscriminately into the same schools." Detrimental effects of desegregated schools, the committee members contended, included a decline in white enrollment since white parents refused to send their children to desegregated schools. Blacks also suffered because of the "turbulent spirit" of whites, manifested most demonstratively in the school disturbances of December 1874. Mitchell was "not reluctant to recommend separation because [he] believe[d]...both races favor[ed] separate schools." To give added weight to their proposal the committee members pointed out that they believed northern cities such as New York, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati also had separate schools.<sup>14</sup>

Desegregated schools were not the only practice under attack at the special meeting. To their horror, supporters of public education learned that the same three member committee recommended the discontinuation of all high schools. The committee offered the familiar reason for such a drastic step--a lack of funds. But Mitchell went on to explain that "whilst recommending the measure as a financial necessity alone we do not deem it improper to state that we do not regard our High Schools as indispensable requisite to an efficient system of public education, and are inclined to believe that teaching advanced studies at the public expense is an abuse of our educational system."<sup>15</sup> The committee's report and

Mitchell's statement in support of closing the high schools indicated the lack of broad based support for public education in the city of New Orleans. The lack of financial support by the community hampered the entire educational system, especially the educational opportunities for blacks. The board, however, decided to defer action on the two proposals until the next meeting.<sup>16</sup>

Black leaders responded to the proposal to resegment the schools by appealing to Governor Nicholls to intervene before the board voted. Aristide Mary, a black landowner who had been active in the struggle for suffrage and civil rights, led a delegation of blacks who met with the governor. The group denounced the board's plan, but Nicholls simply replied that his pledge to promote black equality did not include support for desegregation. Frustrated in their attempt to gain the support of Nicholls, black leaders tried a more direct approach.<sup>18</sup>

When the board met on 3 July 1877, a large delegation of blacks attended and presented a lengthy petition protesting separate schools. Again, Mary provided leadership and counsel to the black protestors. The board received the petition, took no action on it, and proceeded with its agenda. Without rancor or rhetoric, the spokesman for the segregationist forces, Archibald Mitchell, offered a motion to resegment the races:

Whereas: This board, in the performance of its paramount duty; which is to give the best education possible with the means at its disposal



to the whole population, without regard to race, color or previous condition, is assured that this end can be best attained by educating the different races in separate schools.<sup>19</sup>

The proposal to resegregate the schools passed by a vote of fifteen to three. Three of the black members cast the only dissenting votes--Martinet, Fayerweather, and Tourne. The other black member, Joseph Craig, voted with the majority.<sup>20</sup> Why did Craig vote to end the experiment with mixed schools? Neither Craig, nor any other member, gave a reason for his vote so a definitive answer remains elusive, but available evidence suggests one or two plausible reasons. Craig supported the Democratic Party and according to one source was the founder of a "colored conservative club."<sup>21</sup> The term "conservative" in Craig's case probably meant an acceptance of the "Redeemers" pledge of peace between the races based on a policy of "separate but equal." Craig's vote could have reflected the belief that separate schools would lead to improved race relations. On the other hand, his vote may have been merely a gesture to the politicians that placed him on the board.<sup>22</sup>

Craig's vote, of course, had no influence on the final decisions to resegregate the schools. Even if blacks had voted as a "block" they were, as Governor Nicholls aptly phrased it, "sandwiched in" without control. The significance of Craig's vote lies outside the school board and its decision to resegregate the schools, but within the

development of the black community. For over a decade black leaders had waged a battle for suffrage, civil equality, and acceptance into the larger society. Some of their deeds during Reconstruction were petty and venal, but the articulated ideology that made it possible for them to serve had its tap-roots deep into basic American values--democracy, equal opportunity, and equality before the law. The withdrawal of federal troops, its impact powerfully more symbolic than real, and the inauguration of the Nicholls administration presented the black community with its first ideological crisis. At what point should principles give way to pragmatism? Craig's vote signaled the beginning of that ideological struggle. He had apparently chosen not to fight on principle but to seek a practical accord with white supremacists. But the men of principle had not yet surrendered the field.

The board acted on its segregation motion during the summer recess, therefore, concerned black leaders had time to formulate a response. It is difficult to assess how many blacks favored desegregated schools or accepted the pragmatism implicit in Craig's vote. At least two views existed within the community. Many blacks had never enjoyed the benefits associated with desegregated schools. At most only twenty to twenty-five percent of black students attended mixed schools. Yet all had suffered verbal abuse, mob intimidation, and physical violence in

the cause of desegregation. Those who had gained little if anything from integration, but still suffered as much from white violence, considered segregation as a possible prerequisite to ending race-related violence. Therefore, some blacks welcomed the return to segregated schools, though were neither as vocal nor as organized as those who remained committed to the battle for an integrated society.<sup>23</sup>

Blacks held several meetings throughout the city in response to what they considered a crisis. According to the Weekly Louisianian, a local black newspaper, attendance at the meetings was "large and enthusiastic." The participants adopted resolutions condemning the board for violating the 1868 State Constitution that had prohibited the establishment of separate schools. Black leaders thought they had legitimate grounds for legal action and decided to contest the board's decision in court. Attorneys filed a suit in the Sixth District Court on behalf of Paul Trevigne, a black teacher, former editor of L'Union, and former school board member.<sup>24</sup> The presiding judge, N. H. Rightor, issued a temporary restraining order forbidding the school board from proceeding with the resegregation plan.<sup>25</sup>

On 23 October 1877, however, Judge Rightor lifted the restraining order and dismissed Trevigne's suit. He ruled that Trevigne had failed to show personal injury and had

filed the suit after the board had resegregated the schools. By using these grounds to dismiss the suit, Judge Rightor skirted the central issue in the case--the constitutionality of the board's plan. Article 135 of the 1868 Constitution forbade separate schools, yet the school board had adopted and instituted measures to accomplish what the constitution would not allow. Rightor chose not to attempt the difficult task of reconciling law with community sentiment. The next judge to hear a similar case from the black community displayed no such misgiving.<sup>26</sup>

Arnold Bertonneau, a black merchant, Civil War veteran, and delegate to the 1867-1868 Constitutional Convention, also filed a suit opposing resegregation.<sup>27</sup> Bertonneau attempted to avoid the legal fate of Trevigne by demonstrating specific injury from the school board's policy. He attempted to register his children in the Fillmore School without success and in his suit charged the school board and its agents with violating his civil rights, the Fourteenth Amendment, and Article 135 of the State Constitution.<sup>28</sup>

Judge W. B. Woods did not reach a decision until fifteen months later; in the meantime the black and white communities argued the merits of the case in the press. The New Orleans Times, anti-black but without the virulence of the New Orleans Daily States, came out forcefully in favor of separate schools.<sup>29</sup> The Times' editors thought

Pinchback had orchestrated the continued struggle for mixed schools and speculated that he was "too shrewd a man to cherish such an absurd and impractical scheme, too adroit and frugal a politician to waste time in pursuit of a chimera."<sup>30</sup> The combative and equally committed Pinchback, through his newspaper, the Louisianian, replied that, "As citizens and taxpayers entitled to the protection of the courts, we are therein to prevent the perpetuation of a great wrong upon us. . . ." Articulating the hopes of many blacks, Pinchback optimistically stated, "we do not despair of ultimate success."<sup>31</sup>

In February 1879 Judge Woods reached his decision in favor of the school board. The establishment of separate schools based on race was not a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment, according to Judge Woods. He compared racial separation in schools to sex separation, a widely accepted practice. Under the desegregation policy adopted by the board, "both races are treated precisely alike. White children and colored children are compelled to attend different schools. That is all. The State, while conceding equal privileges and advantages to both races, has the right to manage its schools in the manner which in its judgement will best promote the interest of all."<sup>32</sup> Judge Wood cited an Ohio law, upheld by the Ohio Supreme Court, that required separate schools. The Daily Picayune agreed and provided an extension to the judge's remarks:

". . . the constitution of the United States does not create schools or confer on any body any right in any school in any state. Hence, the constitution of the United States cannot be invoked to set aside or modify any regulations on the subject of education that the State may choose to make."<sup>33</sup> The courts eventually extended that belief to cover all areas of race relations in the South.

The struggle for desegregated schools revealed some interesting truths about race relations, politics, and the role of education in post-Reconstruction New Orleans. The argument that separate schools represented inferior schools would have to await the bitter lesson of experience. Black efforts at desegregation at this time centered on the proposition that the schools should serve as an example of racial harmony to the larger community.<sup>34</sup> "Every discrimination which is maintained against us is a blow upon us," the editor of the Tribune had argued, "and will have an influence to postpone the realization of equality before the law and impartial protection to our people."<sup>35</sup> Separate schools represented the antithesis of a nation of "one people," the Reconstruction goal of the black community.

Whites also interpreted desegregated schools as a harbinger of a nation of "one people," and that is why they fought to eliminate them. Any type of interaction between the races that failed to demonstrate or buttress white

supremacy, whites viewed as an attempt by blacks to gain social equality. Less than one generation removed from the institution of slavery, whites had little tolerance for the twin evils of mixed schools and social equality. The state elections in 1876 failed to answer all of the political and social questions of the day, but did lead to a white consensus on the separation of the races. Although Archibald Mitchell, other school officials, and city leaders expressed a willingness to provide blacks with educational opportunities, they emphatically rejected desegregated schools.

Race relations, politics, and education remained intertwined during this period, with improved black education inextricably dependent on the retention of effective black suffrage and a degree of racial harmony within the community. Race relations, but more important, the education blacks received, declined over time: 1877 marked a great departure but not a sudden end. Before the complete ascendancy of the "radical racists" in the 1890s, blacks continued to vote, though not always freely.<sup>36</sup> Blacks continued to hold elective and appointive offices until the turn of the century. The numbers decreased significantly, however, in the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, their presence and the black vote helped to forestall the harsher manifestations of white supremacy that surfaced in the 1890s and reigned until the 1940s.<sup>38</sup>

The State Constitution of 1879, enacted after the Redeemers' gained power, did not place any specific disabilities on black suffrage and the delegates passed a resolution "assuring the Negro that his newly acquired rights would not be jeopardized or imparied."<sup>39</sup> Nearly two decades would pass before Louisiana voters gained another opportunity to express their views on the subject. Several provisions in the 1879 Constitution affected the black community, two of them related to education. The constitution addressed the issue of desegregated elementary and secondary schools by making no reference to them at all.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, the constitution contained a race-specific article (231) regarding higher education. Rather than use a constitutional measure to exclude blacks from the existing universities attended by whites, it stipulated that, "The General Assembly shall also establish in the city of New Orleans a university for the education of persons of color; provide for its proper government, and shall make an annual appropriation of not less than five thousand dollars nor more than ten thousand dollars for its maintenance and support."<sup>41</sup>

In 1880 lawmakers passed the necessary enabling legislation and Southern University, nurtured into existence by black politicians P.B.S. Pinchback and T. T. Allain, opened in 1881 as a state university for blacks. It opened at a time when many blacks had abandoned the



belief that a racially integrated society could exist in the South. Southern University represented an attempt by some blacks to live and adjust in the post-Reconstruction South. For nearly four decades Southern would provide black New Orleanians with their only source of public secondary education. Integrationist sentiment lingered, however, and some prominent blacks assailed Pinchback for his support of Southern.<sup>42</sup> Pinchback faced the issue squarely and admitted that establishment and attendance at Southern "will deprive us of a great part of our civil rights." Nonetheless, in words strikingly similar to those of W.E.B. DuBois over a half century later, Pinchback attempted to justify his position. "However true this may be," he asserted, "it is but sentimental when we recognize the fact, that there is not in this state, nay, I venture to say in the whole South a single institution of learning where the colored and white children are educated together....What we want is education, whether it be acquired in a mixed or colored school it must be had...."<sup>43</sup>

Pinchback's pragmatic pronouncements failed to convince his critics. Some opponents believed that the acquiescence of black delegates at the Convention gave "the appearance of consenting to their own debasement." Support for Southern, they charged, "helped to create a system they knew would deprive the black children of the advantage of

education available to other children in the state." Much of the criticism against Pinchback and other black supporters of Article 231 came from the black Creole community. Aristide Mary referred to the Article as the "Black League in the Constitution."<sup>44</sup> Mary and other critics argued "that this line of demarcation, once established, chiefly by their consent, would serve as the basis and the pretext for other measures contrary to the interests and rights of our citizens."<sup>45</sup> Both groups had seen the future; the quarrel between them centered on how best to respond.

The immediate effect of "home rule" on black education was a return to segregated schools amidst pronouncements of equal facilities. School officials provided secondary education to blacks by conducting a high school in a rented building. Although separated, black students in the high school classes had "skillful and experienced teachers, and the school appear[ed] to be steadily increasing in favor among the class which it is designed to benefit," Superintendent Rogers stated.<sup>46</sup> Sixteen blacks enrolled in the secondary school that first year and twenty-five the next. Attendance at the school declined during the 1879-1880 school year, and the board discontinued secondary education for blacks.<sup>47</sup>

The decision to abolish the black high school could be excused as wise and prudent because of the reduction of

students. Indeed, school board members often defended their actions by pointing out that few blacks had taken advantage of high school facilities when they were available. But the board's refusal in subsequent years to reestablish the school when demand increased demonstrated its failure to recognize the changing educational needs of the black community. Nevertheless, even after the public high school closed, blacks did have access to a high school education. Unlike their counterparts in many other areas, black New Orleanians benefited from the establishment of several colleges founded to educate the freedmen. Of the four black colleges established in the two decades after the Civil War--New Orleans, Leland, Southern, and Straight Universities--Southern was the only public college.<sup>48</sup>

Throughout their early existence the colleges attempted to address centuries of black educational neglect and provided instruction beginning at the primary school level.<sup>49</sup>

Such alternatives to public education relieved some of the pressure on school officials to enhance educational opportunities for blacks. Several years after discontinuing the black high school, school officials cooperated with Southern University to have eligible public school children transferred to Southern for secondary work. The agreement developed from a series of meetings between members of the Southern Board of Trustees and school board members. Southern officials agreed to admit students who

had completed the sixth or seventh grade and to stop admitting students below that level. The agreement worked to the advantage of the board, since it eliminated the need for the board to offer secondary education to blacks. The board maintained some control over admission to Southern by requiring Southern officials to give entrance examinations only to students recommended by the superintendent. The board also exercised influence by apparently subsidizing the tuition of students who entered Southern after completing grammar school. The first group of students admitted to Southern under the new arrangement started school in January 1885.<sup>50</sup>

Perhaps the black community believed that the secondary facilities provided by several colleges adequately met its needs. Before the turn of the century the school board received few petitions or communications from black citizens complaining about inadequate high school facilities. In the early twentieth century the upsurge in petitions requesting a black high school represented the black community's response to the declining availability of private secondary education.<sup>51</sup> The decline occurred, in part, because of the desire of the area black colleges to become colleges in fact as well as in name. As the colleges grew they started to offer and emphasize a college level course of study. They no longer wanted to provide extensive work at the high school level. Their

reorientation also reflected the moderate, but nonetheless discernible, growth in black educational advancement. A final factor in the changed focus of the black colleges was the growing belief that the black community needed a trained professional class of teachers, ministers, physicians, and lawyers.<sup>52</sup>

The average black, however, entertained no such lofty professional goals. Obtaining a grammar school education constituted a formidable enough quest. Between 1877 and 1900 much of the collective energy of the black community centered on public education at the primary and grammar grades. The larger community shared the same concern. Therefore, education and public school policy were main points of interest in the city. Black leaders knew that if white education suffered black education would fare much worse. They watched and sympathized with white community leaders as they attempted to administer a school system chronically short of money. Revenues for the schools came from state and city appropriations, and the poll tax.<sup>53</sup> The board rarely received the amount requested in its budget to the city council. The poll tax, the only tax specifically dedicated to education, accounted for a small percentage of the annual budget. For example, in 1878 the poll tax collected only totaled \$746.25. New Orleanians paid the poll tax reluctantly, when they paid it at all.

The superintendents who held office during this period spoke often of the need for additional school revenues. "Our schools cannot be conducted successfully," Superintendent Rogers disclosed, "as now organized, upon uncertain revenues."<sup>55</sup> In the Democrats' zeal to undo the work of the Republicans, monies appropriated to education plummeted.<sup>56</sup> The school budget for a typical year during Reconstruction, 1 July 1874 to 30 June 1875, was \$480,496. In December 1877, Rogers submitted the first budget under the Democrats to the commission council requesting \$303,678. Were the Democrats more efficient? No, the saving came from a 40 percent reduction in teachers' salaries.<sup>57</sup> An inadequately financed educational system victimized not just blacks but the entire community; blacks suffered disproportionately, but they did not suffer alone.

**Table 3**  
**Estimated or Actual Expenditures for Selected Years<sup>58</sup>**

Year	Expenditure
1874	479,554
1877	303,687
1882	279,316
1886	305,536

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Annual Budget, 1882<sup>59</sup>

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Teachers Salaries	\$229,006.45
Superintendent's Office	4,200.00
Officers of the Bd., Secy.	3,000.00
Custodians	13,213.00
Fuel	1,510.75
Rent	7,945.85
Repairs	9,992.45
Supplies and Current Expenses	6,541.20
Sites and Buildings	2,500.00
Furniture	1,406.45
Total	279,316.15

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With little financial support from either the city or the state, the school system passed through one financial crisis after another. Insufficient school revenues worked a tremendous hardship on the teachers. They labored for small salaries that sometimes fluctuated annually and they often went months without any compensation. For example, New Orleans teachers received no pay between September and December 1878. The next year brought little relief as they went from October 1879 to March 1880 without pay. The board attempted to borrow fifty thousand dollars to meet the January and February payrolls for 1880 but was unable to. The sad litany of unmet payrolls continued throughout the 1880s.<sup>60</sup>

Financial problems affected more than the salaries of school teachers. The lack of revenues often forced school officials to postpone needed repairs to deteriorating buildings. Although the city owned the school buildings, the mayor and council members contended that the school board was responsible for their maintenance and repairs. School officials, on the other hand, believed the responsibility rested with the city and constantly asked council members for money to make repairs. Their requests usually fell on unreceptive ears because the city also had pressing budget problems.<sup>61</sup> An occasional infusion of cash and a upsurge in civic pride sometimes led to a favorable response, though. School board members employed a more



direct but just as ineffective approach in August 1877. In a letter to the mayor and Commission Council, they outlined the urgent maintenance needs of many of the schools and threatened not to use the buildings unless the city funded repairs. When the council still refused to provide the money, board members, conscious of the need "to protect life and limb" of the students, voted to make emergency repairs not to exceed a cost of two thousand dollars. The maintenance and repair of school buildings remained a problem for the board.<sup>62</sup>

Segregated within a system that experienced constant revenue shortages, could not always pay its teachers, and failed to make timely repairs on its buildings, how did black education fare? Did the state of black education in New Orleans during the post-Reconstruction period justify Pinchback's pragmatism regarding segregation? Or, did events prove Aristide Mary correct? The highly visible black campaign for suffrage, civil equality, and desegregated schools, had existed alongside problems related to employment, housing, and adjustment to freedom.<sup>63</sup> Black leaders and parents expressed and demonstrated a commitment to education throughout the 1880s and 1890s, but could not always translate the commitment into practice.<sup>64</sup> Black public education in the years immediately following the black compromise of 1879

appeared to justify Pinchback's position. But Mary had cast his glance farther into the future, and realized that a principle once conceded was difficult to recover. The educational needs of the black community expanded, the narrow view of whites on the same subject did not. But that took two decades to develop; in the interim blacks had to slowly build and maintain an educational tradition. It started at the primary and grammar school levels.

The attitude of school officials at the beginning of the period reflected the paternalistic ideology of the Redeemers and continued to exist for several years after the Redeemers had suffered the political fate of their Republican predecessors. "Whether in improved methods of instruction, modes of discipline, school accommodations or provision for the convenience and comfort of teacher and scholar, "Superintendent Rogers maintained in 1878, "there has been no distinction to the prejudice of any class."<sup>65</sup> Several years later Rogers expressed similar views. "They share impartially in all educational means at the disposal of the board," he stated.<sup>66</sup> Roger's successor in office, Ulric Bettison, echoed Rogers' sentiments and both wanted to see an increase in black enrollment.<sup>67</sup>

As several scholars, most notably C. Vann Woodward, have contended, race relations in the years following Reconstruction remained in a state of flux that affected black education.<sup>68</sup> When school officials spoke on the

subject of black education they usually assured the black community of continued support. Whites had not yet seized on the idea of using education, or more accurately the denial of education, as a means of oppression or black degradation.<sup>69</sup> Rather than promoting oppression, degradation, or schooling them for slavery, many whites shared Superintendent Rogers' view that schools would assist blacks in "acquiring habits of industry: learning, directly or indirectly, those lessons of virtue and intelligence, which are designed to make them better, more useful, as individuals, and as members of society"<sup>70</sup>

School officials translated their statements into policy by attempting to provide blacks with adequate school facilities. During the first year under the resegregated system blacks had the use of twenty-three primary and grammar schools. Two of the schools, McDonogh Nos. 5 and 6, were "fine large, brick buildings, ornaments to the city."<sup>71</sup> When school superintendents made recommendations for new buildings and maintenance they usually included black schools. As a result, the conditions of black schools were comparable to white schools.<sup>72</sup> This would later change but did indicate that at one point "forgotten alternatives" existed.

Black public school enrollment remained static and in some years declined. School officials used several reporting categories to monitor student attendance--number

of students registered, number enrolled, average of daily roll, and average daily attendance. Absolute comparisons are virtually impossible because school officials did not use the same reporting categories each year. Additionally, at times they reported figures by calendar year and at other times by school year. Available statistics, however, provide a good indication of changes in school attendance. In 1877 the number of blacks enrolled in school stood at 4,338 and a year later had risen to 6,856, an increase of 2,518. The average attendance was 3,025 in 1877 and 5,625 in 1878. By the 1887 school year enrollment and attendance had experienced a sharp decrease. Only 6,029 enrolled in school and the average attendance for the year was 3,042. Enrollment had increased to 6,013 during the 1898-1899 school year with an average attendance of 3,746.<sup>73</sup> An upsurge in black enrollment did not occur until the twentieth century.

**Table 4**  
**New Orleans Public School Enrollment<sup>74</sup>**

Year	Black	White	Total
1877	4,338	15,169	19,507
1878	6,856	17,294	24,150
1879	6,654	17,670	24,324
1880	5,595	15,316	20,911
1881	5,473	18,928	24,401
1882	5,540	19,427	24,976
1883	4,511	17,130	21,641
1884	4,955	18,227	23,182
1885	4,752	19,579	24,331
1886	5,306	19,555	24,861
1887	6,029	19,620	17,954
1888	6,042	20,930	26,972
1889	4,858	16,278	21,136
1890	5,426	17,974	23,400
1891	5,592	17,617	23,209
1892	5,436	18,454	23,840
1893	4,929	18,559	23,488
1894	5,441	19,829	25,270
1895	6,126	21,274	27,400
1896	5,855	22,673	28,528
1897	6,117	23,597	29,713
1898	6,013	23,509	29,522
1899	6,221	24,549	30,770
1900	6,662	24,859	31,521

The black students who attended school received until the 1890s a "range of studies...common to all the schools."<sup>75</sup> The emphasis remained on English, math, writing, history, geography, and penmanship. The level of difficulty and specific topics covered varied at each grade level. All schools, including those for blacks, used the same books. Unfortunately, during this period parents often had to purchase the necessary books for their children, so many students attended school without books or other school supplies. Black students who enrolled in school and attended regularly progressed at the same rate as white students. Age-grade averages for 1887 revealed no consistent statistical differences--blacks had lower figures for some grades and higher for others. Teachers, with limited oversight from the principals, determined student promotion. Attendance, class performance, and exams served as the standard criteria for promotion.

**Table 5**  
**Age-Grade Averages, 1877<sup>76</sup>**

Year	Black		White	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
First	8.6	8.6	8.0	7.6
Second	10.2	10.1	9.8	9.4
Third	10.6	11.1	10.7	10.4
Fourth	11.1	11.4	11.8	11.4
Fifth	11.8	12.8	12.8	12.2
Sixth	12.5	13.5	13.1	13.2
Seventh	13.9	13.9	13.6	13.7

### High School Entrance Examination Questions<sup>77</sup>

#### History, Geography and Civil Government

1. For what do we remember John Cabot? John Smith? Thomas Jefferson? Henry Clay? Abraham Lincoln?
2. Name the states bordering the Mississippi River.
3. What war was waged during Polk's administration? Name the two generals who most distinguished themselves in the war.
4. What three departments of government were established by the Constitution? What is the duty of each?

#### Grammar

1. In what three ways may a dependent clause be used? Give an example of each.
2. Write a single declarative sentence; a simple interrogative sentence; a simple imperative sentence; a simple exclamatory sentence.
3. Correct the following: "Lets you and I go in" "I do not know who to blame." "Indeed herewith I send you a dollar." "He spoke of you failing to come." "He consulted Webster and Walker's dictionary."
4. Analyze by diagram or otherwise: "He gave me an apple this morning."

#### Etymology, Penmanship and Composition

1. What is a prefix? A root? A suffix?
2. Write a composition of not less than one hundred words on one of the following subjects: Mardi Gras, Public Schools, Iron; or, you may write a letter.

## Arithmetic

1. Define greatest common divisor. Define least common multiple. Find the greatest common divisor of 374, 714, and 1,020. Find the least common multiple of 15, 30, and 60.
  2. (a) Find the value of  $231.04 + 2.64/.024 - 2.64 \times .024$ .  
(b) Find the cube root of 2.3 to 3rd decimal place.
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The public school curriculum continued to emphasize academic subjects with a few business related courses offered in the high schools. Black instruction followed the same trend, but without the business courses. Neither blacks nor whites received manual or industrial training in the public schools. School officials first gave serious consideration to manual training in 1896 because of interest generated by the Mechanics' Dealers' and Lumbermen's Exchange.

The group forwarded to the board a copy of a resolution that described the benefits of manual training in glowing terms. They wanted the establishment of a minimum of two manual training schools. The board responded by naming a special committee to gather information concerning manual education and the feasibility of such a course of study in New Orleans. The special committee wasted little time and issued its report at the next meeting.<sup>78</sup>

The board members learned that national interest in manual training had increased because of the Centennial Exposition held in Philadelphia in 1876. There spectators and educators had marveled at the sophistication and skill of the work done by Russian and Swedish children. New York led the way and started offering manual training at five public schools in 1888. After its inception in New York, the manual training idea quickly gained favor throughout the country. The committee members thought it was time for

New Orleans to join other leading cities and recommended that the board secure permission from the State Board of Education to begin offering manual classes. Although enthusiastic, the committee members suggested a cautious start. For secondary students they recommended providing instruction in wood working and the proper use of tools. Participating students would receive two hours of instruction twice a week. After agreeing to make changes if necessary, the full board adopted the report. Budget limitations, however, prevented the board from implementing the recommendation. Even if it had gone into operation, the proposal did not include blacks.<sup>79</sup>

School board members failed to consider manual training for blacks because by 1896 the educational aspirations of the black community and the board's commitment to black education had diverged. The 1890s and the following decade were the "crucial" period for blacks. The genteel paternalism that had existed at the start of the 1880s had all but disappeared by 1890.<sup>80</sup> The white South had closed ranks on the "Negro Question" as effectively as it had done on the "Slavery Question" forty years earlier. Moreover, during the process, northerners were conspicuous by their silence, at least as voices of dissent.<sup>81</sup>

Louisiana joined the rush to Jim Crowism in 1890 with the passage of a railroad car bill mandating separate but equal seating for blacks and whites. Other segregation

laws followed, separating or excluding blacks from street cars, railroad terminals, restaurants, hotels, and places of entertainment.<sup>82</sup> The laws had little to do with altering existing behavior. They represented the ideological statement of a dominant group. Many blacks would later leave the South as some had already done, most noticeably in the 1870s. Most stayed, however, and some resisted.

"It was in 1890 that the Citizens' Committee was formed, when a return to exaggerated fanaticism about caste or segregation once again alarmed the black people.... We were face to face with a government determined to develop and establish a system by which a portion of the people would have to submit to the rest."<sup>83</sup> So began an account by one of the participants who tried to prevent the complete legal subjugation of black New Orleanians. The black response to the railroad segregation law encompassed all the elements of legal protest in America. Various elements of the community's black leadership participated in the protest, but the black Creoles were the driving force throughout the period of litigation.<sup>84</sup>

Louis A. Martinet emerged as the leader of the protest against the railroad car bill. Martinet, a former state representative, school board member, and attorney, had recently started publishing the Crusader, a black newspaper. In his editorials, Martinet attempted to recapture the militancy of the New Orleans Tribune which

had ceased publication in 1870. As the "men of Tribune" had done before him, Martinet promised to fight without compromise.<sup>85</sup> Martinet and other black leaders tried to defeat the bill before it became law. They first formed the American Citizens' Equal Rights Association, drew up a protest petition and presented it to the legislature.

Intimately aware of the support throughout the South for segregation laws, they "protest[ed] against the passage of any class legislation now pending before the General Assembly, or which may hereafter come before the honorable body...." They appealed to the legislators to remain true to their professed values of justice and equality, and found it "difficult to conceive how any caste legislation can maintain the sacredness of these truly American principles...." They also offered a Biblical argument: "men should not do unto others what they do not wish should be done unto them." Blacks knew the proposed laws "would be a free license to the evilly-disposed that they might with impunity insult, humiliate and otherwise maltreat inoffensive persons...."<sup>86</sup> For all those reasons and more they appealed, "in the name of God and the constitution... that the chalice of political bitterness may be snatched from the grasp of intolerant persons and made to melt into the sacred fires of patriotic mercy."<sup>87</sup>

Political expediency rather than adherence to the siren call of justice and morality temporarily halted the march of Jim Crowism. The legislature still contained a

few black members, and they opposed the railroad bill. After the bill fell three votes short of passage in the Senate, the New Orleans Times Democrat chided the Senate "because it placed Louisiana in opposition to the other Southern States, and ...the failure will be misunderstood by the Negroes and produce unpleasant results."<sup>88</sup> A bill once defeated could, of course, rise again. This one did. On 10 July 1890 Act 111, "to promote the comfort of passengers on railway trains; requiring all railway companies carrying passengers on their trains, in the state, to provide equal but separate accommodations for the white and colored races...",<sup>89</sup> became law.

Martinet castigated the black "political men" for their naivety at best or, at worst, their crass dishonesty. "They worked," according to Martinet, "with might and main against the bill, no doubt, but after it was too late."<sup>90</sup> Many of the black legislators aligned themselves with the state's infamous lottery interest and voted for the lottery's extension, ostensibly in exchange for white support to defeat the separate railroad car bill. After the lottery bill passed, Act 111 gained approval three days later.<sup>91</sup> Protest and the legislative process having failed, blacks turned to the guardians of equality under the law--the courts.

