THE GARDEN OF OPPORTUNITY: BLACK WOMEN INTELLECTUALS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY IN NEW JERSEY, 1912-1949

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ABSTRACT

The Garden of Opportunity:
Black Women Intellectuals and the Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey, 1912-1949

Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation by

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This dissertation examines the history of the Civil Rights Movement through a study of the social activism and ideas advanced by black women intellectuals in New Jersey from 1912 to1949. By analyzing the historical importance of black women in the early Civil Rights Movement, I illuminate the significance of black women in the broader history of the black freedom struggle. My dissertation presents a challenge to the existing scholarship about the Civil Rights Movement on multiple levels in terms of chronology, geography, and methodology. Historian Jacqueline Dowd Hall, in a significant 2005 article on the black freedom struggle that appeared in *Journal of American History*, adopted what has come to be known as the "long movement" approach to the study of the Civil Rights Movement. This approach contends that the Civil Rights Movement began before 1954. My study affirms this perspective by focusing on the early movement in a northern state. Much of the literature on the Civil Rights Movement suggests that it was primarily a southern movement directed by middle-class men associated with the black church. By considering the activism and ideas of women such as Florence Spearing Randolph, Anna Arnold Hedgeman, and Marion Thompson Wright, my dissertation constitutes a necessary intervention in the history of the long Civil Rights Movement. In

this study, I utilize gender analysis (intersectionality) as both a method and a theory to discuss how and why black women advanced an intersectional approach to empowerment that eventually garnered significant gains in civil rights at the state constitutional level in New Jersey that became a platform for extending the movement across the nation by the mid-twentieth century.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a historical study that primarily focuses on black women intellectuals and the early Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey between 1912 and 1949. Specifically, I discuss the critical role played by black women intellectuals in forging interracial, cross-class, and cross-gender alliances at the local level and in securing the passage of progressive civil rights legislation in the Garden State. This analysis is largely defined by a central question: How and why did New Jersey's black leaders, community members, and women in particular affect major civil rights legislation, legal equality, and integration a decade before the *Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas* decision in 1954? The history of the early black freedom struggle in New Jersey reveals that the history of the long Civil Rights Movement in the North began in the Garden State, and black women intellectuals were at the center of this struggle.

I accomplish this largely through a discussion of the lives of women such as Mary Allen, Alice H. Foster, Anna Arnold Hedgeman, Bessie Marsh, Florence Spearing Randolph, Hortense Ridley Tate, Marion Thompson Wright, and Sara Spencer Washington, many of whom had some association with the state (and particularly in communities such as Montclair) from 1912 to 1949. A discussion of these women including their organizing activities, strategies for black empowerment, and ideas concerning civil rights more generally forms the basis of this analysis.

These women significantly shaped the development of the Civil Rights Movement in the North. Tate, Allen, and Marsh were among the women who transformed Montclair from a segregated northern locale into an integrated "progressive" multiracial suburb by

mid-century. Patricia Hampson Eget has argued that women were the "dominant force for social and political change" in Montclair during the Interwar Era.[1] Randolph, Hedgeman, and Wright, although active in northern New Jersey as well, played pivotal roles in the national black freedom struggle during the early decades of the twentieth century. Spencer Washington created a boardwalk empire in Atlantic City while moving between various associations connected to the black freedom struggle.

My core argument is that black women intellectuals in New Jersey served as a key vanguard of the long Civil Rights Movement in the North. These women played a critical role in defining the ideas that determined the direction of the national agenda for Civil Rights reform by successfully navigating race, gender, and class differences within and between local and national associations. This was accomplished in a New Jersey context that ultimately became a model for the state and nation after operatives from the NAACP national office took greater notice of the achievements that were taking place in the Garden State before 1954. Horace Mann asked Marion Thompson Wright to join the Brown team as a researcher as her work was also used in the only twentieth-century legal precedent concerning school segregation at the state level in the significant case of *Hedgepeth-Williams vs. Trenton Board of Education*, 1944.[2] Communities such as

[1] Patricia Hampson Eget, "Envisioning Progressive Communities: Race, Gender, and the Politics of Liberalism," Berkeley, California and Montclair, New Jersey, 1920-1970" (Rutgers University Dissertation, New Brunswick, NJ: 2011), 4.

[2] Margaret Smith Crocco, Petra Monro, and Kathleen Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance: Women Educator Activists, 1880-1960*, (New York: Teacher's College Press, 1999), 72. Horace Mann Bond asked Wright to join the *Brown* legal team in 1953 to help in the historical research for litigation working with other historians such as John Hope Franklin and C. Vann Woodward as well as Mabel Smythe of the NAACP's Legal Defense and Education Fund. For more on Hedgepeth-Williams, see also Marcellus D. Smith, Jr. "The Importance of *Hedgepeth and Williams v. Board of Education, Trenton*," February 27, 2009 accessed April 7, 2007, found at https://web.archive.org/web/20090503125107/http:// www.trenton.k12.nj.us/hwday.htm

Montclair became unique among interracial communities by mid-century in the nation as a whole.

Prior to 1954, black intellectuals (many of whom were women) in New Jersey laid the ideological groundwork for the national campaign to advance the civil rights of African Americans. New Jersey's African American intellectuals such as Marion Thompson Wright, Hortense Ridley Tate, Mary Allen, Bessie Marsh, Otto Hill, Ernest Thompson, and Robert Queen played a pivotal role in defining what would eventually become a mass movement for black equality in America highlighted by the emergence of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955. In other words, members of the uniquely positioned black professional class in New Jersey during this time forged the ideological foundations of the mass nationwide campaign for black equality.

My thesis challenges the more traditional view that southern states such as Mississippi were the proving ground for civil rights reform.[3] It supports the newer emerging view that northern states such as New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania led the way in the struggle for black equality, in the nation, in a long movement that extends

[3] Most of the scholarship concerning the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) before 2005 has involved scholars writing about the CRM as a southern movement led by middle-class ministerial men or texts about movement men more generally. The movement in this literature is understood largely within the framework of a Memphis-to-Montgomery narrative from 1954 to 1968. The more significant of these texts includes *Let the Trumpet Sound: A Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982) by Stephen B. Oates, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: William and Morrow and Company, 1987) by David Garrow, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987) by Adam Fairclough, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) by Charles Payne, and Timothy B. Tyson's *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). The publication of Jacqueline Dowd Hall's article "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (March 2005): 1233-1263 changed the trajectory of CRM studies and has broadened the chronological and geographic framework of the movement.

beyond the traditional story of these events.[4] The ideas, activities, and achievements of black activists in the Garden State became the basis for the development of a nationwide strategy to end segregation. My contention is that the Garden State was a leader in civil rights reform in the North, and black women activists in New Jersey led the way to civil rights reform nationwide before 1954.

My thesis flows from a two-part premise: (1) the civil rights activities of the black community in New Jersey reflected similar patterns as in other northern states at the time, such as New York, but (2) New Jersey's black professional class was uniquely positioned to exact changes at the local and state constitutional level that were far greater than the reforms gained in any other state in this era. In other words, black intellectuals in New Jersey constituted a distinctly positioned local vanguard of civil rights reform from the Progressive Era to the emergence of the mass movement for civil rights in the mid-1950s.

New Jersey was able to achieve a higher level of legislative success for civil rights reform than any other state during the immediate post-WWII Era. The success of black activists in New Jersey is illustrated by the historic legislative achievements in civil rights implemented in the Garden State between 1912 and 1949. In this dissertation, I examine the ideas and activities of black intellectuals who helped secure the enactment of civil rights precedents at the legislative level. These legislative measures became critical in defining the black freedom struggle both at the local and national levels.

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[4] See Martha Biondi's *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003) for an argument about New York and *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006) by Matthew Countrymen for an argument about Pennsylvania. Two of the more important standard histories of the CRM in the state of Mississippi are *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1994) by John Dittmer and *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) by Charles Payne.

The Garden State's early civil rights legislation was fundamental to the development of national civil rights ideologies/strategies orchestrated by African Americans in the first five decades of the twentieth century.[5] Wright's doctoral dissertation on the history of African Americans and education in New Jersey published in 1941 by Columbia University served as the basis for the historical research advanced in litigation as a part of the legal argument used against school segregation in the Garden State and nationwide.[6] In 1944, the New Jersey Supreme Court declared that "it is illegal to deny any student" access to any public school on the basis of race in *Hedgepeth-Williams v. Trenton Board of Education*.[7] A decade later, NAACP lawyers cited the *Hedgepeth-Williams* case as precedent in their legal brief for *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954.[8] This was the first legal precedent in any state during the twentieth century to explicitly call for an end to the practice of school segregation before the *Brown* decision. In 1948, the New Jersey state legislature also enacted laws to protect the jobs of black school teachers by forbidding the dismissal of any teacher on the basis of race.[9] The number of black teachers in the state subsequently increased nearly 75 percent by 1954.[10]

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[5] Davison M. Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North: The Battle over Northern School Segregation, 1865-1954* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 243-244.

[6] Margaret Smith Crocco, Petra Munro, and Kathleen Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance: Women Educator Activists, 1880-1960* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999), 72.

[7] Jack Washington, *The Quest for Equality: Trenton's Black Community, 1890-1965* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 1993), 9-10. See also Jon Blackwell, "1943: School Spirit," *The Trentonian* www.capitalcentury.com accessed April 7, 2017, found at www.capitalcentury.com/1943.html, and T. Napoleon Smith, "A Brief History of the Hedgepeth and Williams Decision," www.trenton.k12.nj accessed April 7, 2017, found at www.trenton.k12.nj.us/downloads/hedgepeth_and_Williams_v_Board_of_Education.pdf

[8] Margaret Smith Crocco, Petra Munro, and Kathleen Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance: Women Educator Activists*, 71-72.

[9] Davison M. Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North*, 242.

[10] Ibid.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) used New Jersey as a testing ground to gain support from black professionals in the campaign for desegregation in the Garden State and beyond.[11] Robert Queen, a local Trenton attorney and member of the NAACP who served as the lawyer for Hedgepeth and Williams,[12] was subsequently able to generate greater interest in civil rights issues in the Garden State in the statewide branch of the organization.[13] Wright, an expert on the subject of school segregation, took interest in the case as well.[14] She too was a member of the New Jersey NAACP.[15] Following Queen's success, field secretaries from the national office were soon dispatched to the state. School desegregation was also related to the fight for more comprehensive legislation supporting fair employment.[16]

In 1945, New York and New Jersey became the first two states to pass fair employment practices (FEP) laws.[17] Subsequently, the Garden State also created an enforcement agency and revised its state Constitution.[18] The passage of these laws in New Jersey, following the passage of fair employment measures in defense industries

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Jack Washington, *The Quest for Equality: Trenton's Black Community: 1890-1965* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1993), 110-111.

[13] Ibid., 110-111; 112-113.

[14] Crocco, Munro, and Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*, 72.

[15] Ibid., 69.

[16] Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North*, 241.

[17] Anthony S. Chen, "Republican Elites, Employer Mobilization, and the Politics of State Fair Employment Practices Legislation in the North, 1945-1964," *Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan Working Paper No. 04-004* July 2004, Access Date: March 2, 2014, www.fordschool.umich.edu, found at http://www.fordschool.umich.edu/research/papers/PDFfiles/04-004.pdf

[18] Crocco, Munro, and Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*, 71.

during the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941, occurred nearly two decades before Federal legislation was secured to prohibit discrimination in employment practices on the basis of race. Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island passed similar laws within a few years, but New Jersey's more pronounced enforcement procedures were not replicated in most of the more than twenty states that advanced such statutes before a federal law was enacted.[19] New Jersey's Fair Employment Practices Act (FEPA) of 1945 prohibited racial discrimination in employment, and the Division Against Discrimination was created to enforce the act. This was one of the first state agencies developed to ensure the end of racial and ethnic discrimination in the workplace.[20] Governor Alfred Driscoll took aggressive action by ordering the Division Against Discrimination to cut off funding to school districts that continued to engage in blatant segregation.[21] An Urban Colored Population Commission (1941-1945) was created in New Jersey to investigate racial discrimination and the cause of racial tension in the state at the urging of black activists.[22] This Commission was created long before the Kerner Commission organized in 1967 by President Lyndon B. Johnson in response to the urban rebellions that were taking place across the nation. In 1947, New Jersey's

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[19] Anthony S. Chen, "Republican Elites, Employer Mobilization, and the Politics of State Fair Employment Practices Legislation in the North, 1945-1964," *Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan Working Paper No. 04-004* July 2004, Access Date: March 2, 2014, www.fordschool.umich.edu, found at http://www.fordschool.umich.edu/research/papers/PDFfiles/04-004.pdf

[20] Crocco, Munro, and Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*, 71.

[21] Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North*, 242.

[22] Urban Colored Population Commission, "Discrimination in Public Places and the Civil Rights Laws of New Jersey: Fourth Annual Report," Urban Colored Population Commission Papers, New Jersey State Library, Trenton, New Jersey, accessed April 11, 2017 found at http://dspace.njstatelib.org:8080/xmlui/handle/10929/40439

third state Constitution included an equal rights clause, outlawed school segregation, and required the integration of the state National Guard.[23]

This analysis addresses the concerns about periodization, locality, and continuity in the black freedom struggle advanced by critics[24] of the long movement approach through the guise of an interactive approach that recognizes local agency as coupled with the larger national agenda of the black freedom struggle. New Jersey is used as a case study that reveals the salience of local agency (in northern states) and the importance of a national movement directed by more recognizable figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr. It was the efforts of local people in this northern state through both community and national organizations working in conjunction with a broader national initiative that made the black freedom struggle possible; however, in many instances, local initiatives shaped the strategic foundation of resistance that became the basis for a larger national civil rights agenda.

Scholars of black women's lives, including Darlene Clark Hine, Deborah Gray White, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Paula Giddings, Hazel Carby, and Bettye Collier-Thomas, among others, have emphasized black women's intersectional approach to empowerment.[25] These researchers have primarily discussed the era of enslavement,

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[23] New Jersey State Legislature, "1947 State Constitution," www.nj.gov, New Jersey State Archives, accessed April 7, 2017, found at http://www.nj.gov/state/archives/pdf/const47.pdf

[24] See "The Long Movement as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," by Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang in *The Journal of African American History* 92, no. 2 (Spring 2007) pp. 265-288 for the most scathing critique of the long movement approach related to issues of periodization, locality, and continuity.

[25] Darlene Clark Hine is one of the chief architects of black women's history as illustrated in countless journal articles, book chapters, monographs and significant edited volumes, such as *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women's History* (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1995) and *Hine Sight: Black Women and the Re-Construction of American History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997). Deborah Gray White is one of the first historians of women's history to adopt an intersectional approach to the study of black women's lives in her important text *Ar'n't I a*

black club women, religion, and black literary women. In her text *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Routledge,1991), sociologist Patricia Hill Collins combines Afrocentric philosophy, feminist theory, the sociology of knowledge, and critical theory to trace the theoretical underpinnings of black feminist thought from the nineteenth to the twentieth century.[26] Collins argues that Maria Stewart, as the first American woman to lecture in public to an interracial audience of women and men in 1831, was also the first black feminist to "champion the utility of black women's relationships to one another" while at the same time defining the major themes in black feminist thought more generally.[27] Historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham in her text *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Harvard University Press, 1993), argues that black Baptist

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Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985), and this text was later followed by her significant book on the study of black women's thought and social organizations *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999) that also highlights the intersectional approach to understanding black women's lives in historical studies. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, in "African American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2 (Winter 1992): 251-274, interrogates the importance of race and gender in the discussion of black women's lives, thereby advancing the critical necessity of intersectionality, as does her 1999 text *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church*, 1880-1920 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 2-3; 139. *In Search of Sisterhood: Delta Sigma Theta and the Challenge of the Black Sorority Movement* (New York: William Morrow, 1988) by Paula Giddings is one of the first scholarly analyses of black women's sororities. *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the African American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) by Hazel Carby is one of the first scholarly texts on the history of black women novelists, and *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice: African American Women and Religion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011) by Bettye Collier-Thomas is an expansive survey of black women's Christian activism that builds on the work of Higginbotham.

[26] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 1991), xii.

[27] Ibid., 4.

women forged a feminist theology defined by an "aggressive womanhood that felt personal responsibility to labor no less for men, for the salvation of the world."[28]

There are several important texts on black women's intellectual history, but most—such as *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black women on Race and Sex in America* (William Morrow and Company, 1984) by Paula Giddings, Hazel Carby's *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (Oxford University Press, 1987), and *Black Women Abolitionists: A Study of Activism, 1828-1860* (University of Tennessee Press, 1992) by Shirley J. Yee—concentrate on black women in the nineteenth century.[29] The more recent texts on Ida B. Wells include Linda O. McMurry's *To Keep the Waters Troubled: The Life of Ida B. Wells* (Oxford University Press, 2000), *Ida: A Sword Among Lions, Ida B. Wells and the Campaign Against Lynching* (Harper, 2008) by Paula Giddings, *They Say: Ida B. Wells and the Reconstruction of Race* (Oxford University Press, 2008) by James West Davidson, and *To Tell the Truth Freely: The Life of Ida B. Wells* (Hill and Wang, 2009) by Mia Bay, and do include some analysis of the twentieth century; however, very few texts on black women intellectuals focus on the Interwar Era.[30]

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[28] Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 139.

[29] *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (William and Morrow Company, 1984) by Paula Giddings traces the history of black women's activism and thought from the early Colonial Era to the twentieth century. *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) by Hazel V. Carby focuses on the rise of black women novelists such as Frances E. W. Harper in the nineteenth century. *Black Woman Abolitionists: Study in Activism, 1828-1860* by Shirley Yee (Nashville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992) is one of the first monographs on the history of black women abolitionists in US history with a focus on the nineteenth century.

[30] There has been important and necessary work on the life and activism of Ida B. Wells that focuses on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including *To Keep the Waters Troubled: The Life of Ida B. Wells* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) by Linda O. McMurray, *Ida: A Sword Among Lions: Ida B. Wells and the Campaign Against Lynching* (New York: Harper, 2008) by Paula Giddings, *They*

Jesus, Jobs, and Justice: African American Women and Religion (Alfred A. Knopf, 2010) by historian Bettye Collier-Thomas is one of the more comprehensive studies produced by a historian on black women and religion that also includes an expansive analysis of the Interwar Era.[31] Collier-Thomas builds upon Collins' work concerning the self-defined feminist standpoint of black women, and more specifically Higginbotham, to contend that black women's broadly defined feminism "did not exclude racial issues" and that black women "recognized that in black America women's status was often defined by sex, necessitating an internal struggle for their rights as women."[32]

There is now an expansive body of scholarly literature on black feminism, black women in the black church, and the black women's club movement that documents the history of black women's intersectional approach to empowerment such as with Deborah Gray White's *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1999) and Jualynne E. Dodson's survey on black church women in the AME Church entitled *Engendering Church: Women, Power, and the AME Church* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).[33] In her text *How Long, How Long? African American*

Say: Ida B. Wells and the Reconstruction of Race (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) by James W. Davidson, and *To Tell the Truth Freely: The Life of Ida B. Wells* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010) by Mia Bay. These scholarly analyses situate Wells within the pantheon of black leadership at the turn of the century, suggesting that her leadership rivaled that of men such as Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois.

[31] Bettye Collier-Thomas, "Prologue," in *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice: African American Women and Religion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), xvi-xxxiv.

[32] Bettye Collier-Thomas, *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice*, 121.

[33] *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999) by Deborah Gray White is considered a definitive survey history of black women's thought and leadership from the late nineteenth to the late twentieth century. In this text, White assiduously traces the history of five major organizations that were dominated by black women, including the National Association of Colored Women, National Council of Negro Women, Ladies Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, National Welfare Rights Organization, and National Black Feminist Organization, detailing how black women attempted to put "the variables" of identity such as race, gender, and class in "reasonable order" (18) and maintain a "workable balance"

Women and the Struggle for Freedom and Justice (Oxford University Press, 2000), Belinda Robnett advances the innovative theory of "bridge builder" by contending that black women such as Fannie Lou Hamer functioned as key bridging figures in the development of black activism through both local and national organizations across class and gender lines.[34] Eric McDuffie in his text on the intellectual history of black women in the Communist Party entitled *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Duke University Press, 2011), identifies a black left feminism among black women activists in the twentieth century.[35] My work continues in this tradition by arguing that black women indeed embraced an intersectional approach to empowerment by forging alliances across race, class, and gender lines to successfully help develop the Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey, primarily during the Interwar Era. Further, the intersectional approach to empowerment as evidenced in black women's thought was most successfully applied during the early Civil Rights Movement in the Garden State.

This history of black women intellectuals as told from a largely suburban context, with a broad emphasis on the Interwar Era, is an important intervention in twentieth-century US history on multiple levels. First, there are few texts on black women

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(17) by deploying an intersectional approach to human liberation. *Engendering Church: Women, Power, and the AME Church* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, Inc., 2002) by Jualynne E. Dodson is a history of black women's activism in the AME church and how churchwomen's activism influenced civil rights reform in US society.

[34] Belinda Robnett, *How Long, How Long? African American Women and the Struggle for Freedom and Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 8. Robnett tells the story of the struggle for black equality from a womanist/feminist standpoint, "reconceptualizing" the role of key local black women activists by defining these women as pivotal "bridge builders" and "grassroots leaders" (8).

[35] Erik S. McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 4. McDuffie, in this history of black women in the US Communist Party, demonstrates how black women Communists advanced a "black left feminism" (4) before the intersectional approach to black empowerment was popularized by black feminists in the 1970s.

intellectuals in US history, and the vast majority tend to focus on nineteenth- and twentieth-century figures such as Frances E. W. Harper, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells or Ella Baker. The intellectual biographies on black women in the twentieth-century Civil Rights Movement tend to concentrate on national figures such as Rosa Parks or Ella Baker. To date, there is only one book-length study on Hedgeman, Jennifer Scanlon's *Until There is Justice: The Life of Anna Arnold Hedgeman* (Oxford University Press, 2016), despite the fact that she was a prolific writer and public intellectual.[36] Hedgeman wrote extensively about civil rights as a public intellectual and was one of the more pivotal national figures in the twentieth-century black freedom struggle as the only woman to serve on the national committee to organize the March on Washington in 1963.[37] There is also not a single text on Wright (about four scholarly articles, that this author is aware of, mention Wright),[38] who was the first professionally trained black woman historian in the US and a major architect of the national NAACP campaign to

[36] Jennifer Scanlon's *Until There is Justice: The Life of Anna Arnold Hedgeman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016) is the definitive biography of Hedgeman. Scanlon identifies Hedgeman in this text as a key figure in the northern and national black freedom struggle (pp. 2-3).

[37] Ibid., 2.

[38] For articles on Wright, see Margaret E. Hayes and Doris B. Armstrong, "Marion Manola Thompson Wright," in *Past and Promise: Lives of New Jersey Women*, edited by Joan N. Burstyn et al., (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997), pp. 435-437, "Mary Ritter Beard and Marion Thompson Wright: Shaping Inclusive Social Education" by Margaret Smith Crocco in *Theory and Research in Social Education*, Winter 1997, 25, no. 1 (1997), pp. 9-33, Hilton Kelly's, "Toward a Critical Race Biography of Marion Thompson Wright," *Vitae Scholasticae* 30, no. 2 (2013): 49, and "Black Women Historians from the Late 19th Century to the Dawning of the Civil Rights Movement," in *Journal of African American History*, Summer 2004, 89, no. 3, pp. 241-261 by Pero Gaglo Dagbovie, which only includes a discussion of Wright as a part of a larger analysis of black women historians. Thus, there are two scholarly articles on Wright—one encyclopedic entry in the text on New Jersey women and some discussion in the Dagbovie article. There is no known book-length biography of Wright to date. *Pedagogies of Resistance: Women Educator Activists, 1880-1960* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1999) by Margaret Smith Crocco, however, does include a sustained discussion of Wright in a section of Chapter 3 of her analysis.

desegregate public schools.[39] Randolph was a towering figure in women's liberation and the black freedom struggle; but, again, only one book-length project includes a sustained discussion of her activism.[40] Second, social historians have dominated the field of civil rights history since the 1960s though the intellectual biographies that exist have focused primarily on ministerial men such as Martin Luther King, Jr., James Farmer or the ideas advanced by national associations such as the NAACP, CORE, and SCLC. Further, scholarly interpretations of the history of the Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey have been dominated by social histories largely about urban rebellion in the 1960s as opposed to sustained discussions of the Interwar Era.[41]

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[39] Crocco, Munro, and Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*,72-73.

[40] The first monograph to devote a significant portion to a discussion of Florence Spearing Randolph is *Black Women's Christian Activism: Seeking Social Justice in a Northern Suburb* (New York: New York University Press, 2016) by Betty Livingston Adams, which is a community study of Summit, New Jersey that concentrates on the activism of Violet Johnson and Florence Spearing Randolph. This work is largely a social history that details the processes of suburbanization and the role of religious activism among black women in a northern suburb and how these women influenced civil rights reform in the first four decades of the twentieth century. Bettye Collier-Thomas is considered by many to be the chief biographer of Florence Spearing Randolph as illustrated by her writings, including a book chapter "Minister and Feminist Reformer: The Life of Florence Spearing Randolph, pp. 177-185 in *This Far by Faith: Readings in African American Women's Religious Biography* (New York: Routledge, 1996) edited by Judith Weisenfeld. Collier-Thomas is also the editor of *Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and Their Sermons, 1850-1979* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), a collection of sermons by black women preachers that includes nearly a dozen sermons authored by Randolph. "Florence Spearing Randolph: Holiness Preacher and Social Reformer," *Charisma Magazine*, April 7, 2017, is also authored by Collier-Thomas www.charismamag.org accessed April 7, 2017, found at http://www.charismamag.com/ site-archives/24-uncategorised/9848-florence-spearing-randolph.

[41] There are some notable studies of twentieth-century New Jersey history that include sustained discussions of the black experience. Among these texts are *A Social History of Economic Decline: Business, Politics, and Work in Trenton* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989) by John T. Cumbler, *Camden After the Fall: Decline and Renewal in a Post-Industrial City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005) by Howard Gillette, *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007) by Kevin Mumford, and Walter Greason's more recent *Suburban Erasure: How the Suburbs Ended the Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 2013). These social histories focus primarily on poverty, economic decline, riots, white flight and suburbanization.

There is a long[42] and short narrative of the Civil Rights Movement in US history. The general public is more familiar with the short story of the Civil Rights Movement in the South as opposed to the history of the long movement that includes a discussion of the struggle for black equality in both the North and South. The short narrative encompasses several topics: *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954, the mass public protests that followed, the passage of key civil rights legislation during the 1960s, and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968.[43] In contrast, the history of the long movement begins before the *Brown* decision, and continues after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Historians such as Jeanne Theoharis, Komozi Woodward, Jacqueline Dowd Hall, Matthew Countrymen, and Robert Self have abandoned the notion of a "short civil rights movement."[44] These scholars reject the popular retelling of events and embrace the view

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[42] Jacqueline Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (March 2005), 1235. The phrase "Long Civil Rights Movement," coined by Hall in this essay, has since become the basis of an expansive large-scale collaborative digitization initiative between the University of North Carolina Press, the Southern Oral History Program, the Center for Civil Rights in the University of North Carolina School of Law, and the University of North Carolina Library called "The Long Civil Rights Movement Project", which is helping to popularize the long movement approach. This massive online initiative that seeks to "deepen the traditional understanding of the civil rights struggle as a 1960s era American phenomenon" is likely one of the largest online databases of information related to the Civil Rights Era, with the more than 300 interviews collected by the Southern Oral History Project as a part of this initiative. The endeavor involves the collection of hundreds of interviews, documents, articles, essays, papers, and other materials related to the idea of a long civil rights movement in US history. For the Southern Oral History Project interviews, see http://sohp.org/research/the-long-civil-rights-movement-initiative/. The Long Movement theory has increasingly become, due to endeavors such as "The Long Civil Rights Movement Project", the primary public interpretation of the black freedom struggle in American memory.

[43] Ibid., 1234.

[44] Ibid., 1235. See also, for examples of the extended narrative approach, *Freedom North: Black Freedom Outside of the South, 1940-1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), edited by Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodward, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," by Jaqueline Dowd Hall in *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (March 2005), pp. 1233-1263, *The Forgotten Civil Rights Movement in the North* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) by Thomas Sugrue, and *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance: A New*

of a black freedom struggle that began decades before the turbulent 1950s and '60s. Hall has argued that a short narrative "distorts and suppresses as much as it reveals."[45] The long narrative emerged as the dominant conceptual framework for understanding the Civil Rights Movement with the publication of *Freedom North: Black Freedom Outside of the South* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), edited by Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodward.[46]

Nevertheless, this conceptualization of the Civil Rights Era as a long movement does have its critics.[47] These challengers include scholars such as Steven F. Lawson, Clarence Lang, and Charles Eagles. Lawson has cautioned against the artificial extension of the short traditional timeline, while Lang has argued that a long movement is an "overly elastic" chronological framing of the movement that has not been consistently applied by the adherents to such an approach.[48] My research combines the extended

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History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010) by Danielle McGuire.

[45] Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," 1233.

[46] Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua, and Clarence Lang, "The Long Movement as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," *The Journal of African American History* 92, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 265.

[47] See "Toward New Histories of the Civil Rights Era" by Charles Eagles in *The Journal of Southern History* 66, no. 4 (November 2000) pp. 815-848, "The Long Movement as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," by Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang in *The Journal of African American History* 92, no. 2 (Spring 2007) pp. 265-288, "The Long Origins of the Short Civil Rights Movement," by Steven F. Lawson in *Freedom Rights: New Perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement* edited by Danielle L. McGuire and John Dittmer (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2011) pp. 9-37, and "Locating the Civil Rights Movement: An Essay on the Deep South, Midwest, and Border South in Black Freedom Studies" by Clarence Lang in *Journal of Social History* 47, no. 2 (Winter 2013) pp. 371-400 for some of the more ardent criticisms of the long movement approach.

[48] For these arguments, see "The Long Movement as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," by Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang in *The Journal of African American History* 92, no. 2 (Spring 2007) pp. 265-288, "The Long Origins of the Short Civil Rights Movement," by Steven F. Lawson in *Freedom Rights: New Perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement* edited by Danielle L. McGuire and John Dittmer (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2011) pp. 9-37.

narrative, understood as an episodic continuum of black struggles, that defies a neat chronological and geographic focus, with the short movement approach as the most useful framework for understanding the place of New Jersey's black intellectuals in the history of the Civil Rights Movement overall. Since the modern black freedom struggle has origins in New Jersey, Lawson's understanding of the "short movement with long origins"[49] seems the most applicable here. This analysis is in part a synthesis of the long and short narratives that combines an integrated understanding of the national and local forces that came together to shape the movement overall. Clarence Lang has argued that the overemphasis on similarities across regions is problematic but that exploring black social movements "north of Dixie" allows scholars to "observe regional particularities" while "highlighting the significance of difference" in the development of black social movements.[50]

Historians have written scholarly works about the struggle for black equality as illustrated in scholarship that has focused on pivotal personalities, national organizations, and local people. This scholarship is represented in studies on organizations such as with Clayborne Carson's *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Harvard University Press, 1981), biographies of national leaders such as with David Garrow's award-winning *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (Harper Perennial, 1987), and monographs such as John Dittmer's text on ordinary people in the movement entitled *Local People: The Struggle*

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[49] See "The Long Origins of the Short Civil Rights Movement," by Steven F. Lawson in *Freedom Rights: New Perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement* edited by Danielle L. McGuire and John Dittmer (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2011) pp. 9-37.

[50] Clarence Lang, "Locating the Civil Rights Movement: An Essay on the Deep South, Midwest, and Border South in Black Freedom Studies" Journal of Social History 47, no. 2 (Winter 2013): 390.

for Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi (University of Illinois Press, 1995).[51] The more recent scholarship on the movement is reflected in texts such as *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance: A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2011) by Danielle McGuire. Her work focuses on the integral role that black women played in the struggle for black equality.[52] The interactive model[53] that combines a discussion of both national and local dynamics is deployed by McGuire in *At the Dark End of the Street*. She highlights, in this text, the connections between individuals and associations working collaboratively at the local and national levels to advance black equality.[54]

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[51] *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* by Clayborne Carson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981) is one of the first monographs on the history of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1987) by David Garrow is an example of a historical analysis that emphasizes national figures in the Civil Rights Movement, whereas *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press,1995) does the opposite by focusing on the activism of local people and the Civil Rights Movement.

[52] *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011) by Danielle L. McGuire is a superlative historical monograph that analyzes the rise of the Civil Rights Movement through a discussion of black women's resistance to sexual assault and exploitation in the American south, arguing that "the Civil Rights Movement is also rooted in African American women's long struggle against sexual violence" (xix).

[53] Christopher Metress, "Making Civil Rights Harder: Literature, Memory, and the Black Freedom Struggle," *The Southern Journal* 40, no. 2 (Spring, 2008), 139.

[54] Danielle McGuire, in *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), does not explicitly state that her text is using the interactive model identified by Christopher Metress in his article "Making Civil Rights Harder: Literature, Memory, and the Black Freedom Struggle," *The Southern Journal* 40, no. 2 (Spring 2008) pp. 138-150. The interactive model that emphasizes the connection between local and national entities during the Civil Right Era unfolds in McGuire's narrative, which is structured around a series of incidents that take place involving the sexual assault of black women, such as with the case of Recy Taylor in Abbeville, Alabama of 1944, that galvanized local leaders such as E. D. Nixon and national figures such as Rosa Parks, thereby elucidating the connection between local acts of resistance and national campaigns for black civil rights.

This study is a look at the local/national dynamics of the black freedom struggle in the Garden State using the interactive model; but, simultaneously, it demonstrates the significance of the origins of a "Long Civil Rights Movement" in the North.[55] The new trajectory in the history of the Civil Rights Movement, which concentrates on precedent-setting achievements in northern states, is represented by a few studies of New Jersey that focus on the movement before the 1960s. This dissertation is part of the larger reorientation of civil rights history led by historians such as Thomas Sugrue, Martha Biondi, and Patrick Jones but at the same time should be understood as a historical synthesis that combines some elements of both the long and the short movement approach while considering the body of literature on black women's intersectional approach to empowerment.[56]

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[55] For examples of historians who have utilized the extended chronology approach to the black freedom struggle, see "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," by Jacqueline Dowd Hall in the *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (Organization of American Historians, 2005), *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009) by Patrick D. Jones, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009) by Glenda E. Gilmore, and *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance: A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* by Danielle McGuire (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011). The trend in historical studies concerning the chronology of the black freedom struggle has been to recognize both that the chronology begins earlier than post-World War II and that the geographic scope extends beyond the southern United States.

[56] For examples of definitive works on the black freedom struggle in the North, see *Northern Protest: Martin Luther King, Jr., Chicago, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993) by James Ralph, Jr., *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) by Thomas J. Sugrue, *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) edited by Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003) by Martha Biondi, *More Than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003) by Jack Dougherty, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006) by Matthew Countrymen, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008) by Thomas Sugrue, and *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009) by Patrick Jones.

Scholarly studies of New Jersey's black community tend to focus on slavery in the colonial period through the mid-nineteenth century or urban rebellions and economic decay in the recent history of the state.[57] These texts are primarily social or urban histories of the Garden State. Select studies on Trenton, Plainfield, and Princeton that have contained some discussion of the black professional class, but these studies are general narratives that do not detail the integral role of black women and their ideas in the development of the black freedom struggle through the lens of intersectionality. These texts include *The Quest for Equality: Trenton's Black Community: 1890-1965* (Africa World Press, 1993) by Jack Washington, a Trenton public school teacher, *Plainfield's African American: From Northern Slavery to Church Freedom* (University Press of America, 1998) by historian Leonard L. Bethel, and *The Long Journey Home: A Bicentennial History of the Black Community of Princeton, New Jersey, 1776-1976* (Africa World Press, 2005) also by Washington.[58]

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[57] There are two major definitive surveys of the black experience in New Jersey—*Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro Americans in New Jersey* (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1980) by Clement Price and *Afro Americans in New Jersey: A Short History* (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1988) by Giles Wright. The conspicuous scholarly endeavors on the history of African Americans during the era of enslavement in New Jersey include *The African American Struggle for Freedom and Equality: The Development of a Peoples Identity in New Jersey, 1624-1850* (New York: Routledge, 1997) by George Fishman and Graham Russell Hodge's *Slavery and Freedom in the Rural North: African Americans in Monmouth County New Jersey, 1665-1865* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997).