An appeal to blacks within the city and throughout the country enabled the Citizens Committee to raise enough money to test the constitutionality of Act 111.<sup>92</sup> Between

1892 and 1896 the case moved slowly through the judicial system before the United States Supreme Court rendered its decision on 18 May 1896. In Plessy v. Ferguson the Supreme Court gave legal sanction to "separate but equal," which was, even then, no longer a "thin disguise." Judge John M. Harlan's lengthy dissent notwithstanding, race relations in America for the next half century would be governed by the idea that, "Legislation is powerless to eradicate racial distinctions based upon physical differences, and the attempt to do so can only result in accentuating the difficulties of the present situation. If the civil and political rights of both races be equal one cannot be inferior to the other socially, the Constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane."<sup>93</sup> But there was more.

In 1896 and 1898 white Democrats found the definitive answer to the "Negro Question." Confronted with a brief, but potentially worrisome, alliance between dissatisfied blacks and whites under the Populist banner, Democrats took measures to reduce the effectiveness of poor white voters and eliminate black voters.<sup>94</sup> After a harrowing, though successful, reelection campaign in 1896, Governor Murphy J. Foster supported a more restrictive suffrage bill. Act 89 went into effect on 1 January 1897.<sup>95</sup> By 1898 the number of black voters in the city had dropped from 14,177 to 3,089.<sup>96</sup>

The Democrats followed the registration law with a call for another constitutional convention to permanently disfranchise blacks and poor whites. The convention convened in February 1898. "We are all aware that this convention has been called by the people of the State of Louisiana principally to deal with one question," the president of the convention reminded the delegates, "and we know that but for the existence of that one Question this assemblage would not be sitting here today." "My fellow-delegates, let us not be misunderstood! let us say to the large class of people of Louisiana who will be disfranchised under any of the proposed limitations of the suffrage, that what we seek to do is undertaken in a spirit, not of hostility to any particular men or set of men...." Ernest B. Kruttschnitt, went on to add "that the Question which we are trying to solve here is one which imperils the integrity of the future government of the State of Louisiana."<sup>97</sup> Several weeks later Kruttschnitt presided over another "assemblage," and in his capacity as president, called the school board meeting to order.<sup>98</sup>

Racism and discrimination was more than the emotive, ritualistic, and sadistic random killing of blacks.<sup>99</sup> It was organized, purposeful, and directed towards maintaining the dominance of whites over blacks. School board members pursued a policy of limited education for blacks. School officials no longer expressed concern about low black enrollment or made references to maintaining equal

facilities for blacks. The new policy damaged black educational advancement in two ways. First, it came at a time when school officials began to expand educational opportunity for whites, which widened the gap between white and black education. Second, the limited educational policy of instruction at the primary grade level was diametrically opposed to the black community's desire to use improved education as an aid in community development.

In 1900 blacks reached their educational nadir within the public school system. Ironically, a request to extend kindergarten classes to some black schools provided the occasion for whites to eliminate even more services for blacks.<sup>100</sup> Instead of granting or refusing the request, several board members thought it offered "a favorable moment at which to call attention of the board to the work of our colored schools and suggest a change in the curriculum and character of work to be done in these schools."<sup>101</sup> These members suggested that the board discontinue grades six, seven, and eight in the black schools. In the remaining grades--one through five--they wanted "to make that education useful, thorough and practical as far as it goes, and to fit him and her for that sphere of labor and social position and occupation which they are best suited and seem ordained by the proper fitness of things."<sup>102</sup> The board adopted the new policy and instructed the Superintendent to put it into effect for the next school year.



By 1900 the idea that blacks only needed a primary school education with limited manual training had become the dominant philosophy throughout the South. Education for blacks would not entail training for occupations which placed them in competition with white workers. When whites thought of the ideal type of black education they thought of Hampton Institute located in Virginia and Tuskegee in Alabama.<sup>103</sup> School board members wanted New Orleans to join the rest of the South by offering blacks the "proper" kind of education. Education for black advancement had been replaced by education for black oppression. Through custom, law, and school board policy white New Orleanians had defined what they considered blacks' proper place. Blacks rejected the policy of limited education, however, and through their leaders organized to secure improved educational opportunities. Less optimistic about achieving a nation of "one people," than they had been, but nonetheless determined to fashion an educational agenda to fit their needs, blacks started the quest for parity within the framework of "separate but equal."

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Education and the Making of a Protest Tradition, 1900-1945**

At the dawn of the twentieth century the prospects for improved education appeared gloomy for black New Orleanians. From the mid-1870s, their at first gradual and then accelerated loss of political power was followed by similar losses in education. The four black colleges located in New Orleans still offered academic training at the grammar and high school level. They all charged tuition, even though minimal, it prevented many blacks from attending them.<sup>1</sup> The public school system was the only source of education for most blacks. Black community leaders refused to accept the mandate of white leaders to use education as a means of oppression. They had their own idea of their proper place in New Orleans society, and that their place was not the bottom.

In 1900, 77,714 blacks lived in New Orleans out of a total population of 287,104. Only 5,509 blacks, though, attended the city's public schools. Decisions by school officials, therefore, directly affected only a small percentage of the black community. But the issue always involved more than the educational interest of the black students actually enrolled. Educational access and opportunity were community goals with larger significance.

Barred from politics through legal and extra-legal means, segregated in or denied access to public accommodations, and employed in mostly menial jobs, education became a way out of the quagmire. The quest for improvements in education became the only sustained form of protest and agitation directed against the citadel of white political power and supremacy. Between 1900 and 1945 the tactics and strategies changed, but the goals and focus remained the same--improved schooling consistent with the principles of full citizenship and equality.

Black education existed within the larger framework of race relations in the city. Therefore, improvement in black education, especially gaining additional facilities, sometimes involved more than the presence or absence of sufficient revenues. Early in the twentieth century whites in New Orleans attempted to increase the spatial separation of the races; as a result, they developed a heightened sensitivity to black schools in areas with a large white population. Residential patterns over a century in the making came under scrutiny. Not only did whites want to prevent black encroachment, in some cases they attempted to remove blacks from schools and institutions they had occupied for several decades. One of the more contentious examples involved attempts by school officials to build a replacement for the Bayou Road School. The Bayou Road incident provides a typical example of the difficulties

blacks encountered in their fight for improved schools.

Blacks living in the Sixth Ward, a working class neighborhood below Canal Street, had attended the Bayou Road School since the 1880s. The Sixth and Seventh Wards contained most of the city's black Creoles. By 1910 Bayou Road, located at the intersection of Bayou Road and Derbigny Street, was one of the few schools still conducted in a rented building.<sup>2</sup> It was also overcrowded and in a state of physical deterioration. The Bayou Road Parents' Club informed the board of the problems and requested immediate improvements and additions to accommodate the pupils. The board refused to commit itself to constructing a new building but promised to rent another building for use as an annex and to make some repairs on the present structure. When whites in the neighborhood learned of the proposed annex, they protested. After referring the protest to the Committee on Teachers and Instructions, the board decided not to alter its plans. The board members refused the request because the lease for the building had been signed and "Bayou Road Colored School has been established there for a number of years."<sup>3</sup>

The addition of the annex alleviated the problem of overcrowding but left the board with another rented building in need of substantial repairs. Conditions at the school worsened and evoked a strong letter of condemnation from the city's Board of Health. In response, John

Wegmann, the chairman of the Committee of Buildings and Grounds, inspected the school. Wegmann acknowledged the bad conditions but thought the Board of Health official had exaggerated and possibly over-dramatized the conditions. Nonetheless, Wegmann considered the buildings unsuitable for school purposes. "It is the best we have, however, and I can conceive of nothing that can remedy the situation, unless it be the building of a new school somewhere in the neighborhood." Wegmann examined and quickly dismissed the possibility of using the McDonogh No. 18 School, an abandoned white school located about a mile and a half from Bayou Road, as a replacement. He considered it to be in worse condition than Bayou Road.<sup>4</sup>

In February 1914 the board finally initiated plans to build a new school to replace the two rented buildings. School officials examined seventeen possible sites before deciding to purchase a large tract of land encompassing the old school. Several factors influenced the board's decision, but one of the more prominent considerations was its belief that using part of the old site would prevent "a protest from neighboring property owners."<sup>5</sup> That proved more hopeful than prophetic; a sustained and angry protest would eventually develop.

Almost a decade passed before school officials actually built the new school. Several factors contributed to the delay. When school officials first made the

decision to replace Bayou Road, the city had responsibility for building schools and acquiring sites. But in 1914, despite a "strong plea" from the board because of conditions at Bayou Road, members of the Commission Council stated that the city could not afford to purchase the site for the new school. Consequently, board members voted to lend the city enough money to make the purchase as well as to build another black school. Using funds from the board, the city purchased both tracts in the summer of 1914. After acquiring the land, however, the city still did not build the school because of a lack of funds.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, the situation at the Bayou Road School had grown progressively worse. Officials from the Board of Health closed the school in September 1914 and refused to reopen it until the board made needed repairs. A year later, on 29 September, a storm tore into the city and damaged most of the schools, including the annex to Bayou Road.<sup>7</sup> Work crews under the supervision of board and city officials eventually managed to repair most of the damaged schools, but several, including the Bayou Road Annex, had to be demolished.<sup>8</sup>

The affects of World War I came to the city, receded, and the Bayou Road School remained as overcrowded and dilapidated as ever. Finally, in 1922, construction started on the long overdue replacement for Bayou Road. Almost immediately intense opposition developed and exposed

the state of race relations in New Orleans. Numerous whites appeared before the school board and left little doubt that whites expected and demanded the bulk of the community's resources. Any concessions made to blacks had to occur after city leaders satisfied the needs of the majority population. White opposition to the building of Bayou Road, therefore, centered not only on its location but on the scale of the project. School officials planned to build a school comparable in quality to schools built for white students.

The first protest came in July 1922 when a group of whites from the neighborhood around Bayou Road attended a meeting of the school board. One protestor complained that the location was not in a black area. Another stated that property values "would depreciate with the erection of a large modern school, that negroes would move into the neighborhood, and that such a condition would prove obnoxious to the residents of that section." A third suggested that the board either build another school in a neighborhood with a large black population or convert an older white school into a school for blacks and give the new school to whites. School board President, Daniel Murphy, reminded the protestors that the school had occupied its present site for approximately fifty years. The previous board had considered similar objections, Murphy added, and despite the sentiments of the group,

blacks in that area needed school facilities. With surprising candor Murphy charged "that no matter where the board decided to locate a colored school protest would arise." Percy Moise, elected to the board in 1920, informed the delegation that he would entertain alternatives that satisfied the group, but at the same time provided for the educational needs of students in the Bayou Road area. The meeting ended with the understanding the board would delay making a final decision.<sup>9</sup>

At a January 1923 board meeting white citizens again voiced their opposition to the school. "To put from eight hundred to a thousand negroes in that section almost entirely inhabited by white people," according to one spokesman, "would be a very serious disadvantage to both races." Disavowing any hostility to the education of blacks, the speaker argued that "a more suitable location could be found for the negro school that would be less obnoxious to white residents of that section." Another member of the delegation used a different approach when he stated the location of the school "was just as unjust for the negroes as it was for the whites to establish a negro school in that vicinity; that there were vested rights involved and that it was an injustice to the negroes to force them to come a great distance to the school located in a white section." When questioned by board member Fred Zengel, the speaker admitted that he did not represent the



black community.<sup>10</sup>

Percy Moise and Zengel asked protestors for suggestions of what to do with students in the Bayou Road area if the board denied blacks access to the school. A female protestor suggested converting McDonogh No. 9 to black use, notwithstanding her own acknowledgement of the hazardous condition of the building. She thought it absurd for white students to attend McDonogh No 9 "while the Negroes would be given a school that was really a monument."<sup>11</sup>

None of the speakers convinced the majority of the board to deny blacks the new school. The "constructive" plan that Moise hoped to find had not been presented. Board president James Fortier, who had not entered into the discussion, relinquished the chair so that he could speak. Fortier used his opening remarks to dramatize his deep conviction on the subject. He lived, he began, in the Sixth Ward only "about twenty-four squares from the proposed school, but [that] if he lived seventy-five squares he would be as vitally interested as though he were a resident directly across the street." According to Fortier the issue "concerned the development and the growth of the entire city."<sup>12</sup> Fortier did not want to see black homes or schools in predominantly white areas and lamented the Supreme Court decision in Buchanan v. Warley, which had declared residential segregation laws unconstitutional.<sup>13</sup>

In the absence of legal authority, it became important for agencies like the school board to prevent blacks from living in white areas.

Fortier recommended three possible uses for the school; none of them involved blacks. He wanted it used as a junior high school, an annex to Esplanade High School, or an industrial training school. Moise asked Fortier what he planned to do about the eight hundred black students scheduled to attend the school. Fortier thought school administrators could devise a plan to house the black students in other locations. Moise again voiced his support for the protestors but wanted a concrete plan to provide for the students. Moise reminded the protestors that the board had adhered to the established practice of building replacements for black schools on or near the original site-many of them he claimed had purchased their homes "with the knowledge that the Negro school existed in their midst." Nonetheless, Moise was willing to concede to white sensibilities by borrowing money to build another school for blacks in a different area. In the interim, however, he wanted to proceed with the scheduled opening of the school as a school for blacks.<sup>14</sup>

Fortier disagreed with Moise's position and wanted an unequivocal declaration from the board that blacks would not enter the school. Fortier viewed potential black enrollment as a threat to segregation and white supremacy.

But for once the familiar call to arms associated with the phrase "threat to white supremacy " failed to elicit the usual response. Moise made a motion that passed four to one to continue the plan for opening the school for blacks with the understanding that if the board received a workable plan to house the students, school officials would transfer the students immediately. Fortier cast the lone dissenting vote and remained determined to keep blacks out of the school.<sup>15</sup>

Fortier, expecting persistence more than justice and morality to triumph, called a special meeting less than a week after the board voted against his plan. Fortier unveiled the idea of "placing these pupils on part-time for the next five months, while a comprehensive policy was being devised to cover the entire field of negro education." Moise stated his objections in strong terms, and the meeting ended without a vote.<sup>16</sup> Undeterred and correctly sensing that a viable plan would break the opposition, Fortier came to the next meeting better prepared. At it, he recommended placing the students in several schools in the area. Fellow member Daniel Murphy declared his faith in Fortier's sincerity, "but felt that since this was the first move on the part of the board to give the negroes a real substantial building, he deemed it unwise to defer the opening of the school as a colored institution." When Superintendent Gwinn stated that the

area schools could accommodate the students by placing them on part-time status, board members Mrs. Arthur Baumgartner and Fred Zengel reversed themselves and supported Fortier. Baumgartner made a motion to defer the opening of the new school until Fortier had an opportunity to present his plan. The motion passed by a three to two vote. Moise and Murphy cast the dissenting votes.<sup>17</sup>

A bevy of activity ensued before the next meeting of the board. Emile La Branche, a black businessman, the black Republican politician Walter L. Cohen, and other black leaders called a mass meeting to protest the board's decision and to formulate a response. Members from the Colored Educational Alliance, New Orleans NAACP, the National Progressive Association for Negroes, and many interested black citizens attended the meeting. Their lack of suffrage left the blacks attending the meeting with few options. They could not threaten the board members with political reprisals. The group denounced the board's position and drew up a petition of protest. They chose LaBranche to serve as their chairman and spokesman and decided to present their petition at the next board meeting.<sup>18</sup>

Blacks received unexpected support from the New Orleans Times Picayune, one of the city's leading white newspapers:

Time and reflection have only served to confirm this newspaper's belief that the closure of the school and consequent denial for an indefinite

period of elementary education to Negro children whose fathers and grandfathers learned their letters in the place now closed to them amounts to a grave injustice....Let us close the incident in the right and wise way by adopting the course counselled by every consideration of justice and equity.<sup>19</sup>

Some of the board members were also busy several days before the next meeting. Mrs. Baumgartner and Fred Zengel decided to personally inspect conditions at three of the schools scheduled to receive the influx of new students from Bayou Road. Both of them emerged from the inspection obviously concerned by what they had observed and would later share their findings with the other members.<sup>20</sup>

On 9 February a large crowd of blacks and whites assembled for the regular scheduled meeting at the Carondelet Street school board Office. Emile LaBranche presented the petition from the black community. He called attention to the fact that blacks in that area had needed a new school for decades and had made countless appeals to school officials. Over the years the "Parents Club had waited and the children had suffered," LaBranche stated. "We now come to you," he closed, "and ask that you open to the colored children this school which has been built for them. There is no territory in the city of New Orleans where there is a greater need for educational facilities for school children than in the territory of the Bayou Road.... The redistricting does not make the schools any larger, nor nearer our homes."<sup>21</sup>

LaBranche confined his arguments to the educational needs of blacks. The next two speakers, both white, labored under no such constraints. They believed that the use of the new school by blacks threatened segregation and white supremacy. Their views expressed mainstream southern thought regarding blacks.<sup>22</sup> Elucidating what he considered the racial sentiments of the white community, one of the speakers maintained that "all of us of the Southland who are of the white race are firm in one belief--and that is the supremacy of the white race and the segregation of these races in all things political and social." The other speaker argued placing blacks at the school would lead to fights and other disturbances between black and white children in the area.<sup>23</sup>

Then Fortier rose to speak. He criticized the newspaper articles supporting the board's original plan and declared the time had come to reassess black education. Fortier wanted the board to develop a comprehensive plan to provide blacks with vocational and manual training. Fortier also angrily criticized the blacks who had the audacity to appear before the board and question its decisions. And he admonished his fellow members for establishing a dangerous precedent by reacting to the protests of blacks. Fortier's position was clear; he wanted the school used for whites. Fortier could not comprehend the board's attempt to provide a modern school

for blacks, when, for example, "Our white boys of the Warren Easton High School are crowded and put into the basements."<sup>24</sup> Despite his advocacy of a policy contrary to the educational needs of the black community, Fortier observed that his proposal would foster friendlier relations between blacks and whites. In his view the needs and aspirations of the black community did not enter into the prescription for improved race relations.<sup>25</sup>

Apparently neither Fortier nor the various groups realized Baumgartner and Zengel had changed their opinion. Baumgartner asked Fortier if he had visited any of the schools. He said no. Baumgartner then stated that she and Fred Zengel had visited the schools within the last week. She considered the conditions at the schools deplorable. "We found the Valena C. Jones crowded to a great extent. We found them in dark rooms in cottages rented by the board some time ago. We found the children three and four in one desk. I saw a condition in the Valena C. Jones [school] that I never knew existed in a school room before. " Despite the horrible conditions at Jones, Baumgartner reported they were better than the conditions at Bienville. Zengel supported Baumgartner's bleak assessment and thought Fortier's plan to add more students to those schools impractical. After subsequent discussion failed to produce any new points, the board adopted a motion by Zengel to open the school for blacks within a week. Only Fortier

voted against the proposal.<sup>26</sup>

What seemed a favorable vote for the black community was actually only a compromise. The members also declared their intent to build a replacement for the school and locate it in a predominately black neighborhood.<sup>27</sup> In an irony probably lost on most contemporaries, the school board named the New Bayou Road school after Joseph A. Craig, the black Reconstruction school board member who in 1877 had voted with the white majority to resegregate the public schools. In 1927 when school officials finally transferred the black students to a new school they transferred the name of the school with them.<sup>28</sup>

The Craig School controversy vividly illustrated the general dynamics of race relations and black education in New Orleans. The condition of black education reflected to a large degree the racial ideology of the dominant population. Whites in the South had definite views concerning the kind of education blacks should receive. Overcrowded schools, unsanitary buildings, rented annexes, and a general disregard for the educational needs of the black community stemmed from their desire to keep blacks in an inferior position in the social order.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, as James D. Anderson pointed out, other ideological currents influenced black education. Anderson maintained that the debate "was not in any significant sense a conflict between extreme racists and moderate racists. There were racists,



extreme and moderate, who both supported and opposed the idea of universal public schooling for blacks and whites. There were also extreme and moderate white supremacists who favored a racially restrictive form of universal education."<sup>30</sup> What, if not race, determined black educational policy in the South? According to Anderson "conflicting conceptions of the relationship between political economy and universal education," were decisive. A combination of northern philanthropists and southern reformers vied with the South's agricultural interests for control of the South's educational destiny.<sup>31</sup> The two sides had different ideas on how to maintain a docile and stable work force. Southern reformers and their northern allies placed their faith in the socially redeeming powers of education. By contrast, the agriculturalists had no reason to abandon their traditional and effective methods of coercion and force.<sup>32</sup> New Orleans urban environment, however, did not possess an agriculturalist-reformist dichotomy. The debate in New Orleans centered on whether black education would serve as a means to improve the socio-economic position of blacks or as a brief way station to inculcate social deference and rudimentary skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic for a lifetime of menial labor. Racism was the key variable that united most whites in New Orleans in favor of limited education for blacks.

The racist ideology, though triumphant, existed in the midst of alternate views on black education. The Bayou Road School controversy revealed the presence of three views regarding black education. Black leaders, of course, thought blacks should receive an education comparable to whites. They articulated their opposition to limited black education clearly and often. There were also some school officials, however, who advocated and supported improved black education, although their support stopped short of a belief in equal facilities and curriculum for blacks and whites. Another group, as characterized by James Fortier and most members of the white community, wanted a continuation of the policy of limited education for blacks--education at the elementary level with some manual training. Nonetheless, black education progressed throughout the Jim Crow Era despite a vocal ideology of limited education for blacks.

The refusal of the school board to allocate sufficient revenues to black New Orleanians accounted for the poor condition of black schools. What philosophy or policy guided school board members when making budgetary decisions? How many members had clearly defined ideas on the desired purpose and scope of black education? Several members and school officials used the school board meetings as a forum in which to articulate their views on black education and race relations. At the beginning of the

period several board members maintained that New Orleans should duplicate the policy of other southern states and limit black education to the primary grades, emphasizing manual and domestic training. Advocates of the primary/manual training school philosophy attempted to fashion a program for the present as well as the future.<sup>33</sup>

When Sol Wexler resigned his position as President of the board in 1916, the belief that the educational needs of blacks differed from those of whites still prevailed.

Wexler admonished his soon to be former colleagues:

Do not neglect the negro in providing educational facilities. The welfare of the South can be greatly increased by better educational and uplift work among our negro population. Give them the rudiments of a good education up to the eighth grade, with specially selected subjects, and particularly teach them the domestic sciences, manual training and the vocations which will enable them to become more useful citizens and taxpayers.<sup>34</sup>

Several years later James Fortier echoed the sentiments of his predecessors. Fortier, an ardent white supremacist, thought "it absurd to follow any plan for the education of the negro which involved anything beyond reading and writing and the teaching of the trade; that the negro's place in life was to do the heavier manual work...; that it was absurd to attempt to teach negroes the beauties of Roman and Greek history...."<sup>35</sup> Fortier wanted school officials to build schools that featured only manual training. Years after the death of Booker T. Washington, his legacy of promoting industrial education for blacks

continued to influence the educational policy of most whites.

Of the men who served as superintendent during this period, the one who said the least about black education probably revealed the most. Warren Easton, who had the longest tenure of the superintendents, failed to mention the needs of black students in his annual reports from 1900 to 1910. His omission indicated the low or non-existent priority given to black education. During Easton's years in office black education reached its lowest point. His actions alone did not contribute to that condition, but his policy of active neglect did little to arrest the trend.<sup>36</sup>

After the death of Easton in October 1910, Joseph Gwinn became superintendent. Almost immediately he found himself in the midst of a small tempest regarding the South's racial norms. After assuming office, Gwinn called a meeting of all the teachers, both black and white. Unlike previous meetings, however, some blacks and whites sat in the same section, which drew condemnation from the school board. Effectively chastened, Gwinn declared: "In the future all meetings of teachers called by the Superintendent shall be for white teachers alone or for colored teachers alone. I shall also discontinue the practice of holding joint meetings of white and colored principals.... In this connection I wish to state I am now and have always been opposed to any action which tends

towards or seems to tend toward the breaking down of the color line...."<sup>37</sup>

Despite Gwinn's declaratory allegiance to segregation, he demonstrated an increased awareness of the need for improved black education. His opinion on black education did not mirror that of the black community, but it marked a new departure from the twenty-two years of active neglect under Easton. Gwinn maintained that manual and industrial training represented the ideal type of education for the minority population. Nonetheless, he conceded that "provisions should be made for the smaller class who are going to enter the teaching or other professions."<sup>38</sup> Black education not only suffered because of the narrow instructional limits whites attempted to impose, whites refused to adequately fund the programs they had outlined. Gwinn at least sought more funding and included black schools in his annual reports. Although such statements as "there is pressing demand for an evening school for colored youth," merely reiterated the many petitions and statements of the black community, blacks benefited from having someone in office not totally hostile to their educational interests.<sup>39</sup>

Nicholas Bauer became superintendent in 1923, succeeding Gwinn. Bauer, a native and lifetime resident of New Orleans, continued the course chartered by Gwinn. He occasionally met with black parents and leaders.<sup>40</sup> Bauer

once vowed "that he would never be satisfied until every child in New Orleans, both white and colored...[received] full and adequate educational facilities."<sup>41</sup>

The policy of educational neglect and limitations pursued by Fortier and board members affected the quality and quantity of black school facilities. The white response to the Bayou Road School was not an isolated phenomenon. Protestors frustrated many attempts by school officials to supply blacks with additional school facilities. The Bayou Road incident was atypical only because it involved a school of considerable expense. White protest usually centered on plans to convert existing white schools to black use. The historical residential patterns in New Orleans caused a dilemma for segregationists and school officials. In-migration and intra-city relocation kept the racial composition in some neighborhoods in a state of constant flux. The sword cut both ways--whites moved into black areas and blacks moved into white areas. School officials had the unenviable task of operating a dual educational system with limited resources amid black demands and white protests.<sup>42</sup>

Using money from the John McDonogh Fund, the city officials had built a school for blacks living in the westbank community of Algiers.<sup>43</sup> In 1904, due to an "increasing number of white children in the vicinity of McDonogh No. 5," school officials proposed building another

school and transferring the black students. On 14 April 1905 the board adopted a resolution to convert the school and build one for blacks in another section of the city.<sup>44</sup> This represented a form of indirect urban planning along racial lines because adequate school facilities attracted additional residents.<sup>45</sup> Blacks protested the change because school officials planned to build a school of lesser quality and wanted to transfer the black students to a rented church until the completion of the new school. Board members heard their protest, but decided to follow the original plan.<sup>46</sup>

Blacks usually found themselves on the other side of the argument, favoring conversion. Between 1900 and 1945 blacks attended several schools that formerly housed white students. For example, the board converted Zacharie, McDonogh Nos. 13, 17, 20, and Benjamin schools to black use.<sup>47</sup> To prevent the conversions whites used several arguments in addition to the appeal to white supremacy. Julia Volz, chairwoman of the Fourth Ward Civic League, spoke out against the conversion of McDonogh No. 17 because "when Bienville founded the city of New Orleans he certainly did not found it for the colored people."<sup>48</sup> Few opponents of conversion used such a historical approach. Typical statements included the belief that property values would decline or that area businesses would suffer.

Black leaders did more than react to the educational limitations whites attempted to impose. They identified their own needs. At various times the educational needs of the black community included additional schools to relieve overcrowding, improvement in the physical condition of existing schools, high schools, instruction in industrial and commercial training, and a better curriculum. The educational advances of the black community occurred as a result of the efforts of black leaders and parents. Between 1900 and 1945 blacks formed a plethora of organizations dedicated to improved education. Many of them were small and focused on the needs of a particular school or neighborhood. All of the schools had "Mothers' Clubs" or "Patrons' Clubs." Judging from communication received by school officials, the school-centered organizations were active and to a degree effective. Several ward based organizations such as the Third Ward Educational Association and the Seventh Ward Educational League attempted to address the needs of an entire ward. In addition, city-wide groups like the Colored Educational Alliance, the Federation of Civic Leagues, and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance fought, as they had done in the Bayou Road incident, for educational parity and improvement.<sup>49</sup>

The organizations, through their leaders, attempted to garner a larger share of the city's educational resources



through communications and petitions to school officials. The tactic of drawing up lengthy petitions which detailed the ills and inadequacies of black schools remained a favored tactic throughout the first half of the century. Black leaders gathered statistics, conducted visits to individual schools, and then presented incontrovertible evidence of the actual condition of black schools to white officials. During most of this period the Colored Educational Alliance, founded in 1913, led the fight for better schools along with other key organizations.<sup>50</sup>

Seeking to stem the tidal-wave of repressive actions against blacks, a group of leaders organized a local chapter of the NAACP. The branch received its charter on 15 July 1915 and counted among its active members Reverend Henderson Dunn, Walter Cohen, Thomas Bailey, Dr. Rivers Frederick, Constant C. Dejoie, Paul Landix, Dr. George Lucas, and Mrs. Ida Johnson. No other organization in New Orleans would work as long or as diligently for black equality. Most black leaders joined the branch, and leadership within the black community was virtually synonymous with leadership in the branch. Eventually, most issues involving education and race relations came through the branch office.<sup>51</sup> The NAACP often served as an umbrella organization for the city's various black civic, social, religious, and fraternal groups. This was especially important for a black community with religious and color

diversity. Since limited education affected the entire community, it was not difficult to forge alliances.

The various organizations provided a communication network for black leaders but not the entire community. On 19 September 1925, the New Orleans Herald, which soon after became the Louisiana Weekly, began publication under the leadership of Constant C. Dejoie. Prior to its inception, blacks, either out of a financial inability or unwillingness, had not supported a race-specific newspaper. After the demise of the Louisianian in 1882, no other black newspaper, except for a promising but short run of the Crusader, edited by Louis A. Martinet, attained the subscribers and revenues to survive. The religious, regionally-oriented but New Orleans based Southwestern Christian Advocate provided some coverage of the black community, but its anti-Catholic, pro-Methodist stand, and its lack of clear editorial focus prevented it from becoming a paper for the whole black community.<sup>52</sup>

The Louisiana Weekly avoided a similar identity crisis and from the beginning espoused a clear mission. "We believe," the paper declared in its debut edition, that

in matters pertaining to race, a newspaper should not straddle. There is only one course for a newspaper to take in matters pertaining to Negro life and that is the right side. Any attempt to side step and to "pussyfoot" is more harmful to the race than anything else. Negro newspapers are not the property of the individuals who have them in charge, but the property of the Negro public whose interests they should serve.<sup>53</sup>

Thereafter the Weekly remained steadfast and true to its stated aims. The paper not only echoed the sentiments of the black community, it helped to define vital issues. More than an organ of information and race chauvenism, it printed articles and editorials that challenged the prevailing social order. Inadequate educational opportunities made education one of the Weekly's major points of focus. "At the beginning of this next year," stated an editorial in December 1926, "we shall turn our attention to our schools, both public and private. We shall attempt to turn the spotlight upon the various institutions of learning which are training our young...."<sup>54</sup> The Weekly turned the spotlight on often and remained in the forefront for improved schools.