[58] *In Search of a Community's Past: The Black Community in Trenton, New Jersey, 1860-1900* (Trenton: African World Press, 1990) by Jack Washington is a narrative history that details the development of the black community and their social institutions in Trenton, New Jersey. *The Quest for Equality: Trenton's Black Community: 1890-1965* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1993) by Jack Washington is a narrative history examining the rise of Trenton's black professional community and black social activism from the late nineteenth century to the Civil Rights Era in 1965. *Plainfield's African American: From Northern Slavery to Church Freedom* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1998), edited by Leonard L. Bethel and Frederick A. Johnson, is a collection of essays on the history of black churches in Plainfield, New Jersey from the late nineteenth to the late twentieth century. *The Long Journey Home: A Bicentennial History of the Black Community of Princeton, New Jersey, 1776-1976* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2005) by Jack Washington, is a survey history of the black community in Princeton, New Jersey spanning 200 years. These texts provide us with invaluable information on the history of African Americans in New Jersey; however, they are not sustained critical analyses that

Black elites and professionals in New Jersey are discussed in two recent texts: *Union County Black Americans* (Arcadia, 2004) by Ethel M. Washington, a cultural heritage and museum professional, containing prints and photographs that document the history of black Americans in North New Jersey, and *The Path to Freedom: Black Families in New Jersey* (History Press, 2010), a photographic history of the Russell, Ham, and Brown families in New Jersey by historian Walter D. Greason. These two texts are primarily photograph histories of the black experience. *The Garden of Opportunity* is more than a picture book. This study is unique in that it is an intellectual history that focuses on black women activists across the state. Furthermore, it covers a time frame—the Interwar Era—that has been virtually ignored by historians who have written on the black experience in the history of the Garden State with the exception of *Black Women's Christian Activism: Seeking Social Justice in a Northern Suburb* (New York University Press, 2016) by Betty Livingston Adams.[59]

Black Women's Christian Activism: Seeking Social Justice in a Northern Suburb (New York University Press, 2016) by Betty Livingston Adams is a commendable text

interrogate the history of African Americans in the Garden State from the perspective of black women's experiences.

[59] The vast majority of texts on the black experience in New Jersey are survey or narrative histories. *Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersey* (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Society, 1980) by Clement A. Price includes a collection of documents with sustained commentary by Price. *Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History* (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1988) by Giles Wright is a narrative history of the black experience in New Jersey from the Colonial Era to the Civil Rights Era. *Suburban Erasure: How the Suburbs Ended the Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013) is a survey and social history of the black experience in New Jersey that spans the twentieth century, focusing primarily on the processes of suburbanization and how this led to the decline of civil rights gains, with two chapters specifically discussing the Civil Rights Movement and one on black women. *Black Women's Christian Activism: Seeking Social Justice in a Northern Suburb* (New York: New York University Press, 2016) by Betty Livingston Adams is the first book-length study on the history of black women in New Jersey that also includes a sustained analysis of the Interwar Era. While there are a series of survey and narrative histories on the black experience in the Garden State that cover the Interwar Era as a topic, monographs that focus on black women in the Interwar Era in the history of New Jersey are limited to the text recently produced by Livingston Adams.

with some noticeable limitations. Adams builds upon the work of scholars such as Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Judith Weisenfeld, Bettye Collier-Thomas, and Jualynne Dodson, who have written book-length studies of black women's Christian activism, in this community study of black women activists in Summit, New Jersey.[60] *Black Women's Christian Activism* is a narrative that focuses on the life and work of two women activists who became national figures: Violet Johnson and Florence Spearing Randolph. This work by Adams is a religious and social history of black women's Christian activism that uses Summit as a nexus to demonstrate the importance of black women in social and civil rights reform, in U.S. history, between 1898 and 1945; as coupled with a discussion of the place of black women within the larger processes of suburbanization with a focus on gender, race, and class. Adam's work is likely the first book-length study of black women in New Jersey history. This text is also one of few analyses on African Americans in New Jersey history that includes a broad discussion of the Interwar Era. These two factors make the work laudable.

Adam's theory that black women "advocated a *politics of civic righteousness*" and sought to reform "civic institutions by placing morality and justice in the realm of public policy, laws, and institutions" demonstrated by "organizing missionary societies and unions to extend the work of the church in society" is an important analysis of black women progressives and it stands alongside other studies of black women reformers

[60] See *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993) by Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham on black women's activism in the Baptist Church, *African American Women and Christian Activism: New York's Black YWCA, 1905-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997) by Judith Weisenfeld about black women's activism in the YWCA, *Engendering Church: Women, Power, and the AME Church* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, Inc., 2002) by Jualynne Dodson concerning black women's Christian activism in the AME Church, and *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice: African American Women and Religion* by Bettye Collier-Thomas (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011) which is a comprehensive survey of black women and religion.

associated with the AME Church, Baptist Church, and YWCA movement.[61] Furthermore, black women as a part of the larger progressive ethos among Christian reformers were influenced by the social gospel—a movement that sought to apply Christian ethics to social problems ultimately with the goal to transform the society. These black women were northern Christian progressives responding to the changes in black life wrought by industrialization, mass scale immigration, the rise of the corporation, and suburbanization.[62] That black women were *progressives* in a *Progressive Era* has long been noted by scholars of the American experience but this study by Adams further expands our knowledge of black women and progressivism in critical ways.[63]

The greatest limitation of the Adam's book is that it remains largely a community study, and the author's framing of Randolph as an "ordinary working woman"[64] is not completely accurate. Adams does not mention prominent Christian women activists such as Anna Arnold Hedgeman active in the region at the time. Scholars such as Jennifer Scanlon have begun to demonstrate that Hedgeman is likely one of the most important women social reformers in the long Civil Rights Era. Though my study does not include an entire chapter on Randolph, my study does not dismiss Randolph as she is discussed, along with a mention of Johnson, in Chapter Two of this analysis. Adams leaves out

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[61] Betty Livingston Adams, *Black Women's Christian Activism: Seeking Social Justice in a Northern Suburb* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 3.

[62] John Whiteclay Chambers, *The Tyranny of Change: America in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000), xi-xiii. See also for important works that examine black women in the Progressive Era: *Harlem Nocturne: Women Artists and Progressive Politics During World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 2013) by Farah Jasmine Griffin, *Private Politics & Public Voices: Black Women's Activism from World War I to the New Deal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007) by Nikki Brown, *Gender, Class, Race and Reform in the Progressive Era* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994) ed., Noralee Frankel, Nancy S. Dye, and *Afro American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895-1925* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989) by

[63] John Whiteclay Chambers, *The Tyranny of Change,* xiii.

[64] Adams, *Black Women's Christian Activism*, 2.

several prominent black women active in the state—without a mention. While I recognize that Johnson and Randolph must be mentioned in my study, given their prominence in reform efforts, my work concentrates on black women intellectuals within and outside of the church. And, mainly for the purposes of brevity and clarity in this analysis, specific chapters on black women focus on an example of a black woman Christian activist in the person of Hedgeman, and a black woman social scientist with the example of Marion Thompson Wright. I do this not to minimize Randolph but rather to articulate the uniquely positioned role of elite black women intellectuals such as Hedgeman who worked within and outside of the religious institutions as a transitional figure situated between the early and classical phases within the larger matrix of the Civil Rights Movement. Randolph holds firm to her civic righteousness and is not a part of the classical phase of black civil rights reform from 1954 to 1968; while, on the other hand, Hedgeman is clearly a pragmatist at the onset of the classical phase with a broadened perspective regarding political liberalism having worked within government as an operative of the Democratic Party. Adams concedes that "the language of resistance changed from civic righteousness to civil rights" after the New Deal and that women like Johnson and Randolph "found themselves in a new world."[65] That said, it is not possible to make the same argument about both Hedgeman and Randolph regarding the black freedom struggle, or the history of feminism, though both make considerable contributions to its development. Hedgeman, as a practitioner of Christian activism, takes

[65] Adams, *Black Women's Christian Activism*, 14.

up the intellectual position and language of New Deal liberalism and later *1960s liberalism* that places an emphasize on individual rights.[66]

Black Women's Christian Activism is defined as an example of a local study that considers both the regional and national dimensions of black women's social reform activities; but, there is no better example of this in the person of Hedgeman active in New Jersey, New York, and on the national level as a member of the FEPC. Adams also does not include a robust discussion of black women and the development of the Urban Colored Population Commission in New Jersey. Black women associated with the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs actively petitioned the governor of New Jersey for representation on this commission. Sara Spencer Washington who was a member of the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women Clubs, and likely the most influential black business woman, philanthropist, and civil rights activist in the state at the time, is also not mentioned. Johnson and Randolph become national figures but they are certainly not alone in their activism within the Garden State and the nation. This approach coupled with the hyper-focus on black women's Christian activism overlooks the significant case of *Hedgepeth-Williams vs. Trenton Board of Education* (1944) and activists such as Marion Thompson Wright instrumental in the campaign against school segregation in the Garden State and the nation.

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[66] There is a difference between New Deal Liberalism and 1960s Liberalism (with roots in the mid-1950s). Franklin D. Roosevelt's liberalism is rooted in Progressive reform efforts to utilize government action as a means to ameliorate or control social problems through regulation and many black women Christian activists such as Johnson and Randolph embraced New Deal liberalism; but, 1960s liberalism places an emphasis on individual rights and freedoms (civil rights) that is counter, in its broadest sense, to the civic righteousness that Adams claims women such as Johnson and Randolph promulgated through the 1940s. Hedgeman is a co-founder of the National Organization of Women (NOW) that goes on to advocate for women's *individual rights to an abortion*. Randolph dies in 1951before the wide-scale application of 1960s liberalism that is really associated with John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, and the various movements for civil rights and freedoms including second wave feminism that place an emphasis on freedom from constraint. Randolph is a part of the larger Christian progressive ethos that sought to impose order/control on societal vices like public drinking and her feminism is markedly different from that of individuals associated with liberal reform in the 1960s.

Furthermore, Randolph was an elite and in this current study I posit that uniquely positioned elites (black professionals) like Randolph, working with the black masses, made the Civil Rights Movement possible across the state and the region. Florence Spearing Randolph was educated at Avery Normal School in Charleston, South Carolina (a certificate from such a school would have enabled her to teach in a southern black public school), and she was also an instructor of dressmakers; She completed coursework at the Moody Bible School in Chicago in 1925; and in 1926, she took an advanced course at Drew Seminary according to her biographer Bettye Collier-Thomas.[67] Thomas describes Randolph as a member of a "prosperous" family:

> As the daughter of a prosperous cabinet maker and a member of the black elite, it was expected that she would become educated and would pursue a career in one of several professions available to women of color. Because of her race and gender, her choices were limited primarily to teaching and dressmaking. She chose dressmaking.[68]

Adams describes Randolph as a "seamstress" and later goes on to describe both Johnson and Randolph as "ordinary working women" who "entered public space and challenged hegemonic assumptions about race and gender."[69] Though Adams does note that Randolph was an ordained minister, she minimizes the social importance of such a position, in some respects, while also miscalculating Randolph's elite family background and the fact that she likely made a reasonable income as a dressmaker and was more than

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[67] Bettye Collier-Thomas, "Minister and Feminist Reformer: The Life of Florence Spearing Randolph," in *This Far By Faith: Readings in African American Women's Religious Biography*, Judith Weisenfeld, ed., (New York: Routledge, 1996), 177-178.

[68] Bettye Collier-Thomas, "Minister and Feminist Reformer," 177.

[69] Adams, *Black Women's Christian Activism*, 2.

a mere *seamstress*. The Spearing family saw themselves as elite[70] and Randolph's work as a "dressmaker and instructor of dressmaking" coupled with her position as a minister, with a significant level of education, confirms her status as an elite not merely a working woman.[71] The uniquely positioned black elite women such as Hedgeman, Randolph, and Wright joined with working class women to make the black freedom struggle possible. This more nuanced interpretation of black elite women activists, as reflected in this current study, who employed an intersectional approach to empowerment, and human liberation, at times forging an interracialist-feminist theology, provides us with a more comprehensive portrait of the black freedom struggle in the state of New Jersey and the nation as a whole.

My dissertation differs from *Black Women's Christian Activism* in several ways. Specifically, my work in terms of chronology, scope, focus and approach deviates significantly from this analysis. Adams study, using a pre-migration model, primarily focused on black women's Christian activism from the Progressive Era to the New Deal, demonstrates how black women activists such as Randolph and Johnson helped to lay the foundation of the modern struggle for black equality as progressives advancing a *civic righteousness*. But, my project is a history of the Civil Rights Movement that begins with the rise of associations such as the NAACP, National Urban League, and independent black YWCAs, paralleled with the first Great Migration after 1910, as black activists began to rely more heavily on secular associations, legal remedies, and social science data to demand civil rights. My scope is far broader in that, while I recognize the

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[70] "Toni Ward on the Spearing-Steele Family History Part I," Toni Ward a Spearing descendant was interviewed about her family and she clearly describes her family as elite. See the video interview here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gFPZgDC198

[71] Bettye Collier-Thomas, "Minister and Feminist Reformer," 178.

importance of black women's Christian activism in advancing the black freedom struggle, I include in this study black women such as Sara Spencer Washington and Marion Thompson Wright active in the state as a whole. Washington used her wealth, and was a follower of Father Divine, to advance social justice causes in Atlantic City, New Jersey, while Wright, working on the state and national level, placed her faith in scientific inquiry as a means to transform society. Anna Arnold Hedgeman, who by the mid-1940s became a national figure, was a staunch Methodist and feminist who came to embrace New Deal Liberalism and later sixties liberalism. I approach my subject through a discussion of various models of black women's intellectualism, both within and beyond Christian based institutions, to illustrate how black women across the state became the architects of the Civil Rights Movement. This dissertation is concerned with *black women's activism* broadly construed to included black women capitalists such as Washington and social scientists such as White and Hedgeman the pragmatic Christian feminist.

There are some more notable studies about twentieth-century New Jersey history. Among these texts are *A Social History of Economic Decline: Business, Politics, and Work in Trenton* (Rutgers University Press, 1989) by John T. Cumbler, *Camden After the Fall: Decline and Renewal in a Post-Industrial City* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005) by Howard Gillette, *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America* (New York University Press, 2007) by Kevin Mumford, and Greason's more recent *Suburban Erasure: How the Suburbs Ended the Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey* (Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013). These social histories discuss poverty, economic decline, riots, white flight and suburbanization but do not include a sustained

discussion of black women's activism. African American women in the history of the Civil Rights Movement are not significantly represented in the major narratives on the history of the black freedom struggle in twentieth-century New Jersey.[72]

Cumbler's text focuses on the social, economic, and political decline of Trenton after World War I, and Gillette's *Camden After the Fall* details the local politics surrounding deindustrialization, urban decay, racism, and riots. Mumford's work is a case study of Newark at the height of the Civil Rights Era that includes several chapters on early black protest politics in New Jersey. The chapters focus largely on Newark, but Mumford does include one chapter on black women. Greason's urban history concentrates primarily on Central and Southern New Jersey, including two chapters on the Civil Rights Movement and one entitled "Black Women's Historiography." *The Garden of Opportunity* does not relegate a single chapter to women. Black women intellectuals are central to my narrative. This project deviates from the Mumford and Greason texts in terms of its focus on black women in the Civil Rights Movement in the state of New Jersey as a whole.

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[72] *Social History of Economic Decline: Business, Politics, and Work in Trenton* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989) by John T. Cumbler is an urban/social history on the decline of commercial industry and manufacturing in Trenton, New Jersey, while Howard Gillette's *Camden After the Fall: Decline and Renewal in a Post-Industrial City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005) is also a social history that focuses on urban decline through a discussion of deindustrialization, the rise of the suburbs, racial segregation, and political corruption in Camden, New Jersey. *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007) by Kevin Mumford is primarily a community study of Newark, New Jersey, and it too is an urban history that examines the history of race relations in New Jersey's largest city and includes a chapter on women entitled "The Reconstruction of Black Womanhood" that focuses on the post-riot reconstruction of black women in the aftermath of urban rebellions. *Suburban Erasure: How the Suburbs Ended the Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013) is also an urban history that traces the rise of suburbanization in the Garden State with one chapter on women, "Black Women's Historiography," which is a useful discussion of women in the struggle for black equality in New Jersey. That said, these texts do not tell the history of the black experience in New Jersey from a woman-centered perspective but rather are social histories focused primarily on the processes of suburbanization, urban decay, and the social impact of these changes on communities of color.

The materials used for this study are derived from public records, government documents, historical African American newspapers, organizational records, periodicals, oral history interviews, photographs, prints, and other primary sources. These sources enabled me to reveal evidence of an ever-evolving black professional class in the history of the Garden State agitating for civil rights. The NAACP Papers, particularly the sections related to the New Jersey chapters of the NAACP, and the Papers of the National Urban League housed in the Library Congress were especially useful primary sources. The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture holds several core collections including the Black Women's Voices Project Oral Histories, the Moorish Science Temple Papers, and the Papers of Anna Arnold Hedgeman among many other collections. I used the Girl Friends Incorporated Papers, and historical African American newspapers[73] such as *Amsterdam News*, *Black Worker*, and *New Jersey Afro American* to present a broader spectrum of the black community. The personal papers of Otto Hill, Ernest Thompson, and Paul Robeson helped me to demonstrate how African American activists developed their activities, ideologies, and strategies. The Montclair YWCA Papers housed at the Montclair Free Public Library, the YWCA of the USA Papers located within the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, and the more than twenty oral histories derived from the Montclair African American Oral History Project housed at the Montclair Historical Society were important resources for this project. The

[73] The evaluation of African American print culture is critical to the development of this dissertation as an intellectual history. There are publications such as pamphlets, organizational newsletters, magazines and African American newspapers that should help to reveal the evolution of ideas about black empowerment over time. The visual representation of the black community through photographs and prints in magazines such as *Opportunity* and *Crisis* or in newspapers such as *New Jersey Afro American* helps to reveal the various dimensions of black elite uplift ideology and the mass consumption of such ideas. These artifacts of print culture will also be examined to gain insight about representations of race, color, class and gender more generally. This will include an examination of letters to the editor and editorials on topics pertinent to the black community that should help to reveal the black American mind during the early decades of the black freedom struggle.

YWCA Papers at Smith College contain critical documents about the interracial cooperation between black and white women associated with the YWCA movement. Also used in this analysis is the Montclair African American Oral History Project, which includes more than two dozen oral histories of blacks who lived in Montclair during the early decades of the twentieth century.

This dissertation also examines autobiographical texts and other writings produced by black intellectuals from this era. Marion Thompson Wright, as the first professional black woman historian trained in the United States, was an activist educator and prolific writer. Her doctoral dissertation entitled *The Education of Negroes in New Jersey* was published by Columbia University in 1941. Coupled with her private correspondences as a faculty member at Howard University, these documents help to reveal her role in the development of the NAACP's legal strategy against school segregation. William T. Ashby, New Jersey's first black professional social worker, and trade unionist Ernest Thompson both wrote autobiographies detailing their activism in the early black freedom struggle in the Garden State. Ashby's autobiography *Tales Without Hate* (Newark Preservation and Landmark Committee, 1981) and Thompson's *Homeboy Came to Orange: A Story of a People's Power* (Bridgebuilder Press, 1976) provide similar sources for critical textual analysis along with the writings of Randolph and Wright.[74]

[74] *The Education of Negroes in New Jersey* (Columbia University Press, 1941) by Marion Thompson Wright is a history of segregation in New Jersey and the nation that became the basis of the historical research for litigation in key cases regarding school segregation in the nation. *Homeboy Came to Orange: A Story of People's Power* (Newark: Bridgebuilder Press, 1976) by Ernest and Mindy Thompson is part autobiographical but focuses mainly on Thompson's philosophy of political pluralism as applied to his community activism in East Orange, New Jersey. *Tales Without Hate* (Newark: Newark Preservation and Landmark Committee, 1981) is William Ashby's autobiography that includes a discussion of his founding of the first New Jersey chapter of the National Urban League. *Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and Their Sermons, 1850-1979* (San Francisco:

Although this dissertation is an intellectual history of African Americans in the Civil Rights Era, I also incorporate some of the methods used by social historians. My project explores the history of the struggle for black equality by using textual analysis integrated with the use of quantitative data on the economic and social dimensions of the black community (i.e., housing, income, education, membership lists in social institutions, and demographics). I embrace Harvard historian Peter E. Gordon's definition of 'intellectual history' as "the study of intellectuals, ideas, and intellectual patterns over time."[75] At the same time, I view the term 'intellectual' as broadly construed to mean people who "made a living by arguing" *and the people who made a living and argued*.[76]

There is a distinctive tradition of black women's intellectualism. Historically, black women have rarely worked out of "the academy or research institutes."[77] That said, "black women's intellectual history can never be explained by way of a mere genealogy of ideas."[78] Given that these women have been routinely closed out of prominent

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Jossey-Bass, 1998), edited by Bettye Collier-Thomas, contains nearly a dozen sermons authored by Florence Spearing Randolph.

[75] Peter E. Gordon, "What is Intellectual History?" *The Harvard Colloquium* Access Date: May 20, 2013 found at http://projects.iq.harvard.edu/harvardcolloquium/pages/what-intellectual-history.

[76] David Hollinger, in a pivotal essay on the subject, has contended that American intellectual history as a subfield suggests porous disciplinary boundaries by stating in "What is Intellectual History?" *History Today* 35, no. 10 (October 1985) pp. 49-50, that "Intellectual history is a convenient label for a number of scholarly activities carried out by persons trained in a number of disciplines" (49). American intellectual history has interdisciplinary origins as it emerged primarily from the work of philosophers, literary scholars, and historians of political thought. Hollinger, as the field matured, later concluded that American intellectual history, as stated in the essay "American Intellectual History, 1907-2007," in *OAH Magazine of History* 21, no. 2 (April 2007) pp. 14-17, might be defined "more avowedly than ever, [as] the history of American intellectuals (17)." This definition draws a distinction between the study of ideas in mass culture that are largely the concern of cultural historians and the ideas produced by educated elites who "made history by arguing" (17).

[77] Mia Bay, Farah J. Griffin, Martha S. Jones, and Barbara D. Savage, eds., "Introduction," in *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 5.

[78] Bay, Griffin, Jones, and Savage, *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women*, 4.

academies and institutions on the account of race and gender, their ideas have always been "produced in dialogue with lived experience"[79] as shaped by their social condition. The more restrictive definition of the term 'intellectual' as one who makes her living through an activity of the mind, produces written work, often attached to academies or research institutes is sometimes inadequate when defining black women intellectuals who often have been self-taught and preoccupied with concerns of race and gender. The terms 'organic intellectual' or 'activist intellectual', and sometimes 'public intellectual', tend to be more applicable when considering black women intellectuals in a historical context.[80]

This dissertation is organized around the lives and thought of black women intellectuals who fall into multiple categories. Randolph produced sermons and public addresses with a deep concern for black people and women's rights.[81] She can be

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[79] Ibid.

[80] The phrase "organic intellectual" is borrowed here from the writings of Italian neo-Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who states in "The Intellectuals," which appears in *An Anthology of Western Marxism from Lukacs and Gramsci to Socialist Feminism,* pp. 113-119, edited by Roger S. Gottlieb (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), an essay from volume three of his *Prison Notebooks*, that "all men are intellectuals" (115). Gramsci further contends in this same section of his *Prison Notebooks* that the category of intellectual is multiple and that everyone has the capacity to think; therefore, there are only categories of intellectuals, and "nonintellectuals do not exist" (115). In the tradition of African American history, the phrase "activist intellectual" has been utilized by scholars of the black experience to connote the dialogic relationship between lived experience, the formation of ideas, and the production of knowledge as stated in *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015) edited by Mia Bay, Farah J. Griffin, Martha S. Jones, and Barbara D. Savage, "The result is intellectual history 'black woman-style', an approach that understands ideas as necessarily produced in dialogue with lived experience and always inflected by the social facts of race, class, and gender," (4). Jűrgen Habermas, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), has defined the public intellectual as one who makes "public use of reason" as quoted in "Phillis Wheatley, a Public Intellectual" by Arlette Frund in *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women*, edited by Mia Bay, Farah J. Griffin, Martha S. Jones, and Barbara D. Savage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 35. Frund, in this same essay, goes on to define the term 'intellectual' as an "individual who engages in an activity of the mind, produces written work, and participates in public debates" 35. These terms are utilized in this dissertation as derived from the writings of Gramsci, Habermas, Frund and the editors of *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women*.

[81] Betteye Collier-Thomas, ed., *Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and Their Sermons, 1880-1979*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), contains nearly twelve sermons authored by Florence Spearing Randolph.

classified as an organic intellectual who spoke for the interests of the black masses. Wright is an intellectual in the classical sense in that she was highly educated at Howard University and Columbia Teacher's College, where she received her undergraduate and graduate degrees.[82] She made her living as a college professor who wrote prolifically about race and gender.[83] Hedgeman can be understood as a public intellectual though she too had a formal higher education.[84] As a civil rights activist and public policymaker, she made use of critical reason for the public good and wrote specifically to advance civil rights policies or to address the public about concerns related to race and gender. Several of the women in this study did have some formal higher education, including Marsh, Tate, and Spencer.[85] These women, through their lived experience and ideas, reflect a broad spectrum of black women intellectuals active in New Jersey during the early Civil Rights Era.

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[82] Margaret Smith Crocco, Petra Munro, and Kathleen Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance: Women Educator Activists*, 62-69.

[83] Ibid., 70.

[84] Anna Arnold Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds: A Memoir of Negro Leadership* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), 18. Hedgeman earned a BA from Hamline University in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

[85] "Honor Set for Mrs. Marsh," People Files-Bessie Marsh Folder, Montclair Historical Society, Montclair, New Jersey, unprocessed. Bessie Marsh received her AB from Knoxville University in Tennessee, and was the first African American woman to serve on the Montclair Board of Education. Hortense Ridley Tate attended Washburn University and earned a BA in English, according to Birdie Wilson Johnson in "Leadership Struggles, and Challenges of Hortense Ridley Tate: A Twentieth-century African American Women's Legacy to Methodism and Community Service," (Diss. Madison, NJ: Drew University, 1998), 44. Florence Spearing Randolph was educated at Avery Normal School in Charleston, South Carolina (a certificate from such a school would have enabled her to teach in a southern black public school), and she was also an instructor of dressmakers. She completed coursework at the Moody Bible School in Chicago in 1925, and in 1926 took an advanced course at Drew Seminary, according to her biographer, Bettye Collier-Thomas, in "Minister and Feminist Reformer: The Life of Florence Spearing Randolph," in *This Far by Faith: Readings in African American Women's Religious Biography*, edited by Judith Weisenfeld (New York: Routledge, 1996), 177-178.

In this analysis, I combine internalist formalism and externalist contextual methods that have been customary in intellectual history.[86] In other words, I consider ideas in part as autonomous constructs, manifestations within high culture, and the writings of elites. At the same time, I recognize elites and their ideas within broader socio-economic contexts over time (or the external material forces that shape ideas). The ideas regarding black empowerment are largely understood within the context of social struggle and institutional change. The chapters devoted to individual thinkers such as Wright focus on a close textual reading of documents such as Wright's *The Education of Negroes in New Jersey* (Columbia University Press, 1941).[87] Further, I trace the idea of Black Nationalism in various contexts as it relates to the black freedom struggle as well as ideas about black women's empowerment in response to sexism.

The more broadly construed definition of the term 'intellectual' allows for a discussion of organic intellectuals in the struggle for black equality. David Hollinger has argued that American intellectual history concerns people who "made a living by

[86] There are two main currents in American intellectual history—(1) the study of ideas as internal, autonomous, and produced apart from material interests as expressed in high culture among intellectual elites, and (2) the study of ideas as expressions of external forces while focusing on the popular ideas of non-elites. For an extended discussion of intellectual history and methods, see Robert Allen Skotheim "The Writing of American Histories of Ideas: Two Traditions in the XXth Century," in The *Journal of the History of Ideas* (June 1964); John Higham, "The Rise of American Intellectual History" in *The American Historical Review* (April 1951), Stefan Collini, "What is Intellectual history" in *History Today* (October, 1985), Anthony Grafton "The History of Ideas: Precept and Practice, 1950-2000 and Beyond," in the *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 1 (January, 2006), David Hollinger "American Intellectual History, 1907-2007" in *OAH Magazine* (April 2007), and more recently "The International Turn in Intellectual History" by David Armitage in *The Global Journal* (January 2013) for a more in-depth discussion of American intellectual history.

[87] Margaret E. Hayes and Doris B. Armstrong, "Marion Manola Thompson Wright, 1902-1962," in *Past and Present: Lives of New Jersey Women* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997), p. 436, edited by Joan N. Burstyn. Marion Thomson Wright's dissertation, *The Education of Negroes in New Jersey* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), was published by Columbia Teacher's College in 1941.

arguing,"[88] whereas Antonio Gramsci has contended that there is no such thing as a "non-intellectual."[89] I understand the term as more broadly construed to include the people who made a living by arguing, and the people who made a living *and argued* such as Thompson the trade unionist or Randolph the professional preacher. I also consider the cross-class interaction between black professionals and the black masses within both local and national civil rights associations, for example the NAACP and the National Urban League (NUL).

I utilize intersectionality,[90] in this dissertation, as both a theoretical and methodological tool to discuss the interconnections between gender, race, and class within the larger framework of the black freedom struggle. Intersectionality is defined as the "idea that various forms of oppression interact with one another in multiple complex ways."[91] The variables of oppression and privilege by race, class, gender or other aspects of human identity such as nationality or sexual orientation do not function independently in the lives of individuals, or in social institutions; rather, each is shaped by and works

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[88] David Hollinger, "American Intellectual History, 1907-2007," *OAH Magazine of History* 21, no. 2 (April 2007), 17.

[89] Antonio Gramsci, "The Intellectuals," in *An Anthology of Western Marxism from Lukacs and Gramsci to Socialist-Feminism*, edited by Roger S. Gottlieb (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 115. Gramsci's notion that everyone has the capacity to think, and non-intellectuals do not exist, is tied to a more broadly construed idea that intellectuals emerge naturally (or organically) and come in a variety of categories that are shaped by the condition of one's labor and social class.

[90] See "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," by Kimberle Williams Crenshaw in *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*, edited by Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller and Kendall Thomas (New York: The New Press, 1995), 357-383. Crenshaw has been credited with coining the phrase "intersectionality" in 1989, although historians such as Catherine Clinton, Elizabeth Fox Genovese, and Deborah Gray White were utilizing a methodology that can only be described as an intersectional approach to understanding race, gender, and class in US history before the publication of the Crenshaw essay. Kathleen Brown among others later deploys a similar approach in her study of colonial Virginia. The sociologist Patricia Hill Collins also plays an important role in the development of this approach.

[91] Ann Garry, "Intersectionality, Metaphors, and the Multiplicity of Gender," *Hypatia* 26, no. 4 (Fall 2011): 826.

through the others.[92] This concept functions as a method in that I seek to demonstrate how black women in particular embraced an intersectional approach to empowerment in their writings, speeches, and public statements including within the context of their social group affiliations.

This study also seeks to illustrate how these multiple co-constituted variables of difference helped to create and sustain alliances as well as barriers to equality in the struggle for black civil rights. Social relations, identity-making, and the limitations of shared interests among similar groups are all significantly shaped by the interrelated variables of gender, race, and class.[93] The use of intersectionality in historical studies of the black experience has been deployed to illuminate the approach to empowerment embraced by black women. This is evident in the work of historians such as Deborah Gray White, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, and Bettye Collier-Thomas.[94] This approach further allows for an examination of the Civil Rights Movement simultaneously from the top-down and the bottom-up to help demonstrate how national, state, and local agendas within this movement were inextricably linked.

This dissertation incorporates some of the methods used by social historians on multiple levels. It includes some discussion of social structures (race, gender, and class), social processes, interactions between social groups, and ideas promulgated by both elites and ordinary people. The social historical dimension serves primarily to contextualize the

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[92] Ibid., 827.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1999), 17-18. *Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church*, 1880-1920 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 2-3. Bettye Collier-Thomas, "Prologue," *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice: African American Women and Religion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), xv-xxxiv.

larger intellectual history that ultimately defines this dissertation. There is an inherent discourse on the meaning of power, resistance, and community in black social processes and institutions that seek social and political equality. The personal and the social are both political in black life.[95]

The chapters of this dissertation are organized into a thematic and chronological framework. There is a considerable overlap in chronology and biographies of black women intellectuals, their ideas, and the institutions within which they formed alliances. Specific chapters in this dissertation focus collectively on black intellectuals in the state as a whole (or on a given region). Locales such as East Orange, Newark, Trenton, Camden, Montclair, and Asbury Park are featured frequently within this narrative. Chapters in this analysis are organized in such a way as to highlight the ideas and activism of intellectuals such as Florence Spearing Randolph, Marion Thompson Wright and Anna Arnold Hedgeman. The development of their ideas about black empowerment, in the context of social organizations, and within the larger framework of social struggle, is the primary focus of this analysis.

There are four chapters that define this study. The first chapter, "Bury Me in a Free Land": The Great Migration, Black Professionals, and their Community Institutions," discusses the migration of African Americans to New Jersey, the formation of a black

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[95] See *Womanpower Unlimited and the Black Freedom Struggle in Mississippi* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015) by Tiyi Morris; Laurie Green, "Challenging the Civil Rights Narrative: Women, Gender and the Politics of Protection," in *Civil Rights History from the Ground Up: Local Struggles, A National Movement*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), p. 52-80, ed. Emily Crosby *Beauty Shop Politics: African American Women's Activism in the Beauty Industry* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010) by Tiffany M. Gill; *Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts of Women in SNCC* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010) Faith S. Holsaert, ed., et. al.; *For Freedom's Sake: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999) by Chana Kai Lee; and the definitive study on personal politics and women is *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement & the New Left* (New York: Vintage, 1980) by Sara Evans.

professional class, and the institutions that became the basis for the black freedom struggle in the North. Chapter Two, "A Young Colored Girl's Haven from Prejudice": The Black Women's Club Movement in the Garden State and the Montclair Y," details the black organizing tradition as illustrated by the emergence of the Montclair YWCA in 1912, black women's activism in associations such as the NAACP, NUL, and the New Jersey Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. This is followed by a chapter devoted to the life, ideas, and social activism of Anna Arnold Hedgeman entitled "'The Urgency of the Hour was with Us': Anna Arnold Hedgeman and the Civil Rights Movement in the North." Hedgeman is a critical figure in the development of the black freedom struggle in the North given her activities in both New Jersey and New York. Her story helps to illustrate more broadly the role of black women thinkers in the Civil Rights Movement involved in northern communities. Marion Thompson Wright and the Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey are discussed in Chapter Four: "'All That I Am or Hope to Be': Marion Thompson Wright and the Civil Rights Movement in the North." The fight to desegregate the schools in New Jersey led by black intellectuals across the state and the key civil rights legislation that was passed in New Jersey are analyzed, including some discussion of the black labor leader Ernest Thompson.

The enduring place of religion in black life is also a major aspect of this narrative. In fact, historian David L. Chappell, in his text *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (University of North Carolina Press, 2005), argues that the successes of the black freedom struggle should not be understood as a triumph of liberalism.[96] He contends that these successes came as a result of an ardent religious

[96] David Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 2-3.

revivalism that rallied Americans to the cause of integration.[97] The role of the black church and religion has been fundamental to our historical understanding of the black freedom struggle. Moreover, the institutional and ideological framework of the struggle for black equality first emerged from the black church. In fact, the vast majority of narratives on the Civil Rights Movement were initially dominated by a series of texts on ministerial men such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and James Farmer.[98] This dissertation is informed by a body of more recent literature that has placed an emphasis on the activism of black women in the church.[99] Further, the activism of black women in the black church tradition is central to understanding the church's central role in providing an organizational structure for the Civil Rights Movement in the early twentieth century.

The first two chapters of this dissertation focus on the activism of black women and black men in organizations such as AME and AME Zion Churches, and the YWCA. The black professionals who came to dominate the early black freedom movement were at first members of the black church. This dissertation is concerned with the

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[97] Ibid., 3-4.

[98] The master narrative of the Civil Rights Movement was at first defined by the biographers of Martin Luther King, Jr. and social historians writing about the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), who situated King at the heart of the movement as a type of tragic hero or conscience of America called by God to "redeem the soul of America." This prevailing narrative about King as the leader of the movement suggested a movement that was led by middle-class ministerial men from the South such as King, his chief associate in SCLC, Ralph Abernathy, and James Farmer, national director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), who championed the strategy of nonviolence to advance the cause of black civil rights. See *Let the Trumpet Sound: A Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982) by Steven B. Oates, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1987) by David Garrow, and *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987) by Adam Fairclough.

[99] See *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994) by Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, the first complete account of the black women's movement in the black church, *Engendering Church: Women, Power, and the AME Church* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002) by Jualynne E. Dodson, and *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice: African American Women and Religion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011) by Bettye Collier-Thomas.

professionalization of the black community and the secularization of the movement in the early twentieth century, while recognizing the continued role of religion in shaping ideas about black empowerment. It would be nearly impossible to discuss the black freedom struggle without a sustained discussion of black religious traditions from Christianity to the Nation of Islam. The chapters that follow are guided by an extended analysis of the intersection of race, gender, class, religion, and community.

This study has several core themes or concerns, and is in some respects a work of historical synthesis that considers a series of pertinent questions related to the Civil Rights Movement in US history. How does the study of the black freedom struggle in New Jersey illustrate the significance of both regional distinctions and continuities across regions? When and how did local and national constituencies converge around strategies, goals, and achievements in the Garden State? What is the appropriate periodization for the Civil Rights Movement given the achievements in New Jersey before 1954? In this project, I incorporate into the larger analysis some discussion of what I understand as the five dominant themes of Civil Rights Era history, including a discussion of (1) gender and the role of women, (2) the interaction between local people and national leaders, (3) middle-class activism and working-class leadership, (4) the distinctions between northern and southern initiatives, and (5) the use of nonviolence versus armed resistance. These are the five major foci that have shaped the historiography of the Civil Rights Era in US history.

This is a work that understands women as key agents of the struggle for black equality while recognizing cross-class alliances between black professionals and working-class black Americans across gender lines in local and national contexts. It is

also an attempt to provide a more nuanced interpretation of the place of the black elite and professional class in the history of African Americans more generally while reconsidering the role of the Garden State in the history of the Civil Rights Movement. The unique place of New Jersey as a corridor between North and South, with its constant internal division and porous boundaries, makes the state a distinctive case for illustrating both the particularities and similarities across regions in the history of the Civil Rights Movement.

Chapter 1

Bury Me in a Free Land:

The Great Migration, Black Professionals and Their Community Institutions

Make me a grave where'er you will,
In a lowly plain, or lofty hill;
Make it among earth's humblest graves,
But not in a land where men are slaves.[100]

– "Bury Me in a Free Land," Frances E. W. Harper

The Great Migration[101] was a pivotal moment in the history of black society and culture in the twentieth century, transforming the nation as a whole. Black social and religious institutions, and the formation of a black professional class in New Jersey, evolved as a direct result of black migration to the state in the first four decades of the twentieth century. This mass migration of blacks out of the rural South into the urban North took place in two distinct phases: first from 1910 to 1940, also known as the First

[100] Frances E. W. Harper, *Complete Poems of Frances E. W. Harper* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 93.

[101] This dissertation necessitates some discussion of the Great Migration as a transformative event in the black experience. There are, to date, no major scholarly monographs of the Great Migration that focus specifically on New Jersey. Although several community studies have been completed on the Great Migration, my analysis here is not intended to be a comprehensive or thoroughgoing analysis of black migration in the twentieth century. *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-1945* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1985) by Joe Trotter, *Making their Own Way: Southern Black Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916-1930* by Peter Gottlieb (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1987), *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (University of Chicago, 1989) by James R. Grossman, *To Do Good and To Do Well: Middle-class Blacks and the Depression, Philadelphia 1929-1941* (New York: New York University Press, 1993) by Charles Pete T. Banner-Haley, *American Babylon: Race and Power in Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) by Robert Self, *Alabama North: African American Migrants, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915-1943* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1999) by Kimberly Phillips, *Way Up North in Louisville: African American Migration to the Urban South, 1930-1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010) by Luther Adams, and *The Making of Black Detroit in the Age of Henry Ford* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012) by Beth Bates Tompkins are among the more notable community studies on the Great Migration that detail the significance of this event in African American history. This chapter serves primarily to introduce the events that led to the formation of a uniquely positioned black professional class in the Garden State as well as some of the core personalities involved in the early struggle for black equality in New Jersey before 1954.

Great Migration, and then from 1940 to 1970, often called the Second Great Migration. This chapter specifically examines the First Great Migration, with an emphasis on New Jersey, the social and religious institutions that evolved or expanded as a result of the migration, such as the independent black YWCAs[102] that emerged in the 1910s, and the formation of a black professional class in the Garden State. Isabel Wilkerson, in her now seminal text *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (Vintage Books, 2010), argues that the Great Migration made the Civil Rights Movement possible as a "turning point in history" that transformed "the social and political order of every city it touched."[103]

The culture and identity of the migrants who came to New Jersey shaped the local, national, religious and community institutions that they founded. This chapter starts with an overview of the Great Migration and an emphasis on the migrants who came to New Jersey. The second section analyzes the connection between the First Great Migration

[102] The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), an association dedicated to the advocacy of women's rights and the social needs of women more generally, is the oldest and largest women's rights association in world history with associations in more than 120 countries (the US currently has 300 associations nationwide, including more than 1,300 sites and 2.6 million members). The YWCA movement was first organized in 1855 England by Mary Jane Kinnaird, a women's rights activist, and Emma Robarts, the leader of a local prayer group, against the backdrop of the Industrial Revolution. Through the convergence of Kinnaird's General Female Training Institute and the Prayer Union led by Robarts, the YWCA was formed. This organization was first headquartered in London. British women dominated the executive committee of the World YWCA through 1930. The YWCA soon became a vast network of local women's associations throughout Northern Europe and North America dedicated to the improvement of women by seeking to improve women's health services, employment, and education opportunities. In 1858, the first YWCA of the United States appeared in New York City and soon after in Boston. In 1889, the first African American YWCA opened in Dayton, Ohio. For definitive analyses of race and the YWCA, see *A History of the World's Young Women's Christian Association* (New York: Women's Press, 1948) by Anna V. Rice, *Men and Women Adrift: The YMCA and the YWCA in the City* (New York: New York University Press, 1997) with roughly a dozen essays on the Y movement edited by Margaret Spratt and Nina Mjagkij for general histories of the Y, *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993) by Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn, *African American Women and Christian Activism: New York's Black YWCA, 1905-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) by Judith Weisenfeld, and *Christian Sisterhood, Race Relations, and the YWCA, 1906-1946* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010) by Nancy Robertson.

[103] Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 9.

and the expansion of religious and social institutions, on the local and national levels, and the last section traces the development of the black professional class in the Garden State over the first four decades of the twentieth century. After introducing the personalities of the First Great Migration that are central to this study, this chapter lays the foundation for the central thesis regarding black intellectuals in the Garden State.

The rise of a black professional class and intelligentsia in the Garden State was made possible by two factors: increased economic opportunities that came with migration, and the rise of civil rights associations dedicated to increasing black opportunities in education, employment, politics, and society more generally. Migration allowed for the expansion of church congregations, both new and old, and reform associations such as the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) founded in 1896, as well as the creation of some of the earliest local chapters of the NAACP[104] and the National Urban League (NUL), which began to appear in various locales throughout northern states. Within less than a decade of the NAACP's founding in 1909, local chapters emerged in places such as Newark, Montclair, and then eventually in Camden, Asbury Park, and Trenton. The Newark NAACP, founded in 1913, is the second-oldest branch in the nation (and remains the largest in the state today).[105] Membership in the NAACP increased

[104] For a more detailed organizational history of the NAACP, see *NAACP: Fight for Freedom: The Story of the NAACP* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1962) by Langston Hughes, *Freedom's Sword: The NAACP and the Struggle Against Racism in America* (New York: Routledge, 2005) by Gilbert Jones, *The First Waco Horror: The Lynching of Jesse Washington and the Rise of the NAACP* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005) by Patria Bernstein, and *Lift Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: The New Press, 2009) by Patricia Sullivan.

[105] New Community Corporation, "Newark NAACP Celebrates 100 Years of Service," Newcommunity.org, Accessed June 24, 2015, found at http://www.newcommunity.org/wordpress/wpcontent/uploads/2014/02/NewarkNAACP.pdf

exponentially in the first decade of the Great Migration from 9,000 in 1917 to 90,000 by 1920, including more than 300 local branches.[106]

Migrants such as Noble Drew Ali, who hailed from North Carolina, brought with them new ideas about religion, faith, black empowerment and social organization that challenged black bourgeois religious and cultural sensibilities. These associations, such as the Moorish Science Temple and later Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), represented a challenge to the increasing conservatism of the black church. Ali founded the Moorish Science Temple in 1913 Newark.[107] This organization was later rivaled by the rise of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), founded in 1916 by another migrant to New York—Marcus Garvey from Jamaica. Father Divine's Peace Mission also came to challenge the hegemony of the black church in places such as Newark by the 1930s.[108] The focus on economic self-help in the 1920s and '30s propelled the UNIA to become the largest and most influential black secular organization in the 1920s, while Father Divine's Peace Mission feasts and social service efforts in the '30s helped garner support from the black community that rivaled the influence of the black church in the Depression Era. From the mid-1920s through the mid-1930s, there were thirty chapters of the UNIA in New Jersey alone.[109]

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[106] New Jersey NAACP, "History of the NAACP," NJNAACP.org, Accessed June 24, 2015, found at http://njnaacp.org/?page_id=129

[107] Michael Nash, *Islam Among Urban Blacks: Muslims in Newark, New Jersey: A Social History* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2008), 1.

[108] Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History*, (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1988), 59.

[109] Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History*, (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1988), 63.

Black migration studies tend to be dominated by two major theories:[110] the economic determinism thesis and the socio-emotional theory of migration.[111] Economic determinists such as St. Clair Drake have argued that blacks migrated primarily due to low wages and lack of employment in the South. Social injustice and personal ties outside of the South—that is, the socio-emotional theory of migration embraced by scholars such as Lawrence Levine—suggest that blacks migrated to escape social injustices such as segregation and lynching, and sought out black social networks beyond their current locations or followed family connections out of the South.[112] This theory became more pronounced among scholars writing about the Great Migration during the 1960s and '70s.[113]

Most historians today concur that a multitude of overlapping reasons ultimately prompted blacks to migrate from the South, at different times and to various locales, including economic, social, educational, and emotional factors.[114] Lynch law and the emergence of segregation have often been cited as two major social factors that prompted black migration from the South, coupled with restrictions on black political participation through such means as the poll tax, literacy tests, and the grandfather clause.

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[110] Alan D. DeSantis, "Selling the American Dream Myth to Black Southerners: The Chicago Defender and the Great Migration of 1915-1919" *Western Journal of Communication* 62, no. 4 (Fall 1998), 475.

[111] Ibid., 475-476.

[112] Ibid., 475.

[113] For definitive histories that utilize the socio-emotional approach, see *They Seek a City* (New York: Doubleday, 1945) by Arna Bontemps, *Black Migration: Movement North, 1900-1920* (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1975) by Florette Henri, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1989) by James R. Grossman, and *Black Migration in America from 1915 to 1960* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellon Press, 1990).

[114] Joe William Trotter, Jr., "The Great Migration," *OAH Magazine of History* vol. 17, no. 1 (October, 2002), 31.

Mass migration of blacks out of the rural South began almost immediately after the Civil War. Following the war, thousands of black Exodusters went West to states such as Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, while others joined a new 'Back to Africa' movement. Between 1865 and 1880, an estimated 40,000 black migrants relocated to Kansas, where they founded towns such as Nicodemus.[115] Vast numbers of black migrants also moved into Oklahoma, founding more than two dozen towns, such as Langston, Boley, and Liberty by the late nineteenth century.[116] Relatively few migrated to Africa in the late nineteenth century. The Liberian Exodus Joint Stock Steamship Company raised $6,000 and hired a ship called the *Azor* that took 206 black migrants from Charleston, South Carolina in April 1878 arriving in Liberia in June.[117] Most black migrants of this era did not seek to migrate to Africa. This nineteenth-century migration of blacks initially entailed movement from rural locales in the American South to major southern cities such as Atlanta, Georgia or cities in the Southwest such as Houston, Texas and then to northern cities by the turn of the century.[118]

The migration stories of Timothy Thomas Fortune, William Randolph Granger and Mary Louise Granger, and George Henry White, in many respects, reflect the larger trends of early black migration from the south. Fortune—a writer, editor, journalist, and civil rights activist who was born in Florida and attended Howard University—came in the first major wave of black migrants in 1881 first to New York, where he edited *Globe*,

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[115] Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *African Americans: A Concise History Special Edition* 3rd edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: 2010), 330.

[116] Ibid., 330.

[117] Ibid., 329.

[118] Claybourne Carson, Emma J. Lapsansky-Werner, and Gary B. Nash, *African Americans: The Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Pearson, 2005), 353.

Freeman, and eventually *New York Age*.[119] Fortune, a co-founder of the National Afro American League and a key figure in the Niagara Movement, then moved to Red Bank, New Jersey in 1901, where he built a home on Maple Hill. The Grangers moved from Newport News, Virginia after their son Lester was born.

Born in 1852 in Bladen County, North Carolina, White—a lawyer, educator, politician, and founder of a southern New Jersey town—was the last African American congressman from a southern state before the Jim Crow era solidified.[120] He graduated from Howard University in 1877 and was elected to the US Congress in 1896, where he served a four-year term.[121] After White's tenure as a US Congressman from North Carolina ended in 1901, he decided to migrate northward and settled in southern New Jersey, where he helped found a planned community for African Americans called Whitesboro.[122] The town was established in 1901 by the Equitable Industrial Association Investment Company, which included Paul Laurence Dunbar and Booker T. Washington among its investors.[123] Whitesboro, as a community that is now over 100 years old, is considered one of New Jersey's notable historic black towns.

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[119] Emma Lou Thornbrough, "T. Thomas Fortune: Militant Editor in the Age of Accommodation," in *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century*, edited by John Hope Franklin and August Meier (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 19-20.

[120] Benjamin R. Justesen, *George Henry White: An Even Chance in the Race of Life* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 1.

[121] Ibid., 35.

[122] Alice Jones Roberson, *Whitesboro, New Jersey: Pioneers, Early Settlers, New Town* (Mansfield: Bookmasters, 2002), 2-3.

[123] Ibid., 3.

Lester B. Granger was born on September 16, 1896 in Newport News, Virginia to William Randolph and Mary Louise Granger.[124] William Granger, an immigrant from Barbados, was a medical doctor, and his wife Mary was a school teacher.[125] Wanting to ensure that their sons came of age in a free land, they made the trek out of the South around 1900 to enable their children to enjoy the greater social and educational opportunities that they believed existed in the North. The Grangers relocated to Newark, New Jersey in the first decade of the twentieth century, where they raised Lester and his five brothers. After attending secondary schools in Newark, Lester graduated from Dartmouth in 1918, and later completed postgraduate work at New York University and the New York School of Social Work.[126] He began his social work career in 1922 as an extension worker for the New Jersey State Vocational School for African American Youth at Bordentown.[127]

On his way to becoming a towering figure in the history of the early Civil Rights Movement and social work, Granger served as an active member of the Newark chapter of the NUL, alongside other social workers such as William Ashby, as the chapter's industrial relations officer and eventually the national executive director of the NUL from 1941 to 1961. According to the National Association of Social Work (NASW), Granger is credited with introducing "civil rights to the social work agenda as a national and

[124] National Urban League, "Getting Things Done: Lester B. Granger," Lester B. Granger Papers, Box 4, Folder 84, The Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

[125] National Urban League, "Getting Things Done: Lester B. Granger," Lester B. Granger Papers, Box 4, Folder 84, The Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

[126] National Urban League, "Getting Things Done: Lester B. Granger," Lester B. Granger Papers, Box 4, Folder 84, The Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

[127] National Urban League, "Getting Things Done: Lester B. Granger," Lester B. Granger Papers, Box 4, Folder 84, The Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

international issue" by advocating for equal opportunity and social justice for African Americans.[128] He did this by developing trade unions among blacks in the Interwar Era, advocating for the integration of white unions, and serving on both civil rights and federal agencies to secure the integration of the armed services. Granger was also the first African American to serve as president of the National Conference of Social Work (NCSW). It is pertinent to reiterate here that a core group of social workers—including Granger, William Ashby, and social historians such as Marion Thompson Wright—active first in New Jersey, were the intellectual architects of the early black freedom struggle in the North, working through a variety of organizations.

The Niagara Movement was formed in 1905 during the era of black migration from the rural South and the rise of urban unrest between blacks and whites in the first decade of the twentieth century. In these years, black intellectuals debated the merits of both accommodation and agitation against the backdrop of the Great Migration of African Americans from the southern part of the nation that was buttressed by an increased tide of racial violence. Niagara Movement activists articulated their movement as both a reaction to the public conciliation of Booker T. Washington to segregation and the extralegal violence leveled against African Americans taking place in urban centers throughout the nation.[129] This movement, led by intellectuals such as W. E. B. Du Bois,

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[128] "Lester Blackwell Granger, (1897-1976)," NASW Foundation, www.nasw.org, accessed July 11, 2015, found at http://www.naswfoundation.org/pioneers/g/granger.htm.

[129] Niagara Movement, "The Niagara Movement Declaration of Principles, 1905," *Black History Bulletin*, 68, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2005), 21. For an expanded discussion, see also *Niagara Movement African American Civil Rights: Early Activism and the Niagara Movement* by Angela Jones (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011), "The Niagara Movement, 1905-1910: A Revisionist Approach to the Social History of the Civil Rights Movement" by Angela Jones in *Journal of Historical Sociology* 23, no. 3 (September 2010) pp. 435-500, and "Politics, Rights, and Spatiality in W. E. B. Du Bois's Address to the Country, 1906," by Robert W. Williams in the *Journal of African American Studies* (September 2010) pp. 337-358.

called for suffrage and full civil rights to be afforded to African Americans and established chapters in twenty-one states with 170 members within a year.[130] Washington's public stance of accommodation to Jim Crow laws and disenfranchisement of African Americans led many black professionals such as Du Bois and William Monroe Trotter, a black newspaper editor, to agitate more vociferously for black civil rights. Trotter used his newspaper as an outlet to support causes such as the Niagara Movement and black civil rights more generally.[131]

The influx of black migration into urban locations in the South, West, and North in the first decade of the twentieth century precipitated a series of racial conflagrations between whites and blacks across the nation. Two of the more destructive race riots took place in Atlanta, Georgia and Springfield, Illinois. The five days of rioting that ensued in Atlanta 1906 culminated in the death of twenty-five African Americans, the destruction of black businesses, and hundreds injured. In 1908, white citizens attacked black residents after a black man named George Richardson was falsely accused of raping a white woman in Springfield, Illinois.[132] Six blacks were shot and killed, two were lynched, and black homes and businesses were destroyed. Following the Springfield race riot, more than 2,000 blacks were forced to relocate.[133] However, these riots did not deter

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[130] University of Massachusetts Amherst Library Special Collections, "The Niagara Movement," *Library.Umass.edu* http://www.library.umass.edu/spcoll/dubois/?page_id=12 (accessed November 29, 2013).

[131] Sarah Richardson, "The Man Who Fought the Klan," *American History* 50, no. 6 (February 2016), 22.

[132] James L. Crouthamel, "The Springfield Race Riot of 1908," *The Journal of Negro History* 45, no. 3 (July 1960), 167.

[133] Ibid., 174.

black migration; [134] the incidents led instead to the creation of the NAACP in 1909.[135] The NAACP eventually became the largest black civil rights organization in the nation advocating for anti-lynching legislation, desegregation of the public school system nationwide, and an end to Jim Crow.[136] The organization's growth depended on the migration and the ability of northern blacks in the first and subsequent generations to have the disposable income, protect freedom of assembly and free speech, literacy and political agency to support the organization, its publications, and its platform of social justice.

Black migration to the North dramatically accelerated after 1910 due to the outbreak of World War I in 1914, precipitating the decreased availability of immigrant workers from Europe, which in turn led to the expansion of opportunities for blacks in industrial employment.[137] This was coupled with widespread floods in 1916 and 1917-1918 as well as a severe infestation of boll weevils that ruined the southern cotton crop and caused profound economic hardship for black agricultural workers in the South. After 1910, black migration out of southern states began to significantly shift away from southern destinations to cities in the urban Midwest and the northeastern United States.[138]

During the first phase of the Great Migration, migrants flocked to major Midwestern cities. From 1910 to 1930, noticeably large numbers of blacks settled in

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[134] Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, Stanley Harrold, *African Americans: A Concise History* (Upper Saddle River: Praeger, 2010), 394-395.

[135] Clayborne Carson, Emma J. Lapsansky-Werner, Gary B. Nash, *African American Lives: The Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Praeger, 2005), 332.

[136] Ibid., 332.

[137] Trotter, "The Great Migration," 31.

[138] Stewart E. Tolnay, "The African American Great Migration and Beyond," *Annual Review of Sociology* 29 (2003): 216.

cities such as Chicago, Gary, Indiana, Cleveland, Ohio and Detroit, which recorded some of the highest increases in black population in the first two decades of the Great Migration. Cleveland's black population increased by 300 percent from 8,448 to 34,451 between 1910 and 1920.[139] Many migrants took trains directly to the North or West, leaving states such as Alabama for destinations such as Detroit. Some black migrants who left southern states such as Mississippi and Arkansas took Highway 61 or the Illinois Central Railroad to places such as Chicago. Chicago, a city with only 2 percent African Americans before the migration, experienced a dramatic population increase.[140] In fact, Chicago's black population increased by 148 percent. Similarly, the black population in Toledo, Ohio increased by 200 percent and in Detroit by 611 percent.[141] Detroit's black population grew from 1 percent in 1910 to 8 percent in 1930.[142] In Midwestern cities such as Gary, Indiana, the percentage of blacks increased by more than 1,000 percent from 383 in 1910 to 5,299 in 1920.[143] Gary experienced the highest percentage point change in its black population during the First Great Migration, rising from 2.3 percent in 1910 to 18.3 percent in 1940.[144] The expansion of the black community in such cities over several decades transformed black political and cultural life within a new urban setting.

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[139] Sara-Jane Saje Mathiew, "The African American Great Migration Reconsidered," *OAH Magazine of History*, 23, no. 4 (October 2009): 20.

[140] Hine, Hine, Harrold, *African Americans*, 395.

[141] Sara-Jane Saje Mathiew, "The African American Great Migration Reconsidered," 21.

[142] Katherine J. Curtis White, Kyle Crowder, Stewart E. Tolnay, and Robert M. Adelman, "Race, Gender, and Marriage: Destination Selection During the Great Migration," *Demography* 42, no. 2, (May 2005): 217.

[143] Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *African Americans*, 395.

[144] Ibid., 395.

During the First Great Migration, African Americans also migrated into various northeastern cities in New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and New Jersey,[145] and there was a 15 percent expansion in the black population in New York City, 20.6 percent in Philadelphia, and (13.3 %) in Boston.[146] The increase in the black population of several major New Jersey cities—Trenton (30.4%), Camden (28.5%), Paterson (23.8%), and Newark (79.2%)—within a single decade (1910-1920) during the First Great Migration suggests that the Garden State was a major destination for black migrants.[147] Four New Jersey cities—Newark, Atlantic City, Camden, and Jersey City—were among

[145] There is an expansive body of scholarly literature on the topic of the Great Migration that explores many aspects of black migration, including the various reasons behind migration. These texts include one of the earliest anthologies on the migration of blacks, entitled *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender*, edited by Joe William Trotter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), included in this volume is the seminal essay "Black Migration to the Midwest: The Gender Dimension" by Darlene Clark Hine on gender and the Great Migration. *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992) by Nicholas Lemann is a *New York Times* bestselling survey on the migration of blacks from the rural South that focuses on the post-1940 phase of the migration with personal stories of blacks who moved from Mississippi to Chicago. *Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migration of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007) by James N. Gregory discusses the relationship between the migration of blacks and whites from the South and the larger social, political, cultural, and economic forces behind migration, while *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Black Urban Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007) by Davarian L. Baldwin focuses on the black migration into Chicago and black consumer culture, noting how the New Negro Movement occurred beyond Harlem in places such as Chicago. *The Warmth of Other Sons: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Random House, 2009) by Isabel Wilkerson is currently the definitive text on the Great Migration that was compiled 1,000 interviews of black migrants conducted by the author. "The African American Great Migration Reconsidered" in the *Magazine of History* (October, 2009) pp. 19-22 by Sara-Jane Saje Mathieu forces us to rethink the larger "confluence of domestic and international patterns" such as industrialization that shaped migration worldwide. More recently, *Ain't Got No Home: America's Great Migration and the Making of an Interracial Left* (Chapel Hill: University Press of North Carolina, 2014) analyzes the interrelationship between populism and civil rights, illuminating the historical understanding of the political/aesthetic objectives of the black and white literary left.

[146] US Census Bureau, "The Great Migration, 1910-1970," www.census.gov accessed July 19, 2015, found at https://www.census.gov/dataviz/visualizations/020/

[147] For more details on migration to cities in specific states such as with the major cities of New Jersey, see the US Census Bureau Data Visualization of the Great Migration or the www.census.gov website at https://www.census.gov/dataviz/visualizations/020/508.php.

the twenty-one US cities in 1930 that had black populations over 10,000.[148] Only Ohio had more, in that it had seven cities with a black population at or over 10,000.[149] Many black intellectuals who eventually coalesced in New Jersey during the first two decades of the twentieth century settled in the northern section of the Garden State, in cities such as Newark[150] and suburbs such as Montclair.

Historian Clement Price notes that blacks "came to New Jersey in greater numbers than to any other northern state" during the height of the Great Migration.[151] Migration to New Jersey was so high in part because it had fostered some of the oldest historically black communities in the nation, such as Gouldtown, Timbuctoo, and Lawnside, as well as historically black church congregations, where migrants could find support from existent black institutions to sustain their settlement.[152] Many migrants also looked to religious-based associations such as the YWCA for material and spiritual sustenance. The existence of social and emotional (or spiritual) networks in places such

[148] Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History* (Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1988), 54.

[149] Ibid.

[150] Although the Second Migration from 1940 to 1970 is not the concern of this dissertation, Newark, New Jersey had the highest percentage point increase in its black population, surpassing any other city during the Second Migration in that blacks made up 10.6 percent of the total population of Newark in 1940; however, by 1970, blacks comprised some 54.2 percent of the total, indicating an increase of more than 40 percent.

[151] Clement Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersey* (Newark, NJ: New Jersey Historical Society, 1980), 192.

[152] The black population in Colonial New Jersey was roughly 10 percent (more than 15 percent in the nineteenth century), rivaling the black population in neighboring states such as Pennsylvania and New York. Gouldtown, located in Fairfield Township, New Jersey, is considered by many to be the oldest black community settlement in US history. It was founded by a mixed-race man named Benjamin Gould, who was the son of a white woman named Elizabeth Fenwick and a man of color c. 1700 (or 1671?); Timbuctoo was a fortified town settled by runaway slaves in the nineteenth century, and Lawnside is considered to be the first incorporated black Township in New Jersey c. 1926. These towns contained some of the earliest black church congregations, such as the AME Church that was established at Gouldtown c. 1816 (there is some evidence suggesting that the first black congregation in New Jersey may have appeared as early as 1754).

as New Jersey shaped settlement patterns. The social and spiritual networks in the Garden State were well developed and comparable to, if not greater than, those in other northeastern states at the time given the high numbers of black migrants entering the state between 1910 and 1940. Existent black communities in New Jersey served as a magnet for bringing migrants from the South, and the new migrants augmented existing social, political, and cultural institutions in the Garden State. The black population in New Jersey increased from 47,638 in 1890 to 69,844 in 1900 at an increase of 46.6 percent; and between 1910 and 1930 the black population in New Jersey grew from 89,760 to 208,828, an increase of 132.6 %.[153]

These demographic changes are connected to the emergent influence of a black elite and professional class on politics and social policy in the state during the first four decades of the twentieth century as membership in black social and religious institutions increased. This large and growing NJ population fueled the emergent influence of a black elite and professional class on politics and social policy, such as in education and integration. YWCAs across the nation were forced to respond to the influx of black migrants into northern cities, which in turn led middle-class black women working at the YW to demand more influence within the organization in order to meet the social and economic needs of the new black migrants.[154]

The black population in New Jersey increased from 89,760 in 1910 to 117,132 by 1920, nearly doubling to 208,828 by 1930.[155] Black migrants who came to New Jersey

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[153] Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant*, 192.

[154] Virginia R. Boynton, "Fighting Racism at the YWCA," *Chicago History* (Summer 2000): 22-26.

[155] US Census Bureau, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States: New Jersey-*

came from states primarily along the Atlantic seaboard such as Maryland, Delaware, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia specifically seeking greater economic opportunities in the leisure industry and manufacturing or educational opportunities. This mass migration left an indelible imprint on the African American experience in New Jersey and allowed for increased participation in black institutions after 1910. Between 1910 and 1970, an estimated 6 to 7 million African Americans left the South for northern states such as New Jersey.[156] In the first significant phase of migration during the first three decades of the twentieth century, about 1.75 million migrants came to the cities of the North, and in the second major wave of migration from 1940 to 1970 more than 5 million migrated north.[157] As a result of the Great Migration, the black population beyond the South doubled by 1940.[158] The number of African Americans in the Garden State nearly doubled within two decades from 47,638 in 1890 to 89,760 in 1910.[159]

The black population surge was greatest in counties such as Atlantic, Essex, Monmouth, Union and Camden.[160] African American migrants relocated primarily to cities in New Jersey such as Newark, Atlantic City, Asbury Park, and Trenton and then to

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Race and Hispanic Origin (September 2002) by Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2002).

[156] Saje Mathieu, "The African American Great Migration Reconsidered," 20.

[157] Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *African Americans,* 394.

[158] Hine, Hine, and Harrold, 394.

[159] US Census Bureau, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States: New Jersey-Race and Hispanic Origin* (September 2002) by Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2002).

[160] US Census Bureau, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States: New Jersey-Race and Hispanic Origin Part III: Population of Counties* (September 2002) by Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2002), 108.

smaller suburbs such as Westfield, Summit, and Montclair.[161] In counties such as Essex and Atlantic, where the black population increased most dramatically, a burgeoning black elite and professional class expanded and fermented a strident activism through such national organizations as the NAACP and YWCA among many other local institutions.[162]

Counties	1890	1900	1910
Atlantic	2,267	6,920	10,782
Bergen	1,814	2,600	3,295
Burlington	2,624	3,130	3,454
Camden	7,475	8,583	9,402
Cape May	861	869	1,444
Cumberland	2,100	2,403	2,641
Essex	6,910	12,559	18,104
Gloucester	1,417	2,058	2,375
Hudson	2,456	4,439	7,173
Hunterdon	497	518	438
Mercer	3,467	4,152	5,125
Middlesex	1,643	1,900	1,846
Monmouth	5,074	6,907	8,279
Morris	956	1,618	1,940

[161] US Census Bureau, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States: New Jersey-Race and Hispanic Origin Part III: Population of Counties* (September 2002) by Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2002), 108

[162] Clement Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro Americans* (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1980), 196-197.

Ocean	153	270	438
Passaic	1,125	1,949	2,401
Salem	2,810	3,029	3,324
Somerset	1,348	1,559	1,414
Sussex	134	160	168
Union	2,202	3,854	5,353
Warren	305	367	364
State Total: (Black Population)	47,638	69,844	89,760

US Census Bureau[163]

By 1910, more than half of the black population, an estimated 55,900, lived in the northern section of the state in counties such as Essex and Monmouth.[164] In Essex County, the black population was at 18,104 in 1910 (the highest in the state), while Atlantic County, in the southern part of the state, experienced a significant increase in its black population from 1900 to 1910.[165] The rise of the hotel and leisure industry in Atlantic City made the city a major destination for African Americans fleeing Jim Crow in search

[163] US Census Bureau, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States: New Jersey-Race and Hispanic Origin Part III: Population of Counties* (September 2002) by Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2002), 108.

[164] Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States: New Jersey-Race and Hispanic Origin Part III: Population of Counties*, September 2002, (Washington, DC: US Census Bureau Government Printing Office, 2002), 108.

[165] Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States: New Jersey-Race and Hispanic Origin Part III: Population of Counties*, September 2002, (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau Government Printing Office, 2002), 108.

of better economic opportunities.[166] In places such as Newark in Essex County, Asbury Park in Monmouth, and Atlantic City in Atlantic County, black elite and professional associations became particularly pronounced and well positioned in the social and political arenas.[167]

Counties such as Essex and Union that experienced a large increase in the black population contained several communities such as the Oranges that became bastions of black elite and professional political activities during the Progressive Era and World War II Era. The black population in New Jersey increased by more than 100,000 between 1910 and 1940.[168] The formation of a robust black community of professionals and urban workers began to emerge in New Jersey by the mid-twentieth century.

Migrants were encouraged to relocate North by the charismatic editor of *The Chicago Defender*, Robert S. Abbott, and their letters reveal that economic reasons were paramount in the decision to migrate for some.[169] Abbott, who was trained as a lawyer, founded the paper in 1905, and it became the leading newspaper in black society by the second decade of the twentieth century. At the height of black migration, *The Chicago Defender* was the most widely circulated newspaper among black Americans (and it remains one of the largest sources of documents related to the Great Migration).[170] A 1917 study conducted in Lauderdale County, Mississippi among 100 "emigrating negroes"

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[166] Giles Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 45-46.

[167] Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant*, 196-197.

[168] Frank Hobbs, and Nicole Stoops, US Census Bureau, *Census 2000 Special Reports, Series CENSR-4, Demographic Trends in the 20th Century*, (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2002), Table 8, Part B, A-21.

[169] Alan D. DeSantis, "Selling the American Dream Myth to Black Southerners, 477.

[170] Ibid.

found that fifty had decided to leave for economic reasons, twenty for political, fifteen for social, ten for educational, two for moral reasons, and three for "other" reasons.[171]

Abbott often published letters from men and women seeking assistance in their journey to northern states. These writings suggest that both men and women sought to relocate to the North to find employment. Letters to the editor of the *Chicago Defender* seem to substantiate the notion that many blacks left for economic reasons, as one man seeking to emigrate from Lutcher, Louisiana indicated in a letter dated May 13, 1917, published in *The Defender* suggests, "I dont want to leave my family behind as I cant hardly make a living for them," while a young woman of seventeen who sought to leave Selma, Alabama writes in the same issue, "Sirs I am writing to see if You all will please get me a job."[172]

Men and women seemed to have chosen to migrate to northern states for similar reasons, though the process was often drawn out over several years, involving movement from multiple locales before settling permanently. Scholars of women's history such as Valerie Grim note that women sought better "social, cultural, and educational opportunities," but some women also left to avoid sexual exploitation in the cotton fields or the homes of white men where many worked as domestics.[173] Movement for men and women oftentimes meant moving first from one southern locale to another (often westward), then moving from West to North, or Southwest to North. African Americans

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[171] "The Message: The Negro Movement North." *Colored Messenger*. March 1, 1917, 3.

[172] "Sir I Will Thank You with All My Heart: Seven Letters from the Great Migration," *Historymatters.gmu.edu*, Accessed June 25, 2015, found at http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5332

[173] Valerie Grim, "From Yazoo Mississippi Delta to the Urban Communities of the Midwest: Conversations with Rural African American Women," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies*, 22, no. 1 (November 2001): 127.

who fled the South and eventually moved north were seeking economic, educational, and professional opportunities, but their choices varied over time and space.[174]

Sara Spencer Washington was one of these migrants. Born Sara Philips on June 6, 1889 in Beckley, Virginia to Joshua and Ellen (Douglas) Phillips,[175] she attended grade school in Beckley, a small village in Princess Anne County, Virginia (now part of Virginia Beach) and Norfolk Mission College, eventually earning a BS in business administration from Northwestern University. In 1911, Washington joined the Great Migration and settled briefly in York, Pennsylvania, where she studied hairdressing.[176] She also completed advanced work in chemistry at Columbia University,[177] and eventually moved to the Northside of Atlantic City in 1913, where she developed a financial empire that included beauty schools that graduated as many as 4,000[178] students per year, a drugstore, recreation center, rest home, golf course, and a 120-acre farm fifteen miles outside of the city in Galloway Township.[179] Washington, within two decades, eventually came to employ more than 200 workers[180] at her Apex News and

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[174] Stewart E. Tolnay, "The African American Great Migration and Beyond," *Annual Review of Sociology* 29 (2003), 212.

[175] "Sara Spencer Washington," Sara Spencer Washington Collection, Atlantic City Free Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey, unprocessed.

[176] "Sara Spencer Washington," Sara Spencer Washington Collection, Atlantic City Free Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey, unprocessed.

[177] "Sara Spencer Washington," Sara Spencer Washington Collection, Atlantic City Free Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey, unprocessed.

[178] Nelson Johnson, *The Northside: African Americans and the Creation of Atlantic City* (Medford, NJ: Plexus Publishing, Inc., 2011), 120.

[179] Ibid., 121.

[180] Mme. Sara S. Washington, "Beauty Products and Their Use," (Atlantic City: Apex News and Hair Company, Inc.) Sara Spencer Washington Collection, Atlantic City Free Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey, unprocessed.

Hair Company factory founded in 1919, which sold such products as beauty creams, cosmetics, and perfumes.[181] Spencer's products were sold by thousands of Walker agents in nearly a dozen US states,[182] and she claimed to indirectly employ 45,000 people "all around the world."[183]

Some of the important migrants central to this study who eventually settled in New Jersey like Sara Washington hailed from states such as South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia and Washington, DC, making the state their home during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Florence Spearing, born in Charleston, South Carolina on August 9, 1866, to John and Anna Smith Spearing, became a dressmaker upon graduating from high school and relocated to the North in 1882, first to New York and then to Jersey City, where she met and married another southern migrant from Virginia by the name of Randolph,[184] who worked on the railroad.[185] William M. Ashby, born in 1889 near Newport News, Virginia, one of a dozen children, came north to attend college.[186] He

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[181] "Sara Spencer Washington," Sara Spencer Washington Collection, Atlantic City Free Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey, unprocessed.