The paper contained more than "doom and gloom" articles. It frequently chided blacks for not doing enough to remedy the situation. When school officials instituted programs or allocated funds to enhance black education, the editors offered expressions of thanks. "The relieving of the exceedingly overcrowded condition in our public schools by the erection of modern buildings is a great step towards racial understanding and good will...."<sup>55</sup> On occasions individual school board members received favorable comments. Mrs. Arthur Baumgartner, who had voted to allow blacks the use of Bayou Road School and the first female to win election to a school board seat, obtained an

unsolicited endorsement because "she has made it her duty to visit all the Negro schools in the system and to see the equipment and meet the teachers and principals. She has been kind enough to visit their various affairs... her direct contact with the various schools has made her big heart feel our needs."<sup>56</sup> Hoping that other members possessed if not big hearts then at least some, the Weekly expressed "faith in the good intentions of the board."<sup>57</sup>

When black leaders and the black community in general acted in bad faith or simply refused to act, the Weekly answered editorially. A lack of response to a school related problem led the Weekly to question the dedication of the Colored Educational Alliance. "Now is the time for some one to cause this League to awaken from its lethargetic indifference and function as it should, or cease to masquerade and keep some one that is sincere from working in the interest of the group."<sup>58</sup> Good leaders often needed better followers and to that end the Weekly remained adamant. Consistent with the persistence of the self-help tradition, the paper implored blacks to do more to help themselves in throwing off the odious yoke of oppression and discrimination. "Too long have we as a group sat supinely by and with weeping and wailing bemoaned our lot... And now must we remember that only when we act, act as men, act as thinking men, act, act, act, will we find ourselves the recipients of these things that are our

just and legal right."<sup>59</sup>

"It may be, since law makers and educators neglect us," an exasperated Louisiana Weekly editor stated, "lacking militant members in the higher professional groups to fight for us, we may look hereafter to the laboring men to protect our interests and make the way for us."<sup>60</sup> Leadership within the black community, however, came largely from the professional class of physicians, dentists, clergy, lawyers, entrepreneurs, and teachers. They fought for improved schools and attempted to impart an educational ethos to the black community. Throughout the twentieth century the number of black professionals increased. The early twentieth century emphasis on black self-help produced economic activity and entrepreneurs relatively free from white control. The absence of direct ties to the white community enabled some leaders to pursue a black educational agenda without the fear of economic retaliation from whites.

In a study on black professionals and the community, the black historian Carter G. Woodson documented and analyzed the level of community involvement of black professionals. Woodson criticized black physicians, but still concluded that "In spite of all the shortcomings of physicians...this professional class has done something for the uplift of the masses."<sup>61</sup> That assessment also applied to other professional groups. Physicians and their

professional counterparts, through monetary contributions, supported the various institutions within the New Orleans black community. Organizations such as the Urban League, N.A.A.C.P., Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. could not have existed without support from the professional classes.<sup>62</sup>

Woodson's macro-analysis of the relationship between black professionals and the community demonstrated that, "The Negro physician in another way has manifested interest in the community. To secure drainage and proper sanitation, additional school facilities and adequate compensation for Negro teachers and the like, the Negro professional man because of his outstanding position in the community has been forced to the front in making the appeal for those things which his people deserve."<sup>63</sup> Leadership within New Orleans' black community mirrored Woodson's assessment and the physicians led the way. Many physicians worked for race advancement but several garnered exceptional accolades from the community--Drs. George Lucas, Joseph Hardin, Rivers Frederick, A. W. Brazier, Lloyd B. Landry, and Leoneadas T. Burbridge.

A native of Scooba, Mississippi, Joseph Hardin migrated to New Orleans in 1890. Like many of the early black physicians in the city, Hardin attended Flint Medical College where he received his medical degree in 1904 and decided to remain in New Orleans to start a private practice. In the mid-1890s Hardin developed an

interest in politics and remained an active Republican throughout his life. His foray into politics soon led to involvement in other civic activities. In 1912 he helped organize the Fourth Ward Poll Tax Association as part of an effort to increase the number of black voters. Concern with his Seventh Ward neighborhood convinced Hardin to assist Alex Mollay in the formation of the Seventh Ward Civic League. Soon, similar organizations addressed the needs of particular wards and Hardin became instrumental in creating the New Orleans Federation of Civic Leagues. The Federation of Civic Leagues, as well as the ward-based civic leagues, attempted to solve community problems, especially those related to education and race relations.<sup>64</sup>

A contemporary of Dr. Hardin, George W. Lucas also devoted his time and talent to matters involving black advancement. A transplanted Texan who graduated from Flint Medical College in New Orleans, Lucas built a prosperous medical practice. His work as a physician, however, did not prevent him from becoming an active member in several organizations, among them, the New Orleans N.A.A.C.P., Dryades Street YMCA, the Knights of Pythians, and the Elks. He was more than a joiner, he was also a leader. For several years he served on the NAACP's national board. Dr. Lucas served as President in the 1920s during the Branch's successful challenge of New Orleans segregation ordinances.<sup>65</sup> Lucas' career as physician-activist could

have served as a model for Woodson's observation that, "Unless the Negro can exercise the same rights of citizens in voting and holding office, he cannot transfer the will of the race to the government. In organizing the people toward this end and in stimulating their effort to battle for their rights, the Negro physician has contributed more than any other class, with the possible exception of the Negro lawyer."<sup>66</sup>

Rivers Frederick, another black physician, projected a less public profile than Hardin or Lucas and in the opinion of a biographer "allowed himself to be viewed only in non-controversial roles by the white community of New Orleans. He was seen as a humanitarian, a competent professional, and a champion of better medical care for blacks in Louisiana. With this special image, he was able to secure favors for many blacks from the white power structure."<sup>67</sup> Dr. Frederick played an instrumental role in the formation of the local NAACP Branch and remained a life member. He was also active in the Urban League and devoted time and gave money to solve problems within the black community.<sup>68</sup>

Although Frederick did not match the visible community activism of Lucas and Hardin, he surpassed them in the practice of medicine. A native of Point Coupee Parish, Frederick came to New Orleans to attend Straight University and later Flint Medical College of New Orleans University. He decided to seek his last year of medical school training



in the state of Illinois. He received his degree in 1897 and after stops in his home parish and several years residency in Central America, Frederick returned to New Orleans in 1908. Frederick returned to Louisiana because of his "growing desire to return to the place of my birth in order to help train young Negroes for adequate service in the growing field of medical practice, badly needed among our people."<sup>69</sup> Unfortunately, shortly after his arrival in the city, Flint Medical College closed its doors for the last time. Blacks desiring medical training had to travel to Nashville, Tennessee to attend Meharry Medical College, or to the nation's capital to attend Howard University. The opening of Flint-Goodridge Hospital, however, in 1916 gave Frederick an opportunity to train young black doctors in his capacity as staff physician and Chief of Surgery.<sup>70</sup> Dr. Frederick, and other physicians who labored under less than ideal conditions, provided blacks with medical care not readily available anywhere else.

Black physicians did not work alone in the fight for better education. Percy P. Creuzot, a dentist, gained the respect of the community because of his tireless efforts for improved schools. For several years, he served as president and chief spokesman of the Colored Educational Alliance. James Gayle, a Seventeenth Ward businessman, served at various times on the Republican State Central

Committee, led voter registration drives, and served as President of the local NAACP Branch. Arnold Moss, a successful businessman and member of a host of organizations, provided leadership in the city's Tenth Ward. Women were also active. Mrs. Deborah Guidry, a devoted teacher and social worker, contributed to the success of the NAACP sponsored suit against residential segregation. Miss Fannie C. Williams, a native of Biloxi, Mississippi, became one of the most respected educators in the city. She served as principal of Valena C. Jones Elementary School for thirty-three years and started several educational and social programs without monetary assistance from school officials. As head of the Valena C. Jones Normal School, Miss Williams had a direct influence on many black teachers in the school system.<sup>71</sup>

No study of early twentieth century black leadership in New Orleans would be complete without mentioning Walter L. Cohen. A native New Orleanian of free parentage, Cohen grew up amid the high expectations of Congressional Reconstruction. He later became a protege of Henry Demas, a black legislator from St. John Parish, who managed to retain his senate seat long after the assault on black political participation in the 1870s. In the 1890s Cohen became prominent in Republican politics at the local and state levels which enabled him to gain recognition from the national leadership of the Grand Old Party. After the

election of William McKinley as president in 1896, Cohen received the position of Registrar of Lands.<sup>72</sup> Cohen and other black Republicans repeatedly foiled attempts by whites to purge them from the Party.<sup>73</sup> Cohen once complained that "If the success of the Republican party in this state meant the elevation in any respect of the Negro they [white Republicans] would rather see the Republican party defeated."<sup>74</sup> In addition to his involvement in Republican Party politics, Cohen remained committed to the struggle for improved black education. Until his death in December 1930, Cohen worked closely with Dr. Hardin as a member of the Seventh Ward Civic League.<sup>75</sup>

Several ministers provided leadership to the educational movement and countless others used their Sunday sermons and neighborhood influence to preach the gospel of education. Reverend Henderson Dunn and Bishop Elijah Jones were among the educational leaders in the city. Reverend Dunn migrated to New Orleans from the Thibodaux area and attended Straight University. After graduating in 1903, he taught school for several years and in 1908 assumed the pastorate of Central Congressional Church. Included in his congregation were many of the black professionals of the city. Many of them were graduates of Straight College which received support from the Congregational Church. Bishop Jones presided over the Eighth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Bishop Jones also

edited the Southwestern Christian Advocate and used its pages to promote education.<sup>76</sup>

The black perception of the purpose of education, as well as the kind of education blacks needed, differed markedly from those responsible for public education. Black leaders refused to accept the limitations imposed by the white community. The New Orleans black community agreed with a Mississippian who thought, "no subject opens a broader field for discussion among our people, no subject needs to be talked more, and no subject should be given more thought by them than the subject of education."<sup>77</sup> Blacks in New Orleans went beyond discussing and thinking; they acted. In 1900 more black children remained outside the school doors than inside. A steady increase in enrollment, however, reflected confidence that "An education for your child is better than forty acres and a mule. The mule may die, the title of the land may be defective, but an education abideth eternally."<sup>78</sup> Leaders like Reverend Dunn and Reverend Elijah Jones used terms such as "immediate" and "imperative" when assessing and advocating black education. They also stressed the role of the parent.<sup>79</sup>

Through public meetings, communications to school officials, and the local press blacks expressed their educational objectives. They expressed them through the various neighborhood and community organizations as well as

through recognized and respected community leaders. Racism and discrimination directed at the entire black community helped to blur class and color distinctions among blacks and facilitated black unity. Limited educational opportunities provided a focus for their collective efforts and the beginning of a sustained protest tradition.

## Chapter Four

### Education During the Jim Crow Era, 1900-1945

Through the various organizations they formed to improve education for the black community, black leaders fought for specific objectives. Using protest, petitions, and constant pressure on school officials, they won some victories. Their protest strategy centered on three areas. First, black leaders sought to expand black educational opportunity by forcing school officials to provide black students with high, vocational, and evening schools. Second, they fought for improved conditions within the schools -- improved curriculum, better buildings, and a reduction in overcrowding. Third, they attempted to gain an all black teaching corps and salary equalization for black teachers. Although blacks had made gains in all three areas by the end of the period, educational opportunities for blacks remained unequal to those available to whites.

One of the more glaring examples of the school board's policy of limitation was the lack of high school facilities for blacks. School officials at least acknowledged a need for vocational training and admitted the public school should provide it. Of course, they did very little to provide it. But school officials did not even admit a need

for a black high school, and black leaders usually had more success winning monetary concessions than in changing the board's opinion of the proper education for blacks. The school board's decision in 1900 to reduce black education to the fifth grade forced blacks to temporarily abandon their efforts to secure secondary schools for blacks. It made little sense to launch an aggressive push for a high school when public education ceased after the fifth grade. Then, too, Southern University located in New Orleans still offered high school courses. Between 1900 and 1910 blacks worked to regain grades six through eight.<sup>1</sup>

The closing of Southern University in 1913, and its removal to Baton Rouge in 1914, however, led to a change of strategy. Many whites and blacks thought Southern's location in an urban environment prevented it from becoming a vocational and agricultural training school for blacks from throughout the state. Black leaders in the rest of the state argued that New Orleans had three other black universities and that alone justified the removal of Southern. State officials including Governor Luther E. Hall, his predecessor Jared Sanders, and State Superintendent Thomas H. Harris supported the move. Joseph S. Clark, a black educator who would later become president of Southern, actively worked for Southern's relocation. Most blacks in the city opposed the move, but support for the change did emerge from individuals affiliated with

Straight University. According to one account, Straight acted because of self interest--the elimination of a rival free university.<sup>2</sup>

New Orleans school officials, also acting from self interest, passed several resolutions opposing the removal of Southern because it would create an educational void that blacks would put pressure on them to fill. Indeed, in July 1913, as soon as it appeared doubtful that Southern would remain in New Orleans, blacks did ask school officials to "make arrangements for a colored high school, as the pupils formerly attending Southern University are now deprived of the State High School...." A month later a group of parents from McDonogh No. 6 asked that at least the seventh grade be added when school opened in the fall. The board agreed to add the seventh grade in 1913 and the eighth in the following year, but still refused to open a high school.<sup>3</sup> Between 1914 and 1917 blacks repeatedly petitioned the school board for a black high school. Each time board members denied the request.

Blacks did not abandon their attempts to sway the board, however. Education could not aid black community development without public secondary schools. By 1900 high schools, once only for the elite, were becoming a source of social mobility for the sons and daughters of the white working class.<sup>4</sup> The whole idea of social mobility for blacks, however, contradicted whites' belief in the



inherent inferiority of blacks. Segregation forced New Orleans' white leaders to concede the need for a small number of blacks to receive academic high school training. They recognized that a separate black community needed physicians, teachers, lawyers, and clergymen, but they nevertheless refused to allocate public funds to assist in the training of a professional class.

In January 1917, 823 New Orleans children completed the eight year elementary school course of study in the public schools. Most of them looked forward to attending one of the four public high schools--Warren Easton, Sophie Wright, Esplanade High, or Francis Nicholls. School officials had built the schools within the last six years and they represented a capital outlay of nearly two million dollars. The city's architect, E. A. Christy, and Superintendent Gwinn had visited several midwestern cities to learn of the latest in school design and equipment.<sup>5</sup> They wanted to ensure that New Orleans would have high school facilities unsurpassed in the South. Care also went into formulating the curriculum. Warren Easton offered college preparatory courses as well as commercial classes in bookkeeping, banking, and typing. Wright and Esplanade High were college preparatory schools for girls. Nicholls offered vocational training for females.<sup>6</sup> Seventy-one of the 823 students, however, could not attend the four public high schools--they were black.

But in 1917 that changed. Years of agitation, along with an increasing number of black grammar school graduates, finally convinced the school board to open a high school for blacks that fall. For this venture, school officials did not plan any fact gathering trips or appropriate a large capital outlay. They simply transferred white students from McDonogh No. 13 and converted it to black use. Blacks would have preferred a modern high school in a less commercial part of the city. They accepted the building because they were realists and black grammar school graduates needed a high school education. The school opened in 1917 as McDonogh No. 35, and would eventually win acclaim for academic excellence.<sup>7</sup> John Hoffman, a Tougaloo, Mississippi graduate of Wilberforce University and Michigan Agricultural College, served as its first principal.<sup>8</sup>

The curriculum at McDonogh No. 35 featured the traditional college preparatory courses. To graduate students had to complete a mix of required and elected subjects in English, Latin, history, science, music, mathematics, and physical education. "Credit for these subjects," according to a resolution adopted in September 1917, was "to be given on same basis as in the white high schools."<sup>9</sup> Except for the general science textbook, blacks used the same books as whites. Eighty-two children enrolled for the fall semester and an additional sixty-one

in the spring. Only one spring graduate from the elementary school failed to enroll at McDonogh No. 35 in the first year. A need had existed for a black high school, and blacks took advantage of the new opportunity.

Like the leader of any pioneering effort, McDonogh 35's principal wanted the school to show immediate signs of success. Assessing the first year of operation Hoffman noted, "From the beginning, both pupils and teachers have joined in their efforts to set a high standard of efficiency and promote a spirit of good will in the school."<sup>10</sup> The staff and students also experienced some success in eliminating opposition from whites in the area. "This wonderful spirit seems to have had its effect on the residents in the immediate vicinity," Hoffman reported, "and whatever opposition or uncertainty they may have expressed in the beginning has evidently been swept away."<sup>11</sup> Hoffman realized that the growth and success of the city's first black public high school depended on fostering good relations with neighboring whites.

Meeting the educational needs of blacks, not improving race relations, was the school's mission, however. How well did it succeed? From the start the school faced a dilemma, or rather a crisis of identity. Although McDonogh 35 was established as a college preparatory school, Hoffman wanted it to "meet the larger needs of the community." As

the only black public high school in the city, Hoffman believed the school should offer a diverse curriculum. He therefore sought to expand the curriculum to include vocational education and thought "that courses in Wood Working and Domestic Science will be extremely desirable for our pupils."<sup>12</sup> In later years he advocated introducing courses in plumbing, printing, and automobile mechanics. Citing the opportunities available for employment in those fields, he believed, "the majority of the boys will greatly benefit by such a chance to fit themselves for practical service."<sup>13</sup> By 1927 vocational classes had become a part of the curriculum, and a contemporary observed, "For a number of years the manual training department of the Negro high school made all the work desks for the whole system, [and] the cooking department takes care of the daily lunches...."<sup>14</sup>

Emphasis on vocational training failed to hinder the school's academic development. Hoffman stressed academic attainment with the same zeal with which he advocated vocational expansion. At the conclusion of the first year he mentioned the "excellent showing made in the Department of Science." He credited its success to the teachers and students who "worked enthusiastically during the entire year to build up a first-class department." The mathematics department drew praise for helping students develop "clear and concise reasoning" skills. The history

classes "awaken in the pupils a higher sense of duty and patriotism through a knowledge of the development of civilization and nations." Hoffman expressed less satisfaction with the English teacher and wanted "a teacher of marked ability and special training in English...." To enhance the academic environment the students formed a debating society and attended lectures presented by guest speakers. With the school's growth the board hired additional teachers.<sup>15</sup>

McDonogh No. 35 continued to provide quality education by overcoming obstacles. For example, shortly before school opened in 1923, the school board inexplicably voted to suspend the teaching of Spanish, chemistry, and physics. That action jeopardized 35's standing as a college preparatory school and caused concern within the black community. The board reacted slowly in reversing its position and waited until the following year to restore the subjects.<sup>16</sup> The popularity and success of the school soon produced overcrowding and a continued commitment by blacks to secure additional high school facilities.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to a need for secondary schools, blacks also needed educational facilities for students unable to attend school during traditional school hours. Black children failed to attend school for the same reason many whites did--they simply lacked interest. On the other hand, large numbers of black and white youths worked and

**Table 6****Trends in Black High School Enrollment, 1918-1940<sup>18</sup>**

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<b>Year Ending</b>	<b>Total</b>
1918	143
1919	255
1920	372
1921	565
1922	613
1923	766
1924	509
1925	454
1926	694
1927	869
1928	902
1929	1226
1930	1372
1931	2182
1932	2425
1933	2578
1934	2811
1935	3286
1936	3682
1937	4006
1938	4111
1939	4274
1940	4568

could not attend regular day school. In 1910, of the city's population of persons 7 to 20 years old 45.7 percent of blacks in the age group attended school compared to 54.2 percent for the entire city. In 1920 approximately 58 percent of blacks between 7 and 20 years old attended school. Figures for the entire city were slightly better at nearly 60 percent.<sup>19</sup> Several educational trends at the beginning of the century involved attempts to expand educational access. The start of evening schools significantly expanded educational opportunities for white youths in the city. School board members voted to start an evening school at the Boys High School for the 1903-1904 school year. The school opened on 2 November with 142 students. Enrollment reached 180 before the end of the session five months later. In addition to classes in English, reading, math, geography, and history, students received instruction in typing, bookkeeping, and stenography. Increased enrollment led Superintendent Easton to request additional evening schools. When the 1911-1912 school year started, nine evening schools operated throughout the city.<sup>20</sup> None of them admitted blacks.

The evening school curriculum offered a vivid look at the relationship between educational access and enhanced employment opportunities. The curriculum expanded from the initial three commercial courses to include classes in

manual and industrial training, domestic science, and additional commercial classes. When necessary, school officials fashioned a curriculum to meet a specific need or objective. During the winter of 1907-1908 white New Orleanians became upset by what many regarded as an inordinate number of blacks in the federal civil service. Some whites charged that the area black colleges provided their students with special instruction to prepare them for the federal exam. Superintendent Warren Easton immediately organized a class at one of the evening schools to prepare whites for the test.<sup>21</sup> He soon reported "excellent results by pupils of the Civil Service Class of Evening School No. 1" Seven out of the eight evening school students who took the test passed; one of them earned the highest grade on the letter carrier exam.<sup>22</sup> Neither the educational inequalities nor the tangible benefits of educational opportunity escaped the attention of the black community.

Blacks wanted school officials to provide evening schools for them as they did for white youths who worked. Between 1900 and 1918 evening schools remained a high priority.<sup>23</sup> Expressing the frustration many blacks felt over the board's refusal to provide evening schools, an editorial in a religious newspaper "Question[ed] the right of a people to rule who are so nearsighted and thoroughly selfish as to refuse the petition of an element of the citizenship that is loyal, though poor and helpless."<sup>24</sup>



Although blacks did not benefit initially from the expanded educational opportunities associated with evening schools, they welcomed the new program. They knew, as one scholar observed, that "the southern educational revival widened the gap between the schooling of whites and blacks at the same time that it extended opportunity for both groups."<sup>25</sup> Once a new program for whites became operational, black leaders and parents increased their requests and demands for the same programs. Constant denials by the board failed to lessen their resolve and persistence often produced favorable results. For example, after countless appeals and petitions the school board established an evening school for blacks in November 1918. Despite its restrictive admission requirements--males had to be employed six hours a day and instruction could not extend beyond the fourth grade level--the evening school experienced immediate success. Enrollment reached 398 during the first year of operation.<sup>26</sup>

The DuBoisian-Washingtonian debate over manual versus academic training for blacks had little relevance to blacks in New Orleans because school officials refused to

**Table 7****Trends in Black Evening School Enrollment, 1919-1940<sup>27</sup>**

<b>Year Ending</b>	<b>Total</b>
1919	398
1920	922
1921	2321
1922	2824
1923	2277
1924	2021
1925	2527
1926	2023
1927	3890
1928	4203
1929	4402
1930	4754
1931	4710
1932	4702
1933	4754
1934	3581
1935	4780
1936	4808
1937	3282
1938	2413
1939	2764
1940	2166

adequately fund vocational training for blacks.<sup>28</sup> Despite the opening of McDonogh 35 and the start of evening schools, exclusion or limited educational opportunities served as the operational philosophy of school officials. James Fortier and other school board members consistently expressed the belief that blacks should receive, almost exclusively, manual, industrial, or domestic training, but budgetary problems prevented them from putting the idea into practice. It was cheaper to teach blacks Greek and Latin than sewing and carpentry. Indeed, even in white schools, vocational training developed slowly because of a chronic shortage of revenues. At the beginning of the century no students received industrial training.<sup>29</sup>

Community groups wanted industrial training in the white schools and frequently pressured school officials to furnish it. When the New Orleans Educational Association requested the introduction of manual training in 1900, board members promised to act when funds became available. Dr. James H. Dillard, representing the Public School Alliance, pledged the support of his organization for any plan to start industrial training. Some individuals and groups went beyond speeches and petitions. Joseph Kohn, a businessman and president of the Chamber of Commerce, offered to donate one thousand dollars toward the purchase of industrial training equipment. Kohn later extended the same offer for equipment for a black school.<sup>30</sup> The board

accepted both offers.

Community efforts to secure industrial education received the enthusiastic support of the various superintendents. Warren Easton actively sought to start an industrial program in 1901. With plans still dormant several years later, he informed the board members that industrial education was not a "fad."<sup>31</sup> He suggested they establish a program in the high schools or in a separate vocational training school. The board began seriously to study Easton's recommendation in the spring of 1905 and referred the matter to the Committee on Elementary and Secondary Schools.<sup>32</sup> Unable to reach a decision on whether to start the program in the high or elementary schools, the board waited five years before taking action. In 1910, school officials decided to start industrial training in several white elementary schools.<sup>33</sup>

Most whites agreed that blacks needed manual training, and of course, some insisted they needed no other. Black leaders and parents also embraced manual training but thought blacks needed other training as well. Blacks knew that even in a race-neutral society, varied intellectual abilities and vocational interests necessitated a diverse school curriculum.<sup>34</sup> The idea that schools should prepare students for work was a cardinal principle; few dissented from it. The struggle for vocational training remained an integral part of the

development of the black community. The occupational status of black New Orleans necessitated and justified such an approach.

The majority of black males employed in the city worked as unskilled laborers. For example, in 1920 blacks constituted 27 percent of the population, but nearly 45 percent of the persons engaged in domestic and personal service. Looked at another way, foreign-born white males had more professional jobs than black males (619 to 462). Four-times as many blacks, however, lived in the city, 100,930 to 25,992.<sup>35</sup> In 1950, black laborers outnumbered the white laborers almost two to one. Earning capacity, of course, depended on occupational status. As a consequence, in 1944 black median income was fifty percent less than that of whites.<sup>36</sup> Black leaders and black parents attempted to enhance and expand the occupational options of black youths through vocational training.

Kohn raised his initial offer from one thousand dollars to twelve hundred dollars for industrial equipment in a black school. Citing a lack of funds, school officials still failed to take advantage of the offer, notwithstanding the requests from blacks and the recommendations of the superintendent. "Facilities for trade and industrial education are needed for the colored youth in the upper grammar grades," Superintendent Gwinn stressed in 1912. On another occasion he admitted that

"nothing has been done to supply facilities for industrial education for the negroes. All recognize the great need for this training for the youth of that race."<sup>37</sup> At one point the board considered building an extension to the Thomy Lafon School to house several industrial classes. Board members abandoned that plan, citing the expense of what was actually a relatively modest construction cost of \$2,250. At the same time they had appropriated \$100,000 for the vocational training of six thousand white students.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, in 1918, school officials authorized the construction of a three room annex for manual training at Lafon. Several years after making his pledge Kohn sent the board a twelve hundred dollar check.<sup>39</sup> Eighteen years into the twentieth century, blacks and their supposedly "proper" education met. By 1927 many other black schools, including McDonogh 35, offered manual or domestic training. Female students received instruction in sewing and cooking, and males learned printing, carpentry, and bricklaying.<sup>40</sup>

Vocational instruction in various elementary schools and at McDonogh 35 provided only a partial solution to the problem of inadequate black vocational training. Blacks and school officials acknowledged the need for a trade school for elementary school graduates. Whenever the subject came before the board, however, a claimed insufficiency of funds prevented the board from acting.

Into the financial void, and to the relief of the black community, stepped representatives of the Julius Rosenwald Fund. School officials had attempted to get money from the Rosenwald Fund since 1923.<sup>41</sup> Interest by the Fund coincided with the school board's issuance of three million dollars in bonds for school construction. The board voted in February 1930 to use \$275,000 from the bond money to construct a black trade school. At the time the figure represented the largest amount of money allocated for a black school by the board.<sup>42</sup> Rosenwald Fund officials then pledged \$125,000 to the proposed \$400,000 project.

Some members of the black community did not support the plan to build a trade school. John Guillaume, president of a proprietary business college, argued that blacks needed academic high schools more than a trade school. "A trade school building is not our greatest need in the line of school facilities," Guillaume stated in a letter to Superintendent Bauer.<sup>43</sup> In an editorial titled "We Need It," the Louisiana Weekly disagreed with Guillaume: "The trade school idea is a good one; if not, the white children would not have two in our city while we are getting one. If the idea is good for the opposite group, where they have one hundred chances to our children's one for positions by which they are to earn their daily bread, then why condemn something that will have a tendency to put our children on an equality with

those of other groups."<sup>44</sup>

Blacks welcomed financial support from the Rosenwald Fund and noted with some satisfaction statements made by Dr. Franklin Keller, an executive of the Fund. Dr. Keller met with leaders of the black community in February 1931 to discuss the trade school project. He assured the delegation that "in New Orleans there will be as fine a trade school for Negro children as there is now for either whites or Negroes anywhere in the United States." Keller attempted to allay the concerns of blacks regarding the type of courses to be offered. He maintained the trade "school will continue to introduce new courses of study along with the development of new trades during the constant revolution of industry."<sup>45</sup> He cited the city's need for bricklayers and automobile mechanics and argued that the trade school should train blacks to meet those and other labor needs of the community.

Viewing vocational education in a broader context, blacks wanted vocational courses to go beyond the narrow dictates of the New Orleans labor market. The recent war and the northern migration of blacks convinced many black leaders of the need for training local blacks for a national labor market. The South's hold on the black population grew less tenacious as the years passed. "If the school disregards equipping the Negro for the needs of the forty-eight states," charged the Weekly "and holds to



the theory that brick-laying and plastering is sufficient thereof, we are compelled to ask 'to what aught is this waste'?"<sup>46</sup> The black community did not feel constrained by the policies or actions of the majority population. They knew the proper education of black children involved a struggle of seemingly endless duration.

Many whites, on the other hand, wanted a very limited vocational curriculum for blacks. Racism and discrimination involved more than a cerebral or emotive ideology; it enabled white workers to maintain a favorable position in the labor market. Since race antipathy prevented the inclusion of blacks in most local skilled unions, white workers had a vested interest in suppressing the development of black skilled workers. Attempts at black-white worker solidarity had already succumbed to the "color-line."<sup>47</sup>

Board members like Isaac Heller, who displayed some sympathy for black education and led the campaign within the school board for a black trade school, had to contend with the feelings of the white community. A month after school officials announced their intention to build a trade school, Heller tried to mollify white fears with the assurance that the school would not increase occupational competition between blacks and whites. Heller maintained the trade school curriculum would reflect traditional black employment patterns. Although he spoke in general terms,

his statements prevented the formation of organized and sustained white opposition.<sup>48</sup>

Conflict and concern over the proposed curriculum became moot when school officials allowed the project to die a slow death. With the assistance of the Rosenwald Fund and the money from the bond issue, school officials had sufficient revenues to erect the trade school. To the chagrin of the black community, the school board purchased a former hospital building on Carondelet Street to serve as its central office. Part of the money for the acquisition came from the funds set aside for the trade school.<sup>49</sup> Why did the board suddenly change policy?

Support for the project among the members was tepid at best and rested to a considerable degree on the efforts of Heller and Superintendent Bauer. A \$400,000 school for blacks, even if it promised to train them for the "right" jobs, was too large an expenditure for black education. Additionally, the lingering fear of potential job competition between the races convinced the school board to abandon the project. The effects of the depression all but eliminated reconsideration of the project for several years.