[182] Johnson, *The Northside*, 120.

[183] Mme. Sara S. Washington, "Beauty Products and Their Use," (Atlantic City: Apex News and Hair Company, Inc.) Sara Spencer Washington Collection, Atlantic City Free Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey, unprocessed.

[184] Bettye Collier Thomas, "Florence Spearing Randolph: Holiness Preacher and Social Reformer," *Charismag.com*, January 31, 2004, http://www.charismamag.com/site-archives/24-uncategorised/9848-florence-spearing-randolph (accessed November 22, 2013).

[185] Bettye Collier Thomas, "Florence Spearing Randolph," found at January 31, 2004, http://www.charismamag.com/site-archives/24-uncategorised/9848-florence-spearing-randolph accessed November 22, 2013.

[186] "Landmarks Group Prints Memoirs of Civil Rights Leader, 91," *Grafica* April 26, 1981, William M. Ashby Papers MG 1464, Box 1, Folder, 1, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, NJ.

relocated to New Jersey in 1904.[187] Ashby attended Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and eventually secured a BA in social work from Yale University.[188] Ashby is considered the first black social worker in New Jersey history.[189] He was also the first director of the NUL chapter that was chartered in 1917 as the first local chapter of this organization to be organized in the Garden State.[190] Otto Hill, born in Anderson, South Carolina in 1894, attended the pre-med program at Boston College and later graduated from MeHarry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee before coming to Newark in the 1920s, where he established a practice at 84 Barkley Street.[191] Hill and his wife Bertha eventually became active in Newark politics and civil rights activities through the YWCA, Red Cross, and Interracial Committee of Newark.[192]

Ulysses S. Wiggins was born in a town near Andersonville, Georgia on November 7, 1895.[193] He graduated from Lincoln University with an AB degree and earned an MD from Michigan University in 1924.[194] He came to New Jersey after serving as a corporal

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[187] "Landmarks Group Prints Memoirs of Civil Rights Leader, 91," *Grafica* April 26, 1981, William M. Ashby Papers MG 1464, Box 1, Folder, 1, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.

[188] "Rights Champion Active at 75: William Ashby was first N.J. Negro Social Worker," William M. Ashby Papers MG 1464, Box 1, Folder, 1, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.

[189] "They Called it Bill Ashby Day," William M. Ashby Papers MG 1464, Box 1, Folder, 1, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.

[190] "Landmarks Group Prints Memoirs of Civil Rights Leader, 91," *Grafica* April 26, 1981, William M. Ashby Papers MG 1464, Box 1, Folder, 1, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.

[191] Snow F. Grigsby, "His Prescriptions for the Ills of State: Dr. James Otto Hill, Assemblyman of Essex County, New Jersey," in *Ambitions That Could Not Be Fenced In* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Courier, 1950), 26 Pittsburgh Courier Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, New York.

[192] "Letter from the Chairman of the American Red Cross to Mrs. J. Otto Hill," Otto Hill Papers MG 1463, Box 1, Folder 1, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.

[193] "Dr. Ulysses S. Wiggins," *Journal of the National Medical Association* 58, no. 4, (July 1966), 320.

[194] Ibid.

in the US Army during World War I. Upon graduating from University of Michigan Medical School, Wiggins set up a medical practice in Camden, where he became active in civil rights activities, the Camden County and South Jersey medical societies, as well as the American Medical Association.[195]

In the early twentieth century, Howard University served as the central training grounds for black intellectuals and professionals, including doctors, lawyers, and educators such as Lena Edwards. Howard University was in fact "the most active and influential" African American "intellectual community" in the "era of racial segregation", Zachery R. Williams argues, throughout the formative years of the black freedom struggle from the mid-1920s to 1970.[196] Dr. Lena Edwards, an obstetrician and gynecologist, born September 17, 1900 in Washington, DC to Marie and Thomas W. Edwards, a prominent dentist on the faculty at Howard University, was educated at Howard University between 1918 and 1924.[197]

Black professionals such as Edwards and her physician husband Dr. L. Keith Madison, also educated at Howard, advanced an activist tradition in their fields, as shaped by their Howard experience, while serving as important public intellectuals "affecting various aspects of public policy" [198] at the national level. Edwards, a devout Catholic committed to Christian service to the disadvantaged, was ever-cognizant of her

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[195] Ibid.

[196] Zachery R. Williams, *In Search of the Talented Tenth: Howard University Public Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Race, 1926-1970* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2009), 1.

[197] Lena Edwards, interview by Merze Tate, in *The Black Women Oral History Project Volume III from the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe College,* ed. Ruth Edmonds Hill (Westport, CT: Meckler Books, 1991), 344.

[198] Ibid.

privileged status, once stating, "I feel that I was rather fortunate"[199] as a person born of parents "who had had many opportunities that the average black person had not had."[200] In 1925 Lena and her husband came to New Jersey, where she became the first black woman to complete a residency in obstetrics at Margaret Hague Hospital in Jersey City.[201] Her efforts in community medicine in the state and beyond included setting up programs for unwed mothers, alcoholics, the elderly and the poor.[202]

Ernest Thompson, born in Baltimore, Maryland on August 7, 1907, grew up on his grandfather's farm on Maryland's Easton Shore and came to New Jersey at age 13 to live with his aunt in Jersey City.[203] At age 16, Thompson secured a job working on the construction of the Holland Tunnel in New York City and several years later found work at the American Radiator plant in Bayonne, New Jersey, where he organized an independent union and served as the union's president for more than a decade.[204] This union was first affiliated with the American Federation of Labor and then, under Thompson's leadership, became associated with the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE), one of several unions connected with the militant Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).[205] Thompson's activism as a trade unionist and advocate for black civil rights, including his role as the first black field organizer for

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[199] Lena Edwards, interview by Merze Tate, in *The Black Women Oral History Project Volume III*, 347.

[200] Ibid.

[201] Ibid., 344.

[202] Ibid., 344-345.

[203] Ernest Thompson, and Mindy Thompson, *Homeboy Came to Orange: A Story of People's Power* (Newark: Bridgebuilder Press, 1976), 1.

[204] Ernest Thompson, and Mindy Thompson, *Homeboy Came to* Orange, 4-7.

[205] Ibid., 9.

the UE and Executive Director of the UE's National Fair Practices Committee, demonstrates the importance of New Jersey's intellectuals in the development of the long black freedom struggle.

Historian Leslie Brown has argued that mobility—or more specifically migration—"existed as a gendered exercise of freedom"[206] given that black women have "always numbered among the migrants of the African diaspora,"[207] and, in terms of the process of urbanization, "have outnumbered males in urban populations for about as long as there have been cities."[208] Brown's sentiments regarding black women migrants are echoed by historians Tera Hunter, Jacqueline Jones, and Darlene Clark Hine in their studies on black women migrants in US history.[209] The pattern of black women's dominance in the black urban population continued into the first decade of the twentieth century, as Brown illustrates:

> By 1900, it was clear that black female predominance in the African American urban population was the usual pattern. According to the 1910 census, women formed the majority in two-thirds of the major cities of the North and West, and in 87 percent of large southern cities. A glance toward the five American cities with the largest black populations in 1930 (those with a population of over 50,000 of whom at least 10,000 were black) reveals that in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, women attained statistical advantage.[210]

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[206] Leslie Brown, "African American Women and Migration," in *The Practice of U.S. Women's History: Narratives, Intersections, and Dialogues*, edited by S. Jay Kleinberg, Eileen Boris, and Vicki L. Ruiz (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 202.

[207] Ibid., 204.

[208] Ibid., 205.

[209] See Darlene Clark Hine, "Black Migration to the Urban Midwest: The Gender Dimension, 1915-1945 in *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991) pp. 127-146, ed., Joe Trotter; Tera Hunter, "The Brotherly Love for which this City is Proverbial Should Extend to All: Working-Class Women in Philadelphia and Atlanta in the 1890s," pp. 127-152 in *W.E.B. Du Bois, Race, and the City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998) eds., Michael Katz and Thomas Sugrue; Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

[210] Brown, "African American Women and Migration," 206.

These women migrants laid the foundation of black community development and institution building in urban centers across the nation by maintaining migration patterns that "linked family and community across regions."[211] By developing a host of associations such as the Phillis Wheatley Home in Chicago, the Detroit Friendship Home, the Cleveland Working Girl's Association, and the White Rose Mission in New York City, and through church auxiliary units, as well as expanding the ranks of the YW, these women migrants created much of the social and structural framework for the early black freedom struggle in the North.[212] The migration stories of black women were largely ignored by historians until the early 1990s, and Brown's work has helped to contextualize the broader story of black migration and the role played by women in this process. Although many historians have argued that the majority of migrants who came to northern states between 1910 and 1970 were men, Brown argues that the migration networks were at first cultivated by black women migrants before 1910 and continued after the First Great Migration began.[213] Further, black women, as Brown has demonstrated, continued to comprise a majority of blacks living in major northern cities during the First Great Migration.[214]

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[211] Ibid.

[212] Ibid., 204.

[213] Ibid., 206.

[214] Ibid., 206-207.

Migrant women such as Mary Hayes Allen, Hortense Ridley Tate, and Bessie Marsh came to northern states for various reasons after 1910.[215] Many middle-class black women migrants, as was the case with their male counterparts, were in search of employment or educational opportunities. Some of the only professional employment opportunities available to black women at the time existed in organizations such as the YW, and this was exactly the case for women such as Anna Arnold Hedgeman, who had made her way North in search of a professional position in the First Great Migration. Allen, Tate, and Marsh eventually settled in a northern suburb, where they became active in the local YW and other civil rights agencies such as the NAACP.

Before settling in Montclair during the early Great Migration, Allen, Tate, and Marsh were all born and raised in various parts of the country. Mary Rice (Hayes Allen)

[215] Studies of women in the Great Migration have increased significantly since the mid-1980s and early 1990s. Some of the more notable works on black women and the Great Migration include *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Families, and Work from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1985) by Jacqueline Jones, which is an expansive survey of black women's lives in the Post-Emancipation Era, *Sisterhood Denied: Race, Gender, and Class in a New South Community* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989) by Delores E. Janiewski, one of the earliest texts on black women and migration in the "New South," and *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender* edited by Joe W. Trotter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), which includes the ground-breaking essay by Darlene Clark Hine entitled "Black Migration to the Midwest: The Gender Dimension" pp. 127-147, that helped to galvanize the study of black women in the Great Migration. *Remaking Respectability: African American in Interwar Detroit* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001) by Victoria W. Wolcott, on the vital role that black women played in shaping the politics and culture of interwar Detroit by utilizing respectability as a central symbol of reform, and "The Brotherly Love for Which this City is Proverbial, Should be Extended to All: The Everyday Lives of Working-Class Women in Philadelphia and Atlanta in the 1890s" by Tera Hunter in *The African American Urban Experience: Perspectives from the Colonial Period to the Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 76-98, edited by Joe W. Trotter, Jr., Earl Lewis, and Tera Hunter, take a comparative approach to the study of black women in the Great Migration in the North and South. Both are considered important texts in the study of black women in the Great Migration. *For the Freedom of Her Race: Black Women and Electoral Politics in Illinois, 1877-1932* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009) by Lisa G. Materson illustrates how black women became active voters, canvassers, suffragists, and social reformers in a northern context, while *Making a Way Out of No Way: African American Women and the Second Great Migration* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010) by Lisa Krissoff Boehm uses oral histories of black women migrants and their children to demonstrate how black women challenged institutionalized racism in the Second Great Migration; and, more recently, *South Side Girls: Growing Up in the Great Migration* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015) by Maria Chatelain about black girlhood in the Great Migration and, more specifically, how the construction and meaning of black girlhood shifted over time is an example of the new direction in studies of black women/girls in the Great Migration.

was born in 1875 Virginia to former Confederate States of America brigadier general John Robert Jones and an African American woman named Malinda Rice (a formerly enslaved woman who worked as a servant in the Jones' home in the 1870s).[216] Allen was raised by her uncle John Rice and his wife Dolly in Virginia though her father publicly acknowledged her and paid for her education.[217] She attended Hartshorn College in Richmond, Virginia before marrying Gregory Hayes, the president of Virginia Seminary, a black college in Lynchburg, Virginia in 1895, with whom she had seven children.[218] In 1906, Gregory died of Bright's disease and Mary Hayes Allen served as interim president of the Virginia Seminary until 1908, where she also taught.[219] She married William Allen in 1911 and had three more children. While in Virginia, Mary Hayes was instrumental in organizing the Lynchburg chapter of the NAACP and befriended both Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois before she and William relocated to the North.[220] In 1920, the Allens joined the Great Migration and moved to Montclair, where they lived on Valley Road near Bloomfield Avenue.[221] Mary became involved in the YW and served as secretary of the Montclair NAACP until the mid-1930s.

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[216] Elizabeth Shepard, and Mike Farrelly, *Legendary Locals of Montclair* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2013), 104.

[217] Ibid.

[218] Ibid.

[219] Carrie Allen McCray, *Freedom's Child: The Life of a Confederate General's Black Daughter* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 1998), 103.

[220] Ibid., 90; 118.

[221] Ibid., 131.

Hortense Ridley (Tate) was born in 1899 Topeka, Kansas to Mary and Ezekiel Ridley.[222] Her mother was a homemaker and her father the principal of an all-black school.[223] She graduated from Washburn University in Topeka with a BA in English.[224] In 1921, joining the Great Migration from West to North, she found her first professional position as secretary of the Girls Reserve program, and later director of cultural programs at the Montclair YW, where she taught young women African American history and presided over social events that included presentations from the leading intellectuals of the New Negro Era.[225] She married Alfred H. Tate in 1925 and later became a founding member of the National Council for Negro Women.[226] Marsh, born in Trenton, Tennessee, with her husband, an executive with the YMCA, relocated from Ohio to Montclair, where she taught piano and founded the Study Hour Club.[227] Marsh played a pivotal role in the local politics of Montclair, including the integration of the Montclair YW.[228]

Migrants came to Montclair, Atlantic City, and Newark individually and in groups. Some came to these cities as families while others traveled North as children

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[222] Birdie Wilson Johnson, "Leadership, Struggles, and Challenges of Hortense Ridley Tate: A Twentieth-Century African American Woman's Legacy to Methodism and Community Service," (Diss. Drew University, Madison, NJ), 4.

[223] Ibid., 42.

[224] Ibid., 44.

[225] Ibid., 55.

[226] Ibid., 81.

[227] "Montclair Honors Bessie Marsh," Montclair People Files, Bessie Marsh Folder, Montclair Historical Society, Montclair, New Jersey.

[228] "Honor Set for Mrs. Marsh," Montclair People Files, Bessie Marsh Folder, Montclair Historical Society, Montclair, New Jersey.

accompanied by older siblings or aunts and uncles. Many young adults traveled alone. The general pattern of migration to states such as New Jersey suggests that a younger generation of African Americans tended to make their way north, sometimes with children, sending for older relatives later. Orene Shelton's parents moved from Virginia around 1920 and came first to Pittsburgh, where they found work as domestics, then relocated to Montclair by 1924, where Orene was born.[229] Attending St. Paul Baptist Church in Montclair, the Sheltons became active in both the YMCA and YWCA. As Shelton recalled, "I don't remember a time when I didn't go to the YWCA. My mother was active in the YWCA; my father was active in the YMCA."[230] L. M. Connor left her home in Virginia at age fourteen around 1930, securing permission from her parents to live with a cousin in Montclair, taking the train first to Newark. She describes her journey in vivid detail:

> I left home…before I became a young miss, to Montclair…I got permission from my parents…to be in custody of a distant cousin, Cyrus L. Slayton, who had recently moved to Montclair at the time…. As I boarded the train leaving from Altavista, Virginia, I felt very good about leaving, yet I knew I was going to miss my family, and as I was riding on the train….it was quite lonely to a point. Then I shed some tears, knowing that I was going to miss my family already, and plus at that time we were Black, so we had to ride in the Black coach.[231]

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[229] Orene Shelton, interview by Elizabeth Shepard, transcript, 17 January 2001, The Montclair-African American Oral History Project, Montclair Historical Society, Montclair, New Jersey.

[230] Orene Shelton, interview by Elizabeth Shepard, transcript, 17 January 2001, The Montclair-African American Oral History Project, Montclair Historical Society, Montclair, New Jersey.

[231] L.M. Connor, interview by Elizabeth Shepard, transcript, 10 November 2000, The Montclair-African American Oral History Project, Montclair Historical Society, Montclair, New Jersey.

Upon arriving in Montclair, Connor became active in several organizations, including the Union Baptist Church, NAACP, and YWCA.[232] Several years later, she supported the relocation of her brother, sister, and parents.[233] Mary E. Brown, born in Snow Hill, North Carolina, came to Atlantic City around 1934 at the age of nine with her widowed mother and siblings.[234] Her mother found employment as a domestic dayworker with a white family in Margate but "was very protective of her daughters" and forbade them to "work in the homes of whites."[235] Willie Dean Bradwell, born in Calvin County, Georgia, came first to Buffalo, New York in 1938 then to Newark with her first husband at the age of eighteen in 1939.[236] Her reflections on why she traveled North indicate that "the work there [in the South] was limited. And we were looking for something better, something more secure."[237] George Branch came to Newark from North Carolina with his mother and siblings in 1941 to live with an aunt who had already settled there. Branch recalls that his aunt Mazur Branch, on her visits South, suggested that "the labor was better" in the North and you "could get a job fast and you didn't have to work in the field."[238]

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[232] L.M. Connor, interview by Elizabeth Shepard, transcript, 10 November 2000, The Montclair-African American Oral History Project, Montclair Historical Society, Montclair, New Jersey.

[233] L.M. Connor, interview by Elizabeth Shepard, transcript, 10 November 2000, The Montclair-African American Oral History Project, Montclair Historical Society, Montclair, New Jersey.

[234] Mary E. Brown, interview by Richlyn F. Goddard, tape recording, 26 October 1995, Atlantic City Oral History Project, Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

[235] Mary E. Brown, interview by Richlyn F. Goddard, tape recording, 26 October 1995, Atlantic City Oral History Project, Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

[236] Willie Dean Bradwell, interview by E. Alama Flagg, 8 December 1997, The Krueger-Scott African American Oral History Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

[237] Willie Dean Bradwell, interview by E. Alama Flagg, 8 December 1997, The Krueger-Scott African American Oral History Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

[238] George Branch, interview by Pauline Blount, 28 August 1996, The Krueger-Scott African American Oral History Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

The city of Newark was a primary destination hub for many African Americans during the Great Migration to northern communities. Both women and men such as Coyt L. Jones, Jessie Johnson, and Sharpe James, Newark's second black mayor from 1988 to 2006, relocated to Newark in search of work and professional opportunities. Some came before or after family members arrived in the city. Others came with. Jones, father of famed poet and civil rights activist Leroy Jones (Amiri Baraka), came north in 1927 from South Carolina.[239] He was about ten years of age and had an older sister who had previously located to Newark, residing on South Orange Avenue. Their parents followed some years later. Jones recalls that he took the train "straight to Newark" [240] seeking employment. He eventually found work in several places, including working for a Jewish family unloading vegetables at a local grocery store as well as a position mopping floors and shining shoes at a barbershop.[241] Johnson, a professional woman with a college degree in education from Florida A&M, migrated to several cities such as Dothan, Alabama, Washington, DC, Cleveland, Ohio and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania before settling in Newark in 1944.[242]

Johnson went first to Dothan to teach then relocated to DC in search of work as a teacher, but she and her husband were only able to find menial labor, which prompted them to migrate first to Pittsburgh and then Newark in search of professional jobs:

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[239] Coyt L. Jones, interview by Pauline Blount, transcript, 25 January 1996, The Krueger-Scott African American Oral History Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

[240] Coyt L. Jones, interview by Pauline Blount, transcript, 25 January 1996, The Krueger-Scott African American Oral History Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

[241] Coyt L. Jones, interview by Pauline Blount, January 25, 1996.

[242] Jessie Lois Jones Johnson, interview by Glen Marie Brickus, transcript, Newark, NJ, The Krueger-Scott Oral History Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

> We were in Washington, and jobs were very difficult to obtain. There were menial jobs that you could do, but I didn't have my mind set on doing a menial job. I wanted something in a professional job. And, of course, my husband being a professional man, he could only get a job such as being on the railroad.[243]

They went specifically to Pittsburgh to take a civil service exam for federal positions at the Office of Dependent Benefits for soldiers that were available in Newark, Philadelphia, and New York.[244] Johnson notes that she gained a positive impression of Newark from black visitors who returned South bearing signs of affluence:

> I thought of Newark, as people would come back, that leave Douthen, they'd come back. They would come back, and they would come back in the biggest car they could come in. And they would come in fur coats.[245]

Johnson optimistically believed that conditions for blacks would be ideal in the North, stating that, "I had heard up north we're free, we can do whatever we want to, we are integrated and all."[246] However, when she and her husband were refused a place at The Essex Hotel upon arriving in the city, she was forced to rethink this claim. The Johnsons slept in the train station for two nights until a minister from a local church assisted them with lodging.[247]

James recalls that his mother brought him and his brother to the North from Jacksonville, Florida on trains, buses, cars, and walking, reaching Elizabeth, New Jersey

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[243] Jessie Lois Jones Johnson, interview by Glen Marie Brickus, transcript, Newark, NJ, The Krueger-Scott Oral History Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

[244] Jessie Lois Jones Johnson, interview by Glen Marie Brickus, transcript, Newark, NJ, The Krueger-Scott Oral History Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

[245] Jessie Lois Jones Johnson, interview by Glen Marie Brickus, transcript, Newark, NJ, The Krueger-Scott Oral History Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

[246] Jessie Lois Jones Johnson, interview by Glen Marie Brickus, transcript, Newark, NJ, The Krueger-Scott African American Oral History Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

[247] Jessie Lois Jones Johnson, interview by Glen Marie Brickus, transcript, Newark, NJ, The Krueger-Scott Oral History Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

in 1944.[248] Mrs. James came North to escape an abusive husband; her son stated that she had been "harassed by my stepfather" suffering a beating that nearly "cost the loss of her life,"[249] finally prompting her to migrate North. The James family lived with an uncle in Elizabeth moving to Newark in 1945, where Mrs. James eventually established her own restaurant and Sharpe James became an educator, community activist, and prominent politician. This story suggests that although black migrants continued facing obstacles to freedom in the North, such as segregation and denial of opportunities in employment, the North continued to be viewed as a land of opportunity by some. James recounts his life in the South in stark contrast to his experience in the North, stating that his time in Jacksonville was marked by "Fear. I felt the weight of segregation and being a second-class citizen and being fearful of the police."[250] Though the North was not devoid of racism, relative to the South it seemed a land of opportunity for some blacks who had made the Great Migration to northern cities, partly due to the role of the black church in providing assistance to migrants.

The black church is the oldest—and some would argue most important—community institution in the African American experience, and the Garden State is home to some of the oldest black church congregations in the nation. This is an institution that plays multiple interrelated roles as a social, cultural, political and economic entity in black life. Historic black congregations in the Garden State include the Salem Mt. Pisgah

[248] Sharpe James, interview by Glen Marie Brickus, transcript, 3 December, 1986, The Krueger-Scott African American Oral History Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

[249] Sharpe James, interview by Glen Marie Brickus, transcript, 3 December, 1986, The Krueger-Scott African American Oral History Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

[250] Sharpe James, interview by Glen Marie Brickus, transcript, 3 December, 1986, The Krueger-Scott African American Oral History Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

Church, dating to c. 1800, the only New Jersey black congregation represented at the founding of the AME Church in 1816 and in places such as Princeton and Trenton by 1818.[251] The AME Church considers itself to be the first black church formed in the African Diaspora. Clinton Memorial Church was likely the first AME Zion (AMEZ) Church to appear in Newark, developed in 1822; the Plane Street Presbyterian Church founded in 1831, and the Bethany Baptist church established in 1871 Newark were also considered pivotal black religious institutions in the state by the time of the First Great Migration.[252] The Ebenezer Baptist Church was founded in 1873 New Brunswick. These churches served as meeting places for literary societies, ladies auxiliaries, men's clubs, and educational facilities.[253]

In 1886, AME minister Walter A. Rice helped establish a state-supported vocational school for blacks known as the New Jersey Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youths, illustrating the preeminence of the AME Church in the state at the time.[254] This school, a segregated institution supported by state funding, focused on the vocational training of black youths.[255] The school, which Booker T. Washington visited on occasion, has also been referred to as the "Tuskegee of the North."[256] The predominance of the AME Church in New Jersey was eventually rivaled by the black Baptist Church in the early twentieth century, and the school became a site of contention

[251] Giles Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 30.

[252] Giles Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 30.

[253] Ibid., 48.

[254] Ibid., 48.

[255] Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant*, 181-187.

[256] Ibid., 181.

between black civil rights advocates and intellectual elites in terms of its curriculum, and the policy of state-sanctioned segregation in educational facilities.[257]

Migrant communities were assisted by black church congregations on multiple levels as an integral institution in the development of black urban centers in the North. African American leaders in education, social work, business and civil rights were congregants at the leading black churches in northern states who sought to provide support for the new migrants. In their adopted communities, black migrants looked to the church as a source of stability and social welfare. Churches such as Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York and Olivet Baptist Church in Chicago facilitated daycare centers, kindergartens, employment bureaus, social clubs and youth groups.[258] The increased number of migrants in the 1910s helped to expand church membership, and some black migrants such as Ida Bell Robinson, who settled in Philadelphia, sought to establish their own congregations.[259] Albert J. Raboteau contends that "some churches were so overcrowded that they had to double services on Sundays" during the early years of the Great Migration.[260] Olivet Baptist Church had a membership of 8,743, including forty-two departments and auxiliaries with nearly two dozen salaried workers by the second decade of the Great Migration.[261] Robinson, disenchanted with the lack of women preachers in the United Church of America, founded the Mount Sinai Church of America

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[257] Ibid.

[258] Albert J. Raboteau, *Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 85.

[259] Ibid.

[260] Ibid., 84.

[261] Ibid., 85.

that would eventually include 84 churches from New England to Florida with some 125 women ministers of the 163 total.[262]

There was a contingent of black congregations in northern urban communities during the first three decades of the twentieth century, including those led by Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Jews, Catholics, Spiritualists, and independent charismatic leaders[263] such as Timothy/Noble Drew Ali, Marcus Garvey, and Reverend M. J. Divine / Father Divine. In early twentieth century, Methodism as exemplified in the AME Church remained a dominant force among blacks in the Garden State "as the largest black religious body"[264] in the state since the late nineteenth century. The AME Church had developed a long tradition of protest advocating at first for the abolition of slavery and then denouncing the disenfranchisement of blacks.[265] Black Baptist congregations soon surpassed the domination of the black Methodist congregations in the state by the 1930s. These same men and women who held leadership positions in the black church came to occupy pivotal positions in the YWCA, NAACP, and NUL.

By 1938, there were approximately 412 black churches in New Jersey with 71,221 members.[266] The two largest church organizations in the state included the black Baptist Church and the AME Church. By the third decade of the twentieth century, there were 159 black Baptist churches with a membership of 41,129 and 101 AME churches

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[262] Priscilla Pope Levinson, *Turn the Pulpit Loose: Two Centuries of American Women Evangelists* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 205-207.

[263] Raboteau, *Canaan Land*, 86.

[264] Clement Alexander Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro Americans in New Jersey* (Newark: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1980), 167.

[265] Ibid.

[266] Works Progress Administration, *The Negro Church in New Jersey* (Hackensack, NJ: 1938), 47.

with 11,415 members in total in New Jersey.[267] Although the Baptists surpassed the AME Church in terms of numbers and estimated church assets, there were multiple constituent black Methodist organizations in the state, such as the Methodist Episcopal (ME), AME Zion (AMEZ), Union American Methodist Episcopal (UAME) African Union First Colored Methodist Protestant (AUMP), and Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (CMEC), with nearly 14,000 black congregants in total. The AMEZ Church had 5,625 members worshiping at thirty-two facilities, and the ME Church had twenty-nine churches and 3,525 parishioners as the second- and third-largest black Methodist organizations in the state at the time.[268] The assets of the black church were 200 million dollars in total by 1938.[269] The black church was a formidable presence in the lives of blacks in the early Civil Rights Era as paralleled by the emergence of secular organizations such as the NAACP, NUL, and UNIA as blacks continued to rely heavily on religious-based institutions such as the YMCA and YWCA for social services. Activists did not always distinguish between their sacred and secular responsibilities to the community; rather, they understood the value of the church as an organizing ground for civil rights activities, as both a social and political entity, though an increased reliance on legal remedies and social science evidence becomes more pronounced amid the rise of associations such as the NAACP with activists such as Marion Thompson Wright.

African Americans turned to Christian-based associations such as the YMCA and YWCA as well as secular agencies such as the NAACP, NUL, and UNIA for support

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[267] Ibid.

[268] Works Progress Administration, *The Negro Church in New Jersey* (Hackensack, NJ: 1938), 47.

[269] Ibid.

during the First Great Migration. The Y Movement espoused a philosophy of Christian community and provided much-needed social services such as housing, job training programs, and recreation opportunities to both blacks and whites, although the vast majority of these Ys remained segregated until the WWII Era. Many blacks took the initiative and formed YMCAs and YWCAs in their own New Jersey communities in places such at Montclair, Newark, Trenton, and Red Bank (though the Montclair YW is considered the only independent YW in the state during this era).[270] The national platforms of associations such as the NAACP and NUL publicly ascribed to an ideology of integration as the solution to racial discrimination. NAACP activists embraced a strategy of legal gradualism to fight segregation in the courts, whereas the NUL focused on the economic and social well-being of blacks by conducting mass-scale social science surveys and seeking support for social programs from liberal-minded whites who served as a liaison between black workers and employers while advocating for jobs training programs. Garvey's UNIA, the largest and most successful black civil rights agency in terms of numbers, through the 1930s, as aforementioned, had more than 300 chapters

[270] The general pattern of development of black YWCAs, as identified by Nancy Marie Robertson in her text *Christian Sisterhood, Race Relations and the YWCA, 1906-1946* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), was that there had to already be a branch of the YW in the town or city before a separate YW for African Americans could be approved, which derived from the agreement that "only one association in a city would be allowed to affiliate with the national association" and that the first association in a given city would be recognized as the "central association" while all others would be considered "branches" (32). Montclair did not have a YWCA the year that the black women there decided to begin their own association in 1912. The branch relationship, according to Robertson, was encouraged; however, the YWCA policy also allowed for the creation of independent branches that were later absorbed into the national body. The branch relationship meant that members of the white central branch served on the governing board of the affiliate branch and the affiliates branches' activities were subject to the approval of the (white) central branch (32). Robertson identifies several independent associations that were still in operation by 1912, including in Baltimore, Maryland, Norfolk, Virginia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Washington, DC, Dayton, Ohio, and Charleston, South Carolina. She fails to mention the Montclair YW even though this too was an independent YWCA in some respects; however, my term for this YW is "semi-autonomous" because it began as an independent branch that was developed by black women and controlled by black women through a board of management that worked in consultation with an all-white advisory board.

with a membership in the millions worldwide along with an international newspaper called *Negro World* and several business ventures centered in New York City.[271] The UNIA advocated black economic self-reliance while espousing the ideology of separatism popularized in Garvey's 'Back to Africa' campaign.

Blacks developed a complex set of allegiances to multiple church-based and civil rights agencies simultaneously. Although the national office of the NAACP embraced the philosophy of integration, through a strategy of legal gradualism, local leaders often deployed a strategy of armed self-defense as discussed by historians like Timothy Tyson and Lance Hill.[272] Tyson profiles the gun-toting head of the North Carolina NAACP, Robert F. Williams, in his text *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams & The Roots of Black Power* (University of North Carolina Press, 2001), and Hill, in his book *The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement* (University of North Carolina Press, 2006), tells the story of the black Korean War veterans who organized a gun club known as the Deacons for Defense and Justice to protect black civil rights workers in the Deep South. Members of an Asbury Park gun club, who were

[271] Carson, Lapsansky-Werner, and Nash, *African American* Lives, 358-359.

[272] There are several texts to date concerning African Americans and armed resistance—including *This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible* (New York: Basic Books, 2014) by Charles E. Cobb, *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (New York: New York University Press, 2013) by Akinyele Omowale Umoja, *The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006) by Lance Hill, and *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Black Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001) by Timothy B. Tyson—that illustrate the interrelationship between nonviolent direct action and armed self-defense. NAACP members routinely took up arms in defense of black lives while publicly espousing nonviolent direct action.

known to take up arms in defense of black civil rights, for instance, were also leading figures in the local chapter of the NAACP.[273]

Between 1910 and 1940, African Americans in New Jersey developed a variety of local, regional, and state-level professional, civic, recreational and civil rights associations important to the development of the early Civil Rights Movement in the Garden State. Because most of the professional teacher's associations in the United States did not integrate until the 1950s, black teachers such as Mrs. Hannah P. Lowe from Atlantic City formed the New Jersey Organization of Teachers of Colored Children in 1915.[274] Through this association, black teachers learned about opportunities for professional growth and development. The New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, founded in 1915 by Florence Spearing Randolph, was a statewide association that promoted women's suffrage, supported the temperance movement, and advocated for black civil rights.[275] This federation joined with the NACW in 1918. In 1920, the Plainfield Negro History Club was formed by local professionals such as Mills Barnes to combat segregation in the city, and that same year the Just-A-Mere Literary Club of Roselle was organized in northern New Jersey.[276] Just-A-Mere was developed by professional black women primarily to study and discuss literature but also served as a

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[273] "Gets Friends from Asbury Park to Reinforce Home Defense," Box 1, Folder 1, Urban Colored Population Commission Records, 1944-1947, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, New Jersey.

[274] Rebecca Batts Butler, *Profiles of Outstanding Blacks in South Jersey During the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s* (Trenton: Reynolds Publishing, Inc., 1980), 38.

[275] Bettye Collier-Thomas, "For the Race in General and Black Women in Particular: The Civil Rights Activities of African American Women's Organizations, 1915-1950," in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001) edited by V. P. Franklin and Bettye Collier-Thomas, 23.

[276] Ethel M. Washington, *Union County Black Americans* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2004), 52.

necessary identity-making institution for professional black women.[277] The New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs joined the Northeastern Federation of Women's Clubs in 1922. In 1929, the Atlantic City Board of Trade was created by black professionals, including Dr. L. D. Wright, Clifford J. Newsome, and Thomas B. Pursley, to facilitate cooperation between black professionals on the Northside of the city, which included advertising the services of local black businesses in a periodic organizational publication.[278] Civic and recreational centers such as the Jersey Land Park Community Center formed in 1932 Scotch Plains also emerged as important community institutions.

Through the 1930s, blacks formed other associations at the regional, local, and national levels such as the Negro Funeral Directors of North Jersey, a regional group focused on pooling professional information and business strategies, and the Newark Barber's Protective Association, formed also to promote black business interests and opportunities.[279] The Essex County League of Colored Women Voters was formed to support black women migrants entering northern New Jersey as a result of the Great migration, and Black Republican Clubs were created at the county level in various sections of the state during the First Great Migration.[280] In 1934, Emma Odessa, Ollie Chinn Porter, and Effie Diton, among others, formed the Negro Business and Professional Women's Club, along with black women business owners, managers, and licensed professional black women to support black women's business development

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[277] Ibid., 53.

[278] "Reflections: Black-owned Businesses of the Past," Black Businesses Collection, Atlantic City Free Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey unprocessed.

[279] Kevin Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 24.

[280] Ibid., 25.

opportunities.[281] Elite black women formed Girlfriends Incorporated in 1927 as a national organization with "social and cultural interests." Some of the group's earliest chapters appeared in New York and New Jersey.[282] Similarly, black women in the haircare industry such as Cordelia Greene Johnson formed professional groups such as the Modern Beauticians Association of New Jersey, Inc. in 1935.[283] The Tuxedo Club was formed by a group of black professional men including William Dinkins, Tex Powell, Fes Robinson, Charles Malloy, and Roley Ross in 1936 in Trenton, and later the Tuxedorettes (Ladies) Club was formed to promote social connections and community service among blacks in the city.[284] By 1937, Johnson's organization was described as the largest state organization for black beauticians in the nation.[285] In addition to organizing clubs and associations, black communities throughout the state founded community centers, such as the Westfield Community Center in 1938, where black community members could meet to discuss social justice issues.[286]

There were also several groups that promoted interracial cooperation at the local level, such as the Interracial Council of Newark and the Interracial Committee for Unity

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[281] National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., "History of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs Inc.," SC D 98-1261, Research and Reference Library, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, New York.

[282] "History of the Girlfriends, Inc. from 1927 to 1984," Girlfriends Incorporated Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, New York.

[283] "State Beauticians in Annual Convention at Atlantic City," Black Businesses Collection, Atlantic City Free Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey unprocessed.

[284] Jack Washington, *Quest for Equality: Trenton's Black Community, 1890-1965* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1993), 121.

[285] "State Beauticians in Annual Convention at Atlantic City," Black Businesses Collection, Atlantic City Free Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey unprocessed.