In the meantime the board, with bitter irony, or disdain, decided to build an inexpensive elementary school on the site previously purchased for the trade school. The new school, constructed in less than two months, alleviated

overcrowding at three schools in the area. Ordinarily black leaders and parents expressed joy at the addition of new schools. This time they knew that they had lost more than they had gained. With justifiable indignation blacks wondered: "Did they decide to give a 25,000 dollar temporary building on a site selected for a trade school in order to avoid erecting the needed trade school?"<sup>50</sup>

Black leaders, however, continued the effort to secure a trade school. Throughout the 1903s the Colored Educational Alliance, the New Orleans NAACP, and the Federation of Civic Leagues kept the issue before the school board.<sup>51</sup> Funding through the Works Progress Administration eventually made the trade school a reality. In 1940 construction started near the previous site which had been purchased amidst much fanfare and hope. In honor of the man who a half-century earlier had placed his approval and life's energies in industrial education, the board named the school after Booker T. Washington.<sup>52</sup>

Victories in the struggles to get black high schools, evening schools, and a trade school greatly increased educational opportunities for blacks. Black leaders though wanted limitless educational opportunities; as soon as they claimed victory in one battle they moved on to eliminate other educational deficiencies. What type of instruction the students received also mattered to parents and

community leaders. Although the city operated a dual educational system, in many subjects a common curriculum existed for blacks and whites. In other words, a black first grader taking arithmetic had the same curriculum as a white first grader.<sup>53</sup> Disparities in the content of black and white education occurred because whites received instruction in many more subjects than blacks and had programs not available to blacks.

From the first year of school, discrimination affected the content and scope of black education. For example, school officials provided kindergarten classes for whites but failed to give blacks the same opportunity until the 1940s. In a response to a request for kindergarten classes for black students in 1900, the Committee on Teachers established the tone for several decades when it informed blacks "it is the sense of this committee that under the existing conditions it is not feasible to inaugurate said system at present."<sup>54</sup>

School officials continued the division of the grades started in the nineteenth century, elementary (primary and grammar), high, and normal. The primary grades remained one through four, and grammar grades consisted of five through eight. High school students had a three year curriculum, except for the 1900-1901 school year when officials increased it to four years. Some dissatisfaction with the three year plan lingered, and occasionally,

someone proposed changing to a four year curriculum. Opposition from educational pressure groups effectively overcame such sentiments.<sup>55</sup> But in the end the decision by some colleges not to accept students without four years of high school forced a change. Even then the ever resourceful school board transferred the eighth grade from the elementary division to the high school division.<sup>56</sup> The curriculum at the normal school for prospective teachers remained at two years. With the advent of evening schools and increased interest in vocational training, the organizational divisions changed to meet those needs.<sup>57</sup>

The elementary schools provided instruction in language arts, reading, spelling, mathematics, science, history, civics, art, and physical training. In each subject teachers expected a specific mastery of certain skills. In language arts students acquired "freedom and facility in expression," and the ability to "differentiate between thought, expression, and the mechanical side of language work." Memorization remained in vogue; teachers had a list of stories and poems for each grade they taught.<sup>58</sup> First grade teachers exposed their students to works such as Longfellow's Hiawatha, Jacob's Fables of Aesop, and Holbrook's Book of Nature myths. "To secure mastery of the printed page, and easy effective expression of thought; to develop appreciation of literature, love of books, power to select and use them wisely..." grammar

school students read Rip Van Winkle, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, The Shell and the Brook, and The First Snowfall.<sup>59</sup>

As the number of supervisors and administrators increased, the school board devoted more time to curriculum development. Teachers received book-length guides that provided detailed outlines and suggestions for teaching as well as for tests and measurements.<sup>60</sup> Students spent about fifty percent of the school day on their English-related subjects. Time devoted to mathematics and science was eighteen and ten percent respectively.<sup>61</sup> Students usually spent the remainder of the school day studying history, geography, and drawing.

Attempts to improve the curriculum or to up-grade facilities were frequently undermined by lack of funds. Resistance to taxes for education, a fixture in nineteenth century New Orleans, continued into the twentieth. New Orleans consistently spent less on education than cities of comparable size. The state's contribution to local schools remained small.<sup>62</sup> Inadequate funding retarded the entire system, but blacks suffered to a much greater extent since they received a much smaller share of the public school budget.<sup>63</sup>

An indictment of the inequities of school board policy can be gleaned from examining the number, condition, and value of various schools. In the 1901-1902 session blacks

had twelve schools and whites sixty. In 1910 New Orleans had sixteen black schools and sixty-eight for whites. Moreover, school officials generally spent more to maintain white schools than to maintain black ones. Whites also benefited disproportionately from new construction. Between 1900 and 1910, school officials erected twenty-one schools. Even though white schools already numbered far more than black, only three of the new schools served the black population. The estimated site and building value of the new black schools averaged \$25,000. By contrast, the value of the new white schools averaged \$42,500. The three black schools were frame structures: twelve of the eighteen white schools were brick. Whites not only received more schools, they received better schools.<sup>64</sup>

Ten years later, the Superintendent's report for the 1920-1921 school year revealed similar statistics. Out of the eighty-six public schools in the city, fewer than twenty served the needs of blacks students. Again, city leaders had erected new schools. Fourteen went up between 1910 and 1920. Only one, however, served black students.<sup>65</sup> Black and white leaders knew that often the number of available schools affected total black enrollment; limited facilities equaled lower enrollment. "It is evident," Superintendent Warren Easton reported in 1903, "that the full seating capacity has been reached and a further increase in the enrollment cannot be expected until the

school accommodations are enlarged."<sup>66</sup> After 1920 black enrollment outpaced available facilities, which placed additional pressure on school officials and provided them with tangible evidence of black educational interest. Increased enrollment and interest also placed pressure on black leaders to fight for better schools. To meet the educational needs of the black community, black leaders had to become more aggressive in their attack on the status quo.

The need for additional black schools persisted throughout the period. Leaders of the black community continually kept the issue before school officials. In the main, the school board was a reactive body, seldom making decisions until some type of community interest or pressure developed. In matters related to black education, this tendency was even more pronounced. Black activism, therefore, became an even more crucial element in the campaign for improved schools. Blacks residing in the less developed sections of the city fared worse in the quest for schools. Residents in the Milneburg area, an outlying district near Lake Ponchartrain, on several occasions petitioned school officials, without success, for a school. Others living in the more populous areas also kept their needs before the board. A 1913 petition from the Colored Educational Alliance requested the erection of several



**Table 8**  
**Average Cost of Operations Per Pupil, 1922-1940<sup>87</sup>**

Year Ending	Black	White	Differential
1922	36.77	74.26	\$37.49
1923	32.50	70.05	37.55
1924	39.41	69.20	29.79
1925	34.82	63.09	28.27
1926	43.35	73.77	30.42
1927	42.72	77.65	34.93
1928	41.38	79.31	37.73
1929	41.47	78.08	36.61
1930	40.82	77.59	36.77
1931	37.78	74.52	36.74
1932	37.82	75.99	38.17
1933	29.03	56.15	27.12
1934	27.33	52.10	24.77
1935	27.67	56.21	28.54
1936	27.88	69.49	27.81
1937	37.73	79.34	31.76
1938	41.86	85.19	37.48
1939	42.18	8.615	43.01
1940	44.32	86.15	41.83

annexes to relieve overcrowding as well as new schools.<sup>68</sup>

The petitioners pointed out that money spent on black education would benefit the entire community. In a city that often displayed hostility to any form of black education beyond the primary level, it made sense to link the educational aspirations of blacks to the development of the larger community. Black New Orleanians did not invent this strategy; blacks in other cities employed similar tactics with a degree of success.<sup>69</sup> Black leaders and parents emphasized that they wanted a fair share of the community's educational revenues. Fair and equitable meant the resources spent on black education should approximate the black percentage of the population.

Adherence to the latter part of the separate but equal doctrine had long ago succumbed to racism and budgetary constraints. Black leaders like Reverend Dunn and Dr. Hardin hoped that investigation and exposure of the conditions in the schools would lead to improvements. They also used the many investigations as a means to keep the black community involved in educational issues. Blacks gained few absolute educational victories, but parental and community interest increased because of the emphasis placed on education by black leaders.

Unsanitary and unsafe conditions existed at most of the black schools and received the attention of black leaders. Beginning in 1925 the black owned newspaper, the

Louisiana Weekly, made improved education a top priority. When blacks petitioned for improved school buildings they sought not an upgrading of buildings from adequate to good or good to better; rather they had to fight to improve schools from deplorable to adequate.<sup>70</sup> In 1913 blacks and school officials considered several of the schools unsanitary--Oleander, Fisk, Fisk Branch, Bayou Road, and Miro. After city health authorities condemned the Oleander School, school officials rented a building to accommodate the students.<sup>71</sup>

Renting building served only as a temporary measure, modern brick structures represented the real answer to the problem. School officials, however, rarely allocated enough money for such permanent solutions. When officials finally transferred students from "the broken down church building which formerly housed Fisk Branch School," conditions improved marginally. A school hygienist considered the building unfit for a school. According to one report: "All of the rooms are filled with desks. The windows have not been changed, but are the same windows usually found in residences. No desk space for the teacher is possible, as the rooms are too small for both teacher's and pupils desks."<sup>72</sup>

As late as 1927 blacks had only one modern school building, Joseph Craig located in Faubourg Tremé, the city's oldest black residential area. Most of the other

schools were wooden structures in poor condition.<sup>73</sup> A large delegation of blacks, including Dr. Hardin and members of the Seventh Ward Civic League, appeared before school officials in 1928 to discuss conditions at Jones. Dr. Hardin presented pictures of the school that supported his statements, and Superintendent Nicholas Bauer informed the board that conditions were as bad as Dr. Hardin indicated. Bauer recommended immediate relief and suggested the construction of a modern school for that section of the city.<sup>74</sup> The board members assured the group that relief would follow, and this time they kept their promise.

Several months later school officials accepted bids for the construction of the new school at Annette and Miro Streets.<sup>75</sup> In October 1929, over two thousand individuals attended dedication ceremonies for the new Valena C. Jones, "considered one of the best equipped school buildings in this section of the country." The lengthy program included speeches by Superintendent Bauer, board member Isaac Heller, community leader Hardin, and Jones' principal Fannie C. Williams. Heller gave the keynote address and used the theme "The New Negro" as his topic. Miss Williams encouraged the crowd to tour the school and "note the modern equipment, which includes a radio in the school auditorium, an electric refrigerator and gas stoves and ovens in the domestic science room, a fire-chute, and a

well equipped infirmary."<sup>76</sup> Doubtlessly, many parents in attendance shared Miss Williams' joy, heightened by the realization that the school began in the early twentieth century in a "lowly tenement house."<sup>77</sup>

The number of blacks enrolled in school increased dramatically between 1900 and 1945. Except for a significant and, to a degree, unexplained fluctuation in enrollment from 1901 to 1906, black enrollment demonstrated sustained growth. In 1900, blacks accounted for 17.5 percent of total enrollment, by 1920 the percentage had increased to 21.3 percent. The increase occurred despite the fact that increased enrollment invariably contributed to overcrowding which forced many students to attend school on a part-time basis. Moreover, increased enrollment often exasperated an already critical teacher-to-pupil ratio. In a superintendent's report that acknowledged some of the needs of black schools, Joseph Gwinn stated, "practically all of the schools for Negroes are overcrowded." As a remedy he suggested that "additions are needed at McDonogh 32, Bienville, McDonogh 6, and Thomy Lafon."<sup>78</sup> Throughout the period blacks complained of the endemic overcrowded conditions in their schools.

Table 9

New Orleans Public School Enrollment, 1900-1940<sup>79</sup>


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Year Ending	Black	White	Total
1901	5,509	26,038	31,547
1902	5,072	26,133	31,205
1903	4,856	26,228	31,144
1904	4,949	26,751	31,700
1905	4,558	27,331	31,889
1906	4,847	27,125	31,972
1907	5,659	28,605	34,265
1908	6,295	31,710	38,005
1909	6,717	33,687	40,404
1910	6,616	36,117	42,733
1911	7,674	38,151	45,825
1912	8,105	38,499	46,604
1913	8,367	40,080	48,447
1914	8,706	39,161	47,867
1915	8,736	40,244	48,980
1916	9,656	39,161	47,868
1917	9,404	40,244	48,990
1918	9,685	41,836	41,647
1919	9,362	40,182	49,544
1920	10,984	40,611	51,595
1921	12,996	49,923	53,920
1922	15,256	44,662	59,918
1923	16,103	47,325	63,428
1924	16,128	47,087	63,215
1925	17,052	47,401	64,453
1926	16,500	47,952	64,452
1927	19,625	48,732	68,356
1928	21,025	50,165	71,189
1929	21,911	52,927	74,839
1930	23,018	52,891	75,909
1931	22,572	56,834	79,406
1932	24,987	55,948	80,935
1933	25,130	57,364	82,494
1935	26,640	58,968	85,608
1936	29,256	59,587	88,843
1937	29,062	57,496	88,558
1938	27,537	54,797	82,334
1939	28,322	54,140	82,402
1940	27,787	53,657	81,444

Schools recently built often became overcrowded. The new Thomy Lafon School, erected in 1906, was overcrowded a year later, which necessitated an annex. McDonogh No. 32, built in 1907, had to conduct some of its classes in a rented church building that constantly needed repairs.<sup>80</sup> School officials responded to overcrowding by renting or building annexes. Renting church buildings, though popular with school officials, worked a hardship on teachers and students. Unlike residences, school officials could not build partitions or even place desks in the rented churches. Although vacant during the week, the buildings had to be in condition for use by their congregations on Sundays. Nevertheless, the practice of renting churches continued.<sup>81</sup>

When the board could not find suitable buildings to rent or did not have the funds to construct annexes, it had blacks attend school only part of the day. The idea of part-time classes developed slowly but became widespread in the 1920s. Students at McDonogh No. 6, however, had their school day shortened as early as 1915. In the beginning of the 1922-1923 school year, 5,396 black students attended school part-time. Only 192 white students, however, had less than a full day of school.<sup>82</sup> School officials attempted to limit part-time classes to the primary grades, but that often proved impossible as the number of blacks in grammar and secondary schools increased. Students forced

to attend part-time averaged 2 1/2 to 4 hours of school. No official policy or regulation existed regarding the length of the school day for students attending classes part-time. School officials reacted to conditions as they arose. They made no effort to defend the practice as a remedy for overcrowding, citing as a reason the familiar refrain--insufficient revenues.<sup>83</sup>

In 1927, a survey of black schools conducted by reporters for the Louisiana Weekly, disclosed overcrowded conditions in most of the schools. Craig School, one of the better facilities, had part-time classes, and the paper's reporter lamented that "It is to be pitied that an almost perfect school should be marred by this evil."<sup>84</sup> Craig served a large district; some of its students traveled over twenty-five blocks to attend. Thomy Lafon, in uptown New Orleans, hailed derisively as the "largest elementary school in the world," resorted to part-time classes as the only way to accommodate the large number of students.<sup>85</sup> A writer asked, "When, oh when, shall we come across a school where enough room is provided for giving all the children full time in the classroom?"<sup>86</sup>

The decision to resegregate the schools in 1877 did not result in the elimination of white teachers from black schools. In a community that claimed to want to enforce the color line in all aspects of human interaction, the



presence of white teachers in black schools appeared contradictory. Nonetheless, despite a board resolution passed in 1890 calling for the removal of white teachers, the practice continued into the twentieth century.<sup>87</sup> Both black and white groups opposed the practice and frequently petitioned the board to have it stopped. In the face of such widespread dissatisfaction, why did it persist? At various times one or more factors influenced the board's decision. First, native white teachers steeped in the tradition of the region's racial mores could be counted on to reinforce the dominant position of the majority population. Second, the use of white teachers in black schools increased employment opportunities for white females, a significant consideration because of the absence of professional jobs for women. Third, the number of qualified black applicants lagged behind demand until the 1900s.<sup>88</sup>

The number of black schools staffed by whites fluctuated; on at least two occasions board members considered expanding the practice rather than phasing it out. In 1906 two board members, Knickerbocker and Brennan, tried to win board support for replacing the entire corps of black teachers with whites. Neither Brennan nor Knickerbocker offered a reason for their proposal and their motives remained unclear. Whatever their rationale, the board voted against the measure.<sup>89</sup> School officials built

an annex to the always overcrowded Lafon in 1910 and proposed staffing the annex with white teachers. They justified their decision by claiming that the annex represented a new school. When blacks learned of the plan they quickly registered a protest. They contended that the new building was an annex to Lafon and so should have black teachers. The board subsequently voted to place black teachers at the new annex.<sup>90</sup>

Attempts by blacks to remove all the white teachers proved just as elusive as Brennan and Knickerbocker's effort to remove all black teachers. Blacks residing in Algiers persistently, but unsuccessfully, tried to get only black teachers at McDonogh No. 32. Yet their brethren in the Second and Fourth Districts did achieve that goal at Bayou Road and First Street Schools.<sup>91</sup> As late as the 1912-1913 school year, four black schools still had white teachers--Lawton, McCarthy, McDonogh No. 6, and McDonogh No. 32. The same sentiment that made whites support residential segregation contributed to a more concerted effort to remove white teachers from black schools. The board voted to make the change at McDonogh No. 6 and McDonogh No. 32 in August 1913. Two years later Lawton became an all black teacher school and in 1916 McCarthy did too.<sup>92</sup>

One researcher believed "the establishment of a completely colored division of the New Orleans Public

School was and still is an educational triumph for the Negro race."<sup>93</sup> Blacks believed that the racial views of the white community made it virtually impossible for white teachers to provide quality instruction to black students. The number of qualified black teachers increased during the early twentieth century. Fannie C. Williams, O.C.W. Taylor, Lucian Alexis, and John Hoffman were only a few of the young teachers who joined the public schools. The use of more black teachers also increased the number of professional positions available to blacks. The dearth of professional positions for blacks actually helped the development of black education. College bound students had few options in choosing a professional career, so the majority studied to become teachers.<sup>94</sup>

Despite the willingness of blacks to pursue teaching as a career, several obstacles existed. The absence of a free teacher training school posed the biggest problem. The school board sponsored a normal school for whites but not, until 1923, for blacks. Additionally, the board, in cooperation with Tulane University, conducted a normal school in the summer for white teachers which afforded them an opportunity to improve their teaching skills. Black teachers recognized the importance of the summer normal programs and looked for ways to obtain those advantages for themselves. In 1915 Reverend Dunn and Reverend Jones, led a successful effort to establish a summer normal program

for blacks. The school board contributed 250 dollars to help defray expenses, and Straight University donated the use of its facilities. Superintendent Gwinn selected Alfred Lawless as the first director and named an advisory committee composed of Sylvania Williams, Hattie Feger, and Thomas Sherrard. Lawless, along with the advisory committee, recommended the faculty with approval of the superintendent. Lawless conducted a successful program and the next year Gwinn recommended its renewal. Registration for the 1919 session reached 230 and the board's contribution rose to 500 dollars.<sup>95</sup>

The separate and unequal doctrine extended to teacher salaries as well as school facilities. In the midst of the 1900 campaign to reduce black education to the primary grades, the Committee on Elementary Schools considered a proposal to equalize the salaries of black and white teachers. The plan never reached fruition; the practice of paying black teachers less than whites became entrenched, despite the protest of black teachers and their supporters.<sup>96</sup> Black teachers usually received approximately twelve percent less than white teachers. For example, in 1920 a first year white elementary school teacher earned eighty dollars a month; a black teacher with the same qualifications received seventy dollars. The differential remained throughout the years of service. A white teacher with six years of experience received 120

dollars a month and a black teacher 110 dollars.<sup>97</sup> Given the low and often late salaries paid to black and white teachers, both groups had a right to complain--and they did.

Black teachers throughout the South also suffered because of discriminatory salary scales.<sup>98</sup> The salary "differentials amounted to a loss of approximately 10 million dollars to Negro teachers."<sup>99</sup> Through individual effort and eventually through the coordinated assistance of the NAACP, black teachers used the court system to challenge salary discrimination. The campaign started in Maryland in 1936 and resulted in the 1939 consent decree to equalize teacher salaries in that state.<sup>100</sup> The stirring of change in the distant state of Maryland had no effect on the local school board. The salary schedule for the 1937-1938 school year continued past inequities. An editorial in the Weekly placed the issue in a broader context and argued that more was at stake than additional money for black teachers: "...if the Negro teachers employed by the Orleans Parish school board accept without protest this most recent discrimination, we fear for children who enter their classrooms, so humble and lacking in dependence will they doubtless be due to the attitude of their instructors."<sup>101</sup>

With assistance from several organizations--the league for Equal Rights and Justice, the Colored Educational

Alliance, and the New Orleans NAACP--black teachers through the New Orleans League of Classroom Teachers and later the New Orleans Citizens' Committee for Equalizing Educational Opportunities, attacked salary discrimination.<sup>102</sup> Following what by then had become a traditional approach, in petitions to the board the teachers first outlined their grievances and requested changes. They sent one such petition in January 1938 and another that July. Using statistical information published by the board, they pointed out that a first year white teacher with a B.A. degree received an annual salary of \$1,000. On the other hand, a black teacher with a B.A. degree had a starting salary of \$909 a year. The disparity increased with the level of experience. Thus by the eleventh year in the system, the white teacher received \$2,200 dollars annually, \$760 dollars more than a black teacher of the same rank. "The added strain of financial worries," the teachers argued, "takes from us energy which we strongly desire to use in rendering the highest degree of efficient service to our children."<sup>103</sup> They expressed confidence in the board's willingness and ability to eliminate the inequities.

But this time, the teachers decided to do more than simply submit a petition and hope. Between the mailing of the first and second petitions they hired a lawyer to pursue a court challenge. Unfortunately their enthusiasm exceeded their judgement in the selection of an attorney.

They secured the services of a white attorney who "informed the teachers that they needed a plaintiff; and besides he had not had much experience in that type of law."<sup>104</sup>

Dismayed but not discouraged, the teachers next sought the aid of Thurgood Marshall, the attorney responsible for the salary equalization victories in Maryland. Marshall, a graduate of Howard University Law School, had joined the NAACP as a staff attorney in 1936.<sup>105</sup> Marshall, who had visited New Orleans several times in the past, arrived in March 1939 to assist in the pay equalization fight. A meticulous organizer and strategist, Marshall informed the group "that certain steps should be taken before filing suit. The teachers should organize a special committee, raise money, and find suitable plaintiffs." Before returning to New York Marshall selected the local black attorney Alexander Tureaud to help him in the case and he assured the group that Tureaud would receive his constant assistance.<sup>106</sup>

The New Orleans Citizens' Committee for Equalizing Educational Opportunities, chaired by Donald Jones, a community activist, provided funds to fight the case. Forming an organization proved easy but finding a plaintiff took more care, given the threat of reprisals by school officials. Officials in some southern communities dismissed black teachers who took similar action.<sup>107</sup> Unlike most black professionals and businessmen in New Orleans,

teachers worked at the pleasure and discretion of whites. Despite the possible loss of his position, Joseph McKelpin, a non-tenured teacher at Ricard School, agreed to act as the plaintiff.<sup>108</sup>

Two years elapsed between Marshall's visit and definitive action by black teachers. The most plausible explanation for the delay was that the teachers thought school officials, cognizant of successful challenges in other areas, would abolish salary discrimination without a court fight. They failed to realize that what may have started out as just another form of petty discrimination had become in New Orleans a means of holding down the cost of black education and therefore of subsidizing white education.<sup>109</sup> Once on the back of the tiger it was difficult for school officials to dismount without a push. The push came on 9 May 1941 in the form of a four point petition presented by Attorney Tureaud on the behalf of Joseph McKelpin. It requested:

1. That the board abolish the present discrimination schedule of teachers' salaries.
2. That petitioners and all other Negroes employed by the board as public school teachers and principals be paid compensation equal to that paid white teachers with the same qualifications and experience and performing the same services.
3. That a salary schedule free of all racial discrimination or differential be established by the board and made applicable to the compensation of all teachers and principals in public schools in said city.
4. That because this matter has previously been before this board prompt action is respectfully requested in order that the petitioner's legal rights in the premises may not be jeopardized by delay.<sup>110</sup>



The five member school board, led by President Henry C. Schaumburg, assured Tureaud that the board would consider the petition. Tureaud seized the initiative, however, and filed suit in June, 1941. Schaumburg then called a special meeting to consider what actions the board should take. One board member, George Treadwell, believed that Tureaud filed the suit prematurely because the board had not refused to grant the requests raised in the petition. Neither Treadwell nor the other members, however, proposed to eliminate or narrow the differential between the salaries of black and white teachers. Instead they referred the suit to the City Attorney, Howard Lenfant, and instructed him to litigate.<sup>111</sup> On 7 July Lenfant filed a "Motion for Extension of Time to Plead" and the court granted his request. Faced with precedents recently established in other states, Lenfant had concluded that a strategy of delay and dismissal represented his only option. After receiving a delay, he next filed a motion of dismissal in September.

In addition to doing the routine legal work on the case in New Orleans, Tureaud remained in constant communication with Marshall in New York. Tureaud wrote asking Marshall to "indicate the time at which you would like to argue the motion to dismiss."<sup>112</sup> This was Tureaud's first important civil rights case, and he feared the motion to dismiss might have legal merit. Marshall, on the other hand, a

veteran in the legal crusade for black civil rights, considered the dismissal motion "completely without foundation."<sup>113</sup> Marshall assured Tureaud that any points Lenfant could raise had been attempted and lost in the other cases. Meanwhile, the case, assigned to Judge Wayne Borah, remained dormant for several months. Tureaud called the judge's clerk several times hoping to hear encouraging news only to be told that Borah had not reached a decision.<sup>114</sup>

Dismayed over what he considered Judge Borah's inordinate delay in reaching a decision, Marshall proposed that he and Tureaud meet with the Judge in hopes of expediting the matter. Before the meeting took place, Borah threw out the motion to dismiss and later scheduled a trial for August 1942. The prospect of a trial and almost certain defeat led school board officials to attempt a settlement. August J. Tete, who became Superintendent in January 1942 after Nicholas Bauer resigned, presented Tureaud with a proposal. Tete offered what he considered a "better proposition" because his plan would eliminate not only the differential between white and black teachers but between degree and non-degree teachers as well.<sup>115</sup>

According to Tureaud's figures, about thirty percent of the black teachers did not possess at least a B.A. degree, and under Tete's plan they would also receive a salary increase. Tete requested five years to implement the plan;

black teachers would receive twenty percent of the differentiation in salaries each year until they equalled those of whites.<sup>116</sup> Tureaud lacked the authority to accept or reject the offer and forwarded Tete's plan to Marshall. The man with the authority minced few words: "I think the plan submitted by the school board stinks," he declared and outlined his reasons. "In the first place five years is too long. In the second place, there are too many catches. And in the third place, I am sure that our teachers are opposed to it."<sup>117</sup>

Rebuffed, Tete changed his approach and asked Marshall and Tureaud to suggest "terms" they could accept. Neither Tete nor the school board envisioned equalizing the salaries in one step. Tureaud also endorsed the concept of gradual equalization. "I still believe," Tureaud wrote, "that we could with some propriety fix at least a maximum time we would grant them, and leave the details of the plan to be worked out after they have indicated their acceptance of any suggested plan."<sup>118</sup> Why did Tureaud give tacit support to a compromise that clearly favored the school board? Unsubstantiated charges would later surface that Tureaud received a bribe from school officials for his endorsement of a compromise. Tureaud was a man of impeccable integrity and labored without compensation in the black struggle for civil rights for over fifty years. A bribe was definitely not the reason. He supported a

compromise for the same reason the black teachers eventually accepted one--litigation was costly, sometimes was lengthy, and its outcome was uncertain. Although Marshall refused to propose terms to school officials because "the pressure at the present time is on the school board, and not on us," he, too, would later support a compromise.<sup>119</sup>

"Unless they propose a plan that is satisfactory to us, they will have to go to trial in August; and this they do not want to do," Marshall wrote in July 1942.<sup>120</sup> Marshall's instincts proved correct; in August school officials came forward with an offer satisfactory to the black teachers and to Judge Borah. The opposing sides agreed to a two year equalization plan. The board promised to reduce the differential by fifty percent in September 1942 and the remainder in September, 1943. Black teachers were understandably happy, but Judge Borah's ruling contained a broader implication for the entire black community. Borah had partially resurrected the principles of the Fourteenth Amendment, principles that had at one time held such promise and hope. Borah stated that the differentials in white and black salaries were "in violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States...."<sup>121</sup> Not unmindful of the implication of this statement, the Louisianan Weekly placed the issue in the larger context of the development

of the black community. "The teachers won equal pay. Why should not equal facilities for Negro children be the next step?"<sup>122</sup>

It was the "next step," and a study conducted by Alonzo Grace provided additional support for black claims of educational inequality. Beginning in the mid-1930s various white individuals and groups started to question the efficiency of the city's public schools. Out of their concern emerged the Citizens' Planning Committee. The school board agreed to hire an educational expert to study the entire school system and selected Dr. Alonzo Grace, the Commissioner of Education for Connecticut, to head the effort. His investigative team started work in April, 1938, and published its final report in December, 1939. Some blacks feared that Grace and his staff would either ignore black education or minimize its deficiencies. Their fears proved groundless, however, and the Weekly considered the completed study "open, fair, and extensive."<sup>123</sup>

Published as Tomorrow's Citizens: A Study and Program for the Improvement of the New Orleans Public Schools, the report contained seven monographs covering a wide range of subjects: school facilities, administration, finance, teacher training, curriculum development, and recommendations for the improvements of the school. It painted an unflattering portrait of public education in New Orleans. Many of the problems cited by Grace resulted from

a history of inadequate financial support for the schools. An assessment of school buildings, for example, stated: "New Orleans has serious problems in trying to provide safe, sanitary and adequate buildings for its school children...."<sup>124</sup>

More than a lack of money, the report added, contributed to the building problem. Inadequate planning caused "a great overlapping of circled areas [attendance districts], many children living within a half-mile of three or four schools."<sup>125</sup> A utilization survey disclosed that the white schools had enough unoccupied classrooms to accomodate 2,310 students. The researchers thought "a judicious shifting of district lines would make it possible to fill some of those rooms, and buildings thus vacated could be discontinued or converted to other uses."<sup>126</sup>

Only four of the twenty-five black schools received a "fairly good" rating. The remaining schools were in such poor condition that Grace recommended complete replacement. In many ways the Grace report merely reiterated the deplorable conditions blacks had complained of for over half a century. The four "fairly good" schools--Craig, Lockett, Jones, and Landry--possessed serious shortcomings of their own. The classrooms at Craig showed signs of extensive water damage caused by leaks in the roof or walls. The desks, chairs, blackboards, and toilets were in poor condition. Overcrowding rather than under-utilization

plagued the black schools. "The rooms were very badly crowded, and many classrooms did not have seats and desks enough for the children present. In one classroom, there were fifty-four children present and only forty-seven seats. This condition is not peculiar to the Craig School," the researchers concluded, "but may be found in any number of colored schools."<sup>127</sup>

More important than overcrowded and inadequate school buildings was the educational performance of black students. Like their white counterparts, black students performed below the national norm in most categories. Approximately sixty-five percent of the black students were "overage" for their grade. A typical student entered the first grade at the age of six, and with normal promotion, progressed one grade a year. Thus, for example, at the age of nine the student should have been in the fourth grade and in the eighth at the age of thirteen. Out of a total of 2,377 blacks in the fourth grade, 1,727 were "over age" for their grade.<sup>128</sup> The imbalance in the age-grade distribution became more pronounced as the student attempted to advance through the system.