[286] Ethel M. Washington, *Union County Black Americans* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2004), 55.

in Trenton, both active in the Interwar Era.[287] The Interracial Committee of the New Jersey Conference of Social Work was a professional group formed at the state level to promote the collection of data on discriminatory practices in the state. This list is exhaustive, and yet it is impossible to list all of the local, regional, and state-level associations developed by African Americans to promote civil rights in the early twentieth century.

During this era, some marked class distinctions emerged within and between black religious and social institutions. In *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (University of Arkansas Press, 2000), Willard Gatewood has argued that black elites tended to be affiliated with the Catholic Church or "high-status" Episcopal, Presbyterian or Congregational Churches as opposed to the black Baptist Church (at least before 1920).[288] Further, he notes that religion may not have played as strong a role in the lives of elites as in the lives of middle- or working-class blacks.[289] Clubs such as the Girlfriends Incorporated or the Tuxedo Club of Trenton were clearly organized by and for black old money elites.[290] These organizations lent their support to various civil rights causes, but membership was not open. The black elite tended to form exclusive associations such as the *Boulé* (Sigma Pi Beta), Diamond Back Club, Girlfriends Incorporated, and Cosmos Club that limited membership to a select population of well-

[287] Washington, *The Quest for Equality*, 111.
[288] Willard B. Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2000), 282.

[289] Ibid., 282.

[290] Washington, *The Quest for Equality*, 121.

to-do black professionals with distinguished family names or wealth.[291] Various fraternal lodges, guilds, and black Greek letter associations were also dominated by elites.[292]

Historically, class stratification[293] was evident within and between black church and social organizations during the height of the Jim Crow Era given that the black elite had previously been defined primarily by its proximity to white society (through birth and family name, religious affiliation, or profession) during the era of enslavement.[294] But, race allegiance among blacks became noticeably more solidified in the first four decades of the century, due to segregation.[295] Black elites and professionals were barred from obtaining equal access to residential, educational, social, and recreational facilities just like working-class African Americans in this era.[296] In fact, cross-class collaboration was necessary in the Jim Crow Era for the success of the struggle for black equality overall.

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[291] Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color*, 217-219; 241.

[292] Ibid., 217.

[293] The term 'elite' has often been used interchangeably by scholars with the phrases 'upper middle-class' or 'professional class' as related to the African American experience; however, more recent scholarship has made a distinction between old money elites and the new elite or nouveau riche contingent of professionals such as with doctors, lawyers, morticians, educators, and entrepreneurs who acquired wealth in their own generation (relative to the overall economic status of the black masses) that emerged in the early twentieth century. The two communities often overlap in that the doctors, lawyers, and business owners are oftentimes members of the old money elite. For the purpose of this study, I conjoin the two and utilize the phrase "black elite and professional class," which reflects the broader view of scholarship on the black upper class more generally while at the same time recognizing distinctions within this community. This study then does not focus only on the old money elite but also the professional class as well as the interrelationship between the black elite professional class, middle-, and working-class communities more generally.

[294] Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color*, 153-155.

[295] Ibid., 311.

[296] Ibid.

African Americans lived in closer geographic proximity to one another as a result of segregation and shared a linked fate shaped by the experience of racial oppression. The spatial proximity of African Americans in terms of working- and middle-class blacks was far greater in the early black freedom struggle than today; thus, the spatial relocation of the black middle-class outside of the geographic boundaries of the black community today has caused a shift away from a caste-like[297] system, once circumscribed largely by race, for middle-class African Americans to a class-system that resembles the dominant white middle-class structure.[298]

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[297] Sociologists and historians writing on the black urban underclass formed as result of the Great Migration have utilized the phrase "caste" or "racial caste" to describe the black underclass constellated in urban communities that emerged between 1910 and 1970. Social scientists writing in the 1940s such as Gunnar Myrdal, W. Lloyd Warner, St. Clair Drake, and Horace R. Cayton helped to develop the racial caste model to describe the black urban underclass. In his text *Deep South* (1941), Warner advanced the notion of a caste and class model as applied to race relations in the US by arguing that racial segregation in social, economic, political and cultural institutions was persistent for African Americans within the larger American experience. He claimed that because African Americans faced persistent inequality, they could not be understood as merely another racial minority but rather should be understood as a (racial) lower caste or class. The caste and class model is also illustrated in Myrdal's publication *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper,1944) in which he argued that the dilemma of ideas about liberal democracy coexisting with black social inequality was an impediment to social progress. St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, in their text *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1945), use the caste and class theory to examine the cultural, social, economic and political life of a black neighborhood in Douglas, Chicago. The term 'ghetto' is deployed in *Black Metropolis* to signify the black urban underclass constellated in this section of Chicago. This term "ghetto" is later utilized in a work entitled *The Negro Ghetto* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1948) by Robert Weaver. In this text, Weaver argues that the black ghetto was a recent development in American life. More recent scholarship such as *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) by Arnold Hirsch, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) by Kenneth Jackson, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994) by Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, and *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) by Thomas Sugrue all detail the persistence of segregation and social inequality among blacks in urban locales while also demonstrating how practices such as blockbusting, redlining, restrictive covenants, and low-interest federal subsidies to the white homeowners who created the suburbs made the creation of a black racial caste possible as a result of the Great Migration. The benefits of the Civil Rights Movement helped to produce an expanding upper class no longer confined within the spatial parameters of the inner city, thus helping to create a new class structure among African Americans more generally or an increase in class stratification.

[298] Kesha S. Moore, "Class Formations: Competing forms of Black Middle-class Identity," *Ethnicities* 8 (November 2008): 495.

This transition for (some) African Americans from caste to class is largely a late-twentieth century phenomenon signified by the expansion of the black middle class after 1960. In terms of class distinctions, the unschooled charismatic leader with no formal education who served as minister of the local church was just as important as the black minister with a formal education; in other words, class was defined sometimes as position in the community and not necessarily by education or wealth, at least before the advent of the modern Civil Rights Movement.[299] The social institutions of black society reveal a broad spectrum of cross-class alliances between 1909 and 1954, both within and between the more recognizable civil rights associations such as the NAACP and NUL.

In early twentieth-century New Jersey, African Americans such as Alice H. Foster sought to organize various branches of national reform associations in the state. Foster, the wife of a local black businessman, organized an independent all-black YWCA in 1912 Montclair.[300] Foster, as a Montclair native and graduate of Howard University, recognized the need for such an organization to support the expanding population of black women migrating into the city.[301] This YW was one of the only semi-autonomous all-black YWCAs in the nation, though the Y's national policy was that local branches, particularly those labeled "colored", must be attached to a central branch office in the town or region that it was established. There was no other YW in Montclair at the time. Thus, black women in Montclair took the initiative and created a place of their own.

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[299] Willard B. Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color*, 281.

[300] Montclair Historical Society, "The African American Y Project," *Montclairhistorical.org*, Summer 2012, http://montclairhistorical.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/MHS-Web-Newsletter-Summer-2012.pdf (accessed November 22, 2013).

[301] Ibid.

New Jersey's black intelligentsia evolved from a significant indigenous black population. During the Colonial Era, the Garden State had one of the largest black populations in the northeastern United States, and all-black communities from this time such as Gouldtown, Lawnside, and Timbuctoo contain some of the oldest black churches in the nation with congregations that had been directly involved in the early struggle for black equality. These same churches had also served as critical stations along the Underground Railroad. Anti-slavery activists such as Cyrus Bustill, born a slave in Burlington County, New Jersey, a co-founder of the Free African Society, and William Still, author of *The Underground Railroad: A Record of Facts, Authentic Narratives, and Letters* (Johnson Publishers, 1970; 1872) and youngest son of Levin and Charity Still, had roots in New Jersey's southern black communities.[302] Still's nephew James Thomas was only the second African American to receive a medical degree from Harvard.[303]

Many notable twentieth-century black writers, singers, musicians, artists, and intellectuals—Jessie Redmon Fauset, Paul Robeson, William James "Count" Basie, Sonny Greer, Marion Thompson Wright, and Jacob Lawrence—were born in New Jersey. Fauset—a writer, essayist, editor, and mentor to writers such as Langton Hughes—was born in southern New Jersey in 1882 (she later resided in Montclair from 1939 to 1960) and educated at Cornell University, where she studied languages and became one of the first African American members of Phi Beta Kappa.[304] Her significant works as a major

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[302] William Still's book *The Underground Railroad: A Record of Facts, Authentic Narratives, and Letters* (Chicago: Johnson Publishers, 1970; 1870) is considered the first comprehensive written account of the Underground Railroad.

[303] Karen Reeds, "Still, James," in *Encyclopedia of New Jersey,* edited by Maxine Lurie and Marc Mappen (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 780.

[304] Erin A. Smith, "Fauset, Jesse Redmon," *American National Biography*, www.anb.org, accessed April 16, 2017, found at http://www.anb.org/articles/16/16-00524.html

figure of the Harlem Renaissance include *There is Confusion* (Northeastern Library of Black Literature, 1989), *Plum Bun: A Novel Without A Moral* (Beacon Press, 1999), *The Chinaberry Tree: A Comedy of American Life* (Dover Publications, 2013), and *Comedy, American Style* (Rutgers University Press, 2009).[305] Robeson—actor, singer, athlete, activist, and great-great grandson of Bustill—was born in 1898 Princeton, New Jersey into one of the elite black families of the region. Robeson's activism, and particularly his connection to black labor-left coalition politics, is well documented.

Greer—a bandleader, vocalist, and actor—was born in 1895 Long Branch, and Basie was born in 1904 Red Bank, New Jersey. Basie is considered one of the foremost jazz pianists, bandleaders, and composers in US history. Several great musicians, including Lester Young, Freddie Green, and Herschel Evans, rose to fame under his tutelage. These two acclaimed musicians, Greer and Basie, helped make this particular region of the Jersey Shore a hub of Jazz Age culture in the first two decades of the twentieth century.[306] Stride piano player Willie Grant and Duke Ellington visited this area on occasion as early as 1913.[307] Asbury Park's Springwood Avenue eventually became a center of black music culture as demonstrated by places such as the Turf Club, Madonna Club, and later the Orchid Club.[308] At the height of the Harlem Renaissance, Greer

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[305] Jessie Redmon Fauset, editor, novelist, poet, essayist and mentor to major figures of the Harlem Renaissance, is considered to be the most prolific woman writer of the New Negro Era. She wrote four novels, including *There is Confusion* (New York: Northeastern Library of Black Literature, 1989) originally published in 1924, *Plum Bun: A Novel Without a Moral* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999) first published in 1929, *The Chinaberry Tree: A Comedy of American Life* (Dover Publications, 2013) published in 1931, and *Comedy, American Style* (Rutgers University Press, 2009) published in 1933.

[306] Charlie Horner, "Asbury Park's West Side Vocal Groups Part I (1958)," *Echoes of the Past Magazine* 99, (2012), 1.

[307] Ibid.

[308] Ibid.

became a drummer for the Ellington band in New York called the Washingtonians while Basie toured the country.

Marion Manola Thompson was born in East Orange, New Jersey on September 13, 1905 as the fourth and youngest child of Moses R. Thompson and Minnie Holmes Thompson.[309] The family eventually moved to Newark, where she attended the prestigious Barringer High School. One of the only two black students at Barringer, Marion graduated at the top of her class. Although she married while still in high school (to William H. Moss) and had two children by 1920, her mother ensured that she continued her education after divorcing her first husband in 1923.[310] Society frowned upon a divorcée at such a young age with two children attending college, but Wright subsequently attended Howard University on scholarship while her daughter Thelma and her son James lived with her mother in Montclair.[311] Wright—a social worker, historian and activist—along with Granger and Ashby, maintained her connection to the Garden State after graduating from Howard and became one of the leading advocates calling for the end of segregation in New Jersey and the nation.

Jacob Lawrence, the first black artist to be represented by a major commercial gallery in US history, was born in the thriving resort town of Atlantic City in 1917.[312] He eventually moved to New York with his family, but the burgeoning black cultural and

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[309] Hilton Kelly, "Toward a Critical Race Biography of Marion Thompson Wright," *Vitae Scholasticae* 30, no. 2 (2013): 49.

[310] Ibid.

[311] Crocco, Munro, Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*, 62.

[312] Whitney Museum of American Art, "Jacob Lawrence: Exploring Stories-Whitney Museum of Art," www.whitney.org accessed April 27, 2017 fount at http://whitney.org/www/jacoblawrence/meet/

commercial section of Atlantic City known as the Northside, increasingly becoming a more prominent fixture in black cultural and intellectual life during the Renaissance Era, became a black cultural Mecca populated by artists, musicians, and businesspeople.

The migration of blacks to the state, coupled with the presence of a historic black community settled within New Jersey for centuries, helped facilitate the formation of a black intelligentsia in the state during the 1920s and '30s. Many well-to-do and middle-class blacks migrated for non-economic reasons such as educational pursuits or political rights. Some migrated to attend prestigious universities in New York or New England, while others active in organizations such as the YMCA, YWCA, NACW, NAACP, and NUL participated in the formation of local chapters in various northern states, thereby providing much of the leadership structure for these associations.

John A. Kenney, founder of the National Medical Association, and the first full-service hospital for African Americans called John A. Andrew Memorial Hospital in 1913, migrated to New Jersey in the 1920s.[313] Kenney was a vocal advocate for black healthcare rights and worked as the personal physician to Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute.[314] Much to the consternation of the Klan in Alabama, he advocated that the VA hospital which had been built for African American patients be reserved for black staff only.[315] In 1923, he left Alabama after the Klan threatened his life and burned a cross on his property.[316] When Kenney arrived in northern New Jersey with his family,

[313] Robert M. White, M.D., "Kenney Memorial Hospital," *Journal of the National Medical Association* 91, no. 5, (1930): 282.

[314] Ibid.

[315] Ibid., 283.

[316] Robert M. White, M.D., "Kenney Memorial Hospital," *Journal of the National Medical Association* 91, no. 5, (1930): 283.

there were no hospitals in the Garden State that allowed black physicians such as himself to practice.[317] Therefore, Kenney decided to open Kenney Memorial Hospital in Newark in 1927. By 1930, the hospital had a bed capacity for thirty patients and the property was valued at $75,000.[318] An estimated 941 patients had spent a total of 14,514 days at the facility within three years of its opening.[319] By 1930, it was one of the only two hospitals in the state that admitted blacks.

Black physicians formed an important intellectual community in the Garden State alongside social scientists like Wright, Ashby, and Granger, as well as entertainers such as Robeson, during the early Civil Rights Movement. Otto Hill, Ulysses S. Wiggins, and Lena Edwards migrated to the state around the same time as Kenney, and all three were pioneers in the field of medicine and civil rights simultaneously. Prior to Kenney's founding of a hospital for blacks, black doctors in segregated hospitals could only treat patients after the white doctors had administered the patients to them in the event that hospitalization was necessary.[320] Hill's campaign to desegregate the blood supply and his authorship of a major civil rights law in the state in 1945 are important to the story of the black freedom struggle in the Garden State. Both Hill and Wiggins were major forces in the early black freedom struggle alongside Edwards and Kenney. These black doctors understood that access to quality healthcare was a fundamental civil right. There was a

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[317] Ibid., 284.

[318] John A. Kenney, M.D., "Kenney Memorial Hospital (Incorporated) Newark, New Jersey," *Journal of the National Medical Association*, XXII, no. 3, accessed April 16, 2017, found at http:// newarkcarefacilities.com/kenney1930journal.php

[319] John A. Kenney, M.D., "Kenney Memorial Hospital (Incorporated) Newark, New Jersey," *Journal of the National Medical Association*, XXII, no. 3, accessed April 16, 2017, found at http:// newarkcarefacilities.com/kenney1930journal.php

[320] White, M.D., "Kenney Memorial Hospital," 282.

linked fate between these elite black doctors and the working-class blacks for whom they advocated, as many understood segregation in public facilities like hospitals to be both a human rights issue and an impediment to medical progress.

Chapter 2

"A Young Colored Girls' Haven from Prejudice":

The Montclair YWCA and Black Women's Club Movement in the Garden State

"The YWCA had a much deeper meaning for us colored girls. It was a safe gathering place, a nurturing place. We were barred from so many other places in those days, and the YWCA was the young colored girls' haven from prejudice."[321]

– Carrie Allen McCray, *Freedom's Child: The Life of a Confederate General's Black Daughter*

Black women who came to the Garden State during the First Great Migration became increasingly involved in associations such as the YWCA (YW) and NACW; by working within and between multiple social service and civil rights agencies, these women continued to advance an intersectional approach to empowerment throughout the Interwar Era. Montclair's YW, founded in 1912, became a refuge from prejudice during for young women seeking housing, recreational activities, and job training programs.[322] Carrie Allen McCray described the Montclair YW as a "young Colored girl's haven from prejudice" because it was an important institution in her formative development as a young black woman coming of age in the Garden State.[323] Many black women migrants who came to northern states in the First Great Migration sought out the YWs scattered across northern states in communities such as Chicago, Harlem, and Montclair.[324] The YWCA of the USA, founded nearly a half-century before the NAACP, is considered one

[321] Carry Allen McCray, *Freedom's Child: The Life of a Confederate Generals' Black Daughter* (Algonquin Books, 1998), 233.

[322] "Glenridge Avenue YWCA," The Montclair YWCA Papers Box 16, Folder 17, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[323] McCray, *Freedom's Child*, 233.

[324] Virginia R. Boynton, "Fighting Racism at the YWCA," *Chicago History* (Summer 2000): 22.

of the earliest associations dedicated to interracial cooperation,[325] largely due to the activism of the black women who were members of the YW and other civil rights organizations simultaneously.

The Great Migration facilitated the development of distinct black-led institutions such as the Montclair YW in northern New Jersey. This YW was an important social, cultural, and intellectual center in early twentieth-century North Jersey, and due to its unique structure as a semi-autonomous YW, provides new insight into the development of the intersectional approach to empowerment embraced by black clubwomen in the first four decades of the century. Black women looked first to religious-based institutions such as churches, as historians Higginbotham and Collier-Thomas have demonstrated, and then to organizations such as the YWCA to advance their philosophy of interracialism (i.e., racial equality through interracial cooperation) as one dimension of their broader intersectional approach to empowerment that was informed by feminist sensibilities.[326] These women and the organizations they founded advanced a type of interracialist-feminist theology.[327]

Cooperation between black and white women participating in the YWCA movement was fostered by a common commitment to Christian ethics and, more

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[325] Judith Weisenfeld, *African American Women and Christian Activism: New York's Black YWCA, 1905-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 12.

[326] See *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993) by Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham and *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice: African American Women and Religion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011) by Bettye Collier-Thomas.

[327] Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 2. Higginbotham in this text uses the phrase "feminist theology" to describe black women's Christian activism. Here, I conjoin the phrases "interracialist" and "feminist theology" to describe black women's intersectional approach to empowerment as juxtaposed with their concern for interracial coalition building.

specifically, as Nancy Roberts has argued, the "power of Christian womanhood."[328] Women active in the YW during the first two decades of the twentieth century continued to embrace the nineteenth-century middle-class belief system known as the "cult of true womanhood" that, according to historian Nancy F. Cott, had already become synonymous with Christian womanhood by the mid-nineteenth century.[329] Therefore, Christian sisterhood often converged with a common concern for the uplift of the economically less fortunate, and this sometimes encouraged interracial cooperation among middle-class women engaged in social reform.

Thus, an analysis of the Montclair YW can also serve to highlight black women's intersectional approach to empowerment, including a discussion of the compromises and

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[328] Nancy Marie Roberts, *Christian Sisterhood, Race Relations, and the YWCA, 1906-1946* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 1.

[329] The Cult of True Womanhood asserted that the ideal woman was a chaste, pious, submissive, caregiver. For more analysis of the cult of true womanhood, see "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860" *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966), pp. 151-174 by Barbara Welter. Welter in this essay historicizes the construction of an idealized femininity that helped inaugurate a new women's history in the 1960s and encouraged scholars such as Nancy F. Cott, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, and Estelle Freedman to further interrogate women as gendered subjects at times complicit in the construction of ideas about "true womanhood", which sometimes aided in the subordination of women. Welter defined the "attributes of True Womanhood by which woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, her neighbors and society" as divided into four virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity (152). Nancy F. Cott contends in her essay "Passionlessness: An Interpretation of Victorian Sexual Ideology, 1790-1850" in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 4, no. 2 (1979) pp. 219-236 that women helped to define the cult of true womanhood by promoting the notion of female purity or "passionlessness" through the guise of moral superiority. In this essay, Cott notes that "the ideology of passionlessness was tied to the rise of evangelical religion between the 1790s and 1830s"; women increased their dominance within Protestant churches in America during this period, so that eventually "Christian" values and virtues and "female" values and virtues were nearly identical (221). The public dimension of the women's sphere is the subject of Estelle Freedman's article "Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870-1930" (1979) in *Feminist Studies* 5, no. 3, pp. 512-529. Freedman argues, in this essay, that women in the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century created a "separate, public female sphere" that "helped mobilize women and gained political leverage in the larger society" (513). She further notes that the separate female community sustained "women's participation in both social reform and political activism" and that the women's movement of the late nineteenth century "did not reject a separate, unique, female identity" (514). *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) by Robyn Muncy analyzes the notion of a women's dominion in social reform as associated with the cult of true womanhood; and *Private Politics and Public Voices: Black Women's Activism from War World I to the New Deal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006) by Nikki Brown offers a more recent analysis of black women's social reform during the interwar era.

limitations that came with this ideology. In the YWCA movement, we see both cross-racial and cross-class aspects of the intersectional approach to empowerment, while black women worked within and between multiple organizations such as the NAACP and NUL to foster deeper cross-gender alliances in the interest of black equality more generally. Further, as an important cultural and intellectual center of the New Negro Era, this YW in particular reveals the process and importance of black women's identity-making in the 1920s and '30s.

The Montclair YW had a distinct structure unlike any other in the nation while also serving as an important identity-making institution for young black women in this northern community. This YW not only offered black women migrants a temporary place to call home but also provided major leadership opportunities for black women professionals that were largely absent from the black church and many civil rights associations that emerged in the 1910s.[330] Many of the women who held leadership positions at the Montclair YW were deeply involved in their churches while holding positions in multiple civil rights organizations such as the NAACP, thereby using a variety of organizational venues to develop alliances across race, gender, and class boundaries.[331] Montclair's YW, and the black women who led it, illustrates how black women's roles in multiple organizations nurtured the early Civil Rights Movement in the North.

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[330] Bettye Collier-Thomas, *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice: African American Women and Religion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 11. See also *African American Women and Christian Activism: New York's Black YWCA, 1905-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997) by Judith Weisenfeld for a discussion of how black women found professional opportunities through the YWCA working with white women on various social issues. Weisenfeld notes in her text that the YWCA was a "significant arena for cooperative work" between black and white women (12).

[331] Mary Hayes Allen was a co-founder of the Lynchburg, Virginia NAACP, branch secretary of the Montclair NAACP, and held a leadership position in the Montclair YWCA on the board of management.

A suburban region of Essex County, Montclair was incorporated as a town in 1894 (formerly part of Bloomfield township since 1868). Montclair, for the most part, has been considered a commuter suburb of New York City since the early twentieth century that has been primarily occupied by white middle- and upper middle-class professionals as well as an emergent black elite.[332] The town is generally known for its diversity and progressive socio-political history. In 1895, Montclair had about 7,500 residents; however, between 1900 and 1920, the population increased by about 400 percent to 28,819, 12 percent of which were members of the African American community.[333] Within the next ten years, this number increased to 15 percent of the total 42,107 residents in Montclair.[334] Approximately 90 percent of African Americans living in Montclair at that time were employed in domestic service.[335] By mid-decade, the black population in Montclair became second only to that of Newark in Essex County, which contained the state's largest black population at the time. The Montclair Historical Society describes the city as follows:

> A "progressive" northern town in the throes of integration, a story that both parallels and intersects the story of the Great Migration from the South, racial integration, and the Civil Rights Movement in America.[336]

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[332] The median household income in Montclair is about $95,696 with only about 2.7 percent of the population living under the poverty, according to the 2010 US Census.

[333] Hampson Eget, "Challenging Containment: African Americans and Racial Politics in Montclair, New Jersey, 1920-1940," 4.

[334] Ibid., 5.

[335] Ibid.

[336] Montclair Historical Society, "The YWCA Years," accessed: September 21, 2014, found at http://montclairhistorical.org/israel-crane-house/the-ywca-years/

This excerpt underscores the importance of the town in the development of black society in the early twentieth century. The Great Migration, as a central element in the development of black society for much of the early twentieth century, left an indelible imprint on New Jersey.[337] In New Jersey counties such as Essex and Atlantic, where the black population increased most dramatically, a burgeoning black elite and professional class expanded and orchestrated a strident activism through such organizations as the NAACP and YWCA, among many other local institutions.

"We were barred from so many other places in those days, and the YWCA was the young colored girls' haven from prejudice," states Carrie Allen McCray in her autobiography *Freedom's Child: The Life of a Confederate General's Black Daughter*.[338] McCray's mother, Mary Allen, was a "guiding force"[339] in the development of the Montclair YW as well as an active member of the NAACP.[340] Allen served as president of the Montclair YW from 1922 to 1930. Rosemary Jones, who also frequented the same YW, stated that "Because of the YWCA, we had a life."[341] This YW was a place where, according to Jones, young black women could see "accomplished blacks"[342] perform and give public addresses. McCray describes the Montclair YW as a type of "Colored Girl's

[337] Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant*, 192-194.

[338] Allen McCray, *Freedom's Child*, 233.

[339] Ibid.

[340] Ibid.

[341] Montclair Historical Society, "The YWCA Initiative: Reinterpreting the Crane House," accessed: September 20, 2014, found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkjC7ewCfv4 .

[342] Ibid.

Finishing School," where she learned "how to walk, sit, talk, and eat properly"[343] and also a place where she learned about "black heroes."[344]

The Montclair YW was among the key institutions integral to the development of the long Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey. This particular YW was among the more autonomous "colored"[345] YWCAs in the nation during the early twentieth century. Yet, the definitive work on race and the YWCA movement, *Christian Sisterhood, Race Relations, and the YWCA, 1906-1946* by Nancy Marie Robertson (University of Illinois Press, 2007), neglects to discuss the Montclair YW. Robertson only mentions the names of a few independent YWs in the nation, not including Montclair, in passing. The absence of a single chapter on these YWs seems an egregious oversight.[346]

The Montclair YWCA, among other associations in the northern section of New Jersey, was an important institution in the development of ideas about black empowerment in the history of the Civil Rights Movement in the North between 1912 and 1953. The Montclair YW was run by a managing board of eighteen prominent black women, from 1912 to 1946, including Hortense Ridley Tate and Mary Allen.[347] An advisory board composed of twenty-one white women supported the black women

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[343] McCray, *Freedom's Child*, 233.

[344] Ibid., 235.

[345] The terms 'colored' and 'black' are applied in this analysis as they were used in a specific historical context. I place quotes around the term 'colored' where appropriate.

[346] This author was recently informed by a local librarian in Montclair that the documents related to the Montclair YWCA (now preserved as a set of papers at the Montclair Free Public Library) were retrieved from the trash by a library employee. The evidence pertaining to the Montclair YW and the activism of the black women there was literally thrown into the dustbin of history. Although there are no monographs written about this YW, nor are there any journal-length scholarly articles on the topic, the work of recovery has begun.

[347] "Glenridge Avenue YWCA," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 17, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

managers in terms of funding and general advice, regarding the functioning of the YWCA as a national organization, with control of "the property and all funds related to the agency."[348] This was before the interracial charter was signed by the national organization, notably, in Atlantic City in 1946. African American intellectuals such as Langston Hughes and Jessie R. Fauset settled in Montclair during the early Civil Rights Era and frequented the Montclair YW.[349]

The Montclair YW was a key meeting ground for leading black intellectuals during the early Civil Rights Movement in the North.[350] The formation of this group of intellectuals was made possible by the Great Migration. Historian Patricia Hampson Eget has argued that Montclair's black community "challenged containment" in the interwar years by seeking to secure economic independence from the "racial hierarchy" that defined Montclair at the time.[351] The Montclair YW was one of the forums through which the challenge was made successful, partly due to the stature of the Montclair YW as an important cultural and intellectual institution in the North.

The idea for an all-black YWCA stemmed from a talk on civic responsibility given by Bishop Arthur Selden Lloyd during a meeting at St. Luke's Episcopal Church

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[348] "Glenridge Avenue YWCA," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 17, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[349] Montclair YWCA, "History: The Montclair-North Essex YWCA 1912-Present," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey, Box 16, Folder 19A.

[350] Stacey Patton, "Montclair's Hidden History," The New York Times October 14, 2007, www.nytimes.com, accessed January 3, 2014, found at http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/14/opinion/nyregionopinions/14NJpatton.html

[351] Patricia Hampson Eget, "Challenging Containment: African Americans and Racial Politics in Montclair, New Jersey, 1920-1940," *New Jersey History: Studies in State and Regional History* 126, no. 1 (2011): 2.

on March 12, 1912.[352] In April of that year, seventeen African American women met at the Alice H. Foster's home to organize a YWCA in Montclair.[353] Foster had been a member of the YWCA for some years prior.[354] Addie Waite Hunton, a black secretary with the national YW who represented the YWCA among African Americans, attended this meeting to present a plan for a YWCA in Montclair.[355] Hunton assured the women that this YW would be more than "just a center" and "would become an organization through which leadership and personal growth would develop."[356] Hunton, as an educator, suffragist, writer, and civil rights activist, had long championed an intersectional approach to black empowerment before her tenure with the YWCA.[357] The black women who were in attendance included Mrs. H. Spencer Bell, Mrs. A. Harrison Tate, Mrs. Ernest Jackson, and Lila Harris.[358]

"[The] Montclair Y was set up differently," as one member recalled, and "the idea was that the Negro women would take the lead and the white women would act in an

[352] Montclair YWCA, "History: The Montclair-North Essex YWCA 1912-Present," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 19A, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[353] Montclair YWCA, "History: The Montclair-North Essex YWCA 1912-Present," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 19A, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[354] "Testimonial Dinner Honoring Mrs. Alice Hooe Foster," November 18, 1937, The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 26, Folder 7, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[355] Montclair YWCA, "History: The Montclair-North Essex YWCA 1912-Present," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 19A, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[356] Montclair YWCA, "History: The Montclair-North Essex YWCA 1912-Present," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey, Box 16, Folder 19A.

[357] Hunton was one of the more important women writing about race and women's empowerment in the early twentieth century. See her writings on these issues, including "A Deeper Reverence for Home Ties" in the *Colored American Magazine* (June 1907) pp. 58-59, "Negro Womanhood Defended" in *Voice of the Negro* 1 (July 1904) pp. 280-282, *Beginnings Among Colored Women* (National Board of the YWCA, New York) 1913, "The Work of the National Board of Young Women's Christian Association," in *The New Voice in Race Adjustments*, edited by A. M. Trawick, pp. 215-219.

[358] Montclair YWCA, "History: The Montclair-North Essex YWCA 1912-Present," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 19A, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

advisory capacity."[359] Robertson, in her text *Christian Sisterhood, Race Relations, and the YWCA*, contends that typically, "The branch relationship entailed at least three components: a member of the [white] central association was on the governing board of the black branch; the branch's activities were 'subject to the Central's approval'; and the central was responsible for unmet debts";[360] however, this arrangement was not the case for the Montclair Y. This YWCA differed from YWs in other cities in that all-black associations in those cities were affiliated branches of an existing YW or affiliated with the National headquarters, whereas the Montclair YW was initially developed by black women and its day-to-day operations were controlled by a board of managers comprised of eighteen black women from the community.[361] This board was essentially the central leadership body of the Montclair YW. Foster served as the management board's first president.[362] The Montclair YW was classified as an unaffiliated group at the national meetings and conventions of the YWCA, and had no vote until after the signing of the YWCA Interracial Charter in 1946.[363] There was an advisory board of twenty-one "interested" white women likely associated with St. Luke's Episcopal Church, such as Mrs. Charles H. Hawthorne, Mrs. James J. Spears, and Miss Mary Weeks, who helped

[359] Montclair YWCA, "Montclair YWCA History Audio Cassettes," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 28, Tape #5, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[360] Nancy Marie Robertson, *Christian Sisterhood, Race Relations, and the YWCA, 1906-46* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 32.

[361] Ibid.

[362] Montclair YWCA, "History," Box 16, Folder 19A.

[363] Montclair YWCA, "History," Box 16, Folder 19A.

secure property for the Montclair YW (initially at 89 Forest Street) and controlled finances for the association.[364]

The black women of the Montclair YW created a parallel structure that was unique among YWs in the country at the time. The management board was all-black and there was no white representative, despite the existence of an all-white advisory board.[365] In the historical summary written by a member of the YWCA several years after the formation of the Montclair association, the organization is described as follows:

> The structure of the agency is unusual in that it has two Boards. One [i.e., Board of Management, eighteen members] is elected by the membership, which would conform to the standards set by the YWCA. The other Board [called the Advisory Board, twenty-one members] is a self-perpetuating Board which was organized in 1912.[366]
>
> The Board of Management is composed of Negro Women who act in a consulting capacity to the staff in planning the program of the YWCA.[367]

The Montclair YW, because it was the first YWCA in Montclair, was not attached to a central branch, unlike most black YWCAs in the nation (with the exception of those in Baltimore, Washington, DC, Dayton, Norfolk, Philadelphia, and Charleston, South Carolina).[368] The membership of the Montclair Y often matched the funds raised by the Advisory Board for vital resources with funds raised from various events.[369]

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[364] Montclair YWCA, "History," Box 16, Folder 19A.

[365] "Glenridge Avenue YWCA," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 17, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[366] Montclair YWCA, "History (Written in 1945)," Montclair Historical Society Papers, Box 16, Folder 17, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[367] Ibid.

[368] Robertson, *Christian Sisterhood*, 32.

[369] "Glenridge Avenue YWCA," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 17, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

The Montclair YW operated largely out of Foster's home for much of the first eight years of its existence and, by 1920, had an estimated 600 members.[370] In 1920, the Montclair Y relocated to the home once owned by Israel Crane (one of the region's first settlers and, ironically, a slave owner) or "Crane House" at 159 Glenridge Avenue, where it remained for some forty-five years.[371] Northern New Jersey was becoming a haven for the black professional class with the continued development of the YW and the formation of other black identity-making institutions. The first black-owned and -operated country club known as the Shady Rest Country Club founded in 1921 was located in Scotch Plains, New Jersey; it was one of the key institutions, along with the Montclair YW, that served as a space for the emergent black professional class to enjoy leisure time and formulate ideas about black empowerment in northern New Jersey.[372] By 1921, the Montclair YW was one of only five YWs in New Jersey, and one of more than a total of fifty African American YWCAs that were scattered across twenty-three US states, including the District of Columbia.[373]

The Crane House YW provided young black women with a host of activities and services. The Montclair Historical Society, in its online depiction of the Crane House during the YWCA years, the describes its purpose as follows:

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[370] Montclair Historical Society, "The African American Y Project," *The Montclair Historical Society Newsletter* (Summer 2012), 4-5, Access date: 9/21/14, found at http://montclairhistorical.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/MHS-Web-Newsletter-Summer-2012.pdf

[371] "The Montclair-North Essex YWCA: 85 Years of Community Leadership," Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 9A, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[372] Anthony Venutolo, "Shady Rest in Scotch Plains was First African American Club of its Kind," February 19, 2009, www.nj.com, accessed April 20, 2011, found at http://blog.nj.com/ledgerarchives//print.html

[373] Montclair Historical Society, "The African American Y Project," 4.

> The Y was a place where they could escape the prejudice that existed in the northern states, places where they could take pride in who they were, and in the words of one woman who attended the Y, it was "a place where we could become."[374]

The Young black women who frequented the Crane House YW included domestic servants who had come north as a part of the Great Migration, and the daughters of the burgeoning black professional class.[375] This YW housed YWCA offices and dormitories and was utilized as a social center where young black women and girls "learned to dance, play tennis, and sing."[376] Moreover, as mentioned briefly before, the YW was also a place where these young women were introduced to black intellectuals and activists who helped shape the black freedom struggle.[377] Many of the women who came of age at the Montclair YW became leaders in their own right within the context of the Civil Rights Movement more generally. "I remember there were rooms set up like dormitories," states Bessie Marsh in recounting her time at the Crane House YW. "There were ladies living in these quarters that worked in the community and young women attending Montclair Normal School" (now Montclair State University).[378] There were no living quarters for these women at the university, because campus housing was segregated at the time (with

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[374] Montclair Historical Society, "The YWCA Years," Accessed: September 21, 2014, found at http://montclairhistorical.org/israel-crane-house/the-ywca-years/

[375] Montclair YWCA, "History," Box 16, Folder 19A.