An analysis of the promotion rates of 3,674 black elementary school students revealed that 73 per cent of them had failed at least one semester, 53 percent at least two semesters, and a discouraging 10 percent had failed five to fifteen semesters. Black high school students

fared little better. Approximately 75 percent of the students who entered eighth grade in 1934 left school without graduating.<sup>129</sup> Like many New Orleanians, the report viewed the problems of withdrawaal and non-promotion of black and white students as an indication that the school system failed to adapt to the needs of the students. The Grace study put it bluntly: "This training-to-be-a failure ..., raises a grave question concerning its justice, its common sense, and its cost in terms of heartache and disappointment to pupils and parents."<sup>130</sup> The research team recommended, among other items, a thorough revision of the curriculum and promotional practices to include vocational training.

The Grace study generated a considerable amount of discussion, but unfortunately little action.<sup>131</sup> Budgetary constraints precluded the immediate implementation of the building replacement program recommended in the study. The current curriculum remained as it was except for minor changes that did little to reverse the high non-promotion and withdrawal rates. More might have been done had the report not come amid America's growing concern with the war that raged in Europe. After the United States joined the war, neither blacks nor whites were as vocal in their criticisms of school policies. Blacks embraced the war effort with the ever present pangs of "twoness."<sup>132</sup> On the eve of America's entry into the war many blacks attempted



to reconcile their plight with the promise of democracy.  
The black American said the Louisiana Weekly: "Is faced  
with the challenge to take up the task of the outraged  
democracies..on the other hand he stands face to face with  
a danger just as real...as any outside."<sup>133</sup>

## Chapter Five

### Education and the Pursuit of the Golden Fleece, 1945-1960

After the end of World War II black New Orleanians became more aggressive in their attempts to gain a better education. Their determined approach resembled that in other areas of the country; they first sought to force school officials to equalize black education within the framework of separate but equal. A quiet, cautious, and legal attempt to equalize educational facilities, of course, predated the war. Since its inception in 1909 the NAACP had followed a strategy of using the courts to extend full citizenship to blacks. In the early 1930s, through the efforts of lawyers such as Charles Houston, Thurgood Marshall and Robert Carter, the NAACP embarked on a legal campaign to undermine the separate but equal doctrine by forcing southern states to provide blacks with educational facilities equal to those of whites.

The idea took concrete form in a report prepared by Nathan Margold, later modified by Houston, that called on the NAACP to focus on an "area where the whites were most vulnerable and least likely to respond with anger"--graduate and professional training. "If graduate schools were peaceably desegregated," one historian of the strategy has explained, "then the NAACP could turn to undergraduate

colleges. And then secondary schools. And grade schools. Each new gain would help the advance to the next stage. That the South would know this, too, and therefore fight accordingly in the courts, Houston had no doubt."<sup>1</sup> The South did fight, but blacks fought also on the national and local levels. Black New Orleanians joined the struggle and grafted the new initiative onto their long-sustained quest for improved education.

Faced with law suits filed by the NAACP and with court mandated remediation, school officials throughout the South attempted to narrow the gap between black and white educational facilities. "Southern states spent money, almost desperately, on Negro schools," explained historian John Hope Franklin, "Within a few years some of the most modern schools to be found anywhere in the United States had been constructed for Negro children in Southern communities. Southern leaders pledged themselves to equalize white and black schools as rapidly as possible."<sup>2</sup> New Orleans school officials proved no exception, but did not start until blacks provided a certain amount of prodding.

After World War II, black leaders continued to attend school board meetings in an effort to obtain better schools. In January 1945, Mrs. Charles Young, representing the New Orleans Parent Teacher Council, complained about the busing of students to McDonogh No. 24 School. Some

students lived as much as six or seven miles from the school, she told school board members, and often had to wait for buses in the cold and rain. Mrs. Young asked school officials to provide an elementary school for children living in the area instead of busing them to McDonogh No. 24. At the same meeting another black, Reverend Morris Burrell, requested a new school for the same area. School board member Robert Haas told the petitioners that the war had forced the school system to place its building program on hold.<sup>3</sup>

Such pronouncements failed to dampen the resolve of black leaders. In March 1945, the Colored Educational Alliance presented one of its many petitions to school officials. Anticipating the approaching end of World War II, the Alliance suggested the school board make provision in its postwar construction budget for gymnasiums for Booker T. Washington, McDonogh 35, and L.B. Landry, a high school to replace Albert Wicker, and a downtown high school. School board members received the request but failed to commit themselves to financing the improvements. After the war ended, returning veterans put increased demands on the education system. Dr. Cruzot and other black leaders urged school officials to furnish a training center for the ex- soldiers. Their request was partially heeded; school officials funded a twelve month veteran training center at Booker T. Washington.<sup>4</sup>

A petition submitted to schools officials in May 1946 indicated a new departure by local black leaders. This petition charged that deficiencies in black schools existed because of racial discrimination. The lengthy petition listed eleven areas in which school officials discriminated against blacks--the number of kindergarten, special education, and vocational classes, the number of visiting teachers, the number of gymnasiums, the use of city parks, teaching loads, the high school academic curriculum, the quality of school buildings, expenditures, and business education. Each section of the petition started with the phrase "discrimination in" and summarized the particular deficiency. More important, blacks contended that failure to remedy the problems represented "a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment of the Constitution."<sup>5</sup> Without granting the legal point, the school board accepted the petition and promised to schedule a meeting. Alexander Tureaud then met with school officials on 25 July 1946 to discuss the petition. School officials continued to stress their commitment to solve the problems but claimed a lack of adequate revenues hindered their attempts.<sup>6</sup>

Over the next several years (1946-1951) Lionel J. Bourgeois served as superintendent of the school system and attempted to address some of the inequities in black and white education.<sup>7</sup> After a meeting with Tureaud and other

black leaders, Bourgeois asked Tureaud to "bear with me a little longer and give your fullest cooperation in my attempts to better facilities for Negro youth and to advance the total program of education in this city."<sup>8</sup> A school board report in December 1947 revealed the enormity of the task Bourgeois faced. It disclosed "that the number of classrooms available for the accommodation of the Negro school population is entirely inadequate, and that adequate provisions never have been made in the past for this school population." In addition, "numerous old school buildings previously used for the white population have been converted into Negro schools and have not yet been kept in a good state of repair."<sup>9</sup> Assessing the problem, however, proved easier than finding solutions that satisfied the black community.

The critical issues remained a lack of classroom space, the poor condition of existing facilities, and an insufficient number of teachers. To address the problem of inadequate classroom space, school officials considered a program called consolidation and conversion. Under such a policy, the student body at white schools with low enrollment would be consolidated and the schools no longer needed for whites would be converted for use by blacks. The plan, which on the surface appeared sound, encountered stiff opposition from whites and, for different reasons, criticism from blacks.<sup>10</sup>

Comments by the leader of a parent group concerning the conversion of McDonogh 16 typified the reaction of the white community. The parent group presented school officials with a petition signed by 1,782 persons opposed to the conversion. Its spokesperson argued that the proposed conversion would force white students to cross too many busy streets. If school officials continued to pursue the conversion, the group threatened to sue. School Superintendent Lionel Bourgeois informed the petitioners that black leaders had placed increased pressure on school officials to equalize facilities. Bourgeois added that blacks also had threatened to sue. Doubtlessly, Bourgeois viewed the threatened suit by blacks with graver concern than one by the white group. Bourgeois told the white group that if school officials failed to equalize school facilities, the courts would compel school officials to admit blacks into white schools. The spokesperson informed Bourgeois that the group "certainly did not intend that Negroes should be housed" at white schools.<sup>11</sup>

Following the group from McDonogh No. 16, Mrs. H.J. Smith, president of the William O. Rogers Parents' Club, spoke in opposition to the conversion of that elementary school. Bourgeois, aware of a possible suit by blacks and fearful of a court mandated solution to the school equalization issue, told the white protestors "that the board has the humanitarian and legal obligation to provide

school facilities for children regardless of race...." He considered his plan reasonable though implementing it would "require a great deal of courage" by the school board and white groups.<sup>12</sup> Bourgeois appealed to the white groups for support and again reminded them of the possibility of a court mandated solution that whites would prefer much less than his own plan of consolidation and conversion.

Despite Bourgeois' assessment, school board members assured the Rogers delegation that they would consider the petition and the group would have another opportunity to speak before the board reached a decision. Buoyed by the board's responses to the Rogers and McDonogh No. 16 delegations, other groups attempted to prevent the consolidation and conversion of their schools. On 18 March 1948 a large number of whites attended a special meeting of the school board to protest the possible conversion of several schools, including two vacant white elementary schools, Zachary Taylor and Edward White. Bourgeois offered to withdraw his controversial plan if whites helped to campaign for a millage increase to build additional black schools and dropped their objections to the conversion of the two vacant schools.<sup>13</sup>

Concessions to whites invariably brought angry protests from blacks. Attorney Alexander P. Tureaud, who along with Thurgood Marshall had successfully litigated the teacher equalization suit, appeared before the school board



in May 1948. Tureaud charged that the board had not done enough to equalize school facilities and that the educational demands outlined in the 1946 petition, which had alluded to the Fourteenth Amendment, had not yet been met. In his opinion, blacks were entitled to additional facilities. Tureaud reminded the board of a case in which the Supreme Court ruled against a school board in Virginia and mandated the equalization of black and white school facilities. In addition, Tureaud made it clear that blacks did not want dilapidated, "hand-me-down" buildings unfit for school use. He threatened to sue unless school officials took steps to improve school facilities for black New Orleanians. School board members assured Tureaud that they were aware of the problems and planned to raise forty million dollars with the major portion dedicated to black school facilities.<sup>14</sup>

That same month, over sixteen hundred blacks had gathered at the Booker T. Washington Auditorium and heard a refutation of the Washingtonian philosophy of the separation of the races in non-economic pursuits. The featured speaker, Thurgood Marshall, told the crowd "the issue is not for separate but equal facilities, the real fight is against segregated schools."<sup>15</sup> Yet less than a month later Tureaud filed suit against the school board asking for equalization of facilities. Tureaud's actions appeared in direct conflict with Marshall's speech, and

(since Marshall spoke as a representative of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund) to the NAACP position as well. In fact, the suit represented an integral part of the NAACP's strategy to initially undermine "separate but equal" and then to attack it directly.<sup>16</sup> Although the national NAACP office provided legal expertise, direction, and encouragement, the equalization and desegregation suits depended on local initiatives and conditions. Marshall's speech in May 1948 outlined the basic philosophy; Tureaud's suit signaled the beginning of its implementation.

Since the filing of the May 1946 petition to the school board, the destiny of black education in New Orleans was linked to the local branch of the NAACP. By 1946 blacks had decided to use the courts if protest and petition failed to produce equality. The Colored Educational Alliance, the New Orleans Federation of Civic Leagues, and the various ward based organizations willingly passed the mantle to the NAACP. For nearly half a century those organizations had served the black community well. Using protest, petitions, and constant agitation, their efforts produced improvements in black education. The transition from offering protests and petitions to seeking judicial redress occurred without friction, animosity, or any noticeable splits within the community's black leadership.<sup>17</sup> This was so because the NAACP was an inclusive organization which drew its

membership from throughout the city. In addition, the new strategy was more evolutionary than revolutionary. Black New Orleanians had used the federal courts in the past to eliminate discrimination. With ties to a national organization, the local NAACP branch had access to the best civil rights attorneys in the country. The success of the NAACP in integrating professional and graduate schools, as well as success in the teacher equalization suits, brought prestige and members into the fold. Daniel Byrd and others knew, though, that the members would remain in the fold only if the NAACP supplied aggressive leadership and a constant attack on segregation and discrimination.

Daniel Byrd, a native of Arkansas, moved to New Orleans at the age of 27 and quickly emerged as one of the city's leading civil rights activists. He joined the New Orleans NAACP, helped to organize the state chapter, and later became president of the NAACP State Conferences of Branches. Byrd possessed enormous energy, intelligence, and courage and established the tone for an aggressive NAACP. At a school board meeting on 12 August 1949, Byrd expressed the mood of the new leadership. He questioned the board's decision to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on improving white schools when black children still attended school part-time because of overcrowding. He wanted to know "if the members of the board realized that if a parent of a colored pupil living in the district

of an overcrowded school took a child to a white school and asked for admission, that in accordance with the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution local discrimination statutes would not apply...." Noting the refusal of the school board to convert many of the underutilized white schools to black use, because of white opposition, Byrd wanted it known that "if the school board reacts to pressure and antagonism, then we are ready, and ready now, to start our antagonism; and pressure." Byrd reminded the school board members that talking with representatives of the NAACP was "not the same as talking to groups of black principals and teachers."<sup>18</sup>

Byrd, along with local and national black leaders, realized the difficulties associated with a legal assault on segregated elementary and secondary schools and proceeded cautiously as they built support within the black community. In this connection the organizational structure of the NAACP became important. Unlike the other groups that had fought for improved schools, the NAACP held regular monthly meetings, had officials elected by the community at large, and boasted a dues-paying membership. The monthly meetings provided a forum in which to discuss issues related to education and the appropriate strategy to win improvement. The NAACP kept the members informed about the activities of other communities and the proposals and strategies recommended by the NAACP National Office.

Additionally, the monthly meetings provided the opportunity for the regular members to voice their views on school equalization and desegregation.

Seventy-five years of broken promises and the general hostility of the white community to equal educational opportunities for blacks led many blacks, especially those in the NAACP, to conclude that the federal courts offered the only solution. As early as 1945 several black parents had asked the local NAACP branch to sue to compel the board to equalize black and white education. Partly because of the efforts of Bourgeois to allocate more money to the black schools, black leaders delayed the suit.<sup>19</sup> As fall 1947 approached, however, several leaders had become restive and wanted an equalization suit filed. Among those advocating filing was Daniel Byrd, who by 1947 had become a NAACP Assistant Field Secretary.<sup>20</sup> Byrd acknowledged Superintendent Bourgeois' good intentions but made it clear to Tureaud that he thought "some action should be forthcoming."<sup>21</sup> Much of Bourgeois' plan to improve black schools depended on the passage of a bond issue to finance the construcion of new schools, Byrd believed. But "the proposed Twenty Million Dollar Bond issue is something which may not materialize unless some action is taken to aid the Superintendent in what he terms his willingness to equalize the educational system."<sup>22</sup>

Byrd soon became incensed with the apparent reluctance of the local NAACP leadership to file suit. He confided to Tureaud "that too much effort and sweat has been put into the New Orleans Branch by both of us to permit weak leadership [to] kill the branch. And we both know that the [membership] campaign this year was not properly organized and the only possible way it can be pulled out of the hole is by some issue being attacked."<sup>23</sup> Simple logic convinced Byrd that a suit against the school board would provide the needed issue. Byrd's experience had convinced him that blacks' quest for full equality would necessitate a resort to the judicial system and that the NAACP had to take the lead. A suit against the board would perform a dual purpose--focus attention on and win support for the NAACP and address inequality in education.

Like Byrd, Superintendent Bourgeois favored an equalization suit but for different reasons. Would white voters go to the polls and increase taxes, especially if the majority of it was dedicated to black schools, in the absence of a crisis? Bourgeois thought not. White schools were not overcrowded; indeed, many of the elementary schools were underutilized. If the bond issue failed, white education would suffer slightly--if at all. On the other hand, improvements in black education depended on the passage of the bond issue. Bourgeois hoped that an equalization suit would spur white voters to reassess their

position and support the bond issue. Bourgeois made it clear on several occasions that the failure to move forward on educational equalization would result in black demands for integrated schools.<sup>24</sup> He outlined the choices in stark terms: vote for increased taxes or prepare for integration. Bourgeois' efforts did not go unappreciated by the black community. "During the fifteen years I have lived in New Orleans," Byrd observed, "no other superintendent has ever approached the problem of public education on such a determined and fair basis."<sup>25</sup> But Bourgeois attempted to bring school officials and white New Orleans to a place they were as yet unprepared to go.

Tureaud made one last attempt at a direct appeal to the board before he filed suit. On 20 May 1948 Tureaud forwarded a letter to the school board listing ten areas of discrimination. He reiterated the complaints contained in the May 1946 petition and warned the board that "unless these inequalities are immediately removed, we shall be compelled to take such legal action as may be warranted...."<sup>26</sup> Board members told Tureaud that they shared his belief that tax dollars should be spent equally among black and white students.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, hoping to put pressure on school officials and the white community, Tureaud filed the equalization suit against the school board on 2 June 1948. The board responded with a declaration of commitment to the principle of educational

equality and endorsed several proposals to upgrade black education. Board members also agreed to ask the legislature for additional money to improve black schools. Nonetheless, school officials failed to grapple with the urgency of the situation. Perhaps fearful of racial tension and white hostility, they continued to refuse to convert underutilized white schools to black use.<sup>28</sup>

Instead, they adopted the unrealistic approach of trying to solve the problem by the construction of new schools. School board members had neither sufficient money nor time to pursue such a strategy. A building plan of sufficient scope to address existing inequities would cost millions of dollars and take approximately a decade to complete. They should have realized that black patience had just about run out.

The equalization suit filed on behalf of Wilfred Aubert and other black parents was based on concrete needs as well as abstract principles. Few black children in New Orleans realized they suffered from some of the many behavioral maladies the noted black psychologist Kenneth Clark would later assign them during arguments in the Brown case. They did know, as their parents did even more, that they attended overcrowded schools, and many did that on only a part-time basis. Many of them also knew that their small legs often grew weary before reaching schools miles from their homes. Kindergarten classes, a fixture in the



white schools, existed in only nine of the black schools. When black leaders evoked the abstract principles contained in the Fourteenth Amendment they did so to address concrete needs.

A century of exclusion or segregation had produced educational inequalities which affected all phases of black education. Inadequate school buildings, overcrowding, and high pupil-teacher ratios were just three of the many problems black leaders had attempted to solve. Only during the brief period of political empowerment during Congressional Reconstruction had blacks received an equitable share of the city's educational revenues. Since then, black leaders and parents had formed many organizations to fight for improved schools. Their strategy of protest and petition had yielded significant gains. But black educational interests and needs continued to surpass available opportunities within the public school system. School officials and the white community appeared unwilling to make a final effort to equalize black and white educational opportunities. Blacks hoped to gain, through the federal courts, the educational parity that had eluded them using the tactic of protest and petition.

Since the 1920s overcrowding had been the major complaint of the black community. During the 1946-1947 school year, some black elementary schools had a pupil to teacher ratio of sixty to one. At the high school level,

the ratio was thirty to one. In contrast, white elementary schools enjoyed a pupil to teacher ratio of thirty to one and white high schools, twenty-one to one. Moreover, fifteen of the fifty white elementary schools had less than 53 percent utilization. For example, Allen School built for 1,085 students had an enrollment of 381, or 35 percent of capacity. Kruttschnitt School had 201 students enrolled and a capacity of 630, a utilization percentage of 32 percent. One of the largest white elementary schools, Live Oak, had a utilization percentage of 44 percent. At the close of the 1947-1948 school year, blacks could only attend three high schools, McDonogh No. 35, Booker T. Washington, and L. B. Landry.<sup>29</sup>

In an attempt to eliminate some of the inequities in black and white schools, in 1948 the board appealed to the voters of the state to approve a three mill tax increase for New Orleans. Bourgeois made over one hundred and sixty speeches in behalf of passage of this millage proposal. If voters approved the measure, school officials planned to use approximately sixty-five percent of the money on black schools. Whether that fact persuaded New Orleanians to vote against the tax is unclear. The outcome in the city, however, was clear--on 2 November 1948 New Orleans voters rejected the millage increase by a majority of 24,000. Voters throughout the state proved more cooperative and the measure passed statewide. Thus, even though the increase

failed in New Orleans, its passage statewide made it possible for the school board to levy the extra millage. But, the November election also brought two new members to the New Orleans Board; both had run on a platform opposing the millage increase. Consequently, they thought it was their moral obligation to continue to oppose the tax hike.<sup>30</sup> Superintendent Bourgeois often reminded them of another moral obligation--providing adequate school facilities to all school children.<sup>31</sup> Over the next few years the board assessed part of the three mill tax, but did not link the millage to a comprehensive building plan.

An analysis of the consolidation and conversion plan to equalize black and white education revealed mixed results. School officials often yielded to pressure to prevent the closing of white schools. Moreover, white leaders went beyond mere rhetoric and petitions. They turned to the courts and area legislators for help. Senator Arthur O'Keefe of New Orleans sponsored a bill to prohibit the conversion of a school from white to black use without the consent of seventy percent of the property owners in the area. The bill, Act 463, passed the legislature and Governor Earl K. Long signed it into law in July 1948.<sup>32</sup>

Armed with Act 463 white leaders hoped to block any additional closings and conversions. Undeterred, school board members voted on 30 November 1948 to convert the

Edward White School from white to black use. White leaders opposed to the plan reacted swiftly. Attorneys for Mrs. Marie Theard, a white parent, filed suit to halt the planned conversion. Their judicial pleadings fell on unsympathetic ears; the court ruled Legislative Act 463 unconstitutional. It issued its decision on 28 February 1949, and school officials immediately proceeded with the conversion plan. Another suit filed by patrons of Kruttschnitt School suffered a similar fate. These two conversions did not mean school officials had abandoned the interests of the white community. Indeed, on several other occasions whites successfully prevented the closing and conversion of their schools by protesting to the school board.<sup>33</sup>

Since blacks had begun to shift from their goals from that of equalization to integration, no amount of parity under a segregated system proved acceptable. Between the filing of the equalization suit in 1948 and the suit to desegregate four years later, school officials, especially Superintendent Bourgeois, believed equalization would satisfy the black community. Racial segregation hindered the formation of a consistent dialogue between blacks and whites. White leaders failed to grasp the changing mood of the black population. As a result, Bourgeois frantically attempted to raise school revenues to finance a massive building program. He was also the architect and main

proponent of consolidation and conversion. Bourgeois' motives were clear--he wanted to equalize facilities before local blacks decided to sue for desegregation.

Despite Bourgeois' sincere attempts to equalize black and white school facilities, his efforts failed. The board refused to provide the strong leadership Bourgeois thought the situation warranted. Even after blacks filed suit, Bourgeois advised the board members that if they displayed a good faith effort in working towards equalization, blacks would not press the suit. He cautioned the board that blacks were determined to achieve equal opportunity in education and pointed to the increasing number of blacks attempting to register to vote. Law suits and voter registration aside, Bourgeois thought school officials "should be motivated by the moral values involved in the board's policy promulgated only a few months ago which states boldly that it stands for equality of educational opportunity for the children of New Orleans regardless of race or color."<sup>34</sup>

Throughout his tenure as Superintendent, Bourgeois remained committed to the idea "that all men of every race, condition and age have an inalienable right of education."<sup>35</sup> Pursuing that goal occasionally placed him at odds with the white community as well as with the school board members. The quick-tempered Bourgeois, who had an unshakeable sense of right and wrong, and school board

members disagreed on many issues besides the consolidation and conversion plan. Over a matter not related to his stance on improving black education, board members Clarence Scheps and William C. Fletcher led a successful movement to remove Bourgeois from office. During his travails with the board, teachers, parent groups, and organizations wrote to express their support. Many of the communications came from blacks. The president of the L. B. Landry Parent-Teacher Organization "heartily endorse[d] the Administration of Superintendent Lionel J. Bourgeois and requeste[d] that he be retained as superintendent."<sup>36</sup> After months of harassment and charges of incompetence stemming from the purchase of substandard meat, Bourgeois resigned in May 1951. The board appointed O. Perry Walker interim superintendent and started a search for a permanent replacement.<sup>37</sup> Walker served for nearly two years before the board named James Redmond as the permanent superintendent. By the time Dr. Redmond assumed the position, the educational demands of the black community had changed.

When the school year started in 1951, black leaders had made the commitment to desegregation. They would spend the next ten years working toward that end. In September of that year when Marshall and Byrd discussed various strategies they would employ, Byrd stressed the need for providing the community with as much detailed information

as possible. Byrd wanted to ensure that the black population fully understood and supported the new initiative.<sup>38</sup> On 12 November Tureaud presented another petition to the school board--as he and other blacks had done for over three quarters of a century. Tureaud's petition again detailed the substantial inequalities in the educational opportunities available to blacks and whites. Declaring that his petition "represented the sentiments of the entire Negro citizenry," Tureaud demanded the integration of the New Orleans Public Schools. The president of the board, Dr. Clarence Scheps, thought Tureaud had raised "a very grave question" and promised to "study the petition and prepare an answer in due time."<sup>39</sup> Two weeks later the board issued a unanimous response.

"After careful study of the petition," the resolution began, "the board is of the firm opinion that such a radical change of policy could not, at this time, serve the best interests of the system. The board believes, rather, that such a departure from tradition and custom, quite apart from the fact that such action by the board would be illegal, could result in chaos and confusion and further, quite possibly cause a very serious worsening of race relationships in the community as a whole."<sup>40</sup> The school board's statement did not come as a surprise to Tureaud; by the time he submitted the petition, he was formulating desegregation strategy with Robert Carter and Thurgood

Marshall. Why did Tureaud present a petition he knew the board would reject? Tureaud could not sue for desegregation without first attempting to desegregate the schools. The petition to desegregate and the subsequent resolution rejecting the request enabled him to pursue a judicial remedy.

By 1952 the school board operated twenty-eight black and forty-six white elementary schools. At the secondary level the disparity continued--eleven schools for whites and six for blacks. Still faced with overcrowded, unsanitary, and generally insufficient school facilities, New Orleans black leaders again sought judicial relief. This time, however, they were not only seeking physical parity, but something more. Earl Benjamin Bush, and several other parents, on behalf of their children and through their attorney Alexander P. Tureaud, filed suit against the Orleans Parish School Board on 5 September 1952. The sponsors of the suit requested complete integration of the New Orleans Public Schools. At the next school board meeting, the board members ordered Superintendent Walker to forward the suit to the State Attorney General. They also "approve[d] the recommendation for additional platooning [at several black schools] necessary to reduce the pupil to teacher ratio below forty-five, with an expression of profound regret that a situation existed which called for such action."<sup>42</sup> Such



decisions served to reinforce black claims that it was easier to discriminate against them in a segregated system than in an integrated one.

The Bush desegregation suit was one of several filed under the auspices of the national office of the NAACP. Three months earlier, the Supreme Court had agreed to hear two similar cases that originated in Kansas and South Carolina. In October and November of 1952, the Supreme Court justices added three more cases from Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Delaware.<sup>43</sup> The justices would use those five cases, consolidated as Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, to rule on the continued legality of segregated elementary and secondary schools, or in a larger sense on "whether the white people of the United States might continue to treat the black people as their subjects."<sup>44</sup>

Neither the filing of the Bush suit nor the decision by the Supreme Court to hear the five desegregation cases affected the manner in which New Orleans school officials administered the schools. Segregation represented law, tradition, and custom, and the school board remained determined to uphold the status quo. The commitment to desegregation, however, created a dilemma for the black community. What should they do in the interim between filing suit and a favorable court decision? Should they press for improvements under the present segregated system

as they awaited court action? To do so, might undermine their position on desegregation. On the other hand, to take no action in the face of persistent, inequalities in black and white education seemed unconscionable. In 1950 the NAACP National Office recommended not continuing efforts to equalize separate facilities. To individuals like Byrd who had set their sights on high principles as well as immediate needs, improvements had to be sacrificed to the ultimate and more important goal of integration. Responding to a request for assistance from a black leader in the central part of the state, Byrd made his views clear. "I understand your problem but I can do nothing to assist you in asking for an increase for a segregated school... as long as schools are segregated, inequalities will exist."<sup>45</sup> Other black leaders remained wedded to Byrd's unerring principles but at the same time sought an increase in school facilities under the segregated system. The outcome of the school desegregation cases was unclear, and blacks still needed an education. Again, pragmatism and principle continued to exist side by side.

On 17 May 1954, in a unanimous decision the nine members of the United States Supreme Court ruled "that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."<sup>46</sup> Blacks throughout America were predictably pleased with the Supreme Court decision.

Tureaud called it "a very momentous decision and one which will go down in the annals of our American jurisprudence...." Another local black attorney considered the decision a "victory for Negroes in particular, and Americans in general."<sup>47</sup> Both men believed the Brown decision would facilitate school desegregation in New Orleans. But the guardians of racial separation remained determined to keep the intent of the Brown decree out of "the city that care forgot."

Within days of the Brown decision, the intransigency which would characterize the white South's response to Brown began to appear.<sup>48</sup> All elements within the white community voiced dissatisfaction with the Brown decree. Governor Robert F. Kennon vowed to maintain segregated schools and noted that "Louisiana has done a great deal in the past few years to develop a good parallel school system."<sup>49</sup> Louisiana congressman F. Edward Hebert assailed the decision and joined the forces of resistance. Members of the Louisiana House of Representatives voted 84 to 3 "that the abolition of segregation would be intolerable to both the white and Negro citizens of Louisiana...." In a letter to a New Orleans paper, one white citizen claimed that "the Negro in America has not evolved to a point where he is entitled to some of the considerations that some of their aggressive agitators are trying to make them believe."<sup>50</sup> Another condemned the Court's action as

"vicious despotism" and endorsed non-compliance.<sup>51</sup>

After the Brown decision, the Louisiana legislature became an active ally of the school board and soon assumed the dominant role in the fight against desegregated schools. The newly created Joint Legislative Committee on Segregation, chaired by Senator William M. Rainach of Summerfield, coordinated the assault. The school board's and state's adherence to the so-called strategy of "legislate and litigate" effectively prevented the desegregation of New Orleans public schools for six years. Before the year ended, the legislature had passed several bills designed to keep the schools segregated. Acts 555 and 556 served as the centerpieces of the legislative initiative. Act 555 prohibited local school systems from establishing desegregated schools. Failure to comply with the law would result in the loss of accreditation and funding. Act 556 established a pupil placement law designed to prevent desegregation. A proposed constitutional amendment also would allow the state to exercise its police power to operate segregated schools.<sup>52</sup>

Acts 555, 556, and the proposed constitutional amendment represented the first legislative attempts to maintain segregation. Letters to the editors and the public pronouncements of politicians are not always the best indicators of public opinion, but when the legislature submitted the segregation amendment to the people for

approval, Louisianians had an opportunity to express their sentiments directly. On 2 November 1954, they did so: 217,992 voted in favor of the amendment and only 46,929 against it. The amendment passed in every parish, including Orleans, where the vote was 54,728 to 16,467. Pleased, Senator Rainach announced the "election certainly show[ed] what the people of Louisiana want and I think they're going to get it."<sup>53</sup> Blacks in New Orleans, on the other hand, could only take solace from the refusal of the city's legislative delegation to formally endorse the amendment. Mayor deLesseps S. Morrison also took a neutral stand on the Amendment.<sup>54</sup>

The New Orleans School Board endorsed and encouraged the state's segregation legislation. School Superintendent James Redmond expressed the opinion that segregation was a state and local issue and questioned the propriety of federal intervention. After the Brown decision he asked the school board to provide "some further direction on how to proceed in preparing the budget." Board member Celestine Besse noted the recent decision failed to provide methods or guidelines for implementation and in fact gave the parties involved in the case until November 1954 to present information concerning implementation. Given that schedule, Besse expected no specific demands would be made by the court until the next spring or summer. Therefore, he "moved that the board instruct the Superintendent and

the staff to prepare all preliminary budgets and plans for organization of the 1954- 1955 school year on the basis of the same kind of organization and programs as the board was currently operating...." Theodore Shepard seconded the motion and it passed without opposition, but not before the board made it clear "that by this action the Superintendent would be directed to operate schools on a segregated basis."<sup>55</sup> Later in the year school board president Dr. Clarence Scheps announced that he favored continued segregation and said that he believed "rapid integration in the public school system would do irreparable damage to the children of both races." Scheps wanted to see integration "postponed for another 50 years."<sup>56</sup>

The Supreme Court's 31 May 1955 decision on implementation led to another flurry of activity. The Court's ruling that desegregation should proceed "with all deliberate speed" gave all the interested groups reason for optimism. The extreme segregationists saw it as a sign of judicial retreat and moderates interpreted it as a mandate to desegregate the schools gradually. The President pro tempore of the Louisiana Senate, Robert A. Ainsworth, Jr. of New Orleans, recognized as much and "welcome[d] the new orders mild tone which furnishes us an opportunity to examine local conditions and act accordingly to get our house in order." On the other hand, state representative John Garrett saw the decision as a victory for the

segregationists. Garrett "firmly believe[d] the justices realized that they had made a mistake...and this was their easiest way out, putting it back on the local level."

Leander Perez charged that the decree represented "a disgrace to the country." Tureaud also expressed some disappointment because he "expected the Supreme Court to put a time schedule beyond which local school boards may not delay in carrying out the decree."<sup>57</sup>

As the state marshalled its resources to prevent desegregation, the black community, marshalled its own resources. On 22 and 23 May 1954, Daniel Byrd attended a NAACP meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, comprised of representatives from the seventeen states and the District of Columbia still operating legally segregated school systems. When the meeting concluded, the participants issued a statement known as the "Atlanta Declaration." Though brief, only one page long, the document indicated that black leaders were determined to see Brown implemented. They urged all Americans to support the Brown decision and took encouragement from "the pledges of support and compliance by governors, attorney generals, mayors, and education officials...." They offered "to work with other law abiding citizens who are anxious to translate this decision into a program of action to eradicate racial segregation in public education as speedily as possible." They asked local black communities

and NAACP branches "to petition their local school boards to abolish segregation without delay and to assist these agencies in working out ways and means of implementing the court's ruling." They expressed their commitment to "resist the use of any tactics contrived for the sole purpose of delaying desegregation." But the ninety-two conference participants were experienced civil rights activists; they realized that even as they met vitriolic white opposition had crystallized.<sup>58</sup>

Over the next several years blacks in New Orleans had to counter many tactics designed to prevent the desegregation of the schools. Even as they did so, New Orleans black leaders pursued three objectives. First and foremost, they continued to litigate the Bush suit. The 1954 Brown decision and the 1955 implementation decree, coupled with the state legislative resistance, led to a costly and time consuming legal battle. The school board refused to pursue any desegregation plan; black leaders had to sue to force compliance with the Brown decision.

The second and third objectives were related to the first. At the local level blacks needed to display enough militancy and aggressiveness to keep the desegregation effort going forward. Blacks responded by submitting petitions and filing applications for admission into white schools. They also raised money to help pay for the litigation. Individuals, along with social, fraternal, and



professional organizations contributed to the effort. Finally, black leaders attempted to win support from elements within the white community. That proved difficult because almost immediately staunch segregationists had gained the ascendancy. Except for the Bureau of Governmental Affairs, a private civic group which investigated and lobbied for improved government efficiency, integrity, and accountability, and high officials within the Catholic Church, notably Archbishop Francis Rummel, sustained white support proved difficult to find.<sup>59</sup>

On 27 June 1955 Tureaud filed with the school board another petition seeking desegregation. In part it stated that "the May 31 ruling means that the time for delay, evasion, or procrastination is passed, and it is the duty of the school board to seek a solution in accordance with the law of the land." Board members refused to act, claiming in the words of their vice president, Celestine Besse, that they were "responsible to the state government, and our state laws do not allow integration."<sup>60</sup> Tureaud had no choice but to continue litigation in the Bush suit, which was scheduled for a hearing in September. Tureaud had to amend the suit to include arguments against Acts 555 and 556 of 1954. Shortly before the scheduled hearing, Judge J. Skelly Wright requested that a three judge panel hear the suit because the case involved the

constitutionality of state law. Herbert W. Christenberry and Wayne G. Borah joined Wright in hearing the case.<sup>61</sup>

In the meantime the legislature, under the growing influence of William Rainach and the Joint Legislative Committee on Segregation, received a \$100,000 dollar appropriation from the Board of Liquidation of the State Debt to hire special counsel to assist in the legal attack against the Brown decision. "The state should step in and assist local school boards everywhere," Rainach charged, "in defending themselves against suits by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People seeking to destroy our policy of separation of the races." The Attorney General's Office administered the fund, and the Orleans Parish School Board received some of the money to pay part of the salary of its special counsel, Gerard Rault.<sup>62</sup>

Meeting in New Orleans, the three federal judges heard arguments on the constitutional issues from Robert Carter of the NAACP Legal Defense staff and Alexander Tureaud for the plaintiff and Gerard Rault and W. Scott Wilkinson, representing the school board. Tureaud and Carter continued the original argument in the Bush suit that school segregation by race was unconstitutional. They also charged that the Brown decision rendered Acts 555 and 556 unconstitutional as well. Rault and Wilkinson countered that the entire matter rested outside federal jurisdiction

and argued the state had acted within its "police power" to maintain health, safety and educational standards. They produced witnesses who supported their claim that health and education problems would result from integrated schools. After hearing both sides, the judges took the case under advisement and issued their ruling in February 1956.<sup>63</sup>

Judges Borah and Christenbery removed themselves from the case after ruling Acts 555 and 556 unconstitutional and noting the case posed "no serious constitutional questions...."<sup>64</sup> Their withdrawal again left Wright as the sole presiding judge; he issued the court's opinion on the specific issue of desegregation. Judge Wright recounted the facts of the case and noted the several petitions blacks had submitted asking the board to desegregate the schools. Clearly the board had demonstrated its unwillingness to grant relief. Wright acknowledged the difficulties associated with desegregation and thought the problems were "considerably more serious than generally appreciated in some sections of our country." To solve the problem "will require the utmost patience, understanding, generosity, and forbearance from all of us, of whatever race." Nonetheless, "the magnitude of the problem may not nullify the principle. And that principle is that we are, all of us, freeborn Americans, with a right to make our way, unfettered by sanctions imposed by man because of the

work of God."<sup>65</sup> Citing the Brown decision, Judge Wright ruled the Orleans Parish School Board's practice of assigning children to schools based on race unconstitutional. After sixty years black New Orleanians had removed the onerous burden of Plessy.

Reaction in New Orleans and around the state varied, but generally the forces of resistance were the most outspoken. Celestine Besse, who had become president of the school board, vowed to appeal Judge Wright's ruling and reiterated the board's commitment "to use every legal and honorable means to preserve segregation."<sup>66</sup> The newly elected governor, Earl K. Long, refused to reaffirm his campaign pledge that he would close the schools before allowing integration. He did, however, assert that the South needed racial separation. Rainach, along with Perez, remained the chief spokesman for the segregationists. Rainach planned to adopt a different strategy featuring the doctrine of interposition and the placing of all local school systems under the jurisdiction of the state. With tacit approval from Governor Long, Rainach easily guided an interposition resolution through the legislature without recorded opposition. The House voted 82 to 0 for approval and the Senate 37 to 0.<sup>67</sup>

The interposition resolution attempted to revive the untenable position of state sovereignty in areas "not specifically enumerated to the federal government."<sup>68</sup> For

the purpose of the present crisis, the legislators maintained that Louisiana had retained its right to administer its public schools. As a result, the desegregation decisions violated the state and United States constitutions. The resort to interposition, despite the bellicose rhetoric to the contrary, revealed the legal weakness of Louisiana's position. The Brown decision and Judge Wright's ruling left little doubt that neither legislative subterfuge nor outright defiance could prevent implementation. Interposition was at best a delaying tactic, but delay no matter how brief seemed more palatable to most whites than integration. Then, too, many Louisianians may have shared Senator Harry F. Byrd's view that, "if we can organize the Southern states for massive resistance to this order I think that in time the rest of the country will realize integration is not going to be accepted in the South. In interposition the South has a perfectly legal means of appeal from the Supreme Court order."<sup>69</sup>

Over the next four years blacks remained resolute, the federal courts refused to retreat, and desegregated education slowly became a reality in parts of the South. To forestall desegregation in New Orleans, the legislature continued to pass segregation laws, but blacks continued to challenge them in court, and the federal courts continued to declare them unconstitutional.<sup>70</sup>

New Orleans' resistance to desegregation extended beyond the polemics of public officials like William Rainach and John Garrett, the segregationist leader in the State House of Representatives. The rapid rise of white citizens' councils attested to the depth of segregationist sentiment. The initial Louisiana Chapter organized in Rainach's home parish of Claiborne in April 1955, a second chapter formed in New Orleans in September under the leadership of Louis Porterie, Jackson Ricau, and Dr. Emmett Lee Irwin. The three council leaders were professionals-- Dr. Irwin was a respected surgeon and former president of the Louisiana Medical Association, Ricau was a former public school teacher, and Porterie was a member of a prominent New Orleans family.<sup>71</sup>

Spokesmen for the council quickly made their presence and ideology known. Appearing at a 26 September 1955 school board meeting, Porterie produced a petition with nearly 15,000 signatures "requesting that the board not abandon segregation in the schools." Porterie assured the board that if necessary the council could have secured even more signatures.<sup>72</sup> Several months later, on 20 March 1956, over 8,000 whites attended a pro-segregationist rally at the Municipal Auditorium to protect Archbishop Joseph F. Rummel's urging acceptance of integration.<sup>73</sup> The Council followed that with a 17 May parade and rally at which over 4,000 whites "gustily cheered what sounded to most like a

call to re-fight the Civil War before submitting to integration."<sup>74</sup> The Greater New Orleans Citizens' Council predicted it would enroll over 50,000 members.<sup>75</sup>

The growth of citizens' councils coincided with efforts to undermine or eliminate the NAACP from the desegregation fight. Rainach had earlier lashed out at the "arrogant, alien NAACP and its hirelings, who would completely destroy the friendly relations now existing between our races." He "deeply resent[ed] the carpetbag NAACP so cynically exploiting our colored people only as an instrument to an end to be discarded when their ignoble purpose is served."<sup>76</sup> Governor Earl Long insisted that "our colored people will get a square deal without the NAACP. We don't need it."<sup>77</sup> Louisiana ironically invoked a 1924 state law, originally enacted to curtail the activities of the Ku Klux Klan, to suspend NAACP operations within the state. The law required most organizations, with the exceptions of churches and the National Guard, to file their membership list with the state. When the NAACP refused to submit its membership list the Attorney General filed suit against the organization. As a result, a state court prohibited the NAACP from operating until it filed a list of its members.<sup>78</sup>

The state court order against the branches presented NAACP leaders with a dilemma. They could not defy the law

in the midst of a legal and moral campaign to force the South to adhere to the letter and spirit of the Brown decision. Although condemning the ruling as "illegal and unjust," Roy Wilkins, the executive secretary, ordered the NAACP branches in Louisiana to suspend all activities. Clarence Laws, the state field secretary, expressed confidence higher courts would overturn the ruling. Tureaud attempted to have the case transferred to federal court where he anticipated a more favorable ruling. In the absence of an order to overturn the ban, State Attorney General Jack Gremillion stated his intention to prosecute any member who met in defiance of the ban.<sup>79</sup> A confrontation almost developed in December 1956 when the NAACP held two meetings, one in Alexandria and the other in New Orleans. Enough legal ambiguity existed, however, to prevent the arrest of the persons attending the meetings. The case proceeded in both the federal and state courts, and lawyers for the state and the NAACP had a difficult time comprehending the status of the case.<sup>80</sup> Nonetheless, the NAACP branches remained banned until February 1960 when a three judge federal court ruled against the state.<sup>81</sup>

The legal attempt to reduce the NAACP's effectiveness was accompanied by a strident campaign to brand the organization and its members communists. The terms subversive and un-American became "buzz" words used to discredit NAACP members and white moderates. The threat of



being labelled a communist prevented many whites from speaking out in favor of even gradual or token integration. The success and widespread acceptance of the anti-communist campaign also forced most black leaders to distance themselves from any person or groups suspected of communist or socialist sympathies. Beginning in 1954, segregationist leaders labeled "communist" on most groups supporting desegregation.

In the main, white New Orleans opposed desegregation with the same force and conviction as its supposedly less cosmopolitan neighbors. But some anti-segregation elements did exist in the white community, and they increased as the state exhausted its legislative and legal options. It is significant, however, that throughout most of the period, no political figure in the city advocated compliance with the Brown decision. The moderates, to the extent that they mobilized, had to rely on businessmen and professionals rather than politicians and did little to influence the segregation struggle. It was not that they were feeble or insincere in their efforts; they were simply too few in number and too far outside the white mainstream's views on race relations. For example, on the same day that approximately four hundred persons attended a meeting in favor of desegregation, 8,000 whites gathered in support of segregation.<sup>82</sup> In September 1955, a group of moderates presented the school board a petition favoring

desegregation, with 179 signatures. Two weeks later, however, the segregationists countered with a petition in support of the status quo signed by 14,962 people.<sup>83</sup> Under the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that white moderates failed to accomplish much.

The same force that started the fight against desegregation in the schools sustained it throughout the crisis--the black community. When asked where the NAACP would get the money to litigate thousands of cases throughout the nation, Thurgood Marshall answered, from the black community.<sup>84</sup> He spoke the truth. An indication of the black community's commitment to school desegregation and the principle of equality was provided by the Louisiana Education Association, the state's black teachers' organization.<sup>85</sup> Even the most optimistic supporters of school desegregation acknowledged that black educators would suffer job losses and demotions. Indeed, as early as 1953, the NAACP recognized the need to assist black educators during the transition to a unitary system and later created the Department of Teacher Information and Security to do so. For several years Daniel Byrd served as Assistant Director of the new agency.<sup>86</sup>

Yet despite the prospect of economic and professional injury the Louisiana Education Association, which, of course, included teachers from New Orleans, provided leadership and financial support to the desegregation

effort.<sup>87</sup> Between 1942 and 1955, J. K. Haynes of Ruston served as president and worked closely with Byrd, Tureaud, and the NAACP. The LEA, like the NAACP, depended on membership dues and contributions to sustain its operations. Haynes' active support of desegregation occasionally drew criticism from some LEA members. "I am especially concerned about Louisiana," Byrd disclosed to Marshall, "because it seems that some 'rednecks' must have reached certain conservative Negroes in the LEA and they have started a campaign...against Haynes." Byrd feared that the conservatives would attempt to replace Haynes at the next LEA convention scheduled for November 1953.<sup>88</sup> But Haynes retained his post, and the LEA remained in the desegregation struggle.<sup>89</sup>

The persistence of the NAACP, the LEA, and other segments of the black community helped to make desegregation a reality in New Orleans. After three unsuccessful attempts at reversals in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and twice in the United States Supreme Court, New Orleans by the end of 1958 still refused to obey Judge Wright's order to desegregate the schools "with all deliberate speed."<sup>90</sup> Board members apparently believed that if they ignored the court order it would go away. Tureaud's frequent trips to federal court should have convinced them otherwise. On 18 June 1959, Tureaud again asked Judge Wright to compel the school board to devise a

desegregation plan consistent with his previous ruling on 15 February 1956. Judge Wright scheduled arguments on the issue for the following month.<sup>91</sup> In a decision finally issued that July, Wright abandoned the vagueness of "with all deliberate speed" and ordered the school board "to prepare, present and file in the record of this case by March 1, 1960, an overall plan covering the complete desegregation of the public schools in this city." He anticipated white response by suggesting that "the board consider a plan under which the first grade would be desegregated the first year, the first and second grades the second year, and so on until all grades have been covered by the plan."<sup>92</sup>

Judge Wright hoped that the "responsible influences on our community life will take their places, as they have in the past, on the side of law and order," but the school board ignored Wright's request for a desegregation plan. board president Matthew Sutherland took refuge in the myriad state laws designed to create a legal buffer between the board and federal judicial authority. Another board member, Emile Wagner, a member of the White Citizens' Council and a virulent Catholic critic of the integrationist pronouncements of Archbishop Rummel, spoke more directly. Wagner preferred to see the public schools closed and segregated private schools established and financed by the state rather than allow any type of

integration.<sup>93</sup> All of the five board members in 1960, and those who preceded them, adhered to the staunch segregationist view. Wagner differed from his colleagues only in his active association with the Greater New Orleans Citizens' Council and his willingness to close the schools as the last effort to prevent desegregation.

Judge Wright extended his deadline for the submission of a desegregation plan, but the board still refused to comply. Through its special council, Gerard Rault, the board tried to get the order set aside.<sup>94</sup> School officials also mailed a questionnaire to parents seeking to ascertain whether they wanted the schools closed or opened if the court forced the school system to integrate. It instructed parents to indicate their preference for one of the following: "I would like to see the schools kept open even though a small amount of integration is necessary. I would like to see the schools closed rather than be integrated even in small numbers."<sup>95</sup> Parents returned slightly more than 27,000 of the 70,000 that were distributed, and they voted 14,114 to 12,978 to keep the schools open. Less than a week after announcing the results, school board president Lloyd Rittiner stated he would disregard the survey because 11,407 of the 14,114 parents who voted to keep the schools open were black. Among whites 12,229 had voted to close the schools and only 2,707 to keep them open in the event of integration. By

contrast, black parents voted overwhelmingly (11,407 to 679) to keep the schools open. Considering the racial composition of the vote, Rittiner felt justified in his position "because whites are the people who support the system."<sup>97</sup>

Having granted the school system an inordinate amount of time to formulate a desegregation plan, Judge Wright issued his own in May 1960. Following his earlier suggestion to the school board, Wright called for the gradual desegregation of the schools starting with the first grade when schools reopened for the 1960-1961 school year. School board members reacted to Wright's modest proposal with defiance. The board again vowed to resist desegregation and declared its intention "to fight this order in the courts of the land and... use every legal means known to it to preserve a segregated school system." Board members also met with Governor Jimmie Davis and received his commitment to help preserve segregation in the city's schools.<sup>98</sup> The 1959-1960 school year came to an end amid the possibility that the regular school vacation might exceed well beyond the usual three months.

In June the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals refused to grant relief from Judge Wright's order. With that avenue closed, the board voted four to one to "call upon the Governor of Louisiana to interpose himself between the federal court and the school board and keep the

public schools of New Orleans open on their present segregated basis." Wagner voted against the resolution because he believed the board had some legal options remaining and interposition should be used only as a last resort. Matthew Sutherland pointed out that six years of litigation had produced delays but no legal victories. In the absence of interposition, Sutherland warned the community to prepare for either desegregated schools or no schools at all.<sup>99</sup>

The NAACP, operating again after the federal court lifted the ban, wasted little time in attacking the school board's position. In a letter to the board, branch president Allison Chapital strongly denounced its actions and questioned the propriety of elected officials openly advocating disrespect for the law. During this time, however, the New Orleans NAACP did far more than write letters. Under the direction of Chapital, the branch held meetings designed to keep the black community informed about the integration effort. Furthermore, the NAACP coordinated the effort of black parents who planned to send their six year old children to schools that did not want them.<sup>100</sup>

During June the branch held more than ten meetings, often conducting two or three on the same day in different parts of the city. For example, on 6 June a meeting to "clarify the issues for the parents" was held at Law Street

Baptist Church and at the Central Congregational Church. Others were held at Shaw Temple Methodist Church, 8 June; St. Augustine High School, 10 and 20 June; St. John Institutional Missionary Baptist Church, 10 June; and Carver-Desire Baptist Church, 15 June. At all of these gatherings, NAACP representatives stressed the importance of the desegregation effort and reminded parents that the court's victory was not complete until blacks actually attended the schools of their choice.<sup>101</sup> For most black children that day remained in the distant future, but events unfolded which placed the opportunity to attend the school of their choice within reach of a few of them.

During the summer recess, four of the school board members--Lloyd Rittiner, Louis Riecke, Theodore Shepard, Jr., and Matthew Sutherland--started a slow retreat from their previous refusal to consider desegregation. The other board member, Emile Wagner, Jr., continued to champion segregation at all cost.<sup>102</sup> What caused the four board members to change their opinion and move the school system toward desegregation? The increased visibility of the white moderates and repeated losses in court influenced their decision. They also began to fear the uncertainty and dislocation associated with closing the schools to prevent desegregation. Moreover, they labored without compensation and served on the board because they believed they could make a contribution to public education. Another



compelling reason, and possibly the most important, Judge Wright's grade-a-year plan, assured only a very gradual increase in the number of blacks into white schools.

Faced with either closed schools or token desegregation, white moderates finally entered the desegregation struggle.<sup>103</sup> The board's new position, and that of the white moderates, found institutional expression in Save Our Schools. S.O.S. organizers refused to endorse desegregation, and made it clear they wanted to keep the schools open. In May 1960 they opened their public campaign and painted a bleak picture of the consequences of school closure. "The closings of public schools inevitably means an increase in juvenile delinquency," the group maintained, "as thousands of youngsters are left to their own devices." Taxes would increase because of a loss of federal funds and children would be deprived of the school's "health protecting services" if the schools closed. In addition, the economy would suffer "because new industries refuse to move into an area in which the public schools have been closed."<sup>104</sup> The moderate activists, like the radical racists, conducted a negative campaign--the evils of school closure were worse than the evils of desegregation. Few moderates took a stand on the lofty heights of equality. Archbishop Joseph Rummel, however, was one of the few exceptions.

Many south Louisianians were Catholic and most took their religion seriously. Archbishop Rummel attempted to use the power of the pulpit to convince his fellow Catholics that racial segregation contradicted the teaching of Christianity and, therefore, was morally wrong. Rummel explained that "the Church will continue to declare and maintain the correctness from the spiritual and moral standpoint of integration in principle in the various human relationships where enforced segregation is now imposed, notwithstanding our profession of faith in democracy."<sup>105</sup> In June 1960 he appealed to the school board to keep the schools open and "accept the moderate form of gradual integration proposed by Judge Wright as a sound, temperate interpretation of the American way of life...."<sup>106</sup> New Orleans Catholics, however, not only refused to embrace Rummel's position but successfully opposed his attempts to desegregate the parochial schools.<sup>107</sup>

Although the board rejected the moral stance of Archbishop Rummel, it continued to move towards the pragmatism of the groups opposed to closing the schools and began to formulate a desegregation plan. The segregationist forces, however, retained control of the state legislature. With a more energetic ally in newly elected Governor Jimmie Davis, its members continued the offensive against desegregation. In a last desperate effort to prevent school desegregation in New Orleans, the

legislature passed numerous segregation bills in 1960. The most important of these, Act 496, gave the governor the power to assume administrative control of any school districts under a court order to desegregate. On 17 August Davis exercised that power and placed Superintendent Redmond in charge of the New Orleans schools. Davis directed Redmond to open the schools on 7 September and outlined a lengthy registration process. The NAACP and a group of 31 white parents filed suits in federal court to prevent Governor Davis and Attorney General Jack Gremillion from assuming control of the schools.<sup>108</sup>

A three judge panel acted quickly and on 27 August ruled "that all Louisiana statutes which would directly or indirectly require segregation of the races in the public schools for the Parish of Orleans, or authorize the closure of such schools, or deny them public funds because they are desegregated, are unconstitutional...." The ruling returned the schools to the authority of the school board and kept in place Judge Wright's desegregation order requiring the opening of school in September. Redmond, seeking "to eliminate as much confusion [as possible] for everyone concerned," met with the school board members to assess and respond to the most recent court order.<sup>109</sup>

At a special meeting held on 29 August attended by Superintendent Redmond, special council Gerard Rault, and all of the board members except Emile Wagner, the board

members discussed its options. Gremillion had already indicated the state would appeal directly to the United States Supreme Court, and Rault said the board could join in the appeal. He admitted, however, success was unlikely. The board members postponed a decision on whether to appeal and authorized Rittiner to see if Judge Wright could meet with them or their attorney. "If the conference is granted," Reicke stated, the board should attend in good faith without any mental reservations."<sup>110</sup> Despite the discussion of an appeal, the board had finally accepted the inevitability of desegregation.<sup>111</sup> They then moved to minimize its effect.

The board wanted to meet with Judge Wright in order to impress upon him the need to delay his ruling for a year. With schools scheduled to open in less than two weeks, the board members once again sought more time. They pursued their new strategy without Emile Wagner who remained "so convinced that integration as required by the court's order would be an evil far worse than closing the school" that he announced he was "going to advocate shutting down the public school system."<sup>112</sup> Wagner refused to attend the meeting held on 30 August between the board and Judge Wright. Over the protest of Tureaud, Judge Wright granted the school board a delay, until 14 November 1960, in beginning desegregation. It had asked for a year, and expected to receive at least 4 1/2 months, but gladly

accepted any respite that pushed the order beyond the opening of school. The delay enabled the board to institute a pupil placement plan that further reduced the number of blacks admitted to white schools.<sup>113</sup>

In 1960 the legislature had approved Act 492, which gave local school boards the authority to assign students to district schools. The board's pupil placement plan conformed to state law and the guidelines contained in Judge Wright's desegregation order. Superintendent Redmond recommended retaining the existing school districts; those students wanting to attend a school outside of their district had to request a transfer. All students had to start school in their district and could only apply for a transfer during a brief period between 27 September and 7 October 1960.<sup>114</sup>

During that time school officials received 208 requests for transfers. They automatically rejected nine of the applications, eight because they arrived after the deadline and one because it contained inadequate information. The remaining 199 applications included 137 from blacks requesting transfer to white schools, 15 from blacks asking to change to another black school, 46 from whites seeking a new white school, and one from a white wanting to go to a black school. To protect the safety of the students and their families, school officials did not release the names of the students applying for transfers.

The board established a four-step procedure to screen the 199 applications.

It prepared guidelines for each step showing who would make the decision and on what basis:

1. The first step by:

First Assistant Superintendent  
Two Assistant Superintendents in Charge of  
Districts, Director, Research, Census and Planning  
Consider:

Verifications  
Proper age (birth certificate)  
Nearness of school to child's home  
Request or consent of parent and reasons  
assigned thereto  
Available room and teaching capacity of  
schools  
Availabillity of  
transportation.

Procedure:

After considering the above factors, the  
applications will be referred to the  
second group.

2. Second step by:

Acting Director, Guidance and Testing  
Psychologists  
Psychometrists  
Consider:

Scholastic aptitude  
Intelligence or ability  
Results of Metropolitan Readiness or  
Achievement Tests already administered.

Procedure:

Secure available test records  
Administer necessary group and/or individual  
tests.  
Refer all information compiled about each  
applicant to the third screening group.

3. Third step by:

Assistant Superintendent, Instruction  
Director of Special Services  
Director of Kindergarten-Primary Education  
Psychologists  
Visiting Teachers  
Consider:

Effect of new pupil upon academic program  
Suitability of established curricula for  
pupil  
(in terms of grouping within the class)

Adequacy of pupil's academic preparation or  
 readiness for admission to school or  
 curricula  
 Psychological qualification of pupil for  
 type of teaching and associations  
 Effect upon academic programs of other  
 students  
 Effect upon prevailing academic standards  
 Psychological effect upon the pupil  
 Home environment of the pupil  
 Maintenance or severance of social and  
 psychological relationships with pupils  
 and teachers.

**Procedure:**

Review tests results and other information  
 on child  
 Arrange home visits and/or interview  
 Review to Medical Department where necessary  
 Refer to administrative review team all  
 applications. Each application to be  
 marked either "recommended" or "not  
 recommended."

**4. Final step by:**

Administrative Review Team  
 The Superintendent  
 The First Assistant Superintendent  
 The Assistant Superintendent, Instruction

**Consider:**

All information previously collected on each  
 applicant  
 Choice of and interest of pupil  
 Possibility of threat or friction or  
 disorder among other pupils  
 Possibility of breach of peace or ill will  
 or retaliation within community.

**Procedure:**

Review all information and formulate  
 recommendations to be presented to the  
 Orleans Parish School Board. <sup>115</sup>

Four of the parents--three blacks and one white--chose  
 to withdraw their applications rather than run this  
 administrative gauntlet. Two of the withdrawals came from  
 blacks seeking admission to white schools. After the  
 exhaustive administrative review, school officials approved

only five of the remaining 135 applications.<sup>116</sup> The five black students approved for transfers to white schools were all females, one of whom withdrew before the 14 November transfer date.<sup>117</sup> Therefore, in the end, four six year old girls stood poised to do what no black New Orleanian had legally done since 1877--attend a desegregated school. They did not stand alone.

Despite the last minute maneuvers of Governor Jimmie Davis, State Attorney General Jack Gremillion, and the state legislature, four black students--Tessie, Leona, Gail, and Ruby--entered the previously all white William Frantz and McDonogh 19 schools on 14 November 1960. They entered accompanied by their parents and escorted by armed federal marshalls. In addition to the marshalls, local police stood guard at each school. The presence of law enforcement officials, however, did not prevent mobs of whites from shouting obscenities and racist remarks at the four students. Police officers did prevent the students from suffering physical harm, but did nothing to disperse the unruly and hostile crowds.<sup>118</sup>

After the students received their classroom assignments white "mothers clad in slacks and pedal pushers arrived to take their children home." Shouting the "south will rise again" and "two, four, six, eight, we don't want to integrate," large crowds remained at the two desegregated schools the entire day but dispersed without



violence.<sup>119</sup> On the second day, a crowd of hundreds of teen-agers attempted to force their way past police to enter McDonogh No. 19. Police made arrests at both schools and Police Chief Joseph Giarrusso sent additional officers to the schools. Over the next several days mob action and interracial violence occurred throughout the city.<sup>120</sup> New Orleans at last reaped, in lawlessness and negative national publicity, what six years of defiance and racist rhetoric had sown.<sup>121</sup>

With the legal battle for desegregated public schools virtually won, the New Orleans NAACP started to concentrate on the task of ensuring that the four students were not harmed physically or psychologically. Under the direction of branch president Allison Chapital, the NAACP conducted a massive campaign to obtain moral support for the students. In order to shield the children and their parents as much as possible, the branch requested that all correspondence to the children be sent to Chapital at the NAACP office. The response to the NAACP's effort was overwhelming. Cards, letters, and small donations began arriving almost immediately. Typical was a letter from Mrs. A. J. Shaw of Brookline, Massachusetts, who sent five dollars for "candy for the children." A Parent Teacher Association group from New York City sent a resolution indicating its support of integrated schools in New Orleans.<sup>122</sup> A letter from Chester W. Hartman of Cambridge, Massachusetts epitomized the

response the NAACP attempted to generate. Hartman thought the girl's "daily anguish must be so great that it was very important to try to offset this with some expression of friendliness." He therefore collected several thousand signatures, including that of noted economist John Kenneth Galbraith, on a "huge greeting card" and sent it to the four girls. Hartman pledged that he and a group of friends would also publicize the need to send additional letters of encouragement.<sup>123</sup>

Why did the parents of the four little girls agree to send their children to schools that had been previously all white? Why did Arthur Chapital, Sr., a postal worker for forty hours a week and a civil rights leader during the remaining hours, expose himself to death threats and hate mail? Why did the black attorney, Alexander P. Tureaud, file thirty-eight suits to force the end of segregated schools, often to the neglect of his private practice? And, finally, why did the black community support the drive for integrated education? Part of the answer to those questions could be found in the persistent inequality of black schools on the eve of limited desegregation.