[376] Montclair Historical Society, "The YWCA Years," www.montclairhistorical.org

[377] Montclair YWCA, "History: The Montclair-North Essex YWCA 1912-Present," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 19A, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[378] Montclair YWCA, "Montclair YWCA History Audio Cassettes," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 28, Tape #5, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

none for blacks).[379] In the early decades of the association's existence, the rent was two dollars and fifty cents per week for students and four dollars for older women.[380]

To the young women who visited or boarded there, this YW also offered adult education classes in basic skills such as nursing, sewing, and millinery (hat making).[381] Many of the social events like teas, dinners, and fairs were organized to help raise money to sustain the various activities offered by the Montclair YW.[382] The women who came to board at the YW, many of whom were employed as domestics, were trained in skills such as nursing that would ensure them a path of upward (economic) mobility.[383] This was a direct challenge to the status quo that trapped many African Americans who had migrated north into a state of perpetual economic dependency. Importantly, classes were also offered on "Negro History".[384]

The black women's movement in the black church, as well as the activism of black women in both social and civil rights associations, helps to contextualize black women's ideas about empowerment. Women of the black club movement in New Jersey played a key role in the formation of the Urban Colored Population Commission between

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[379] "The Montclair-North Essex YWCA: 85 Years of Community Leadership," Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 9A, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[380] Montclair YWCA, "History: The Montclair-North Essex YWCA 1912-Present," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 19A, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[381] Ibid.

[382] Montclair YWCA, "History: The Montclair-North Essex YWCA 1912-Present," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 19A, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[383] Montclair YWCA, "History: The Montclair-North Essex YWCA 1912-Present," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 19A, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[384] Montclair YWCA, "History: The Montclair-North Essex YWCA 1912-Present," The Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 19A, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

the years of 1938 and 1941.[385] Black women were integral to the development of black protest politics in the Garden State during the Interwar Era, and these women were at the forefront of black protest politics not only in New Jersey but in the nation at this time.

African American women, as the driving force behind progressive reform in the Garden State and the nation, as ministers, doctors, teachers, trade unionists and businesswomen, forged alliances at the local, state, and national levels through associations such as the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, NAACP, YWCA and Girlfriends Incorporated. Historian Deborah Gray White has argued that black women in this Era were at the forefront of the struggle for black equality, a time that they themselves labeled "the Woman's Era".

> It was during what has been called the nadir in the black experience that black clubwomen, with full knowledge of the ravages being wrought, proclaimed the advent of the "Woman's Era," and came forth with a plan that made black women the primary leaders of the race, a plan based on the premise of equality between black men and women.[386]

These women understood the path to empowerment, as aforementioned, in intersectional terms, an approach "consistently chosen by black women," particularly in terms of national organizations, by balancing the issues of race, class, and gender in their activism.[387] Although groups such as the Girlfriends were rigidly organized along class lines, this organization raised necessary funds from prominent black families and other

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[385] V. P. Franklin and Bettye Collier-Thomas, "For the Race in General and Black Women in Particular: The Civil Rights Activities of African American Women's Organizations, 1915-1950," in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 26.

[386] Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 40.

[387] Ibid., 17.

professionals to finance critical legal challenges to Jim Crow in the North.[388] White aptly points out that class did not always trump race among black women in this era and the variables of gender, class, and race were always factored into the activism of black women's national organizations.[389] In *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves: 1894-1994* (W. W. Norton, 1999), White speaks about race, gender, and class in terms of the approach to power embraced by black women:

> …it can be said that race, *along with* gender and class were variables *always* factored into whatever national organizations did. Sometimes organizations functioned so that they served black women while they served the race. At other times, it was assumed that the race was served when black women were, or that class interests were met when race and gender issues were addressed.[390]

The black women active in the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, such as Florence Spearing Randolph, advanced women's issues as connected to the interests of the race as a whole.

Women in the black church movement played an integral role in community organizing. Virtually barred[391] from major official leadership roles in the black church during the nineteenth century, these women adopted an intersectional approach to black empowerment by simultaneously calling for the end to sexism, racism, and poverty.[392] The activities of these women oftentimes broke down social barriers within black society

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[388] Eunice C. Shreeves, "The Ancient History of the Girlfriends," May 1941, Girlfriends Incorporated Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, New York.

[389] White, *Too Heavy a Load*, 40.

[390] Ibid.

[391] For an expansive discussion on the history of the black church more generally, see *Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans* (Oxford University Press, 1999) by Albert J. Raboteau and *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Duke University Press, 1990) by C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, two definitive histories of the black church in US history.

[392] Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*, 2.

as a whole for the greater interests of the race. There was a contingent of women itinerant preachers and evangelists in the nineteenth century, such as Jarena Lee, Maria Stewart, and Rebecca Cox; however, black women in the AME, AMEZ and Baptist denominations during this time were denied ordination and official licenses to preach though they cultivated their influence through groups such as the Daughters of Zion and the Women's Evangelistic Union.[393] The first black church denomination to officially ordain women was the AMEZ Church in 1895 with the ordination of Julia Foote.[394] Many women associated with the Pentecostal and Holiness traditions, in the early decades of the twentieth century, such as Ida B. Robinson, Rosa Artimus Horn and Lucy Smith, broke away from the dominance of men in the church and sought to organize independent denominations.[395] Some women such as Ella Baker and Fannie Hamer connected to both the black church and freedom movement have been identified by sociologist Belinda Robnett[396] as bridge builders for their efforts in spanning national, local, class, and gender divides in the struggle for black equality. The social service and economic development support provided to black migrants who had come north during the Great Migration often directly involved church groups and mission societies dominated by black women.[397]

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[393] Albert J. Raboteau, *Canaan Land: A Religious History of African American* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 38.

[394] Ibid.

[395] Bettye Collier-Thomas, *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice: African American Women and Religion* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2011), 84.

[396] See *How Long, How Long? African American Women and the Struggle for Freedom and Justice* (Oxford University Press, 1997) by Belinda Robnett.

[397] Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*, 2; 17.

The singular dynamic of the organizing tradition in black life, as explained by sociologist Charles M. Payne, created two main traditions: (1) the community-mobilizing approach, which focused on large-scale actions such as national boycotts (centered around charismatic leaders), and (2) the community-organizing dimension that focused on the sustainable long-term development of communities and local leaders.[398] I assert that the organizing tradition should be understood historically as a singular dynamic within black life with two main currents (as opposed to separate traditions) that often converged across class, race, and gender lines as well as geographic dimensions. To reiterate, black churchwomen—as a result of their community service and outreach work within black society—were often at the center of these two currents. Many of these women used myriad approaches, including boycotting department stories in downtown locations or writing letter campaigns against the Red Cross for segregating blood and blood banks, that eventually resulted in national campaigns.

The history of the black church reveals the interplay of race, gender, and class in the black freedom struggle over time. At present, African Americans are the most religious ethnic group in America, as shown in a recent poll entitled *The US Religious Landscape Survey* (2007) by the PEW Research Center.[399] It is impossible to separate any discussion of the black freedom struggle from a conversation about black religiosity. In the nineteenth century, the black church emerged as the most important institution in black life and continued as the primary institution in black society throughout much of

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[398] Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 3.

[399] Neha Sahgal and Greg Smith, "A Religious Portrait of African Americans," Pewresearch.org, January 30, 2009, http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1099/religious-portrait-of-african-americans (accessed December 17, 2011).

the twentieth century into the Civil Rights Era. This multipurpose institution has historically functioned as a spiritual, social, educational, economic and political organization across multiple denominations. In fact, nearly every black church was connected to a contingent of educational, literary, scientific, political and social clubs for much of the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[400]

The interconnections between race, gender, and class stem from the history of the black church in that the various clubs, societies and associations connected to churches in black life—before the rise in the influence of major national civil rights groups in the mid-twentieth century—were often stratified according to sex, color (race) or class affiliation.[401] Members of the upper and black middle-class tended to gravitate toward denominations such as the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist and congregational churches dominated by white Protestants though the black church independence movement of the nineteenth century led to a proliferation of organizations such as the AME and AMEZ Church.[402] There were also black Catholics, primarily from the black upper classes, though the majority of blacks were Protestants who were affiliated with either the Methodist or Baptist church.[403] In these churches, black women were barred from the highest official posts as preachers or ministers with only a few exceptions, so these women continued to form ladies' societies and auxiliary units. Since the nineteenth century, these societies and auxiliary units played a critical role in fundraising for various causes ranging from abolitionism and charitable endeavors to the fight against Jim Crow

[400] Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color*, 218.

[401] Ibid., 153.

[402] Ibid., 281.

[403] Ibid., 281.

in the twentieth century.[404] The black upper and middle class many times served alongside the black masses within these churches and societies, although some of the more exclusive black social clubs required specific qualifications for membership, including family name and educational status.[405]

The black church served as a nexus for race, gender, and class in the long struggle for black equality given the challenge to patriarchal authority surmounted by black women who sought to bridge divides defined by distinctions in gender, class and color. Central to the women's movement in the black church was a "lift as we climb" mentality.[406] This women's movement paralleled the emergence of the long Civil Rights Movement more generally in the first three decades of the twentieth century. The same men and women who populated pews of the church made up the ranks of civil rights agencies formed in the first decade of the twentieth century, including black professionals and working-class locals.[407] The more prominent black churches continued to provide for the economic well-being of members of the black community, including the new

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[404] Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*, 17.

[405] Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color*, 217-219.

[406] Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load*, 27.

[407] Harvard Sitkoff in his book *The Struggle for Black Equality* (New York: Hill and Wang,1991) advanced the notion that "the struggle for black equality" is a more accurate term to describe the ongoing demand for civil rights by African Americans that stretches far beyond the parameters of the "Montgomery to Memphis" narrative. This struggle has always involved necessary cooperation between the black upper class and black working class. John Dittmer's book *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press,1994) emphasizes the role of local civil rights activists such as Amzie Moore, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Medgar Evers in the fight against Jim Crow in Mississippi as opposed to national leaders such as King. Charles Payne in his book *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) echoes the work of Dittmer and promotes the notion of an "organizing tradition" that has always been part of African American life and society, involving both middle-class and working-class or "local people." In other words, organizing to demand civil rights is at the heart of the black experience that involved cross-class collaboration from the creation of the Free African Society in colonial times, established to educate free blacks and speak out against slavery to the development of SCLC in 1957.

migrants who had come North in search of a better life, while the exclusive black clubs often raised their voices and funds to fight the legal battle against Jim Crow.[408]

One of the women who felt a calling to preach was Florence Spearing. Her father was a cabinet maker and painter who became widowed when Florence was a child.[409] Spearing was educated in public schools and at Avery Normal Institute in Charleston, South Carolina but soon was influenced by the teachings of the AME Zion church as advanced by Reverend E. George Biddle.[410] In 1882, she relocated first to New York City and then to Jersey City in 1885, where she married Hugh Randolph, who worked as a cook on the railroad, eventually joining the New Jersey Conference of the AME Zion Church in 1898 having been licensed to preach a year earlier.[411] Randolph was ordained a deacon in the church in 1901 and made an elder in the church in 1903.[412]

The Montclair YW, by the 1920s, was among several associations and institutions that were emerging in New Jersey at the time, including the Federation founded by Randolph. The first New Jersey branch of the NAACP was organized in 1913, the same year that Timothy/Noble Drew Ali established his Canaanite (Moorish Science) Temple in Newark. By 1914, the Black Women's Club Movement was well underway, largely under the auspices of the NACW with 50,000 members across 1,000 clubs nationwide.[413]

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[408] Rabateau, *Canaan Land*, 85.

[409] Bettye Collier-Thomas, "Minister and Feminist Reformer: The Life of Florence Spearing Randolph," in *This Far by Faith: Readings in African American Women's Religious Biography* edited by Judith Weisenfeld and Richard Newman (New York: Routledge, 1996), 177.

[410] Ibid., 177-178.

[411] Collier-Thomas, "Minister and Feminist Reformer: The Life of Florence Spearing Randolph," 178.

[412] Ibid., 180.

[413] Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *African Americans: A Concise History*, 383.

Randolph was the principle organizer in the creation of the New Jersey Federation of Colored Women's Clubs in 1915. The Montclair NAACP was formed in 1916. The Newark branch of the NUL, under the direction of social worker William Ashby,[414] became the first New Jersey chapter of this organization in 1917 as one of only six state branches in the nation at the time.

Florence Spearing Randolph was a pivotal figure in early progressive reform in New Jersey as a lecturer with the New Jersey Women's Christian Temperance Union, founding president of the New Jersey Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, and an executive member of the New Jersey State Suffrage Association. In 1915, Randolph brought together thirty women's clubs in Trenton to more efficiently coordinate the activities of black women's clubs in the state.[415] The first annual meeting of the Federation took place in Englewood in 1916.[416] By 1917, the Federation included 56 clubs with 2,600 members; and, by 1924 this number increased to 85 clubs with 3,500 members statewide.[417] Historian Bettye Collier-Thomas notes that, "While many of the club representatives were teachers and businesswomen and the wives of lawyers, physicians, and other professionals, there were also many representatives who were domestic servants, day laborers, and other service workers" involved in the Federation.[418]

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[414] Stanley Terrell, "Rights Leader Recalls Early Days of Urban League," *The Star Ledger* William Ashby Papers MG 1464 Collection 1952-1981, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.

[415] V. P. Franklin and Bettye Collier-Thomas, "For the Race in General and Black Women in Particular: The Civil Rights Activities of African American Women's Organizations, 1915-1950," in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement,* edited by Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 23.

[416] Franklin and Collier-Thomas, "For the Race in General and Black Women in Particular," 23.

[417] Ibid.

[418] Ibid.

Violet Johnson, who served as vice president of the Federation from 1926 to 1931, was a domestic servant. Johnson eventually went on to develop a training school for young black women in New Jersey patterned after the National Training School for Girls in Washington, DC that had been founded by Nannie Helen Burroughs and a women's auxiliary unit of the National Baptist Convention.[419] This school developed by Johnson focused on training young black women to become domestics.[420]

The Federation's activities varied throughout the state. The group denounced lynching and raised $1,500 to support a national anti-lynching crusade, supported the training of young women in defense industries during World War I, and advocated for black employment in war industries more generally.[421] The Federation coordinated its efforts with the Women's Council on National Defense and groups such as the YWCA in the state.[422] There were also efforts to provide food, clothes, and other forms of relief to unemployed blacks as well as scholarships and housing programs for black women migrants coming into the state in the early twentieth century.[423]

It was under the leadership of clubwomen such as Hortense Ridley Tate that the Montclair YW became a cultural Mecca and corridor of black civil rights activism. Born March 9, 1899 to Mary and Ezekiel Ridley, Hortense acquired a BA in English from

[419] Franklin and Collier-Thomas, "For the Race in General and Black Women in Particular," 25.

[420] Ibid., 25.

[421] Ibid., 24.

[422] Ibid.

[423] Franklin and Collier-Thomas, "For the Race in General and Black Women in Particular," 25-26.

Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas in 1917.[424] Her first job following graduation was as director of cultural programs at the Montclair YW. Ridley's work there was coupled with a long history of activism as a committee member, board member, and president of the Montclair YW. She was also one of the founding members of the National Council for Negro Women, a member of the Montclair Human Relations Council, the League of Woman Voters, and a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority for eighty-one years, making her a Diamond Soror.[425] Tate took charge of the Girl Reserve during her tenure at the YW, introducing programs such as a glee club, pageants, bible study, charm classes, and basketball. The Girl's Reserve raised $5,000 from their "money-making activities" in 1925, which included performing original plays (based on texts by black authors) written by Tate.[426] These funds matched the $5,000 given to the YW by a white member of the board of directors for the construction of a large recreation building. By 1926, the Montclair YW had a total membership of 1,342.[427] The recreation building was free from debt by 1928.[428]

During the Harlem Renaissance Era, primarily in the late 1920s and early '30s, the Montclair YW became a major hub of cultural and intellectual activity. In this era, the YW was visited by luminaries such as jazz composer Noble Sissle, whose sister Ruth

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[424] Johnson, "Leadership, Struggles, and Challenges of Hortense Ridley Tate: A Twentieth-century African American Women's Legacy to Methodism and Community Service," 46.

[425] "Hortense Ridley Tate Was Active in Her Community," Martha's Vineyard Gazette Thursday, September 18, 2003, accessed: September 21, 2014, found at: http://mvgazette.com/obituaries/2003/09/ 19/hortense-ridley-tate-was-active-her-community

[426] Montclair YWCA, "History," Box 16, Folder 19A.

[427] Montclair YWCA, "YWCA Expands to Meet New Challenge, Montclair YWCA Papers, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey, Box 18, Folder 8.

[428] Montclair YWCA, "History (Written in 1945)," Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 16, Folder 17, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

Sissle held the position of girl's worker at the YW in the mid-1920s, Countee Cullen, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Aaron Douglas.[429] Langston Hughes came to the YW to deliver poetry readings while living in Montclair, where he wrote some of his most significant works. In 1928, Cullen and Douglas both spoke at an essay awards program for contestants who had written on the topic "What the YWCA Has Meant to Me".[430] Alain Locke was the guest speaker at this annual event in 1930. These awards events most often took place before capacity crowds in the recreation building (that held 600 people). A local newspaper described the Montclair YW as a "character-building association."[431]

In the 1930s and '40s, the national YWCA, as an association, became more vocal about civil rights as championed by black women such as Eva Bowles and, later, Dorothy Height. Members were encouraged to speak out against lynching and mob violence while supporting interracial efforts to protect black civil rights.[432] The League of Industrial Girls (LIG) composed of factory and domestic service workers, attached to a Chicago YW, spearheaded a letter-writing campaign to members of the US Congress calling for an end to lynching, and in 1944 the National Board of the YWCA appeared at congressional hearings to advocate for a permanent Fair Employment Practices Committee.[433] It was at this time in the mid-1940s that representatives of the Montclair YW's all-black board of management began to appear at the meetings of the white-

[429] Montclair YWCA, "History," Box 16, Folder 19A.

[430] "Montclair YWCA Notes," Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 27, Folder 2, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[431] "Colored YWCA Is Active in Town," Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 18, Folder 8, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[432] Boynton, "Fighting Racism in the YWCA," 26.

[433] Ibid.

controlled advisory board. Joint-meetings between the board of management and the advisory board became more regular between 1944 and 1945.[434] In 1946, the national board of the YWCA adopted an Interracial Charter committing the organization to "pioneer in an interracial experience that shall be increasingly democratic and Christian."[435] The Montclair YW was not officially recognized as an affiliated branch by the national association until 1953.[436]

In the New Deal era, the Federation sponsored forums on how blacks could take advantage of New Deal programs while lobbying the governor and other state officials to appoint African Americans to relief agencies.[437] Black women in attendance at the 1936 annual convention of the Federation formed a group to pressure the governor of New Jersey, Henry T. Moore, about the representation of African Americans in "state bodies."[438] The Urban Colored Population Commission that was formed in 1938 by the New Jersey State Legislature included the vice president of the Federation, Evelyn V. Brock, as a member.[439] The Federation would go on to play a critical role in the development of a new state constitution for New Jersey that outlawed discrimination in the New Jersey State Militia, employment, and public schools.[440]

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[434] Montclair YWCA Advisory Board, "YWCA History of Board Structure, Name, Relations, with the National Branch YWCA from the Advisory Board Minute Books," Montclair YWCA Papers, Box 17, Folder 8, Montclair Free Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey.

[435] Robertson, *Christian Sisterhood, Race Relations, and the YWCA*, 163.

[436] Montclair YWCA, "History," Box 16, Folder 19A.

[437] Franklin and Collier-Thomas, "For the Race in General and Black Women in Particular," 25.

[438] Ibid.

[439] Ibid.

[440] Ibid., 25-26.

The Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs and Girlfriends Incorporated were two important national organizations that formed chapters in New Jersey during the New Deal Era. The Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs was formed in 1935. Girlfriends Incorporated was a black elite club of women that was formed in 1927 New York by eleven prominent African American women married to physicians, lawyers, and businessmen at the height of the Harlem Renaissance in New York.[441] The first New Jersey Chapter of the Girlfriends was formed in 1932 Westfield by Alberta Banks, Fannie Vick Berryman, Mattie Jones, Ivy Lambert, Eva Langston and Lillian Jones.[442] This organization was largely a social and cultural group dedicated to "the uplift of the race" through charitable donations and scholarships.[443] New Jersey Girlfriends frequently donated money to various causes such as the NAACP defense fund, the Urban League, and Negro College Fund through their philanthropic and social activities.[444] The Negro women's business association was first organized with the assistance of women from New Jersey. Pearl Flippen of Atlantic City was one of the founding members of the national chapter of the Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs.[445] The first annual meeting of the Negro Business and Professional

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[441] Eunice C. Shreeves, "The Ancient History of the Girlfriends," May, 1941, Girlfriends Incorporated Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, New York.

[442] Frankie Hutton-O'Meally, "New Jersey Girlfriends, Inc., 1932-2007: Brief Chapter History," accessed March 3, 2012, found at http://roseproject.com/njgirlfriends.html

[443] Eunice C. Shreeves, "The Ancient History of the Girlfriends," May, 1941, Girlfriends Incorporated Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, New York.

[444] "History of the Girlfriends from 1927 to 1984," Girlfriends Incorporated Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, New York.

[445] Wilhelmina Adams et al., "History of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc.," Sc D 98-1261 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, New York.

Women's Clubs was held in Atlantic City, July 9-11, 1936.[446] Comprised of business owners, managers, and branch representatives, this organization was dedicated to promoting the business and professional interests of black women.

Black women in New Jersey continued to press for civil rights reform in education, employment, and social work, including Frances O. Grant, union organizer Mae Massie Eberhardt, social reformer Muriel S. Snowden, and the activist-educator Anna Arnold Hedgeman. Grant, who graduated *magna cum laude* from Radcliffe College and earned an MA in Education from NYU, taught at the Bordentown Manual Training and Industrial School for black youth.[447] While teaching there from 1918 to 1955, she helped shape the curriculum by insisting that the students secure four years of high school and a trade certificate.[448] While an active member of the National Organization of Teachers of Colored Children, Grant also initiated a five-credit course in Negro history to serve as part of the standard curriculum.[449] Mae Eberhardt was a recognized union activist in Orange, where she advocated for improved working conditions and better pay as an electronics employee and Social Action Director with the IUE.[450] Muriel Snowden worked for the Essex County Welfare Board as a social work investigator for the Division of Old Age Assistance, where she gained valuable experience that led her to

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[446] Wilhelmina Adams et al., "History of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc.," Sc D 98-1261 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, New York.

[447] Ruth Edmonds Hill, ed., "Interview with Frances O. Grant, October, 1977," in *Black Women Oral History Project Volume 4* (Westport: Meckler, 1990), 364.

[448] Ibid.

[449] Ibid., 365.

[450] Ruth Edmonds Hill, ed., "Interview with Mae Massie Eberhardt, November, 1979," in *Black Women Oral History Project Volume 3* (Westport: Meckler, 1990), 232.

found, with her husband, Freedom House in order to promote interracial understanding and social justice in Boston.[451] Hedgeman worked with the Jersey City YWCA in North Jersey, where she advocated for workers' rights before becoming a nationally recognized advocate for black social justice.

The national struggle for black equality became more pronounced in the state and the nation during the Great Depression and World War II from 1938 to 1945. In 1938, the New Jersey state legislature created the Commission on the Condition of the Urban Colored Population (P.L. 1938, c. 393) as a temporary body to investigate racial discrimination in the state.[452] The Commission had the power to recommend remedial legislation if needed, and their findings eventually led to the creation of the Urban Colored Population Commission (P.L. 1941 c. 192).[453] Created for the purpose of investigating the problems facing urban blacks and to enforce existing civil rights laws, this Commission acted as both a study group and an investigating body with the power of a legislative committee, including the right to subpoena witnesses and records.[454]

Sara Spencer Washington was among the contingent of black women—including Randolph, Allen, Hortense Ridley Tate, Marsh, and Hedgeman—who made the Civil Rights Movement successful in the North. Washington, as founder of the Apex News and

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[451] Ruth Edmonds Hill ed., "Interview with Muriel Snowden," *Black Women Oral History Project Volume 9* (Westport: Meckler, 1990), 5.

[452] Urban Colored Population Commission, "Urban Colored Population Commission Reports (1938-1947)," Urban Colored Population Commission Papers, New Jersey State Library, www.njstatelib.org accessed April 27, 2017 found at: http://dspace.njstatelib.org:8080/xmlui/handle/10929/42041

[453] Urban Colored Population Commission, "Urban Colored Population Commission Reports (1938-1947)," Urban Colored Population Commission Papers, New Jersey State Library, www.njstatelib.org accessed April 27, 2017 found at: http://dspace.njstatelib.org:8080/xmlui/handle/10929/42041

[454] Urban Colored Population Commission, "Urban Colored Population Commission Reports (1938-1947)," Urban Colored Population Commission Papers, New Jersey State Library, www.njstatelib.org accessed April 27, 2017 found at: http://dspace.njstatelib.org:8080/xmlui/handle/10929/42041

Hair Company, presided over a "boardwalk empire" that stretched from Atlantic City, New Jersey to at least a dozen US states. This empire included the Apex Beauty College, Apex Country Club and Gulf Course, Apex rest home, laboratory, offices, employing as many as 215 chemists, lab technicians, office workers and sales representatives as well as 45,000 Apex agents.[455] Patricia Hampson Eget has argued that women were the "dominant force for social and political change" in places such as Montclair during the Interwar Era.[456] Randolph, Hedgeman, and Wright, although active in New Jersey as well, played pivotal roles in the national black freedom struggle during the early decades of the twentieth century. Randolph is considered a towering figure in both the women's rights movement and the Civil Rights Movement, while Hedgeman was active in the YWCA, the only woman on the committee to organize The March on Washington of 1963, and a co-founder of the National Organization of Women a year later.

Madame Washington (publicly referred to as "Madame") was a business woman, civil rights activist, and philanthropist. Her story is known to few. After relocating to Atlantic City in 1913, she established a one-room beauty salon on the first floor of an Artic Avenue building on the Northside of the city in 1916.[457] Sometime between 1916 and 1919, she secured a patent for a product known as "glossatina" used for removing

[455] "Sara Spencer Washington." Sara Spencer Washington Collection, The Atlantic City Free Public Library, Binder: Apex Country Club Photo Collection (unprocessed collection).

[456] Patricia Hampson Eget, "Envisioning Progressive Communities: Race, Gender, and the Politics of Liberalism, Berkeley, California and Montclair, New Jersey, 1920-1970" (Rutgers University Dissertation, New Brunswick, NJ: 2011), 4.

[457] Jim Waltzer, "The Beauty of Beating the Odds," Sara Spencer Washington Collection Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

excessive curl from the hair of black women.[458] This product is described in the Apex literature as "the master straightener for use with the straightening comb."[459] Washington's one-room beauty shop became the basis for a much larger business conglomerate.

In 1919, the Apex News and Hair Company was developed, which included business ventures in publishing as well as the manufacturing of a host of products like pomades, pressing oils, perfumes, lipstick, and facial creams.[460] The main offices of the Apex Company were located in Atlantic City at the intersection of Indiana and Arctic Avenue. *Apex News Services* was a magazine developed by Washington as part of her company, geared toward Apex beauticians and agents as well as the general public. Over 200 brands of distinct Apex beauty products were manufactured in her Atlantic City plant alone.[461] Washington has been labeled by some as the "first female in the country to own a national manufacturing corporation."[462] She was honored at the World's Fair in 1939 New York City with a medallion for being one of the "10 most distinguished businesswomen" in the world.[463] Apex eventually included offices in Atlanta, Georgia,

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[458] Jim Waltzer and Tom Wilk, *Tales of South Jersey: Profiles and Personalities* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 100.

[459] Apex & Hair Co., Inc., "Apex Glossatina," Biographies Collection-Sara Spencer Washington, Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

[460] Apex & Hair Co., Inc., "Apex Products," Sara Spencer Washington Exhibit Collection, Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

[461] Mme. Sara S. Washington, "Apex Products and Their Use," Black Businesses in Atlantic City Collection, Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

[462] Jim Waltzer, "Sara Spencer Washington," Sara Spencer Washington Collection, Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

[463] Jim Waltzer, "The Beauty of Beating the Odds," Sara Spencer Washington Collection, Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

New York City, Brooklyn, Chicago, Baltimore, Richmond, Virginia, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, Johannesburg, South Africa, and in the Caribbean.[464] Apex Enterprises eventually included Apex Beauty Colleges, Apex Publishing Co., Apex News and Hair Co., Apex Laboratories, and the Apex Drug Company.[465]

Washington promoted black businesses and pioneered advertising techniques while marketing her products to the African American community.[466] She created a public relations department within the context of Apex that worked with black-owned businesses throughout the United States while explaining "the importance of buying from blacks and supporting black businesses."[467] Her granddaughter Royton Scott reminisces, "My grandmother always wanted to be her own businesswoman. One of her mottos, I still use today, 'This may be a predominantly white country, but I can still be black and successful.'"[468] Washington authored the pamphlets that advertised her products and various business ventures; these publications also functioned as forums for advice on business practices, education, self-help, and uplift.[469]

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[464] Barbara Polk Riley, "Sara Spencer Washington, 1889-1953," Sara Spencer Washington Collection, Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

[465] Mme. Sara S. Washington, "Apex Products and Their Use," Black Businesses in Atlantic City Collection, Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

[466] Barbara Polk Riley, "Sara Spencer Washington, 1889-1953," Sara Spencer Washington Collection, Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

[467] Barbara Polk Riley, "Sarah Spencer Washington," in the Sara Spencer Washington Collection, Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

[468] Felecia Compian, "Successful Professionals Look Back to their Families' Deep Roots in A.C.," *Hometown*, March 16, 2011 in the Sara Spencer Washington Collection, Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

[469] Mme. Sarah Spencer Washington, "Apex Beauty Products: World's Finest Beauty Preparations and their Use," Sara Spencer Washington Collection, Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Washington was involved in a host of philanthropic endeavors. She used her wealth to actively build up the African American community in Atlantic City by providing social services, leisure, and recreational opportunities to blacks in the city and surrounding areas. Apex Rest was formed as a rooming house for blacks who came to the City in search of employment during the First Great Migration.[470] The Apex Golf Club was financed by Washington, because blacks were barred from other leisure clubs in the Atlantic City region.[471] This club was located in Galloway Township on Moss Hill Road at Odessa Avenue (now Pomona Gulf Club). Washington also utilized her properties to provide African Americans with recreational activities, such as the case with Apex Rest, and her purchase of the Brigantine Hotel from Father Divine led to the integration of the Atlantic City beachfront.[472] During the Great Depression in the 1930s, Washington hired an open-cockpit airplane "to fly over Atlantic City and drop coupons for a quarter ton of coal."[473] She also allowed some of her properties to be used for "homes for wayward girls" and for children's summer camps.[474]

Washington was noticeably involved in the political and civic affairs of Atlantic City and more specifically civil rights organizations as a clubwoman. She was an active member of the NAACP, the New Jersey Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and the

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[470] Robert A. Peterson, *Patriots, Pirates, and Pineys: Sixty Who Shaped New Jersey* (Medford: Plexus Publishing, Inc., 1998), 133.

[471] Robert A. Peterson, *Patriots, Pirates, and Pineys*, 134.

[472] Jim Waltzer and Tom Wilk, *Tales of South Jersey*, 101.

[473] Robert A. Peterson, *Patriots, Pirates, and Pineys: Sixty Who Shaped New Jersey* (Medford, NJ: Plexus Publishing Inc., 1998) 133-134.

[474] Peterson, *Patriots, Pirates, and Pineys*, 133-134.

National Council of Negro Women. In addition to serving as president of the Northside Business and Professional Women's Clubs and Chair of the Industrial Department of the New Jersey Federation of Colored Women's Clubs,[475] Washington was also a member of the Atlantic City Board of Trade and served for a time as an elected official on the County Republican Committee in Atlantic City.[476] Subsequently, in her position with the Committee, she campaigned for and supported various politicians who embraced the idea of black social equality. It was through both local and national organizations that Washington leveraged her wealth and prestige in the community to demand equality for black Americans.

Washington's activism paralleled that of black women in the Garden State and the social justice work of individuals such as Anna Arnold Hedgeman in the North. Hedgeman was active for a time in the Garden State as a worker with the YWCA in Jersey City. It was in New Jersey that Hedgeman became increasingly aware of segregation and discrimination as part of a larger national pattern. She attempted to utilize the YWCA as a platform to address some of the same issues that Washington was addressing as an entrepreneur and clubwoman, such as poverty, employment, and civil rights. Hedgeman's life of activism and thoughts regarding black freedom demonstrate how black women's public intellectualism on the national and local scale advanced civil rights in the early twentieth century.

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[475] "Sara Spencer Washington," Atlantic City Black History Collection, Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

[476] "Sara Spencer Washington," Atlantic City Black History Collection, Atlantic City Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Chapter 3

"The Urgency of the Hour Was With Us":

Anna Arnold Hedgeman and the Civil Rights Movement in the North

"The sense of the urgency of the hour was with us."

– Anna Arnold Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds: A Memoir of Negro Leadership* (1964)

In the development of the early Civil Rights Movement in the North, Anna Arnold Hedgeman was a paramount figure. Historian Jennifer Scanlon, in her recent biography of Hedgeman, *Until There is Justice: The Life of Anna Arnold Hedgeman* (Oxford University Press, 2016), describes her as an "exceptional woman" who played a "central role" in the black freedom struggle.[477] Hedgeman's human rights activism spans more than six decades in the United States and abroad as Scanlon asserts:

> Anna Arnold Hedgeman played a vital role in more than six decades of racial justice efforts. She worked as a teacher in the Deep South and grappled with segregated YWCAs as an executive in the North during the 1920s; she was an emergency relief worker and supervisor in New York City during the Great Depression, a fair employment practices advocate in Washington during World War II, a national political appointee in health and human services in the post-war period, and an assistant to New York City's Mayor Robert F. Wagner, Jr. in the 1950s; and she was a critical advocate for civil rights legislation in the 1960s and 1970s.[478]

Hedgeman fits into this narrative for several reasons, including her connection to the Garden State via the Jersey City YWCA, her role in the YW more specifically, her executive position with the Fair Employment Practices Committee, and her activism in

[477] Jennifer Scanlon, *Until There is Justice: The Life of Anna Arnold Hedgeman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 2.

[478] Ibid.

New York state politics as a Democratic Party operative. Throughout her life, as an educator, editor, writer, public policy official, politician, and civil rights advocate, Hedgeman moved within and between several national associations in an attempt to forge cross-racial alliances in the interest of black freedom and women's rights.[479] Some of the major associations that Hedgeman became affiliated with, beyond the YW, include the NAACP, NUL, American Missionary Association, National Council of Churches, United Nations Association, and National Organization of Women (as a co-founder and first executive vice president).[480]

Hedgeman was also a public policy professional and politician working with several federal agencies, including the Emergency Relief Bureau (Department of Welfare), National Office of Civil Defense, National Council for a Fair Employment Practices Commission (as executive director), the Federal Security Agency, and the State Department, as well as serving on Harry S. Truman's New York presidential election campaign in 1948.[481] She eventually became the first black woman to serve in a mayoral cabinet in New York.[482] Hedgeman was particularly influential as an executive director of several YWs in the Midwest and Northeast from 1924 to 1939 and as a public policy official working with the Democratic Party. Her tenure as an executive director during this time included working with or overseeing YWs in Springfield, Ohio, Jersey City, Harlem, and Philadelphia.

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[479] Ibid.

[480] Ibid.

[481] Julie A. Gallagher, *Black Women & Politics in New York City*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 106-107.

[482] Ibid., 107-108.

Hedgeman's personal biography and the development of her ideas about interracial cooperation as a national figure active in communities in both New Jersey and New York are important to understanding the role of black women and the Civil Rights Movement in the North.[483] Her privileged upbringing and Christian education in the Midwest shaped her ideas on human liberation and black empowerment. Hedgeman's activism with the YW and her role as a public policymaker along with a discussion of her position as a member of the National Committee for a Permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission, into the mid-1940s, are aspects of her role in the black freedom struggle that this chapter explores.

Hedgeman was part of a multifaceted northern Civil Rights Movement that fought various forms of discrimination. Throughout the North, there was persistent segregation in schools and residential areas, despite laws forbidding such practices.[484] Separate schools or separation within schools were common in the North both before and after 1954.[485] There are even documented cases indicating that some school districts in the North gerrymandered school attendance zones to maintain segregation.[486] Chicago schools remained notoriously segregated by race well into the 1960s, while Long Island schools, according to Thomas Sugrue, "sent all black students regardless of their race to a single all-black school."[487] In some cases in the North, black students were forced to eat

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[483] Scanlon, *Until There is Justice*, 3.

[484] Thomas Sugrue, "Northern Lights: The Black Freedom Struggle Outside the South," *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History* 26, no. 1 (January 2012): 13-14.

[485] Ibid.,14.

[486] Ibid., 13.

[487] Ibid., 12-13.

their lunch in segregated cafeterias and occupy separate playgrounds.[488] Students in Asbury Park were segregated within the school buildings, while students in Trenton were segregated within the school system by grade level.[489] Residential segregation was maintained in the North through practices such as blockbusting, redlining and restrictive covenants that have been well documented by a contingent of historians and sociologists.[490] Sugrue has stated that residential segregation was "mandated in Federal mortgage programs supervised by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, the Federal Housing Administration, and Veteran's Administration" from the 1920s to the '40s. [491]

State governments at both the federal and local levels in the North and South maintained segregation in the nation as a whole. It would be wrong to assume that segregation by practice or custom was the only type of segregation that appeared outside of the South in twentieth-century US history. Federally sanctioned discriminatory practices worked in tandem with local practices deployed throughout the North in both public and private contexts. In cities such as Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, and Los Angeles, practices of segregation through restrictive covenants at the local level were consistently

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[488] Ibid., 13-14.

[489] Washington, *The Quest for Equality*, 104-105.

[490] For definitive discussions of the discriminatory practices deployed by the state in northern contexts, see *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1983) by Arnold Hirsch, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) by Kenneth T. Jackson, *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-1945* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press,1985) by Joe Trotter, *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press,1987) by Peter Gottlieb, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,1993) by Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, and *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,1996) by Thomas Sugrue.

[491] Thomas Sugrue, "Northern Lights," 13.

challenged by black communities, culminating in the 1948 Supreme Court decision in *Shelley v. Kraemer* that declared such covenants unenforceable.[492]

It was the combined events of the Great Depression and World War II that helped accelerate the emergence of the modern black freedom struggle (as evidenced in the biography of Hedgeman). In response to segregation in public facilities, black communities in the North organized "wade-ins" at public beaches, including those in cities such as Chicago and Asbury Park, and "sit-downs" at segregated lunch counters, and refused to purchase products from stores that did not hire blacks.[493] Stanley Keith Arnold in his recent text *Building the Beloved Community: Philadelphia's Interracial Civil Rights Organization's and Race Relations, 1930-1970* (University Press of Mississippi, 2014), has noted that the black community in Philadelphia created coalitions through organizations such as the Fellowship House, Philadelphia Housing Association, and Fellowship Commission to secure civil rights at the state, local, and national level.[494] He further argues that Martin Luther King, Jr. first learned of the Indian principle of *satyagraha* at a Fellowship House Sunday forum.[495] Mothers from Trenton to Harlem led a series of protests against public schools in both states in the early 1950s.[496] Historian Jeanne Theoharis counters what she has called the "southernization" of Rosa Park's story in a recent text on the Civil Rights icon entitled *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks*

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[492] Ibid., 13.

[493] Haley Leuthart, "Wading-in at Rainbow Beach," *OAH Magazine of History* 26, no. 1 (January, 2012): 12.

[494] Stanley Keith Arnold, *Building the Beloved Community: Philadelphia's Interracial Civil Rights Organization's and Race Relations, 1930-1970* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 3-5.

[495] Ibid., 3.

[496] Sugrue, "Northern Lights," 14.

(Beacon Press, 2014).[497] Theoharis notes that Parks spent forty years of her life fighting for black equality in Detroit, having been forced out of Montgomery, Alabama after the bus boycott in 1956 due to death threats.[498] In Detroit, Parks was involved in campaigns against discrimination in housing, schools and public accommodations more generally.[499]

African Americans had access to the ballot in northern states, which was likely a core factor as to why the Civil Rights Movement in the North was accelerated and seemingly more successful than the black freedom struggle in the South (at least in the early stages of the latter). A strategy of pressure group politics, eventually conjoined with the tactics of nonviolent direct action, was viable in locations such as Harlem or Chicago, where large black populations could help to determine the outcome of both local and state elections. This is evident with the election of individuals such as Adam Clayton Powell in Harlem and Oscar De Priest in Chicago. It is incontrovertible that the denial of access to the ballot is a major factor as to why the black freedom struggle accelerated first in the northern part of the nation. The North became the proving ground for civil rights campaigns to secure fair employment, desegregation of schools, and public accommodations more generally through the use of the ballot and pressure group politics. This generated a movement towards racial equality in the nation by the 1950s, although the northern movement eventually stalled.

The demand for fair employment and economic parity was the primary goal of black activists before 1954, and the immediate successes in the North led organizations such as the NAACP to take a greater interest in those states that had been more successful

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[497] Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014), xii.

[498] Ibid., ix.

[499] Ibid.

than others with a goal to implement similar strategies, goals, and objectives nationwide.[500] The early success of the black freedom movement was nowhere more visible than in northern states such as New York and New Jersey as a result of the national campaign to secure employment equity in the 1940s led by individuals such as Hedgeman.[501]

The struggle for a permanent FEP law was the event that inaugurated the modern black freedom struggle. This struggle unfolded first in northern states such as New York and New Jersey despite the failure to secure a federal FEP law in 1945. More than fifty laws were passed concerning fair employment, open accommodations, and fair housing in northern states such as Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey from the mid-1940s to the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964.[502] These state laws prohibited not only racial discrimination but also discrimination on the basis of religion and national origin.[503] During these decades, New Jersey and New York led the nation in explicitly mandating non-discrimination in public and private employment by implementing enforcement measures stricter than in any other states.[504] This occurrence was a result of the interracial cooperation between men and women, including members of radical labor organizations such as the CIO, philanthropic associations such as the YWCA and YMCA, civil rights agencies, and various religious denominations.

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[500] Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North*, 243.

[501] Eileen Boris, "Fair Employment and the Origins of Affirmative Action: in the 1940s," *NWSA Journal* 10, no. 3 (Autumn, 1998): 142-143.

[502] Anthony S. Chen, "The Party of Lincoln and the Politics of State Fair Employment Practices Legislation in the North, 1945-1964," *American Journal of Sociology* 112, no. 6 (May 2007): 1714.

[503] Ibid.

[504] Ibid.

Although Hedgeman on more than one occasion in her biographical writings claims a worldview that gravitates towards black nationalism, stating that she did not talk to white people for five years while working primarily in Harlem, her *actions* indicate that over the course of her lifetime she continued to engage in interracial cooperation as a strategy before, during, and after she parted with the YWCA movement. Hedgeman is perhaps best understood as a pragmatic Christian feminist. She may have embraced nationalist tendencies at the height of the Harlem Renaissance but remained, at the time, with the YW although deeply disillusioned about interracial cooperation. Hedgeman's support of African American studies curricula later in life might, at best, be understood as a form of cultural nationalism; but, cultural nationalists are not necessarily territorial nationalists (separatists). Her decisions to join first the Truman campaign and then the Truman administration as a bureaucrat with the Federal Security Agency are the acts of a pragmatist, which is also evidenced by her role in the administration of New York Mayor Robert Wagner, Jr. in the 1950s.

Hedgeman is an important transitional figure and link between the early and classical phases of the black freedom struggle, as evidenced by her associations with black labor-left coalition politics of the 1930s and '40s and liberal politics of the '50s, culminating in her activities as co-organizer of the March on Washington in 1963.[505] Hedgeman's personal biography and her work with the YW helped shape her protest ethic, which was based in Christian theology, feminism, class consciousness, and black liberation ideologies. Her work with the YW and the role she played in the national campaign for fair employment practices, coupled with her work in federal agencies, attest

[505] Scanlon, *Until there is Justice*, 3.

to this fact.[506] Hedgeman's activism can be understood within the framework of the Civil Rights Movement in the North, particularly in the northeast as illustrated by her civil rights work in New Jersey and New York.[507] Hedgeman, who routinely moved within and between multiple organizations to advance human freedom, was among the core personalities responsible for laying the foundation of the black freedom struggle in the North that centered largely on the demand for fair employment practices.[508]

The basis of the modern black freedom struggle at the local and national levels was structured around the demand for fair labor and employment practices as a result of black labor-left interracial cooperation.[509] The National Council for a Permanent Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) was made possible through interracial cooperation. In total, fifty-seven national labor, religious, philanthropic, and civil rights organizations convened to support the fair FEP (Fair Employment Practices) law, including individuals from various ethno-racial groups. Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish congregations joined together with labor organizations such as the CIO and American Federation of Labor to defend the FEP bill.[510] Eleanor Roosevelt maintained her support of a fair employment law after leaving the White House, and George Hunton of the National Catholic Interracial Council spoke at public hearings in support of the law.[511] Rabbi Stephen Wise and Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam of the Methodist Church also

[506] Ibid. 3-4.

[507] Gallagher, *Black Women & Politics in New York City*, 106.

[508] Chen, "The Party of Lincoln and the Politics of State Employment Practices Legislation in the North," 1714-1717.

[509] Ibid., 1717.

[510] Anna Arnold Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds: A Memoir of Negro Leadership* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), 88-91.

[511] Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds*, 91.

defended the idea of a FEP law at public hearings.[512] Some prominent black attorneys offered their services to the Council (pro bono), including Charles Hamilton Houston, William H. Hastie, Spottswood Robinson, who eventually became Dean of Howard University Law School, and George Johnson, working alongside white liberals in the US Congress interested in the passage of a FEP law.[513] Congressional support included both Democratic and Republican members such as Charles La Follette, representative from Indiana, William L. Dawson, a Democrat from Illinois, Senator Dennis Chavez from New Mexico, Helen Gahagan Douglas, a Democrat in the House from California, and Frances Bolton, a Republican House member from Ohio.[514] Ruth Haefner loaded copies of the bill into her car to rally white Church women, and Daisy Bates in Little Rock, Arkansas became an important voice at the local level in support of the idea of a FEP law.[515]

Given that New Jersey passed its FEP law only a month after New York's, it is clear that Hedgeman—active in both states at the time—helped shape both. She spearheaded the national campaign for a federal law on FEP alongside labor leader A. Philip Randolph that led to ground-breaking legislation in nearly every northern state by the mid-1940s.[516] This is illustrated by the state FEP laws arose across the nation as a result of the National Council that had been created to secure such laws as well as the

[512] Ibid.

[513] Ibid., 88.

[514] Ibid., 91.

[515] Ibid., 90.

[516] Ibid., 86.

agencies that were later created to enforce these laws in states like New York and New Jersey.[517]

Hedgeman's life and work is used to illustrate the black freedom struggle in the North from the perspective of a black woman and public intellectual. It is pertinent to state here that Hedgeman's protest ethic, although heavily influenced by Methodism, was also partly a feminist approach to empowerment as revealed in her memoirs, public addresses, essays, and private correspondences. Hedgeman's two published memoirs—*The Trumpet Sounds: A Memoir of Negro Leadership* (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston,1964) and *The Gift of Chaos: Decades of American Discontent* (Oxford University Press,1977)—are utilized to narrate her biography and illustrate the external forces that helped shape her ideas on human liberation.[518]

Hedgeman's memoir *The Trumpet Sound* adopted the subtitle "A memoir of Negro leadership," because with this text she delivers a history of black leadership that showcases the major organizations and leaders most active in the early Civil Rights Movement. Casting herself as one of the central characters in this narrative, she provided only minimal details on her personal life overall. In this text, she continuously reminds her readers with phrases such as "on a personal level," in the fleeting instances when she actually shares any private details of her life, that she may be overlooked in this history.

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[517] Many scholars, including Biondi in her text on the early black freedom struggle in New York *To Stand and Fight*, have failed to adequately discuss the relationship between northern states such as New Jersey and New York comparatively in the early black freedom struggle in the North. Biondi reduces Hedgeman's role to a few lines in her text, which is surprising given Hedgeman's pivotal activism in the development of the Civil Rights Movement in New York.

[518] Anna Arnold Hedgeman authored two book-length autobiographies of her role in the Civil Rights Movement within roughly a dozen years including *The Trumpet Sounds: A Memoir of Negro Leadership* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964) which is an account of her participation in the early phases of the black freedom struggle, and *The Gift of Chaos: Decades of American Discontent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) that details her involvement in the planning of the March on Washington.

Given that she writes two memoirs within a dozen years, she seems to realize that the only way to ensure that her history gets recorded is to write it herself. To date, there remains only one scholarly discussion of her life, despite her countless contributions to the early black freedom struggle in the North. The process of centering black women's voices is fundamental to the development of this project. This approach is coupled with some analysis of her memoirs and other writings, both private and public as she became a key figure in the struggle for black equality.

African American women have forged a distinct tradition of self-life writing, apparent in works such as autobiography and memoir, that exists at times as a type of *scriptotherapy*,[519] a form particularly evident in the genre of black women's slave narratives that should be understood as an oppositional way of knowing within the larger historical continuum of black intellectualism. Joanne M. Braxton, in her *Black Women Writing Autobiography: A Tradition Within a Tradition* (Temple University Press, 1989), argues that black women have been "knowers" who have "not been known."[520] These women turned to self-life-writing as a response to enslavement, sexual violence, and Jim Crowism, and to become known through literary acts of self-articulation.[521] The process of enslavement led to the loss of indigenous African languages in the New World context as well as ownership of the body for the enslaved population. This attempt to become known through literary processes inaugurates a tradition of black women's self-life-

[519] Suzette A. Henke, *Shattered Subjects: Trauma and Testimony in Women's Life-Writing* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), xii.

[520] Joanne M. Braxton, *Black Women Writing Autobiography: A Tradition Within a Tradition* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 1.

[521] Ibid., 2.

writing that is defined by a reclamation of words, language, the body, and image.[522] For these women, the ownership of words is an act of self-liberation. Braxton posits that these black women writers, "through the juxtaposition of oral and literary forms,"[523] functioned as a type of "outraged" mother voice that spoke for and to the black masses.[524] This outraged mother is defined by Braxton as "a variation of the articulate hero archetype"[525] evident in the autobiographical writings of black men.

These outraged mothers wrote about the violence of racial oppression and sexual assault also as a form of catharsis or scriptotherapy, evident in memoirs as a form of re-memory/reenactment that seeks public validation for suffering through testimony.[526] Trauma, though, does not overtake agency or action in black women's self-life-writing, given that a core theme in black autobiographical writing, more specifically, is action[527] not contemplation. Thus, a unique tradition of black women's self-life-writing was born, defined by the trope of a black mother who seeks redress and action through the written word, a tradition that is intrinsic to understanding black women's intellectualism.

This is illustrated in both literary and oral traditions from the era of enslavement to the autobiographical writings or participant histories of CRE activists such as the writings of Anna Arnold Hedgeman. Ma Rainey's lesbian song of self-affirmation "Prove It on Me" is as autobiographical in nature as Anne Moody's participant history *Coming of*

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[522] Ibid.

[523] Ibid., 5.

[524] Ibid., 3.

[525] Ibid., 10.

[526] Suzette A. Henke, *Shattered Subjects*, xi-xii.

[527] Braxton, *Black Women Writing Autobiography*, 5.

Age in Mississippi. These women, as mothers who speak in mother tongues that fuse the personal and the political, fashioned a tradition of black women's self-life-writing that "challenges ways of knowing"[528] often defined by the voices of (white) men. This continues to be evident in self-life-writing about the Civil Rights Era such as the memoir and autobiography written by Hedgeman.

There exists a perennial debate about the uses of self-life writing in understanding history, and this argument is especially pronounced in discussions of this genre in the CRE literature. Some CRE activists such as SNCC member Joyce Ladner, Ralph Abernathy of SCLC, and Casey Hayden have accused historians of inaccurately presenting the movement in their writings on the Civil Rights Era.[529] Moreover, historians have repeatedly cautioned against the use of self-life-writings such as autobiographies when examining the movement.[530] Writers of participant histories have gone as far as to infer that their histories of the movement are more "accurate" and "truer to the experience."[531] Kathryn L. Nasstrom contends that "the relationship between memoir and history is fundamentally more dialogic than adversarial"[532] and that "autobiography is a distinctive form of historical writing on the movement, able to do work that scholarly writing has not done."[533] These writers, several of whom are black

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[528] Alice A. Deck, "Autobiography as Activism: Three Black Women of the Sixties," *African American Review*, vol. 36, no. Fall 2002, 3.

[529] Kathryn L. Nasstrom, "Between Memory and History: Autobiographies of the Civil Rights Movement and the Writing of Civil Rights History," *The Journal of Southern History*, vol. 74, no. 2, May 2008, 325.

[530] Ibid., 325-326.

[531] Ibid., 326-327.

[532] Ibid., 328.

women, are engaged in "helping to define the public memory of a movement," through self-life writing, that they consider to be "ongoing."[534] Hedgeman was involved in such a practice when she produced her autobiography and memoir at the height of the movement. Aside from this dissertation, the only book-length writings on Hedgeman and the Civil Rights Era were written by Hedgeman herself. Furthermore, Hedgeman's writings are part of a distinctive tradition of black women's intellectualism.

Hedgeman begins her history of the movement through a discussion of family, childhood, and various formative educational and professional experiences to help illustrate her personal life story, including some discussion of her motivation for becoming involved in human rights activism. She is often shrill[535] or indignant in her

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[533] Ibid., 333.

[534] Ibid., 335.

[535] I use the term 'shrill' here not in an explicit gendered sense but rather to connote the tradition of the outraged mother as one who signifies [as "going off" or "sounding out"] her consternation with the violence of race and gender oppression. See *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. for an extended discussion of signifying or specifying in the African American experience. Gates with this text identifies a complex system of (indirect) communication involving the use of irony, metonymy, synecdoche, double-speak, boasting, going-off, extended metaphor, sounding-out or calling out through an elaborate examination of the trickster trope (or figure of the monkey) that has been deployed in literary texts by diasporic Africans in the New World. African slaves in order to cope with the peculiar system of enslavement, that made speaking freely a form of punishment through various means (such as with the bit an instrument that was used to punish enslaved persons for speaking out of turn), developed ways to communicate with one another through an elaborate art of indirection that at times involves tone, inflection, and comportment of one's body in a tradition that has been largely an oral tradition of telling stories. The term *shrill* in this context should not be taken *literally* here as I utilize it in relation to Hedgeman's autobiography or black women's self-life writing more generally; particularly, memoir or black women's autobiography (an example of this might be the Janie character in Zora Neal Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* who on several occasions is *specifying* as in "going off" or "getting loud" within the context of the story). There is a voluminous body of secondary source scholarly literature on the subject of specifying and black women's writing/autobiographical writing including *Specifying: Black Women Writing the American Experience* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989) by Susan Willis; *The Character of the Word: The Texts of Zora Neale Hurston* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1987) by Karla F. Holloway; and *Black Women Writing Autobiography: A Tradition Within A Tradition* by Joanne M. Braxton (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989) by Joanne Braxton. These scholars map what they identify as a distinct tradition in black women's writing that is associated with the idea of the mother and "getting loud" that evolved from a tradition of suffering and oppression.

outrage, in reaction to the socio-economic injustices that has witnessed, while also being instructive about the progress of black liberation within the context of her self-life-writings. Her spiritual awakening as a young Methodist in Anoka and then her professional development with the YWCA shaped her protest ethic, which was grounded primarily in Methodism and feminism. The Methodist focus on works of mercy through social action is evident in her thought and social justice endeavors, while the YW's platform of social feminism impacted her thinking on human liberation.

Methodism and feminism were both integral to her interracialist philosophy of human liberation. The Methodist Church and the YW were the most important institutional resources of identity-making in Hedgeman's life as an activist and public intellectual; yet, at the same time, these institutions remained divided by race during the height of her activism, which led Hedgeman to a more pronounced black consciousness. Her lived experience[536] of racism and sexism, coupled with her religious background, heavily informed her development as a public intellectual; however, her newfound black consciousness became juxtaposed with and not superimposed over Methodism and feminism as the guiding principles of her protest ethic. Hedgeman's intersectional approach to empowerment is illustrated in her memoir *The Trumpet Sounds: A Memoir of Negro Leadership* (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), in which she clearly and repeatedly expresses concerns about both racial oppression and sexism.

Hedgeman's two book-length projects that were written during the height of her activist career were a memoir and an autobiography. Her memoir, published in 1964, a year after she helped organize the March on Washington, covers her early childhood,

[536] The term 'experience' here is defined as the process through which an individual interacts with the material world and the translation of these interactions, by said individual, into subjective reality.

formal education, her work with the YW and Democratic Party Politics and her involvement in the committee to organize a March on Washington in 1963. *The Gift of Chaos: Decades of American Discontent* (Oxford University Press, 1977), first released in 1977, is a participant history and detailed account of black leadership that concentrates primarily on the years after the March through the mid-1970s. Understood together, these texts might be taken as parts one and two of an extended form of self-life-writing or record of Hedgeman's life as an activist from the Harlem Renaissance Era through the March on Washington.

Methodism has a complex history of race relations in US society, but John Wesley, an ardent abolitionist, is widely considered to have been the dominant force in its development. David N. Field has identified what he defines as a "historic Methodist praxis" that is predicated on Wesley's stated mission for the faith "as spreading scriptural holiness."[537] Wesley's theology is rooted in concepts of holiness such as love, justice, mercy, truth, and social holiness as expressed through a type of praxis.[538] According to Field, there is a relationship between social justice and the larger mission of the Church that he describes as a "praxis of justice, mercy, and truth," which he sees as integral to holiness.[539] This praxis is often expressed through such actions as works of mercy expected of all Methodists. Hedgeman's family lived in an all-white Midwestern community and attended a white Methodist Church though Methodism, as was the case with various religious denominations in America in the first part of the twentieth century,

[537] David N. Field, "Holiness, Social Justice, and the Mission of the Church: John Wesley's Insights in Contemporary Context," *Holiness: The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge* vol. 1, no. 2, 2015, 177.

[538] Ibid.

[539] Ibid.

remained a generally segregated Church. That said, Hedgeman's thoughts on human liberation were shaped by the core tenets of Methodism as well as her upbringing.

Anna Arnold was born on July 5, 1899 in Marshalltown, Iowa to William James Arnold II and Marie Ellen (Parker) Arnold; however, the family subsequently moved to Minnesota, where she grew up. She had an idyllic childhood where she saw "no poverty" and lived in a large house with "space where children could run and play."[540] "I grew up in Anoka, Minnesota," states Hedgeman in her memoir *The Trumpet Sounds*, "in a small comfortable Midwestern town with the traditional main street."[541] There, she "practiced the piano" and spent much of her free time studying.[542] Hedgeman describes her childhood surroundings:

> Our house was large and there was space where children could run and play. There were trees to climb and a small garden plot to tend. It was no accident that we had space in which to grow and were surrounded by growing things. My father planned it that way.[543]

Her father William was a college graduate who instilled in his children a strong academic work ethic. "He was of the first generation of Negro college graduates immediately following the Civil War era," she says, with a "fanatical desire for education."[544] Hedgeman had a penchant for intellectual pursuits early on as a self-described "plain and a bit solemn" child, unlike her "two beautiful sisters."[545]

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[540] Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds*, 7.

[541] Ibid.

[542] Ibid., 8.

[543] Ibid., 7.

[544] Anna Arnold Hedgeman, *The Gift of Chaos: Decades of American Discontent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 4.

[545] Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds*, 9.

The Arnold family was the only black family in Anoka at the time, a community populated primarily by families of Norwegian, Swedish, Irish, and German ancestry.[546] Her family is described by Hedgeman as living in "the heart of an Irish neighborhood" next to the Doyle family, whom she loved "as much as any neighbors" that she ever had.[547] They attended a white Methodist church where her father served on the Board of Trustees (her father had a very light complexion, and Hedgeman infers in her memoirs that he may have passed however inadvertently). This was an upbringing within which Hedgeman contends having seen "no poverty," later admitting while active in civil rights demonstrations that she "had not realized that a man could need bread and not be able to get it."[548]

The community as a whole was deeply religious, according to Hedgeman, and the pursuit of education was important to most families: "Four ideas dominated our family life and for that matter the life of a great many people in our community─education, religion, character, and service to mankind."[549] In Anoka, there was a "stress on the development of God-given talent for service to the world" states Hedgeman.[550] Her family, with the exception of her mother, who was Catholic, was staunchly Methodist, and Hedgeman declares in her memoirs that she "inherited the Methodist Church from

[546] Ibid., 1.

[547] Ibid., 11.

[548] Ibid., 1.

[549] Ibid., 5.

[550] Ibid.

her two grandfathers" and "her father."[551] She also notes that "under her father's influence," her mother Marie Ellen eventually became a Methodist.[552]

Hedgeman's personal, educational, and intellectual development were strongly influenced by the Methodist Church. Upon her graduation from high school in 1918, her father chose for her undergraduate education a Methodist college in St. Paul, Minnesota called Hamline University, which she described as "an extension" of her "home experience": [553]

> Qualified and concerned professors made education at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota a stimulating and enriching adventure. In a basic sense, Hamline was an extension of my home experience. Daily chapel (not convocation) was a unifying dimension where theology and the disciplines of the academic program presented us with new ideas, choices, and suggestions for exploration.[554]

There were no black teachers or professors in Hedgeman's formative educational experience though she was aware of her "African Heritage."[555] She claims that "the color problem had been minimal" in these early years of her educational experience.[556] Hedgeman's first prolonged encounter with black youth and the black community beyond her own family was on the eve of her entrance to Hamline when her Aunt Mayme took her to meet some "young Negro people" in St. Paul, where she experienced the

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[551] Ibid.

[552] Ibid.

[553] Hedgeman, *The Gift of Chaos*, 5.

[554] Ibid.

[555] Ibid., 6.

[556] Ibid.

"emotional shock" of hearing shouting during a black church service.[557] Her best friend at Hamline was a red-headed Irish student named Mary Elizabeth Poston, and Hedgeman boarded in the home of Dr. Frank Doran and his wife, a white Methodist couple, during her years at college.[558] It was as an undergraduate that Hedgeman first developed a relationship with the YW by working as a volunteer with a local YW. Hedgeman was the first black student at Hamline University and the first black person to graduate from the University, earning a BA in English in 1922.[559] She found work upon graduation in the Deep South at Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi, where she taught English and history from 1922 to 1924.[560]

Hedgeman's first serious encounter with racial discrimination occurred in a segregated rail car on her journey to Mississippi:

> The coach was located behind the engine and obviously had not been properly cleaned. The conductor was rude, there was no food, service available, the toilet was plain dirty, and when we stopped along the route even the public railroad stations, however small, had signs marked for separate entrances…[561]

She described her experience with racism and poverty in rural Mississippi as life-changing: "It was in this setting that I discovered the educational problems faced by Negroes in the Deep South."[562] Rust College contained an elementary school, high school, and a four-year college program. Many of her students in rural Mississippi were sons and

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[557] Ibid., 12.

[558] Ibid., 13-14.

[559] Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds*, 18.

[560] Ibid.

[561] Hedgeman, *The Gift of Chaos*, 6.

[562] Ibid., 7.

daughters of poor black sharecroppers, and several of the parents paid their children's tuition on credit:

> I was amazed to discover that parents paid tuition for grade and high school children, until I visited the local grade school which was situated in the town's jail yard. Rust College had limited financial support, but in the best tradition of the Negro College campus it stretched every human resource to provide basic education at the lowest tuition cost that could be managed…Many of the parents paid tuition on the installment plan, and college income was uncertain.[563]

Hedgeman notes in her memoir how several students disappeared from the classroom at the height of farming season. At Rust College, she taught courses in English and history at multiple levels from grade school to the college level. Mississippi also was where Hedgeman became more intimately familiar with the functioning of the black organizing tradition, within a larger black community context, something that had not been possible in Anoka beyond the immediate context of her family (many of whom had very light complexions, including one of her blue-eyed blonde sisters).

At Rust, Hedgeman became more directly aware of poverty and discrimination. Her experience deeply shaped her development as a human rights advocate. There was no gymnasium or science building, and the books, supplies and financial aid for the students were inadequate. In fact, most of the teachers (including Hedgeman) spent much of their $60-75 monthly salary on books, clothing, and other necessities—such as medical care—for their students.[564] The signs of segregation were everywhere, as Hedgeman relates in *The Trumpet Sounds*:

> The signs, "colored" and "white" were everywhere. I had come to know that this usually meant no service for "colored."[565]

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[563] Ibid.
[564] Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds*, 27.

[565] Ibid., 23.

The segregation that she encountered on a daily basis became at times unbearable, and she details in *The Gift of Chaos* the "nightmare" of living in a segregated world:

> On the personal side, the signs which notified me I could not sit here, enter there, use the transportation freely, eat in any restaurant when hungry, ride in the comfortable part of any train, or drink from the water fountain unless it was marked "Colored" made a nightmare of my life. The entire scene was chaos with a vengeance.[566]

And, upon going into town one day without her hat and gloves, Hedgeman was once warned by a colleague that young black women associated with the school should behave and dress as formally as possible when heading into town to avoid "problematical" contact with white men.[567]

In these memoirs, she also makes note of the courage of the parents, and the determination of the students, who came to her with their last savings to pay for school, and the resourcefulness of school administrators such as Dean of the College Dr. J. Leonard Farmer, father of James Farmer and founder of the Congress of Racial Equality.[568] As Hedgeman recalled Judy Mae, a "sturdily built" fifteen-year-old girl, being assigned to a third-grade class but eagerly wanting to learn. On a separate occasion, an elderly woman came to her with a bag of change at the end of one commencement ceremony, stating, "I wants you to give dis money to de president," she said, "take good keer of it; I washed and ironed and scrubbed fer it; I want some kid ter have de chance I ain't never had."[569] Farmer provided Hedgeman with his own precious books on black

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[566] Hedgeman, *The Gift of Chaos*, 7.

[567] Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds*, 22.

[568] Ibid., 23.

[569] Ibid., 27.

history to prepare her to teach the subject more cogently to her pupils. It was in Mississippi, as revealed in her memoirs, that Hedgeman cemented her commitment to a struggle for human liberation. Upon her decision to move on, she left Rust with "a new sense of relationship to the struggle for freedom."[570]

Yet, she also departed Mississippi with anger as is evident in her writings:

> By the end of my second year at Rust the overwhelming difficulties against which a Negro had to work, study and live in the South had created in me a deep hate for all Southern whites.[571]

These sentiments are reiterated in her text *The Gift of Chaos*:

> After two years, I decided that I must return to the North and organize the pioneering experience of white and Negro citizens to free the Southern Negro. I had in me nothing but contempt for the southern white who had dared rob the Negro of his heritage, labor, and his basic access to facilities which I believed to be the basic right of all Americans. I actually hated those white people because of their inhumanity.[572]

These passages also reveal sentiments of uplift and the politics of respectability (though she would later claim that it was white people who needed "uplift" the most). Indignant about the predicament she faced living in the segregated South, Hedgeman left the region believing that she must find a way to "to free the "Southern Negro."[573] She lived a life relatively sheltered from racism, ensconced as she was in a mostly Irish neighborhood in the Midwest with nice white neighbors whom she loved. As a result of her time in the Deep South, she developed a righteous anger in the form of burning questions:

> Seething within me were many questions. How could conditions like these be tolerated in the United States? How dared such people call themselves

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[570] Ibid., 30.

[571] Ibid., 27.

[572] Hedgeman, *The Gift of Chaos*, 8.

[573] Ibid., 8.

> Christians? Why were Negroes denied the ordinary human freedoms? What could I do about it?[574]

Although Hedgeman left Mississippi with a newfound awareness of racism in the nation, increasingly angry with whites in both the North and the South over segregation and the economic inequality experienced by many blacks, she never relinquished her commitment to Christian service through interracial cooperation. Thus, she decided to leave the South to join an organization that she believed embodied a commitment to both Christian service and interracial cooperation—the YWCA.

Hedgeman's ideas about human liberation were greatly shaped by her life experiences in Anoka, where she had been "impressed by [her white neighbors'] descriptions of the hardships they had faced" in their homelands of Norway, Sweden, Germany, Ireland and England before immigrating to the United States.[575] Her Midwestern Methodist upbringing is likely what eventually compelled her to serve the YWCA movement as an executive director. Further, her intimate association with the black community in Mississippi prompted her to embrace a greater concern for black freedom more specifically. Thus, her ideas about human liberation were informed by Christian ethics and the black self-help tradition, which eventually became coupled with feminist sensibilities. The interracialism that Hedgeman espoused is evident of a long historical continuum within black feminist thought—namely, that of the intersectional approach to empowerment, which emphasizes empowerment on the basis of race, gender, and class simultaneously. It is important to reiterate here that the first black women

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[574] Ibid., 27-28.

[575] Hedgeman, *The Gift of Chaos*, 5.

feminists were churchwomen. Black women have historically utilized the church as an important mechanism for cultivating feminist agency.

With her return to Minnesota in 1924, Hedgeman found it difficult to obtain employment as a teacher. Most of her white classmates from Hamline were already teaching full-time and she sought to rely on them for information or references concerning work as a teacher in Minnesota. As she recalled, many of these former white classmates had met her with "blushing and stammering" when informing her that there was no possibility of her working as a teacher in the schools or communities where they lived and worked, due to her race.[576] She described this difficulty of finding work in her home state:

> It had not occurred to me before that in the North also I was not a teacher or even an American. I was a Negro—not wanted and not expected.[577]

Eventually, at the suggestion of a friend, she contacted one of the black executive directors at the national YWCA central office (there were two at the time, including Eva Bowles) to inquire about a professional position with the YW. She was then offered a position as executive director of the Springfield, Ohio YW, where she "met the sugar-coated segregated pattern of social work and housing in the North."[578]

Hedgeman's work as a professional member of the YW lasted more than a decade at five major "Negro" branches of the YW, primarily in the northeastern section of the United States. She worked as an executive director at the Springfield Negro branch from 1924 to 1926 and the Jersey City Negro branch from 1926 to 1927, as a membership

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[576] Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds*, 30.

[577] Ibid.

[578] Ibid.

secretary for the 137th Street Y in Harlem from 1927 to 1933, and as an executive of the Brooklyn YW from 1938 to 1939. It was while working with these various segregated branches of the YW in the North that Hedgeman became more cognizant of northern racism and disillusioned with white society as a whole. Her career in public policy began mostly after her professional career with the YW.

In Springfield, Hedgeman noticed that the facilities at the Negro branch of the YW were not much better than the conditions in Mississippi. There was no gymnasium, no swimming pool, no cafeteria and inadequate staff at the black branch, while the central "white" branch of the YW had all of these amenities.[579] Hedgeman recalled that although she was a member of the professional staff of the YW, she was not allowed to eat in the cafeteria of the central branch. At this YW, she was in charge of membership, fundraising, interpretation of Christian fellowship to the black community, and general services to the youth, industrial, business and adult communities.[580] She describes her first impressions of the Springfield Negro branch YW in such a way: "The first week of my employment in such a Negro branch in the fall of 1924 was one of appalled discovery of northern segregation."[581] One of Hedgeman's major goals at this YW was to advocate for black youth in Springfield to gain the right to utilize the facilities at the central branch, and cultivate cross-racial Christian fellowship between the black and white communities more generally.[582]

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[579] Ibid., 31-32.

[580] Ibid., 31.

[581] Ibid.

[582] Ibid., 31-32.

Hedgeman's disappointment with the YW movement began at Springfield as demonstrated by her telling response to northern white racism in *The Trumpet Sounds*:

> The Negro youngsters who came for activities were bitter about the restrictions within the Association and within the town. I was expected to build a fellowship of women and girls committed to the development of a Christian community, yet there were no tools of the spirit in the relationships between Negro and white youth. Only a few individuals in the white and Negro community believed in each other or were honest with each other.[583]

Hedgeman continues on her Springfield experience:

> By this time, I was grateful for my Mississippi experience and for all that I had learned from the teachers there of how to give Negro children faith and confidence in themselves in spite of discrimination and segregation.[584]
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> It was in this community that I recognized fully that "separate" meant inferior, despised and unequal.[585]

Her role as executive director of the Negro branch of the YW in Springfield often meant delivering public lectures or talks on the black experience to white audiences.[586] At times during these presentations, by her account, she "lashed out" at whites for their insulting questions.[587] After her proposal to secure more adequate facilities for the Negro branch was rejected, Hedgeman concluded that "the wall of separation was as vivid in the minds of Negroes and whites as though the signs were present."[588] Her disillusionment is aptly conveyed by the realization she made upon deciding to leave the Midwest in 1926 that

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[583] Ibid., 31.

[584] Ibid.

[585] Ibid., 32.

[586] Ibid.

[587] Ibid.

[588] Ibid., 33.

she regarded both the Midwest and the South "with hate and fear."[589] Believing that she would find more autonomy for blacks in the Northeast, Hedgeman decided to take a position as executive director of the Negro branch of the YW in Jersey City.[590]

There, Hedgeman found that blacks were represented in most of the YW committees, black teachers were present in the public schools, and Harlem in particular was a meeting ground for a burgeoning black intelligentsia. This meant regular visits from W. E. B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, William Pickens, Walter White and various poets, writers, and artists associated with the black renaissance at the 137th Street Harlem Y.[591] During her time as director of the Jersey City YW, Hedgeman made frequent trips to New York.[592]

In Jersey City, she became more familiar with trade unionism as many of the young women who frequented this YW were workers in the laundry business.[593] Upon querying the young laundresses about their reluctance to participate in more programing at the YW, some informed her of the hardships they endured at work. With this, Hedgeman went undercover for a week as a laundress in order to better familiarize herself with their experiences.[594] The backbreaking physical labor required of a laundry woman in 1920s Jersey City nearly broke her on the first day.[595] This experience led her

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[589] Ibid., 34.