In the 1959-1960 school year, 50,135 blacks and 41,191 whites attended the public schools. The school board operated forty elementary schools for blacks and forty-eight for whites. The number of white junior and senior high schools stood at sixteen; blacks had twelve such

schools. The lack of adequate schools forced many black students to attend overcrowded schools. Yet the students attending overcrowded classes fared better than the ones who only attended class three or four hours a day because of massive overcrowding. During the 1957-1958 school year, 9,695 blacks attended school on a part-time basis. The number declined to 2,165 in 1958-1959 and 1,687 in 1959-1960. During the 1959-1960 school year, no white students attended school part-time. School officials managed to reduce the number of black students on part-time by increasing class sizes.<sup>124</sup>

Class size had concerned black parents throughout the twentieth century. Statistics for the 1958-1959 school year revealed that only 5.4 percent of black children attended classes with fewer than thirty students per class. By contrast, 38.7 percent of white classes had fewer than thirty students per class. Moreover, 30.7 percent of black classes had over forty students per class; only 1 percent of white classes did. Indeed, ten black classes had over 51 students each. It was not unusual for black students to walk long distances to attend overcrowded black schools, although living a stone's throw from white schools that were often utilized less than 70 percent of capacity. The school board's five year construction plan, unveiled in March 1958, offered no relief for the overcrowded conditions of black schools.<sup>125</sup> Black leaders believed

complete school desegregation provided the only solution to a long festering problem for black students.

That only four black students attended white schools in November portended how slow the pace of desegregation would be in New Orleans. The black community, again led by the NAACP, continued to monitor the desegregation process. Black leaders assisted parents attempting to enroll their children in previously white schools and pressured school officials to accelerate the desegregation. During the 1962-1963 school year, only 107 blacks attended twenty white schools. When school opened in 1963 the number rose to 347. School officials did not remove the last vestiges of segregated education until the 1968-1969 school year.

Moreover, desegregation gave rise to new problems--charges of discrimination by black students and accelerated white flight to private and parochial schools. The new problems, however, did not lessen the importance of desegregation. Desegregated schools transcended the quantitative count of buildings, textbooks, and the number of students actually attending mixed schools. The campaign for school desegregation was a fight for full inclusion into American society, free from legislative discrimination. No matter how slow the pace, black New Orleanians had again embarked on the Reconstruction goal of a nation of "one people."

## Conclusion

For nearly a century New Orleans' blacks linked the development of their community to improvements in public education. To assist in their campaign for better education blacks formed many community organizations. The loss of suffrage in the 1890s, however, forced them to rely on protest and petition to win concessions from school officials. This strategy produced a few positive results, and only because black leaders and parents had remained persistent to their efforts. Each decade brought an increase in their commitment. Escalating black school enrollment placed such a strain on the educational facilities that school officials often remedied deplorable conditions. As a result, white board members made concessions that undermined their own policy of limited black education. Nevertheless, black school facilities continued to lag far behind those for whites.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, only slightly more than five thousand blacks attended public schools in New Orleans, with less than four hundred enrolled beyond the third grade. In fact, school officials did not provide black education beyond the fifth grade until 1908, and the first black high school did not open until 1917. Blacks complained continually about the

inadequacies of their high school facilities. Despite protests by black leaders, school officials refused to provide blacks with better secondary school facilities until the 1940s. The doctrine of separate but equal remained just that: a doctrine, but in practice separation without equality.

The campaign for expanded educational opportunity indicated that blacks never willingly accepted the role of second class citizens. They viewed education as a means of sharing fully in the American ideal of equality. From the beginning, black leaders had advocated education for the masses, not just for the black elite. Education became a community goal pursued by individuals regardless of whether they had children within the public school system. From Louis Roudanez and P. B. S. Pinchback to Alexander Tureaud and Daniel Byrd, and many black leaders in between, education reform remained an important goal. The fight for improved education produced a degree of continuity from one generation of leaders to the next. In the twentieth century each generation of leaders brought the black community a little closer to educational equality.

In the 1940s the pace for improved education quickened considerably; in fact, by the end of the decade blacks had changed their demands from mere equal facilities to total desegregation. In less than three decades, America had fought two world wars and a cold war in which it extolled

democracy and freedom in contrast to Russian tyranny. But black leaders thought the time had come to extend the benefits of freedom and democracy to black Americans. Separate facilities no matter how equal were unacceptable, and in 1952 black New Orleanians filed suit to desegregate the public schools. Eight years would pass, however, before the first black student attended a desegregated school. In the interim, blacks had extended the assault on Jim Crow to include transportation and public facilities. Later the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 further transformed race relations and the black community.

The Voting Rights Act produced unparalleled black advances in politics and civic involvement. In 1968 New Orleans sent the first black to the state legislature in the twentieth century. During the 1970s the rising black vote contributed to a marked increase in the number of black elected officials. Dr. Mack Spears, a black former teacher and principal, won a seat on the school board, which gave the black community a voice in formulating and implementing school policy. Protest, petition, and judicial redress for enhanced black education now were augmented by coalition politics.

When the four little black girls entered McDonogh No. 19 and Frantz elementary schools on 14 November 1960, they had unknowingly set in motion an eventual end to an era in

black New Orleans. The effort for educational equality and desegregation was a part of the larger black struggle for equality in America. Inadequate schools within a segregated school system represented only one of the most glaring consequences of discrimination and segregation. Another major consequence, perhaps less discernible, but not less real, was the apparent solidarity of the black community throughout the period of Jim Crow. Shared civil, economic, political, and social disabilities produced a commonality of purpose--the fight for full citizenship. That struggle joined the wealthy with the poor, the educated with the illiterate, the Creoles with the blacks, and the "downtowners" with the "uptowners." The NAACP and other black organizations received spiritual and financial support from all segments of the black community--from custodians to physicians. The Brown decision and the civil rights gains that followed, however, highlighted class differences that eventually fractured much of the unity of the New Orleans black community. Political empowerment and the increase in the size of the black middle class undermined, to some extent, a community agenda that focused exclusively on racism to explain the status and dynamics of the black community. The prosperity of some blacks existed next to the poverty of others. As housing became more accessible to blacks, they, too, fled the inner-city.



Middle class blacks found common cause, through professional, political, and civic involvement, with members of the white middle class. The struggle for black inclusion that occurred between 1900 and 1960 gave away to the pursuit of specific individual or group goals. The fullest expression of middle class black and white coalitions first occurred during the administration of Mayor Moon Landrieu. Landrieu involved blacks at all levels in his campaign and in his administration, which at one time included the city's first black chief administrative officer. The high profile of blacks in Landrieu's administration and an increase in black voters helped Ernest Morial to become New Orleans' first black mayor. Morial's election indicated that the transition from a purely race conscious society in New Orleans to a class and race conscious society had occurred. Morial shrewdly ran a race-specific campaign within most of the black community. Nevertheless, he appealed to and won support from some of the white middle class. In fact, his campaign stressed typical middle class political values such as government efficiency and business expansion. Whites held many important positions in his administration, including the head of the police and fire departments. Many lower class blacks were just as unrepresented with Morial as mayor as they had been with his white predecessors.

The emergence of a seemingly permanent black underclass led to a reassessment of the civil rights effort, including the effort to desegregate the schools. Some critics of school desegregation actually charged that black educational attainment declined in the aftermath of Brown. They defended their claims by pointing to the number of black students suspended from school, the high failure rate, and the number of drop-outs. The quantitative gains alone, however, appear to justify the fight for school desegregation. Black students no longer had to pass by schools located only a few blocks from their homes to attend school miles away solely because of the color of their skin. When school officials made plans regarding the maintenance and repair of school buildings, decisions reflected need rather than the prejudicial whims of racism. Many black children finally had access to the best education the public schools could provide. Race was no longer the main determinant in the quest for a quality education. The struggle that had started as a question of race had become one of race and class. The struggle continues still.

## Notes

### I. Education and the Politics of Race, 1862-1877

<sup>1</sup>New Orleans, Daily Picayune, 27 April 1862.

<sup>2</sup>Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 40, 50-52.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 46-47.

<sup>4</sup>New Orleans, La., Second District School Board Meeting Minutes, 2 February 1863. Orleans Parish School Board Collection, Archives and Manuscripts/Special Collections Department, University of New Orleans. In July 1864 the board was reorganized as the Board of School Directors of New Orleans and maintained that name or a variation of it until 1916. In that year the name was changed to the Orleans Parish School Board. Hereinafter references to minutes generated by the various boards will be cited as OPSB Minutes, and unless otherwise noted are in the Archives and Manuscripts/Special Collections Department, University of New Orleans.

<sup>5</sup>H. E. Sterkx, The Free Negro in Anti-Bellum Louisiana (Rutherford, New Jersey: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1972), p. 268.

<sup>6</sup>Betty Porter, "The History of Negro Education in Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Quarterly 25 (July 1942): 732; C. Peter Ripley, Slaves and Freedmen in Civil War Louisiana (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), pp. 126-127; Sterkx, Free Negro, pp. 269, 271, 273.

<sup>7</sup>Charles B. Rousseve, The Negro in Louisiana (New Orleans: Xavier University Press, 1937), pp. 43-44; John Blassingame, Black New Orleans, 1860-1880 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 107-108; Rodolphe L. Desdunes, Our People and Our History, trans. and ed., Dorothea O. McCants (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), pp. 21-24.

<sup>8</sup>Blassingame, Black New Orleans, pp. 2-9.

<sup>9</sup>Thomas L. Webber, Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831-1865 (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1978), p. 131; Eugene D. Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), p. 563.

<sup>10</sup>Blassingmane, Black New Orleans, p. 107.

<sup>11</sup>Porter, "History of Negro Education," pp. 730-731.

<sup>12</sup>Blassingame, Black New Orleans, pp. 108-109.

<sup>13</sup>Robert C. Morris, Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction: The Education of Freedmen in the South (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 23; James D. Anderson, The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 9; Elizabeth Doyle, "Nurseries of Treason: Schools in Occupied New Orleans," Journal of Southern History 26 (May, 1960): p. 176; Blassingame, Black New Orleans, p. 109.

<sup>14</sup>B. Bush Plumly to G. N. Taylor, 21 September 1864, Records of the Superintendent of Education for the State of Louisiana, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1864-1869, Record Group 105 (National Archives Microforms Publications, M1026). Hereinafter cited as LA BRFAL.

<sup>15</sup>Blassingame, Black New Orleans, p. 109.

<sup>16</sup>Mortimer Warren, "Monthly Report, 30 October 1865," LA., BRFAL.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Blassingame, Black New Orleans, p. 109-110.

<sup>19</sup>J. H. Ford, "Weekly Report, 29 July 1864," LA BRFAL.

<sup>20</sup>Ford, "Weekly Report, 29 July 1864, 12 August, 1864"

<sup>21</sup>Howard A. White, The Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), p. 173.

<sup>22</sup>Ford, "Weekly Report, 19 August 1864," LA BRFAL.

<sup>23</sup>Ford, "Report of the First Examination of the Colored Schools, 24 September 1864," LA., BRFAL.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>White, Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana, p. 8.

- <sup>27</sup>Warren, "Monthly Report, 30 October 1864," LA BRFAL.
- <sup>28</sup>White, Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana, p. 170; Warren, "Monthly Report, 30 October 1865," LA BRFAL.
- <sup>29</sup>Warren, "Monthly Report, 30 October 1865," LA BRFAL.
- <sup>30</sup>Blassingame, Black New Orleans, p. 111; Leon Odum Beasley, "A History of Louisiana During the Reconstruction Period, 1862-1877" (Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1957), p. 106.
- <sup>31</sup>Warren to H. R. Pease, 13 and 31 January 1866, LA., BRFAL; White, Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana, p. 176.
- <sup>32</sup>White, Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana, p. 170.
- <sup>33</sup>William F. Messner, Freedmen and the Ideology of Free Labor: Louisiana 1862-1865 (Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana Press, 1978), p. 173.
- <sup>34</sup>M. Wright, Jr., "Monthly Report, 2 February 1866," LA., BRFAL.
- <sup>35</sup>Edmonia Highgate, "Monthly Report, 25 June 1866," LA., BRFAL.
- <sup>36</sup>Blass'ngame, Black New Orleans, p. 111.
- <sup>37</sup>Blassingame, Black New Orleans, pp. 111-112; Porter, "History of Negro Education," p. 743.
- <sup>38</sup>OPSB Minutes, 2 February 1863, 4 May 1863.
- <sup>39</sup>OPSB Minutes, 8 July 1865, 29 August, 11 July 1866.
- <sup>40</sup>OPSB Minutes, 13 September 1862, 29 September 1862.
- <sup>41</sup>Marcus Christian Papers, "History of the Negro in Louisiana," Archives and Manuscripts/Special Collections Department, University of New Orleans.
- <sup>42</sup>OPSB Minutes, 25 September 1865, 7 November 1865.
- <sup>43</sup>David Rankin, "The Forgotten People: Free People of Color in New Orleans, 1850-1870" (Ph.D. dissertation, John Hopkins University, 1976), pp. 212, 220.
- <sup>44</sup>Quoted in Rankin, "Forgotten People," p. 233.
- <sup>45</sup>White, Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana, p. 179.

<sup>46</sup>Louis R. Harlan, "Desegregation in New Orleans Public Schools During Reconstruction," American Historical Review 67 (April 1962): 663-675; OPSB Minutes, 3 April 1867; Christian, "A History of the Negro," p. 13; Beasley, "A History of Education," p. 107.

<sup>47</sup>Christian, "History of the Negro," p. 13.

<sup>48</sup>New Orleans Times, 31 July 1867.

<sup>49</sup>OPSB Minutes, 28 August 1867.

<sup>50</sup>OPSB Minutes, 4 September 1867.

<sup>51</sup>OPSB Minutes, 16 September 1867.

<sup>52</sup>OPSB Minutes, 16 September 1867.

<sup>53</sup>OPSB Minutes, 16 September 1867.

<sup>54</sup>The committee members did not report on all of the black schools in the city as evidenced by the later inclusion of at least three Bureau schools not contained in the report.

<sup>55</sup>OPSB Minutes, 16 September 1867.

<sup>56</sup>OPSB Minutes, 2 October 1867.

<sup>57</sup>OPSB Minutes, 4 December 1867.

<sup>58</sup>OPSB Minutes, 4 December 1867.

<sup>59</sup>OPSB Minutes, 21 May 1868.

<sup>60</sup>OPSB Minutes, 10 January 1868.

<sup>61</sup>New Orleans Tribune, 12 May 1867.

<sup>62</sup>Blassingame, Black New Orleans, p. 112.

<sup>63</sup>Joe Gray Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, 1863-1877 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), p. 147; Ted Tunnell, Crucible of Reconstruction: War, Radicalism, and Race in Louisiana, 1862-1877 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), pp. 113-114.

<sup>64</sup>Roger A. Fischer, The Segregation Struggle in Louisiana, 1862-1877 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), pp. 48, 55.

<sup>65</sup>Charles Vincent, Black Legislators in Louisiana During Reconstruction (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), p. 49.

<sup>66</sup>Fischer, Segregation Struggle, pp. 48, 55; Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, p. 147.

<sup>67</sup>Fischer, Segregation Struggle, pp. 48-49.

<sup>68</sup>Charles Vincent, "Negro Leadership and Programs in the Louisiana Constitutional Conventions of 1868," Louisiana History 10 (1969): 343-345; Journal of the Convention for the Framing of a Constitution for the State of Louisiana (New Orleans, 1867-1868), pp. 3-4; Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, p. 150.

<sup>69</sup>Vincent, "Leadership and Programs," p. 350.

<sup>70</sup>Journal of the Convention, p. 13; Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, pp. 151-152; Vincent, "Leadership and Programs," p. 342.

<sup>71</sup>Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, p. 136.

<sup>72</sup>Ella Lonn, Reconstruction in Louisiana after 1868 (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1918), p. 11; White, Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana, p. 148.

<sup>73</sup>Tribune, 27 December 1867.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 18 June 1867, 23 October 1867, 27 October 1867, 28 November 1867.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 27 October 1867.

<sup>76</sup>Journal of the Convention, pp. 16-17.

<sup>77</sup>Article two sought primacy of state law over local law and Article three defined the power of a State Superintendent of Public Education. The fourth article sought state regulation, through licensing, of private schools. Article five attempted to make English the language of instruction. Article six set the salary, term and method for selecting a Superintendent. The seventh and eighth articles addressed the issue of funding and the disposal of federal lands for education. Article nine prohibited the allocation of state funds to private schools. Finally, Article ten sought to establish a state university in New Orleans without regard to race and Article eleven extended the prohibition to include all schools of higher learning chartered by the state. Journal of the Convention, p. 17.

<sup>78</sup>Journal of the Convention, p. 17.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., pp. 60-61.

<sup>81</sup>Tribune, 31 July 1867.

<sup>82</sup>Journal of the Convention, pp. 200-201.

<sup>83</sup>Tunnell, Crucible of Reconstruction, pp. 233-237; Journal of the Convention, p. 201.

<sup>84</sup>Journal of the Convention, p. 201; Tunnell, Crucible of Reconstruction, pp. 233-237.

<sup>85</sup>Journal of the Convention, p. 201; Tunnell, Crucible of Reconstruction, pp. 125, 126, 236.

<sup>86</sup>Tribune, 31 July 1867.

<sup>87</sup>The delegates adopted the Constitution by a vote of seventy-one to six. William H. Cooley, Thomas S. Crawford, George W. Dearing, Jr., George Ferguson, Thomas Harrison, and John Vandergriff voted against adoption. Three delegates voted for adoption but issued a statement of protest against the idea of mixed schools.

<sup>88</sup>Fischer, Segregation Struggle, p. 59.

<sup>89</sup>Tribune, 12 December 1867.

<sup>90</sup>Vincent, Black Legislators, pp. 68-69; Fischer, Segregation Struggle, p. 57; Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, pp. 156-157.

<sup>91</sup>Harlan, "Desegregation in New Orleans Schools," p. 665.

<sup>92</sup>New Orleans Times, 1 September 1867.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 19 September 1867.

<sup>94</sup>White, Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana, pp. 8, 19; Fischer, Segregation Struggle, pp. 57-59; Tunnell, Crucible of Reconstruction, p. 169.

<sup>95</sup>Louisiana, Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Education, 1869, p. 12. (New Orleans: A. E. Lee, 1870), Between 1862 and 1900 various companies, located in New Orleans or Baton Rouge, published the annual



(and beginning in 1880, biennial) reports. Hereinafter cited as LA Annual Report with corresponding year.

<sup>96</sup>LA Annual Report, 1869.

<sup>97</sup>Never reconciled to the denial of suffrage by the delegates at the 1864 Constitutional Convention, black leaders and their white allies attempted to reconvene the convention on 30 July 1866. A white mob, threatened and angered by the mere discussion of black suffrage, attacked the "conventioners" and their supporters. When the carnage ended 34 blacks had been killed and 119 wounded. The total number of persons killed and wounded stood at 38 and 146 respectively. See, Donald E. Reynolds, "The New Orleans Riot of 1866, Reconsidered," Louisiana History 5 (Winter 1964): 5-27.

<sup>98</sup>Fischer, Segregation Struggle, pp. 113-114; LA Annual Report, 1871.

<sup>99</sup>Blassingame, Black New Orleans, pp. 118-122; Harlan, "Desegregation in New Orleans Schools," p. 665.

<sup>100</sup>New Orleans Southwestern Christian Advocate, 18 June 1874, 23 September 1875.

<sup>101</sup>New Orleans Weekly Louisianian, 15 February 1875.

<sup>102</sup>LA Annual Report, 1870; Weekly Louisianian, 19 January 1871.

<sup>103</sup>Harlan, "Desegregation in New Orleans Schools," p. 666.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

<sup>105</sup>LA Annual Report, 1872.

<sup>106</sup>Dale Somers, "Black and White in New Orleans: A Study in Urban Race Relations, 1865-1900," Journal of Southern History 40 (February, 1974): 37.

<sup>107</sup>Harlan, "Desegregation in New Orleans Schools," p. 669.

<sup>108</sup>T. Harry Williams, "The Louisiana Unification Movement of 1873," Journal of Southern History 11 (August, 1945): 350.

<sup>109</sup>Williams, "Louisiana Unification Movement," p. 350; Times, 29 March 1873.

<sup>110</sup>Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, p. 277; New Orleans Times, 17 June 1873; New Orleans Daily Picayune 16 June 1873.

<sup>111</sup>Times, 17 June 1873.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

<sup>113</sup>New Orleans Republican, 28 May, 1 June, and 4 June 1873.

<sup>114</sup>Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, p. 277; Williams, "Louisiana Unification Movement," p. 356.

<sup>115</sup>Times, 17 June 1873.

<sup>116</sup>Williams, "Louisiana Unification Movement," p. 359.

<sup>117</sup>Vincent, Black Legislators, p. 167.

<sup>118</sup>Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, p. 278; Williams, "Louisiana Unification Movement," p. 363.

<sup>119</sup>Williams, "Louisiana Unification Movement," p. 364, 367; Vincent, Black Legislators, p. 167; Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, pp. 278-279; New Orleans Times, 16 July 1873; Daily Picayune, 16 July 1873.

<sup>120</sup>Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, pp. 241-248; Tunnell, Crucible of Reconstruction, pp. 170-171.

<sup>121</sup>Weekly Louisianian, 22 August 1874; Daily Picayune, 8, 13 September 1874.

<sup>122</sup>Weekly Louisianian, 26 September 1874; Daily Picayune 15, 16, 18 September 1874.

<sup>123</sup>Daily Picayune, 10, 11, 14 December 1874.

<sup>124</sup>Blassingame, Black New Orleans, pp. 116-117; LA Annual Report, 1874; Daily Picayune, 15, 16 Decemberr 1874.

<sup>125</sup>Daily Picayune, 16, 17 December 1874.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid, 18 December 1874.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid.

<sup>128</sup>Weekly Louisianian, 26 December 1874; Daily Picayune, 18, 19 December 1874; OPSB Minutes, 9 January 1875.

<sup>129</sup>OPSB Minutes, 7 April 1875.

<sup>130</sup>Blassingame, Black New Orleans, p. 120.

<sup>131</sup>Harlan, "Desegregation in New Orleans Schools," p. 668.

<sup>132</sup>Henry A. Bullock, A History of Negro Education in the South, From 1619 to the Present (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 56-57.

<sup>133</sup>Horace Mann Bond, The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1934), p. 72.

<sup>134</sup>LA Annual Report, 1870.

<sup>135</sup>Weekly Louisianian, 25 May 1871.

<sup>136</sup>LA Annual Report, 1872.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., 1873.

<sup>138</sup>LA Annual Report(s), 1867-1877.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid., 1873.

## Notes

### II. Education and the Struggle for Blacks' Proper Place, 1877-1900

<sup>1</sup>C. Vann Woodward, Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction (New York: Little, Brown, and Co., 1951; Revised ed., Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1956), pp. 235-241; Kenneth M. Stampp, The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), pp. 186-215.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph G. Dawson, III, Army Generals and Reconstruction: Louisiana, 1862-1877 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), pp. 140-260; Ronald E. Butchart, Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education, 1862-1875 (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1980), pp. 181-195; Fischer, Segregation Struggle in Louisiana, pp. 133-146; Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, pp. 480-505.

<sup>3</sup>Carl V. Harris, "Stability and Change in Discrimination Against Black Public Schools: Birmingham, Alabama, 1871-1931," Journal of Southern History 51 (August 1985): 376-378.

<sup>4</sup>Beasley, "History of Education in Louisiana," pp. 185-187.

<sup>5</sup>LA Annual Report, 1877.

<sup>6</sup>Fischer, Segregation Struggle p. 135.

<sup>7</sup>LA Annual Report, 1877.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>In defense of his practice of appointing blacks to minor offices Nicholls stated he "appointed a number of them to small offices sandwiching them on boards between white men where...they were powerless to do harm," Quoted in William Ivy Hair, Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest: Louisiana Politics 1877-1900 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975), p. 22.

<sup>12</sup>OPSB Minutes, 4, 18, April 1877.

<sup>13</sup>OPSB Minutes, 6 June 1877.

<sup>14</sup>OPSB Minutes, 22 June 1877.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>A contemporary later reflected that Mary "believed in upholding our rights, the rights of all Louisianians, and he aided the cause with generous donations. For example, he would assume the responsibility for a lawsuit and would defray its expenses," Desdunes, Our People and Our History, pp. 93-94.

<sup>18</sup>Daily Picayune, 27 June 1877; Fischer, Segregation Struggle, p. 140.

<sup>19</sup>OPSB Minutes, 3 July 1877.

<sup>20</sup>The proposal to abolish the high schools met with less success. Instead of Mitchell's recommendation not to fund the high schools, the board decided to preserve the high schools but reduce expenses "within reasonable limits," OPSB Minutes, 3 July 1877.

<sup>21</sup>Fischer, Segregation Struggle, p. 142.

<sup>22</sup>Craig's fellow board members asked for and received his resignation in December 1878 when he appeared at a meeting inebriated. OPSB Minutes 6 December 1878.

<sup>23</sup>Blassingame, Black New Orleans, pp. 173-210.

<sup>24</sup>Weekly Louisianian, 9 September 1877.

<sup>25</sup>OPSB Minutes, 3 October 1877.

<sup>26</sup>Daily Picayune, 24 October 1877; Fischer, The Segregation Struggle, pp. 140-141.

<sup>27</sup>Vincent, Black Legislators, p. 226; Rankin, "The Forgotten People," p. 300.

<sup>28</sup>Fischer, Segregation Struggle, p. 141.

<sup>29</sup>Hair, Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest, pp. 24-26.

<sup>30</sup>Quoted in Weekly Louisianian, 6 October 1878.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Daily Picayune, 20 February 1879.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Tribune, 26 April 1867.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Henry C. Dethloff and Robert R. Jones, "Race Relations in Louisiana, 1877-98," Louisiana History 9 (Fall 1968): 308-311.

<sup>37</sup>C. Vann Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 36-37; Paul Kunkel, "Modifications in Louisiana Negro Legal Status Under Louisiana Constitutions, 1812-1957," Journal of Negro History 44 (January, 1959): 14-15.

<sup>38</sup>Dethloff and Jones, "Race Relations in Louisiana," pp. 316-323.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Louisiana, Constitution (1879), Art. 231.

<sup>42</sup>Desdunes, Our People and Our History, pp. 136-138.

<sup>43</sup>Weekly Louisianian, 11 June 1881.

<sup>44</sup>Desdunes, Our People and Our History, pp. 136-137.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>46</sup>To reduce expenses school officials restructured the high schools, designating them as "Academic Departments." Each one contained a maximum of four teachers, including the principal. The school assigned to blacks had two teachers because of the small enrollment.

<sup>47</sup>LA Annual Report, 1877.

<sup>48</sup>New Orleans, Leland, and Straight Universities were affiliated with religious organizations--Methodist, Baptist, and Congregationalist, respectively.

<sup>49</sup>Porter, "The History of Negro Education," pp. 775-784.

<sup>50</sup>Marie De Jan, "Education for Negroes in New Orleans Prior to 1915" (M.A. thesis, Xavier University, 1941), p. 91; OPSB Minutes, 1 October 1884, 12 November 1884, 4 February 1885.

<sup>51</sup>There is also no evidence to suggest that the school board had continued the tuition subsidy.

<sup>52</sup>Bullock, History of Negro Education in the South, pp. 160-166; Anderson, Education of Blacks in the South, pp. 243-278.

<sup>53</sup>Hair, Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest, pp. 119-127.

<sup>54</sup>LA Annual Report, 1878.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 1879.

<sup>57</sup>LA Annual Report, 1877.

<sup>58</sup>Louisiana Biennial Report(s) of the State Superintendent of Public Education, 1882-1883, 1886-1887, Hereinafter cited as LA Biennial Report; LA Annual Report(s), 1874, 1877.

<sup>59</sup>LA Annual Report, 1882-1883.

<sup>60</sup>OPSB Minutes, 4 January 1879, 3 March 1880, 28 May 1880, 7 February 1883.

<sup>61</sup>Joy J. Jackson, New Orleans in the Gilded Age: Politics and Urban Progress, 1880-1896 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), pp. 145-169.

<sup>62</sup>OPSB Minutes, 2 December 1886, 10 August 1887, 8 September 1887, 9 January 1888, 9 November 1888, 16 November 1888, and 8 May 1891.

<sup>63</sup>Blassingame, Black New Orleans, pp. 48-77, 139-171.

<sup>64</sup>Black public school enrollment actually declined in the 1880s.

<sup>65</sup>LA Annual Report, 1878.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Report of the Public Schools, 1887.

<sup>68</sup>Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow, pp. 31-65.

<sup>69</sup>This is not to suggest, however, that white leaders wanted black education to serve as a basis for blacks to ultimately gain civil equality, and economic and political empowerment.

<sup>70</sup>Report of the Public Schools, 1882-1883.

<sup>71</sup>LA Annual Report, 1877.

<sup>72</sup>Report of the Public Schools, 1877.

<sup>73</sup>LA Annual Report(s), 1878, 1898-1899.

<sup>74</sup>LA Annual Report(s), 1877-1879; LA Biennial Report(s), 1880-1900.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 1878.

<sup>76</sup>Report of the Public Schools, 1887.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>OPSB Minutes, 8 May 1896, 12 June 1896.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 12 June 1896.

<sup>80</sup>Hair, Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest, p. 170.

<sup>81</sup>Rayford W. Logan, The Betrayal of the Negro from Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson, new enl. ed., originally published as The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901 (New York: Collier-MacMillan, 1972), pp. 195-217.

<sup>82</sup>Dethloff and Jones, "Race Relations in Louisiana," 315-316; Somers, "Black and White in New Orleans: A Study in Urban Race Relations," pp. 38-42.

<sup>83</sup>Desdunes, Our People and Our History, p. 141.

<sup>84</sup>Arthe A. Anthony, "The Negro Creole Community in New Orleans, 1880-1920: An Oral History," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Irving, 1978), pp. 50-52.

<sup>85</sup>Desdunes used the term to describe blacks "who had never compromised,...who remained faithful to the principles of justice and of equality," Our People and Our History, p. 140.

<sup>86</sup>Reprinted in Otto H. Olsen, ed., The Thin Disguise: Turning Point in Negro History, Plessy v. Ferguson (New York: Humanities Press, 1967), pp. 47-48.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., pp. 52-53.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 54.



- <sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 55.
- <sup>91</sup>Fischer, The Segregation Struggle, p. 153.
- <sup>92</sup>Desdunes, Our People and Our History, p. 141.
- <sup>93</sup>Reprinted in Olsen, The Thin Disguise, p. 112.
- <sup>94</sup>Hair, Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest, pp. 237-241.
- <sup>95</sup>Philip D. Uzee, "The Republican Party in the Louisiana Election of 1896," Louisiana History 2 (Summer 1961): 343-344.
- <sup>96</sup>Henry C. Dethloff, "The Alliance and the Lottery: Farmers Try For the Sweepstakes," Louisiana History 6 (Spring 1965): 158-159.
- <sup>97</sup>Official Journal of the Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of the State of Louisiana, 1898 (New Orleans: H.J. Hearsey, 1898), pp. 9-10.
- <sup>98</sup>OPSB Minutes,
- <sup>99</sup>J. Paul Mitchell, ed., Race Riots in Black and White (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 22-37.
- <sup>100</sup>OPSB Minutes, 9 March 1900.
- <sup>101</sup>OPSB Minutes, 29 June 1900.
- <sup>102</sup>OPSB Minutes, 29 June 1900.
- <sup>103</sup>Donald Spivey, Schooling For the New Slavery: Black Industrial Education, 1868-1915 (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1978), pp. 71-101.

## Notes

### III. Education and the Making of a Protest Tradition

<sup>1</sup>The four black colleges were Leland, Straight, New Orleans, and Southern Universities.

<sup>2</sup>The board rented six buildings for school purposes in the 1909-1910 school year. New Orleans Annual Report of the Superintendent of the Public Schools of the Parish of Orleans 1909-1910. Orleans Parish School Board Collection, Archives and Manuscripts/Special Collections Department, University of New Orleans hereinafter cited as N.O. Annual Report.

<sup>3</sup>OPSB Minutes, 14 January 1910, 14 October 1910, and 11 November 1910.

<sup>4</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 January 1914.

<sup>5</sup>OPSB Minutes, 16 February 1914.

<sup>16</sup>OPSB Minutes, 1 April 1914, 14 May 1914, 15 June 1914, and 9 July 1914.

<sup>7</sup>New Orleans Times Picayune, 30 September.

<sup>8</sup>Times Picayune, 1, 2 October 1915; OPSB Minutes, 21 September 1914, 4 October 1915, 11 November 1915, 23 March 1917.

<sup>9</sup>OPSB Minutes, 28 July 1922.

<sup>10</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 January 1923.

<sup>11</sup>Ten years earlier school officials had considered converting the school. Whites opposed the idea as strenuously as they opposed the Bayou Road School. Indeed, Charles Colton, a member of the board at that time, interrupted his convalescence to write a lengthy letter of protest. OPSB Minutes, 13 July 1913, 12 January 1923.

<sup>12</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 January 1923.

<sup>13</sup>Roger L. Rice, "Residential Segregation by Law, 1910-1917," Journal of Southern History 34 (May 1968): 189-199.

<sup>14</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 January 1923.

<sup>15</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 January 1923.

<sup>16</sup>OPSB Minutes, 18 January 1923.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 26 January 1923.

<sup>18</sup>Times Picayune, 27 January 1923.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid, 27 January 1923, 9 February 1923.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 10 February

<sup>21</sup>OPSB Minutes, 9 February 1923.

<sup>22</sup>I. A. Newby, Jim Crow's Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900-1930 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), pp. 3-16.

<sup>23</sup>OPSB Minutes, 9 February 1923.

<sup>24</sup>Warren Easton, named after a former superintendent of schools, was a college preparatory school located on Canal Street and drew students from throughout the city. OPSB Minutes, 9 February 1923.

<sup>25</sup>Robert R. Moton, What the Negro Thinks (New York: Doubleday Doran & Co., 1940), pp. 5-9.

<sup>26</sup>OPSB Minutes, 9 February 1923.

<sup>27</sup>OPSB Minutes, 9 February 1923.

<sup>28</sup>During the frantic attempt to upgrade black schools after World War II school officials converted Craig School back to black use.

<sup>29</sup>Meyer Weinberg, A Chance to Learn: The History of Race and Education in the United States, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 1-7.

<sup>30</sup>Anderson, Education of Blacks in the South , p. 80.

<sup>31</sup>Anderson, Education of Blacks in the South, pp. 80-81.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>33</sup>OPSB Minutes, 29 June 1900.

<sup>34</sup>OPSB Minutes, 6 January 1916.

<sup>35</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 January 1923.

<sup>36</sup>N.O. Annual Report(s), 1900-1910.

<sup>37</sup>OPSB Minutes, 13 January 1911.

<sup>38</sup>OPSB Minutes, 26 January 1923.

<sup>39</sup>N.O. Annual Report, 1911-1912.

<sup>40</sup>OPSB Minutes, 10 November 1925.

<sup>41</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 9 April 1927.

<sup>42</sup>Bond, Education of the Negro, pp. 225-226; OPSB Minutes, 10 November 1911, 17 April 1911, 26 September 1913, 10 February 1928, 8 May 1936, 9 January 1937, 12 May 1939.

<sup>43</sup>John McDonogh, a wealthy antebellum merchant and real estate investor, willed a share of his fortune to sponsor public education in New Orleans. Throughout much of the nineteenth century, funds from his bequest financed school construction in New Orleans.

<sup>44</sup>OPSB Minutes, 14 April 1905.

<sup>45</sup>Bullock, History of Negro Education in the South, p. 150.

<sup>46</sup>OPSB Minutes, 14 September 1906.

<sup>47</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 January 1923.

<sup>48</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 January 1923.

<sup>49</sup>OPSB Minutes, 17 April 1917.

<sup>50</sup>Dunn-Landry Papers, Amistad Research Center, New Orleans, Louisiana.

<sup>51</sup>National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, New Orleans Branch Collection, Archives and Manuscripts/Special Collections Department, University of New Orleans.

<sup>52</sup>Mary F. Berry and John W. Blassingame, Long Memory: The Black Experience in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 369-371.

<sup>53</sup>New Orleans Herald, 19 September 1925.

<sup>54</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 25 December 1926.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 9 April 1927.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 23 October 1926.

<sup>57</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 30 October 1926.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 18 January 1930.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 19 March 1927.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 13 August 1938.

<sup>61</sup>Carter G. Woodson, The Negro Professional Man and the Community. (The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc., 1938; reprint ed., New York: Negro University Press, 1969), p. 122.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., pp. 124-126.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>64</sup>Joseph L. Hardin Papers. Amistad Research Center, New Orleans, LA.

<sup>65</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 24 December 1927, 17 January 1931; Archie Perkins, Who's Who in Colored Louisiana (Baton Rouge: Douglas Loan Company, 1930), p. 113.

<sup>66</sup>Woodson, Negro Professional Man and the Community, p. 126.

<sup>67</sup>Nida H. Vital, "Dr. Rivers Frederick and the History of Black Medicine in New Orleans" (M.A. thesis, University of New Orleans, 1978), pp. 83-84.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., pp. 78-83.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., pp. 40-45.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., pp. 51, 61.

<sup>71</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 7 October 1933, 19 November 1933, 27 January 1934; Perkins, Who's Who, pp. 96, 101, 102, 136.

<sup>72</sup>Perkins, Who's Who, p. 113.

<sup>73</sup>Vincent DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, The New Departure Years, 1877-1897 (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1959), pp. 189-195; Philip D. Uzee, "Republican Politics in Louisiana," (Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University Press, 1950), pp. 170-171.

<sup>74</sup>Quoted in Richard B. Sherman, The Republican Party and Black America From McKinley to Hoover, 1896-1933 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1973), p. 9

<sup>75</sup>Biographical information based on reading of the Hardin Papers.

<sup>76</sup>Biographical information based on reading of the Dunn-Landry Papers and Robert Elijah Jones Papers, Amistad Research Center, New Orleans, Louisiana.

<sup>77</sup>New Orleans Southwestern Christian Advocate, 15 January 1903.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 9 November 1911.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 4 August 1910, 21 September 1916.

## Notes

### IV. Black Education During the Jim Crow Era, 1900-1945

<sup>1</sup>OPSB Minutes, 9 October 1936, 13 September 1940.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Vincent, A Centennial History of Southern University and A & M College (Baton Rouge: Southern University, 1981), pp. 63-72.

<sup>3</sup>OPSB Minutes, 2 July 1913, 8 August 1913, 26 January 1915.

<sup>4</sup>Anderson, Education of Blacks in the South, pp. 186-187; Bond, Education of the Negro, pp. 114-115; Louis R. Harlan, Separate and Unequal Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States 1901-1915 (New York: Atheneum, 1968), pp. 264-265.

<sup>5</sup>OPSB Minutes, 11 June 1909, 8 October 1909, 12 May 1911, 9 February 1917.

<sup>6</sup>N.O. Annual Report, 1912-1913, 1914-1915.

<sup>7</sup>Thomas Sowell, Education: Assumption Versus History (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1986), pp. 9, 18-21; OPSB Minutes, 24 August 1917, 14 September 1917.

<sup>8</sup>OPSB Minutes, 13 August 1914.

<sup>9</sup>OPSB Minutes, 28 September 1917.

<sup>10</sup>N.O. Annual Report, 1917-1918.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>N.O. Annual Report, 1920-1921.

<sup>14</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 19 March 1927.

<sup>15</sup>N.O. Annual Report, 1917-1918.

<sup>16</sup>OPSB Minutes, 14 September 1923, 22 August 1924.

<sup>17</sup>Statistical Report of the New Orleans Public Schools of the Parish of Orleans, 1929-1930, 1930-1931. Orleans Parish School Board Collection, Archives and Manuscripts/Special Collections Department, University of New Orleans, hereinafter cited as N.O. Statistical Report.

<sup>18</sup>N.O. Annual Report, 1920-1921; N.O. Statistical Report(s) 1924-1925 to 1939-1940.

<sup>19</sup>U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Abstract of the Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1923).

<sup>20</sup>OPSB Minutes, 10 July 1903, 3 November 1903, 13 May 1904, 10 November 1905, 14 August 1908, 13 October 1911; N.O. Annual Report, 1903-1904, 1905-1906, 1911-1912.

<sup>21</sup>Advocate, 9 January 1908.

<sup>22</sup>OPSB Minutes, 13 November 1908.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 11 September 1908, 10 September 1909, 8 October 1909, 10 November 1911, 14 March 1913, 15 October 1913, 11 May 1917.

<sup>24</sup>Advocate, 9 November 1911.

<sup>25</sup>Lawrence A. Cremin, American Education: The Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980 (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), p. 231.

<sup>26</sup>N.O. Annual Report, 1918-1919, 1920-1921; OPSB Minutes, 22 November 1918; Myrtle Banks, "The Education of the Negro in New Orleans" (M.A. thesis, Xavier University, 1935), pp. 280-281.

<sup>27</sup>N.O. Annual Report, 1918-1919 to 1920-1921; N.O. Statistical Report, 1924-1925 to 1939-1940.

<sup>28</sup>August Meier, Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1978), pp. 161-255; W.E.B. DuBois, The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques, 1906-1960, ed. Herbert Aptheker (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), pp. 5-15.

<sup>29</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 January 1900.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 8 March 1907, 13 May 1910, 14 May 1914.

<sup>31</sup>N.O. Annual Report, 1904-1905; OPSB Minutes, 14 June 1901.

<sup>32</sup>OPSB Minutes, 9 June 1905.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 13 May 1910.



<sup>34</sup>Advocate, 4 September 1902.

<sup>35</sup>U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Population, vol. 4 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1923).

<sup>36</sup>U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Population: 1950, Detailed Characteristics, Louisiana (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1952).

<sup>37</sup>N.O. Annual Report, 1911-1912, 1913-1914.

<sup>38</sup>OPSB Minutes, 13 April 1916, 19 June 1916.

<sup>39</sup>OPSB Minutes, 1 November 1918, 27 December 1918.

<sup>40</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 19 March 1927, 9 April 1927, 16 April 1927, 23 April 1927.

<sup>41</sup>OPSB Minutes, 26 January 1923.

<sup>42</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 22 February 1930; OPSB Minutes, 12 February 1930.

<sup>43</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 22 February 1930.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 7 February 1931.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Daniel Rosenberg, New Orleans Dockworkers: Labor, and Unionism, 1892-1923 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), pp. 175-184; Jim Stodder and David Wells, "A Short History of New Orleans Dockworkers," Radical America 10 (January-February, 1976): 55.

<sup>48</sup>Times-Picayune, 1 February 1931.

<sup>49</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 26 September 1931.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 3 November 1934.

<sup>51</sup>OPSB Minutes, 16 November 1934, 12 March 1937, 12 May 1939; Louisiana Weekly, 13 August 1938.

<sup>52</sup>OPSB Minutes, 9 October 1936, 13 September 1940.

<sup>53</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 5 March 1927.

<sup>54</sup>OPSB Minutes, 9 March 1900.

<sup>55</sup>OPSB Minutes, 20 April 1900, 9 August 1901, 28 April 1913.

<sup>56</sup>OPSB Minutes, 24 May 1917.

<sup>57</sup>Rules and By-Laws of the Orleans Parish School Board and Rules and Regulations of the Public Schools of the Parish of Orleans, July 1917; Rules and Regulations of the Orleans Parish School Board and the New Orleans Public Schools, 1930, Orleans Parish School Board Collection, Archives and Manuscripts/Special Collections Department, University of New Orleans.

<sup>58</sup>The Course of Study for the Elementary Grades of the Public Schools, 1909, Orleans Parish School Board Collection, Archives and Manuscripts/Special Collections Department, University of New Orleans.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 1916.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 1927.

<sup>61</sup>N.O. Annual Report, 1914-1915.

<sup>62</sup>Minns S. Robertson, Public Education in Louisiana After 1898 (Baton Rouge: Bureau of Educational Materials and Research, 1952), pp. 187-192. Othel Lovell, Jr., "Crucial Issues in Louisiana Public Education as Reflected in Selected Louisiana Newspapers, 1898-1956," (Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1961), pp. 1, 101-105, 122-123, 154.

<sup>63</sup>Bond, Education of the Negro, pp. 114-115; Harlan, Separate and Unequal, pp. 248-269.

<sup>64</sup>N.O. Annual Report, 1910-1911.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 1920-1921.

<sup>66</sup>OPSB Minutes, 13 March 1903.

<sup>67</sup>N.O. Statistical Report(s) 1921-1940.

<sup>68</sup>For a representative sample see, OPSB Minutes for 1 February 1907, 17 April 1911, 11 July 1913, 13 August 1914, 11 May 1923, 22 August 1924, 16 November 1934, and 9 January 1937.

<sup>69</sup>Ullin W. Leavell, Philanthropy in Negro Education (Nashville: Cullon and Ghertrner Co., 1930), pp. 80-82; Bullock, History of Negro Education in the South, pp. 158-159.

<sup>70</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 18 February 1928.

<sup>71</sup>OPSB Minutes, 14 February 1913, 3 June 1913, 12 September 1913.

<sup>72</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 8 May 1926.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 23 April 1927.

<sup>74</sup>OPSB Minutes, 13 January 1928; Louisiana Weekly, 21 January 1928.

<sup>75</sup>OPSB Minutes, 7 August 1928.

<sup>76</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 2 November 1929.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>N.O. Annual Report, 1912-1913.

<sup>79</sup>N.O. Annual Report(s) 1900-1920; N.O. Annual Statistical Report(s) 1921-1940.

<sup>80</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 April 1907, 11 November 1910, 9 November 1916.

<sup>81</sup>OPSB Minutes, 14 November 1913, 28 September 1923, 9 October 1931, 14 October 1938; Louisiana Weekly, 28 October 1933.

<sup>82</sup>OPSB Minutes, 11 March 1915, 27 October 1922.

<sup>83</sup>OPSB Minutes, 13 January 1928, 9 October 1931.

<sup>84</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 2 April 1927.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 9 April 1927.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 16 April 1927.

<sup>87</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 September 1890.

<sup>88</sup>Woodson, Negro Professional Man, pp. 43-48; Anderson, Education of Blacks in the South, pp. 110-114; Bond, Education of the Negro, pp. 264-268; Bullock, History of Negro Education in the South, pp. 183-184.

<sup>89</sup>OPSB Minutes, 29 June 1906.

<sup>90</sup>Advocate, 9 February 1911; N.O. Annual Report, 1903-1904; OPSB Minutes, 14 December 1900, 11 March 1904, 12

August 1904, 9 August 1907, 11 October 1907, 8 July 1910, 12 August 1910, 19 September 1910.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, 11 January 1907, 11 October 1907.

<sup>92</sup>*Advocate*, 9 February 1911; OPSB Minutes, 8 August 1913, 2 August 1915, 14 September 1916.

<sup>93</sup>Banks, "The Education of the Negro in New Orleans," p. 267.

<sup>94</sup>In 1950 teachers accounted for 276 of the 1034 black professionals in the city. U.S. Census of Population: 1950, Detailed Characteristics, Louisiana.

<sup>95</sup>OPSB Minutes, 8 April 1915, 26 April 1915, 13 May 1915, 24 June 1915, 13 January 1916, 25 June 1919.

<sup>96</sup>OPSB Minutes, 28 September 1900.

<sup>97</sup>OPSB Minutes, 27 September 1920.

<sup>98</sup>Bond, Education of the Negro, pp. 267-274.

<sup>99</sup>Bullock, History of Negro Education in the South, p. 216.

<sup>100</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 217.

<sup>101</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 28 August 1937.

<sup>102</sup>Raphael Cassimere, Jr., "Equalizing Teachers' Pay in Louisiana," Integrated Education (July-August, 1977): 5; Mark V. Tushnet, The NAACP's Legal Strategy Against Segregated Education, 1925-1950 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), pp. 97-99; Louisiana Weekly, 8 October 1938.

<sup>103</sup>The Voice, November 1938, copy in Alexander P. Tureaud Papers, Amistad Research Center, New Orleans, Louisiana.

<sup>104</sup>Cassimere, "Equalizing Teachers' Pay," p. 5.

<sup>105</sup>Richard Kluger, Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), pp. 179-181, 197.

<sup>106</sup>Cassimere, "Equalizing Teachers' Pay," p. 5.

<sup>107</sup>Bullock, History of Negro Education in the South, p. 219.

<sup>108</sup>Cassimere, "Equalizing Teachers' Pay," p. 5; Tushnet, NAACP's Legal Strategy, pp. 98-99.

<sup>109</sup>Bond, Education of the Negro, pp. 88-115.

<sup>110</sup>OPSB Minutes, 9 May 1941.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., 17 June 1941.

<sup>112</sup>Alexander P. Tureaud to Thurgood Marshall, 4 September 1941, Tureaud Papers.

<sup>113</sup>Marshall to Tureaud, 8 September 1941, Tureaud Papers.

<sup>115</sup>The Board was also under pressure from non-degree teachers to place their salaries on a par with teachers who had a degree.

<sup>116</sup>Tureaud to Marshall, 14 June 1942, Tureaud Papers.

<sup>117</sup>Marshall to Tureaud, 19 June 1942, Tureaud Papers.

<sup>118</sup>Tureaud to Marshall, 3 July 1942, Tureaud Papers.

<sup>119</sup>Marshall to Tureaud, 6 July 1942, Tureaud Papers.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>OPSE Minutes, 11 September 1942; Cassimere, "Equalizing Teachers' Pay," 6; Tushnet, NAACP's Legal Strategy, p. 98.

<sup>122</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 3 October 1942.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., 4 November 1939.

<sup>124</sup>Alonzo G. Grace, Tomorrow's Citizens: A Study and Program for the Improvement of the New Orleans Public Schools (New Orleans: Citizen's Planning Committee, 1939), p. 53.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., pp. 337-341.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., pp.348-349.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., p. 253.

<sup>131</sup>Samson P. Bordelon, "The New Orleans Public Schools Under the Superintendency of Lionel J. Bourgeois" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi, 1966), 6-7.

<sup>132</sup>With poetic force W.E.B. DuBois at the turn of the century captured the African American's dilemma: "One ever feels his twoness--an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder." W.E.B. DuBois, Souls of Black Folk (New York: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1961), p. 17.

<sup>133</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 11 October 1941.

## NOTES

### V. Education and the Pursuit of the Golden Fleece

<sup>1</sup>Richard Kluger, Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), pp. 136-137.

<sup>2</sup>John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans, 5th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), p. 409.

<sup>3</sup>OPSB Minutes, 16 January 1945.

<sup>4</sup>OPSB Minutes, 9 March 1945, 15 March 1946, 10 May 1946.

<sup>5</sup>Petition dated 3 May 1946 in Box 43, Alexander P. Tureaud Papers, Amistad Research Center, New Orleans, Louisiana.

<sup>6</sup>OPSB to Daniel Byrd, 9 May, 16 June 1946, Byrd to OPSB, 10 July, 15 August 1946, Tureaud Papers.

<sup>7</sup>Samson P. Bordelon, "The New Orleans Public Schools Under the Superintendency of Lionel John Bourgeois" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi, 1966), pp. 7, 89-95, 236.

<sup>8</sup>Bourgeois to Tureaud, 30 September 1947, Tureaud Papers.

<sup>9</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 December 1947.

<sup>10</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 March 1948, 7 June 1948.

<sup>11</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 March 1948.

<sup>12</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 March 1948.

<sup>13</sup>Bordelon, "Superintendency of Lionel J. Bourgeois," pp. 94-95, 156-157; OPSB Minutes, 12 March 1948, 18 March 1948.

<sup>14</sup>OPSB Minutes, 21 May 1948, 7 June 1948, 11 June 1948.

<sup>15</sup>New Orleans Louisiana Weekly, 15 May 1948

<sup>16</sup>Mark V. Tushnet, The NAACP's Legal Strategy Against Segregated Education, 1925-1950 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), pp. 108-109.

<sup>17</sup>For example, the president of the Colored Educational Alliance, Dr. Percy P. Cruzot, informed the Board on one occasion that his petition for improvements under a segregated system did not indicate a lack of support for the NAACP's commitment to desegregation, but a recognition that "immediate relief was needed." OPSB Minutes, 12 November 1951.

<sup>18</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 August 1949.

<sup>19</sup>Byrd to Bourgeois, 21 April 1948, Tureaud Papers.

<sup>20</sup>Daniel E. Byrd Papers, Box 1, Folders 1 and 2, Amistad Research Center, New Orleans, Louisiana.

<sup>21</sup>Byrd to Tureaud, 6 October 1947, Tureaud Papers.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Byrd to Tureaud, 24 April 1948.

<sup>24</sup>Bourgeois to Byrd, 23 April 1948, Tureaud Papers.

<sup>25</sup>Byrd to Bourgeois, 26 April 1948, Tureaud Papers.

<sup>26</sup>Tureaud to OPSB, 20 May 1948, Tureaud Papers.

<sup>27</sup>OPSB Minutes, 21 May 1948.

<sup>28</sup>OPSB Minutes, 7 June 1948, 11 June 1948.

<sup>29</sup>Proposed Program for the Improvement of the Public Schools of New Orleans, 1948, Orleans Parish School Board Collection, Archives and Manuscripts/Special Collections Department, University of New Orleans.

<sup>30</sup>Mary Lee Muller, "The Orleans Parish School Board and Negro Education, 1940-1960" (M.A. thesis, University of New Orleans, 1975), pp. 18-19.

<sup>31</sup>OPSB Minutes, 14 July 1949, 17 October 1949.

<sup>32</sup>Muller, "OPSB and Negro Education," p.20.

<sup>33</sup>Muller, "OPSB and Negro Education," pp. 21-22; OPSB Minutes, 30 November 1948.

<sup>34</sup>OPSB Minutes, 14 July 1948.



<sup>35</sup>Bordelon, "Superintendency of Lionel J. Borgeois," p. 57

<sup>36</sup>OPSB Minutes, 21 December 1951.

<sup>37</sup>Bordelon, "Superintendency of Lionel J. Bourgeois," pp.194-241.

<sup>38</sup>Byrd to Thurgood Marshall, 12 September 1951, Byrd Papers.

<sup>39</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 November 1951.

<sup>40</sup>Board resolution, dated 26 November 1951 in Box 43 Tureaud Papers.

<sup>41</sup>Tureaud to Marshall, 13 November 1951, Tureaud Papers.

<sup>42</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 September 1952.

<sup>43</sup>Tushnet, NAACP's Legal Strategy, pp. 138-143; Kluger, Simple Justice, p.540.

<sup>44</sup>Kluger, Simple Justice, p. 540.

<sup>45</sup>Byrd to Robert Richmond, 16 December 1953, Byrd Papers

<sup>46</sup>Quoted in Kluger, Simple Justice, p.782.

<sup>47</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 22 May 1954.

<sup>48</sup>Numan V. Bartley, The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South During the 1950's (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), pp.97-103.

<sup>49</sup>New Orleans Times Picayune, 20 May 1954.

<sup>50</sup>Times Picayune, 21 May 1954.

<sup>51</sup>Times Picayune, 25 May 1954.

<sup>52</sup>Louisiana, Acts of the State Legislature, Regular Session, 1954, Acts 555, 556.

<sup>53</sup>Nashville Southern School News, 1 December 1954.

<sup>54</sup>Southern School News, 1 December 1954.

<sup>55</sup>OPSB Minutes, 31 May 1954.

<sup>56</sup>Southern School News, 1 December 1954.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 8 June 1955.

<sup>58</sup>A copy of the "Declaration" can be found in Box 1, Byrd Papers; Times Picayune, 24 May 1954.

<sup>59</sup>Southern School News, 4 November 1954, 1 December 1954.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 6 July 1955.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., September 1955, October 1955, November 1955, December 1955.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 6 July, August, September 1955.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., January 1956.

<sup>64</sup>Earl Benjamin Bush et. al. v. Orleans Parish School Board et. al., 138 Federal Supplement, p. 336.

<sup>65</sup>Bush v. OPSB, 138 Federal Supplement, pp. 341-342.

<sup>66</sup>Southern School News, March 1956.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., June 1956.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Quoted in Bartley, The Rise of Massive Resistance, pp.144-145.

<sup>70</sup>Earlean Mary McCarrick, "Louisiana's Official Resistance To Segregation" (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1964), pp.26-44, 105-131.

<sup>71</sup>Neil McMillen, The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954-64 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), pp. 59, 64, 67.

<sup>72</sup>OPSB Minutes 26 September 1955.

<sup>73</sup>Southern School News, April 1956.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., June 1956.

<sup>75</sup>McMillen, The Citizens' Council, p.66.

<sup>76</sup>Southern School News, 4 November 1954.

<sup>77</sup>During the same discussion Long added: "As for the Citizens' Councils, I guess they are all right, but they've got a lot of hotheads, too." Southern School News, June 1956.

<sup>78</sup>Southern School News, May 1956.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., June 1956, November 1956, December 1956.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., January 1957.

<sup>81</sup>Roy Wilkens to Doretha A. Combre, 15 February 1960, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, New Orleans Branch Collection, Archives and Manuscripts/Special Collections Department, University of New Orleans, hereinafter cited as NAACP Papers.

<sup>82</sup>Southern School News, April 1956.

<sup>83</sup>OPSB Minutes, 12 September 1955, 26 September 1955.

<sup>84</sup>Southern School News, September 1955.

<sup>85</sup>In 1947 the members voted to change the name from the Louisiana Colored Teachers' Association to the Louisiana Education Association. LCTA dated back to 1901. See, Ernest J. Middleton, History of the Louisiana Education Association (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1984), pp.46, 53-56, 82.

<sup>86</sup>Marshall to Byrd, 20 December 1954, Byrd Papers.

<sup>87</sup>Middleton, History of the LEA, pp.53, 89.

<sup>88</sup>Byrd to Marshall, 24 September 1953, Byrd Papers.

<sup>89</sup>Middleton, History of the LEA, pp. 89-99.

<sup>90</sup>Southern School News, July 1959.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., August 1959.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., September 1959.

<sup>94</sup>William G. McCall, "School Desegregation in Louisiana: An Analysis of the Constitutional Issues" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Tennessee, 1973), p. 56; Southern School News, May 1960.

<sup>95</sup>Southern School News, May 1960.

<sup>96</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 7 May 1960, 14 May 1960.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>OPSB Minutes, 24 May 1960.

<sup>99</sup>OPSB Minutes, 20 June 1960.

<sup>100</sup>NAACP Papers, Box 70.

<sup>101</sup>See, for example, Allison Chapital to Reverend E. B. Scott, 20 June 1960, Chapital to Reverend Morris Burrell, 21 June 1960, and Chapital to Reverend J. J. Carter, 21 June 1960, NAACP Papers.

<sup>102</sup>Morton Inger, Politics and Reality in an American City: The New Orleans School Crisis of 1960 (New York: Center for Urban Education, 1969), pp. 22-30; McCarrick, "Official Resistance to Desegregation," pp. 125-126.

<sup>103</sup>Inger, Politics and Reality, pp. 29-30; Times Picayune, 5 August 1960; Southern School News, July 1960.

<sup>104</sup>The New Orleans School Crisis, Report of the Louisiana State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights (Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 6.

<sup>105</sup>Southern School News, August 1959.

<sup>106</sup>OPSB Minutes, 20 June 1960; Southern School News, July 1960.

<sup>107</sup>The Catholic schools were not desegregated until 1962. For a less flattering portrait of Rummel see Inger, Politics and Reality, pp. 22-24.

<sup>108</sup>Times Picayune, 18, 21, 26 August 1960.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 28 August 1960.

<sup>110</sup>OPSB Minutes, 29 August 1960.

<sup>111</sup>Times Picayune, 29 August 1960.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

<sup>113</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 3 September 1960.

<sup>114</sup>Southern School News, August 1960; OPSB Minutes, 24 October 1960, 10 November 1960.

<sup>115</sup>OPSB Minutes, 10 November 1960.

<sup>116</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 5 November 1960; OPSB Minutes, 10 November 1960.

<sup>117</sup>Alan Wieder, "The New Orleans School Crisis of 1960: Causes and Consequences," Phylon 48 (June 1987): 129; Louisiana Weekly, 5 November 1960.

<sup>118</sup>Times Picayune, 15 November 1960; Louisiana Weekly, 19 November 1960.

<sup>119</sup>Times Picayune, 15 November 1960.

<sup>120</sup>Louisiana Weekly, 19, 26, November 1960; Times Picayune, 16, 18, 19, November 1960.

<sup>121</sup>Southern School News, December 1960.

<sup>122</sup>Responses are filed in Box 71, NAACP Papers.

<sup>123</sup>Hartman to Chapital, 17, 18 November 1960, NAACP Papers. 124. New Orleans, Louisiana, Superintendent's Annual Report(s) New Orleans Public Schools, 1957-1958, 1958-1959, 1959-1960, Archives and Manuscripts/Special Collections Department, University of New Orleans.

<sup>125</sup>New Orleans, Annual Report of the Orleans Parish School Board and of the Superintendent of Schools, 1961-1962; Annual Report of the New Orleans Public Schools, 1962-1963, 1963-1964; Triennial Report of the New Orleans Public Schools, 1965-1968, Orleans Parish School Board Collection, Archives and Manuscripts/Special Collections Department, University of New Orleans.

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## DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

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Major Field: History

Title of Dissertation: Race Relations and Community Development: The  
Education of Blacks in New Orleans, 1862-1960

Approved:

Aaines M. Foster

Major Professor and Chairman

F. Glen Kemberly

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