[590] Ibid.

[591] Ibid., 39-40.

[592] Ibid.

[593] Ibid., 35.

[594] Ibid.

[595] Ibid., 35-36.

to try to organize the laundry women of Jersey City.[596] Hedgeman's first major endeavor in trade union activism or projects related to employment equity began in Jersey City. Her unsuccessful efforts to organize the black laundry women in Jersey City with the support of the YW led to more frustration by the summer of 1927, when she was offered the post of membership secretary at the 137th Street Y in Harlem. Hedgeman, in her failure to organize working-class black women, became more aware of the obstacles of race and class discrimination in a *gendered* context given her position with the YW, as the majority of laundry women in Jersey City were working-class black women.

It was in the summer of 1927 following a visit home to Anoka, before beginning her new job in Harlem, that Hedgeman's disillusionment with whites became most palpable. She seemed to question everything that summer, including the kindness of the Doyles, the white minister at the family church, and more poignantly white society in general. The segregation and economic hardships that she witnessed in the North made her increasingly hostile toward whites. Hedgeman claims that at this time she felt "no choice but to reject all white people" and that "no Negro could expect any white person to love, respect and honor any people except white people." [597] It was also at this time that her thoughts became more "nationalistic" regarding black freedom.[598]

Harlem of the 1920s was a multiethnic center of black life that offered black professionals various social and leadership opportunities. The black population in Harlem increased exponentially between 1910 and 1940 as a result of the Great Migration, and the city of New York contained the highest concentration of the black population, in an

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[596] Ibid., 36.
[597] Ibid., 43.

[598] Ibid., 44.

urban setting, in the nation by the time of Hedgeman's arrival.[599] The central branches of the YW provided services to whites only, and segregation existed in hotels, restaurants, and recreational facilities in New York City at the time. This meant that the black women migrants entering the city sought services from organizations such as the YW for housing, employment training, and educational support. The Harlem YW where Hedgeman worked as the membership secretary provided job training and educational services to more than 25,000 women in the city of New York, including women from African American, West Indian, African, Panamanian and Puerto Rican communities.[600]

At this time, the Harlem Renaissance was well underway, making the Harlem YW a center of black cultural and intellectual activity. Hedgeman described the Harlem of her day as a "Negro Mecca" where "no Negro leader failed to sign" the YW guest book "immediately upon arrival to New York City."[601] Historian Julie A. Gallagher, in her text *Black Women and Politics in New York City*, notes that "When Anna Arnold Hedgeman moved to Harlem to become the YW's membership secretary, she entered a world in which she had regular contact with the most dynamic minds of the era."[602] In Harlem during the Renaissance, prominent local and national black leaders came together. This convergence of black leadership occurred through associations such as the NAACP and NUL, both of which were headquartered in the City, the Empire State Federation of

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[599] Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1.

[600] Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds*, 44.

[601] Ibid., 46.

[602] Gallagher, *Black Women & Politics in New York City* 35.

Women's Clubs, which was affiliated with the NACW, and several Negro branches of the YWCA such as the 137th Street Harlem Y.[603]

The 137th Street Harlem YW was unique, and Hedgeman's work there was pivotal to its importance in the black community. This YW was one of the better-equipped Negro branch YWs in the nation, first established by Mrs. Cecelia Cabaniss Saunders. Its initial success led the Rockefellers to fund it with a million-dollar building to accommodate various programs, making it, according to Hedgeman, "one of the best-equipped facilities available to Negroes in the United States."[604] Yet, it was Hedgeman who helped make this YW, as Gallagher asserts, "one of the most important social spaces for women in Harlem."[605] By hosting workshops for seamstresses, recruiting nurses' aides for hospital duties, assisting in soup kitchens, and helping to preside over a lecture series of black women of achievement, Hedgeman helped transform this Harlem YW into a vital social and political space for black women and girls.[606]

Hedgeman's most important work at the Harlem YW was in the areas of educational support, FEP, and labor activism in the interest of black girls and women.[607] She helped facilitate regular presentations at the YW by women dentists, doctors, nurses, beauticians, educators, funeral directors, florists and social workers.[608] Mary Church Terrell, Nannie Burroughs, Charlotte Brown Hawkins, and Mary McLeod Bethune were

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[603] Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds*, 45-46.

[604] Ibid., 46.

[605] Gallagher, *Black Women & Politics in New York City*, 35.

[606] Ibid., 41.

[607] Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds*, 44-46.

[608] Ibid., 47.

among the distinguished presenters who gave talks at the Harlem YW. Annie Turnbo Malone, a cosmetics businesswoman, Mable Keaton Staupers, a registered nurse, and Maggie Walker, a bank president, were also among the presenters.[609] These women were brought to the YW to offer advice on education, careers, and business ownership.[610] This was a necessary service, Hedgeman argued, for black women and girls from various backgrounds who might never receive sound advice on education and careers beyond their own homes.[611] The educational programs offered at the Harlem YW prepared young women and girls for work as domestics, bookkeepers, dressmakers, designers, power machine operators, stenographers, nurses, and secretaries. While at this YW, Hedgeman also helped establish referral services for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the National Youth Administration at the height of the Great Depression.[612] Through the auspices of the YW, Hedgeman challenged the garment industry, employment services, department stores, and other industries to hire or provide openings to the women trained at the YW and blacks in the community more generally. While working with the Harlem YW, Hedgeman states that she "learned to fight evictions, to secure the suspension of rent claims" and "suggest employment possibilities." [613] She cultivated these skills at the YW particularly during the Great Depression from 1929 to 1933 as many blacks in

[609] Ibid.

[610] Ibid., 47-48.

[611] Ibid., 48.

[612] Ibid., 54.

[613] Ibid., 57.

Harlem began to gravitate away from the Republican Party to support the Roosevelt Administration and the Democratic Party in New York.[614]

Hedgeman also became more active in politics and trade union activism at the Harlem YW, where she collected petitions, conducted informal civic lessons, and hosted meetings for the community to become more familiar with political candidates, significantly increasing African American participation in the electoral process in New York City.[615] She also eventually became recognized as a formidable political ally in Democratic Party circles as a result of her direct efforts at community organizing through the YW (including her later work with New Deal agencies), which entailed climbing steps, ringing doorbells, and securing signatures to assist candidates for election to city government.[616]

The Depression greatly exacerbated unemployment and poverty in Harlem's black community while also contributing to the end of the Negro renaissance. While the national employment rate peaked at 25 percent, the black unemployment rate throughout the Depression remained at least twice as high, at some 50 percent.[617] An estimated 15 percent of New York residents were on some form of public relief during the Depression, as rampant unemployment and homelessness plagued the city.[618] YW resources became overextended, and Hedgeman—overworked, already accepting a low salary—had not taken a vacation in nearly five years. Eventually, she resigned from the 137th Street YW

[614] Gallagher, *Black Women & Politics in New York*, 107.

[615] Ibid., 34.

[616] Ibid., 106-107.

[617] Ibid., 48-49.

[618] Ibid., 48-49.

to take a position at the Catherine Street Branch of the Philadelphia YWCA in 1933.[619] She left the Harlem YW, her experience there another sobering encounter with northern racism, convinced that "no man is free until all are free."[620]

Hedgeman found that the Philadelphia YW maintained "well equipped" facilities, including "spacious" club rooms as well as a gymnasium, auditorium, and swimming pool for black patrons.[621] These improved facilities, as Hedgeman suggests, were likely due to the fact that Philadelphia maintained one of the oldest black elite communities in the Northeast.[622] She also noted that at this YW, "staff relationships among blacks and whites were above average."[623] The president of the white YW Central branch in Philadelphia, Mary Sampson, was "most cooperative" according to Hedgeman, and black and white women worked together on the Board of Directors and various subcommittees.[624] The Philadelphia YW remained a segregated Negro branch of the YW upon Hedgeman's departure despite the fact that it had become a more vital and functional institution in the City, partly as a result of her tenure there.[625] In 1933, upon her marriage to Merritt Hedgeman, an interpreter of African American folk music, Anna Hedgeman returned to New York City.[626] There she found work with the Emergency

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[619] Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds*, 64-65.

[620] Ibid., 64.

[621] Ibid., 65.

[622] Ibid.

[623] Ibid., 66.

[624] Ibid.

[625] Ibid.

[626] Ibid.

Relief Bureau as a supervisor and consultant working with the city's increasing number of unemployed and impoverished citizens.[627]

From 1933 to 1953, Hedgeman worked with several federal agencies, including the Emergency Relief Bureau (1934-1938), National Office of Civil Defense as assistant in race relations (1939-1944), National Council for a Permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission (1944-1948), and Federal Security Agency as assistant to the administrator (1949-1953).[628] From 1938 to 1939, she briefly returned to the YW to serve as executive director of the Brooklyn Negro branch. During the Depression, several black women were able to expand their professional credentials by working with philanthropic agencies or New Deal agencies.[629] These women included Carita Roane, Dorothy Height, and Pauli Murray as well as Hedgeman.[630] Roane was appointed by Frances Perkins to lead the Harlem office of the State Labor Department, which opened up an opportunity for Hedgeman to work as a social worker with the Emergency Relief Bureau (Department of Welfare).[631] Initially, she worked in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn as a social work supervisor and consultant, mainly with Jewish colleagues, servicing an area that included primarily Jewish, Italian, and African American clients. Most of her work involved interviewing (up to fourteen people per day) and accepting or rejecting applications for emergency assistance, including the need for rent, light, gas, fuel,

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[627] Ibid., 67.

[628] Ibid.

[629] Gallagher, *Black Women & Politics in New York City*, 50.

[630] Ibid.

[631] Ibid., 50-51.

clothing and food.[632] Hedgeman eventually came to supervise forty workers in total while at the Bureau. As a result of her strong performance in this capacity, she was selected to consult on problems related to racial discrimination in 1936.[633]

In her job as consultant on issues related to racial discrimination, Hedgeman reviewed personnel records and conducted investigations, during which she encountered blacks who had been passed over despite having earned promotional opportunities.[634] She conducted investigations that revealed complaints concerning claimants who had reportedly refused work in an attempt to secure emergency relief; however, her investigations more often than not found that claimants had been seeking work and were not defrauding welfare. Hedgeman also became involved in ensuring equity in job promotions in civil service positions as mandated by then-Mayor of New York Fiorello La Guardia. La Guardia had aligned his administration with federal New Deal programs by focusing on the development of social relief programs. As a result of Hedgeman's work with the Relief Bureau, she was recognized by the mayor's office as an important ally in this process.

Hedgeman's work also helped to increase the number of stenographers and clerks in city government. Her years at the Welfare Bureau, she claimed, gave her "insight into the need of the exploited at every level."[635] She gained experience in dealing with city personnel, policymaking, planning, and leadership as well as more direct engagement with people from various class and ethno-racial groups. Her position with the Relief

[632] Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds*, 67.

[633] Ibid., 67-68.

[634] Ibid., 72.

[635] Ibid., 69.

Bureau also gave her greater insight into employment equity issues in city government regarding, in particular, the availability of positions and specific hiring policies in city government employment. Hedgeman used her newfound knowledge about the workings of city government to actively organize and make demands for greater employment equity in civil service jobs in New York. Upon leaving the Relief Bureau and taking on the directorship of the Negro branch of the Brooklyn YW in 1938, she achieved this through the Citizens Coordinating Committee.[636]

Although Hedgeman described the Brooklyn Negro branch of the YW as unattractive, poorly maintained, and nothing more than "a residence operation in a former brownstone," she used her position as YW director to orchestrate grassroots protests against city government and local business regarding racist hiring practices, as a "new kind of community approach."[637] This included gathering together some 100 men and women at the branch to organize and demand access to the more than 500 provisional appointments allotted to the Department of Welfare (formerly known as the Emergency Relief Bureau) in 1938.[638] The Citizens Coordinating Committee, as they were known, bombarded the Commissioner of the new Department of Welfare with inquiries by mail and demands for a meeting under the direction of Hedgeman. Subsequently, an estimated 150 appointments were allotted to blacks in the community to work in the Department of Welfare.[639] Similarly, through her activism at the Brooklyn YW, Hedgeman personally

[636] Ibid., 72.

[637] Ibid., 70-71.

[638] Ibid., 72.

[639] Ibid., 74.

led a picket against a local department store for its refusal to hire black women as cashiers:

> The older Negro Board members of the YWCA were as disturbed as the whites were over this development, for the sight of their Executive Director leading a picket line was not their idea of suitable leadership for the young people of the community.[640]

This protest actually led to the development of an interracial coalition between Hedgeman and the Race Relations Committee of the Federation of Protestant Churches (an interracial group of men and women concerned with race relations).[641] Working together, both black and white women from the Federation began to boycott stores that did not hire black women, ultimately leading some Brooklyn establishments to reconsider their hiring practices; however, Hedgeman lacked the complete support of the YW for these actions.[642]

It is pertinent to note here that Hedgeman, as she suggests in her memoirs, was likely an innovator in using the picket line and the collective boycott in the early black freedom struggle in the North. She was further disappointed with the YW after her more radical approach to employment discrimination was rejected, but she did not relinquish interracialism as her guiding philosophy. After all, it enabled her to gain cooperation from the Federation. At this point, though, her disillusionment with the YW was complete:

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[640] Ibid., 75.

[641] Ibid., 77.

[642] Ibid., 77-78.

> If the Christian Association in a larger Eastern urban city could not practice its avowed purpose to build a fellowship of women and girls committed to the ideas of Jesus Christ, where could I go?[643]

Hedgeman's attempt to secure greater leadership representation for the business and industrial women of the Brooklyn YW was another important goal she advanced. This too did not endear her to the YW's local and national leadership as they rejected her plan, which sought to circumvent class distinctions by arguing that working-class women should have greater say in the leadership of the Brooklyn YW in the interest of collective leadership. She subsequently resigned from the organization in 1939.

In her position as assistant in race relations at the National Office of Civil Defense from 1939 to 1944, Hedgeman continued working on issues related to race and employment equity. She also challenged the Red Cross policy of segregating black and white blood (and in some cases the trashing of "black blood").[644] When civilian defense officials tried to secure blood donations from the black community, several blacks publicly refused on the grounds that black blood was segregated if not thrown directly into the waste. She also worked with black labor leader A. Philip Randolph on labor and voter education as well as investigating concerns related to the exploitation of sharecroppers and the planning of the March on Washington Movement (MOWM) in 1941.[645] Led by Randolph, the MOWM threatened to bring 100,000 black protestors to the capitol in the interest of equal employment in the defense industry.[646]

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[643] Ibid., 79.

[644] Ibid., 80-81.

[645] Ibid., 85.

[646] Andrew E. Kersten, "African Americans and WW II," *OAH Magazine of History* 16, no. 3 (Spring, 2002): 14.

In 1941, as a response to a public rally organized by Randolph, Hedgeman, Channing Tobias of the YMCA, Walter White of the NAACP, and Lester Granger of the NUL that "filled Madison Square Garden to the rafters," President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) on June 25, 1941 through Executive Order 8802.[647] The FEPC was authorized to investigate complaints about job discrimination based on race, color, creed or national origin and to require anti-discrimination clauses in defense contracts. Increased pressure was placed on the Roosevelt administration by black activists and liberal-minded whites to provide more funding for the FEPC as the war progressed, and this funding was subsequently secured.[648] By 1944, when the wartime order for the FEPC ended, the National Council for a Permanent FEPC was formed in Washington, DC to lobby Congress for a permanent federal fair employment law.[649] This was an interracial committee chaired by Dr. Allen Knight Chalmers, a white minister at Broadway Congressional Church, and Randolph, who requested that Hedgeman be offered the role of executive director for the Council.[650]

The most important federal appointment held by Hedgeman was likely her position on the National Council for a Permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission from 1944 to 1948. This Council was comprised of both black and white men and women. Hedgeman insisted on hiring an all-woman staff that included white

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[647] Ibid., 85.

[648] Boris, "Fair Employment and the Origins of Affirmative Action in the 1940s," 141-142.

[649] Ibid., 87.

[650] Ibid., 86-87.

women such as Sidney Wilkinson, Ida Fox, Marjorie Taylor, and Beatrice Schalet.[651] In her role as executive director, Hedgeman engaged in grassroots organizing efforts to solicit support for an FEPC law, developed lobbying strategies, presided over public forums, and ultimately became a nationally recognized figure in the struggle for civil rights.[652] There were several public hearings around the country in places such as Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago. She used her connections and contacts acquired at the YW, as well as her prior work with New Deal agencies, in places such as New York, to solicit support for the law. Randolph leveraged his labor contacts through organizations such as the Congress of Industrial Workers (CIO) to encourage and help workers document discrimination on the job and to bring complaints. This was facilitated by also creating Metropolitan Fair Employment Practices Councils at the state level across the nation, which would play a central role in securing fair employment laws at the state level.[653] Hedgeman conjoined her concern for human rights with her interest in women's liberation while working with the National Committee.

In her years with the National Committee, Hedgeman also began to express more publicly her ideas about the place of black women in the struggle for equality. "Negro women have been intimately a part of the struggle of the Negro people for freedom,"[654] Hedgeman wrote in an article for *Journal of Educational Sociology* in 1944. In this analysis, she focused on the role of black women in history, the war effort, and the development of FEPC politics. She went on to state:

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[651] Ibid., 87.

[652] Ibid.

[653] Ibid., 90-91.

[654] Anna Arnold Hedgeman, Anna Arnold Hedgeman, "The Role of the Negro Woman," *Journal of Educational Sociology* 17, no. 8 (April, 1944): 463.

> For it must always be remembered that Negro women have had to battle for their disinherited men and have also faced the sex handicap, which all women face in American life.[655]

She also expressed her concern in this article about the gendered dimensions of discrimination in the work place:

> Negro women found repeatedly that they had the handicap of color and sex in their efforts to find a place in work life, and always they fought for work opportunities for their husbands, brothers, and sweethearts.[656]

Hedgeman reveals not only an intersectional approach to understanding black women's liberation, stating "We work not just for the Negro woman,"[657] but also places these ideas within an international framework considering the struggle for democracy in a larger context:

> American Negro women have a new sense of mission . . . They believe that if they can help America face her moral obligation to practice what she preaches, they may not only be helpful to the American Negro; they may not only help America assume an honest role in the world struggle; but they may also help the underground movements of the Fascist countries, as well as the people of color all over the world.[658]

Hedgeman's feminist sensibilities are more evident in this writing, though the main feature of her ideas about human liberation remained deeply rooted in Christian ethics. She was able to solicit support from both men and women, white and black, for fair employment practices in the nation as a whole.

The widespread interracial support from clergy, politicians, educators, labor leaders, philanthropists, and civil rights associations led to several gains at the local level

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[655] Ibid., 465.

[656] Ibid., 467.

[657] Ibid., 472.

[658] Ibid., 469.

in the area of fair employment practices. After the attempt to create a permanent FEP law was defeated in 1945, FEP laws were introduced in the majority of US states as a result of the Council's activities.[659] By 1945, blacks held 8 percent of all jobs in the defense industry as civilians (a significant increase from the pre-war 3 percent). At this same time, nearly 200,000 blacks were employed by the government though many still occupied menial jobs in governmental service.[660] When the war was over, coupled with the death of Roosevelt, debates concerning the extension of the FEPC, disbanding the Council, or securing a law continued during the administration of Harry S. Truman though a Senate Bill, effectively "killed" the FEPC in 1946 by defunding the Commission.[661] Supporters twice introduced new bills to revive the idea of an FEP law between 1946 and 1948, but both bills failed. Truman's Commission on Civil Rights recommended the implementation of a permanent FEP law in 1947 though this effort failed as well. President Truman in 1948 also issued two Executive Orders—9980, which called for the desegregation of the federal workforce, and 9981, which called for desegregation of the armed forces. In 1950, the House approved a permanent FEPC, but a filibuster was orchestrated by a contingent of white southerners in the Senate.[662]

Hedgeman became the Executive Director of a National Citizens' Committee to raise funds for the reelection of Truman from 1948 to 1949, and was rewarded with a post in the Federal Security Agency (later known as the Health, Education, and Welfare

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[659] Chen, "The Party of Lincoln and the Politics of State Fair Employment Practices Legislation in the North," 1714.

[660] Kersten, "African Americans and WW II," 14.

[661] Boris, "Fair Employment and the Origins of Affirmative Action in the 1940s," 143.

[662] B.R. Brazeal, "The Present Status and Programs of Fair Employment Practices Commissions: Federal, State, and Municipal," *The Journal of Negro Education* 20, no. 3 (Summer 19510: 380-381.

Agency). She remained with the Agency as a Truman appointee until 1953. Hedgeman, at this point, still supported interracial cooperation but was unsure about the possibilities of democratic politics. She reflects on her decision to take the position as follows:

> I did not know whether the Democratic Party could change, whether my work in a federal agency could be useful in that change, or its involvement with segregation, discrimination and states' rights.[663]

While working with the Agency, Hedgeman remained involved in civil rights politics and visited India as an exchange leader for the US State Department. In an article for the *Pittsburgh Courier* in 1950, Hedgeman seemed to appreciate the efforts of the Truman administration, stating (in her memoirs) that she took the position due to the president's support of FEP, as well as the achievements of the National Council nationwide, despite the failure of a permanent law:

> Although Congress has failed to enact national fair employment practice legislation, there are four new state FEPC laws and helpful Federal regulations in this field. These regulations can be effective but we must be eternally vigilant in our use of them.[664]

Hedgeman worked with Mary Church Terrell to demand an end to segregation in DC theaters, hotels, and restaurants while also working with Roy Wilkins (whom she had met earlier as they were both from Minnesota) to revitalize the NAACP while in DC. While working with the Agency, she also became one of the early advocates of socialized medicine. She visited India in 1952 and was assigned to give talks to college students, teachers, civic groups and youth groups about democracy. Hedgeman also taught at the Madras School of Social Work for ten days while there. She continued to meet with labor

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[663] Hedgeman, *The Trumpet Sounds*, 96.

[664] Anna Arnold Hedgeman, "Fifty Years of Progress in Government Service," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 1950, 6.

leaders while in DC, and was the first woman to address the United Auto Workers Union at their annual convention.

Hedgeman's biography, activism, and writings reveal a great deal about the Civil Rights Movement in the North. The progressive history of the YW might be questioned if we are to consider that Hedgeman spent years at several poorly funded segregated YWCAs in the northeast. The most efficient of these included the Philadelphia YW, bankrolled in part by money acquired from the city's black elite, and the Harlem YW, though both facilities remained segregated. The YW remained intrinsically a racist institution as a whole, regardless of the overtures to diversity made by some in the association. If not for the consistent pressure group politics of black women within the YW movement, the YW would not have officially integrated in 1946. Hedgeman, though she plays an integral role in the black freedom movement in the North, had to literally write herself into this history. Her life is one prism through which we might better understand the Civil Rights Movement in northern states such as New Jersey and New York.

The catalyst for the modern Civil Rights Movement was the Great Migration of southern blacks to the North and the response orchestrated by these migrants to racial inequality in their new urban locales. It is a fallacy to believe that the South alone was exceptionally racist. The nation as a whole was extremely racist before 1954, both in the North and the South.[665] Mob violence against blacks in cities such as Springfield and St. Louis that took place in the first two decades of the twentieth century culminated in the creation of organizations such as the NAACP and the NUL. The freedom struggle

[665] Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," 1234-1235.

advanced by civil rights associations in the first two decades of the twentieth century was forged largely out of black-labor-left coalition politics that manifested in interracial cooperation between philanthropic, labor, and civil rights organizations.[666] Much of the organizational structure for the black freedom struggle before 1954 was first developed in the urban North. Three of the major organizations or the "big Four," as they are sometimes known—the NAACP, NUL, and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)—were created as a result of interracial civil rights activism in the urban North. Further, protest activities such as the "Don't Buy Where You Cannot Work" campaigns of the 1930s, the "sit-downs" that began in 1940s Chicago, and the pressure group politics that led to the passage of state-level FEP laws occurred first in the northern part of the nation.[667]

The history of racism in US society inextricably connects the North and South in the story of the black freedom struggle. Segregation, egregious extra-legal violence meted out by white mobs, and racial inequality more generally existed in both sections of the country in the early decades of the twentieth century. Segregation was the policy of hotels, schools, restaurants, theaters, hospitals, and residential areas across communities of the North such as New York. The level of northern segregation is evidenced in Hedgeman's biography, as illustrated earlier in the chapter (separation between blacks and whites in YWCA facilities in the North is one of the reasons she cites for resigning from the association). When Hedgeman was required to attend a training in Amherst, Massachusetts, while working with the National Office of Civil Defense in the 1940s, she was refused accommodations in the same hotel as her white colleagues, and instead

[666] Ibid., 1233-1263.

[667] Ibid.

offered a room in the home of a liberal-minded white woman living in the area (having first been asked if she had any relatives in the area). In 1948, Josephine Baker was refused service at no less than 36 hotels on a visit to New York City.[668] Many blacks had to stay in the homes of friends, relatives, or segregated YWs when they traveled throughout the North and South.

By 1945, bills to secure a FEP law appeared in five states—California, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. New York was the first to pass such a law in 1945, followed by New Jersey within a month.[669] California was the only state among the five that did not pass a FEP law (it was not until 1953 that California passed a FEP law, following a march on Sacramento).[670] There were FEP laws in twenty-eight US states, primarily in the North, by the 1960s. [671]

[668] Sugrue, "Northern Lights," 11.

[669] Chen, "The Party of Lincoln and the Politics of State Fair Employment Practices Legislation in the North," 1714.

[670] Ibid.

[671] Ibid.

Chapter 4

"All That I Am or Hope to Be":

Marion Thompson Wright and the Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey

"All that I am or hope to be I owe to my mother."[672]
– Marion Thompson Wright

Marion Thompson Wright was part of a cohort of black intellectuals who were educated at both Howard University and Columbia University during the first four decades of the twentieth century. Many of these intellectuals, such as Mamie and Kenneth Clark, received their undergraduate degrees from Howard but went on to complete graduate work at Columbia. From this cohort came the majority of the pivotal historians, social scientists, and lawyers who formed the legal team for the plaintiffs in the historic *Brown vs. the Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas* case.[673] Wright's work as a scholar, first as a graduate student at Columbia, on the issue of school segregation proved crucial to the *Brown* case.[674]

Wright, as a historian, sociologist, social worker, and civil rights advocate, made contributions to several fields of human thought. She was an activist intellectual trained by historian Merle Curti at Columbia Teachers College who made advances in historical, sociological, and educational thought as well as the study of African American history more generally. Wright's scholarship challenged existing educational policies in New

[672] Hilton Kelly, "Toward a Critical Race Biography of Marion Thompson Wright," *Vitae Scholasticae* 30, no. 2 (2013): 49.

[673] Crocco, Munro, Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*, 71.

[674] Pero Gaglo Dagbovie, "Black Women Historians from the Late 19th Century to the Dawning of the Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of African American History* 89, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 253.

Jersey and the nation as a whole for more than three decades.[675] It would be a mistake to force Wright into a single disciplinary category as an intellectual because her academic training, life, and work transcended disciplinary boundaries in multiple ways.[676]

Given that her thought encompassed multiple fields of human inquiry, coupled with the fact that she was professionally trained in history and educational sociology at Columbia Teacher's College, Wright might be viewed by some as both a sociologist and a historian of American education. More aptly put, she was a social historian trained by one of the pioneers in the field at the time.[677] Further, one could argue that leading scholars such as W. E. B. Du Bois understood the study of African Americans in the early twentieth century as an interdisciplinary endeavor requiring an integrated understanding of sociology and history.[678] Wright's dissertation is clearly a work born of the new social history as advanced by historians such as Curti.[679] Deploying the methodologies of the new social history in her study of black education in New Jersey, Wright used quantitative data derived from multiple sources to illustrate the education of

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[675] Ibid., 44.

[676] Dagbovie, "Black Women Historians from the Late 19th Century to the Dawning of the Civil Rights Movement," 253.

[677] Margaret Smith Crocco, "Mary Ritter Beard and Marion Thompson Wright: Shaping Inclusive Social Education," *Theory & Research in Social Education* 25, no. 1 (Winter, 1997): 10.

[678] Crocco, Munro, Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance,* 66-67.

[679] Curti is noted for being a pioneering historian in two major subfields in historical studies—intellectual history and social history. His text *Growth of American Thought* (1943) won a Pulitzer Prize and has remained in print for decades. Curti's study of Trempealeau County, Wisconsin, entitled *The Making of an American Community: A Case of Democracy in a Frontier County* (1959), is considered one of the first works to exemplify the methodologies of the new social history. In this study, he utilized census records and information derived from tax lists to present a portrait of the social structure of this community over time.

blacks and the history of segregation in both her master's thesis and dissertation.[680] Wright delivered a keen observation about the early civil rights movement in the Garden State during the decisive year of 1954:

> New Jersey as a state has always reflected the experiences of a nation . . . . Being a pivotal state, New Jersey has had the unique advantage of serving as a proving ground for battles involving opposing ideologies in human relations.[681]

Wright's historical work on school segregation in New Jersey helped lay the ideological foundation for the modern black freedom struggle in the nation.

Marion Manola Thompson was born in East Orange, New Jersey on September 13, 1905 as the fourth and youngest child of Moses R. Thompson and Minnie Holmes Thompson.[682] Wright's family eventually moved to Newark, where she attended the prestigious Barringer High School.[683] Marion was one of the only two black students at Barringer and graduated at the top of her class. Although she married early, while still in high school, to William H. Moss and had two children by 1920, her mother ensured that she continued her education after divorcing her first husband in 1923.[684] It was frowned upon at the time for a divorcée at such a young age, and with two children, to attend college, but Wright subsequently attended Howard University on scholarship.[685] Her

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[680] Dagbovie, "Black Women Historians From the Late 19th Century to the Dawning of the Civil Rights Movement," 253.

[681] Marion Thompson Wright, "Racial Integration in the Public Schools of New Jersey," *The Journal of Negro Education 23, no. 3* (Summer 1954), 282.

[682] Kelly, "Toward a Critical Race Biography of Marion Thompson Wright," 49.

[683] Ibid.

[684] Crocco, Munro, Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*, 62.

[685] Ibid.

daughter Thelma and her son James lived with her mother in Montclair while Wright attended Howard.[686]

Wright excelled at Howard, as both an undergraduate and graduate student, eventually becoming an instructor and then a professor at the institution. She was president of the Student Council at Howard, joined Delta Sigma Theta, was inducted into the Kappa Mu Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, and served as associate editor of the school newspaper *The Bison*.[687] She earned a BA in sociology *magna cum laude* in 1927, and an MA in education in 1928 from Howard.[688] Her master's thesis was a comparative study of white and black public schools in 16 southern states.[689] This thesis later served as the basis for her doctoral work at Columbia. Wright was influenced in her academic endeavors by Howard's first Dean of Women, Lucy Diggs Slowe, who played a crucial role in shaping the professional careers of several black women undergraduates.[690]

Slowe was an important mentor to Wright and several other students at Howard at the time of Wright's attendance. Slowe was also a founder of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, an alumna of Howard, a graduate of Columbia University Teachers College, where she earned a master's in 1915 before coming to Howard to assume the post of Dean of Women in 1922.[691] She also helped to create the first junior high school in Washington, DC. Slowe played a major role in shaping the academic careers of Howard

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[686] Ibid.

[687] Ibid.

[688] Kelly, "Toward a Critical race Biography of Marion Thompson Wright," 55.

[689] Crocco, Munro, and Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*, 65.

[690] Kelly, "Toward a Critical Race Biography of Marion Thompson Wright," 54.

[691] Carroll L.L. Miller and Anne S. Pruitt-Logan, *Faithful to the Task at Hand: The Life of Lucy Diggs Slowe* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 79.

University students at Howard and beyond. Several of these students, such as Carroll Lee Liverpool Miller, Thelma Preyer Bando, and Wright, attended Columbia University Teachers College largely due to Stowe's encouragement and support.[692] Slowe helped facilitate the development of an intellectual corridor between Howard and Columbia that later developed from the 1920s to the middle of the century.

It was also Slowe who encouraged students such as Bando and Wright to enter the field of guidance counseling and student services more generally with a focus on women's needs on college campuses.[693] Slowe herself was likely one of the first black women trained in student personnel services.[694] Bando eventually became a Dean of Women at Virginia Seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia after first studying student personnel at Columbia as a result of a scholarship that Slowe had helped her secure.[695] Wright was involved in the leadership of a women's club on campus, participated in the women's debate team, and with the encouragement of Slowe represented Howard University at a peace conference hosted by Princeton University while an undergraduate.[696]

Slowe was also an advocate of black women's rights in higher education through organizations such as the NACW and the National Association of Women's Deans and Advisors of Colored Schools (NAWDACS) while speaking out against the sexual

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[692] Linda M. Perkins, "Lucy Diggs Slowe: Champion of Self-Determination of African-American Women in Higher Education," *The Journal of Negro History* 81, no. 1/4 (Winter-Autumn 1996): 94-95.

[693] Ibid.

[694] Perkins, "Lucy Diggs Slowe," 89.

[695] Ibid., 94.

[696] Crocco, Munro, Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*, 62.

harassment of women on the Howard campus.[697] She ensured that women students such as Wright and Bando acquired leadership skills as mentors to other Howard students through clubs and in leadership positions in the women's dormitories.[698] Interestingly, Slowe presided over the construction of the first women's dormitories on the Howard campus.

Wright became an instructor of education at Howard from 1929 to 1931, and returned to New Jersey in 1931 to be with her second husband, Arthur M. Wright, a postal worker, and to continue her graduate education.[699] Before returning to Howard to teach as a professor in 1940, she worked for the Newark Department of Public Welfare and the New Jersey Emergency Relief Administration (ERA), where she became a case supervisor. At the ERA, she participated in a significant study conducted in 1935 that involved interviewing 10,000 young people across New Jersey,[700] a project that familiarized her with the educational and socio-economic status of blacks throughout the state. This study was critical to advancing her arguments about the effects of discrimination on the lives of young black adults and the history of segregation. Wright continued her education at the New York School of Social Work, where she earned a degree in 1938, and at Columbia University Teachers College, where she earned a doctoral degree in 1940.[701]

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[697] Perkins, "Lucy Diggs Slowe," 89.

[698] Ibid., 92.

[699] Crocco, Munro, Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*, 67.

[700] Ibid., 67.

[701] Crocco, Munro, Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*, 67-69.

Columbia University, in New York City, was increasingly becoming an important intellectual training ground for African Americans in the early decades of the twentieth century. Even earlier, Slowe, Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson, and John Louis Wilson, Jr., one of the first black Americans to secure a degree in architecture, all attended Columbia in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Slowe secured her graduate degree from Columbia in 1915, Hughes attended Columbia from 1921 to 1922, with the intention of studying engineering, but left due to the racism there, and Robeson graduated from Columbia Law School in 1923. Wilson received his degree in architecture from the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation at Columbia in 1928. In the 1930s and ’40s, Columbia University became more clearly a place where blacks could secure degrees across many fields of study, including anthropology, medicine, psychology, chemistry, legal studies, education, history, and architecture. M. Moran Weston II, founder of Carter Federal Savings Bank, which eventually became the largest black financial institution in the nation, attended Columbia College in 1930, and Zora Neale Hurston earned a graduate degree in anthropology from Columbia’s Graduate School of Arts and Science from in 1935, where she worked with Franz Boas. Charles Drew, whom most historians credit with developing the idea of the blood bank, acquired his degree from the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia in 1940, the same year that Kenneth Clark received his doctoral degree in psychology from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

A contingent of black intellectuals who received their academic training at Columbia at around the same time that Wright was completing her graduate studies there, in the late 1930s and early ’40s, was interested in the problem of school segregation. In

fact, his cohort of black intellectuals, including of course Wright, came to form the research and legal team that made up the legal defense for the plaintiff in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka Kansas*. These intellectuals included Robert L. Carter, who graduated from Columbia Law School in 1941, later becoming one of the lead legal strategists in the *Brown* case, Mamie Phipps Clark, who received her doctoral degree in psychology from Columbia in 1943 and provided critical social science research for litigation, and Constance Baker Motley, who received her law degree from Columbia in 1946. Motley was the only woman counsel on the plaintiff's core legal team. Kenneth Clark was the first black person to receive a doctoral degree in psychology from Columbia, and Mamie Clark was the second (and first black woman) graduate to secure such a degree. The Clarks testified as expert witnesses in both the *Briggs v. Elliott* and *Brown* cases. Their crucial doll experiments, conducted first in the 1940s, to illustrate how racism impacts the social attitudes of young black children became the cornerstone of much of the social science research used by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to argue the *Brown* case.

In order to better understand Wright's development as an intellectual, it is necessary to consider that Columbia University, and Columbia Teachers College in particular, was a center of progressive education across several disciplines in the early decades of the twentieth century. There was a cohort of liberal-minded whites such as Boas, John Dewey, Mabel Carney, George Counts, and Merle Curti, among others, who came to Columbia in the early twentieth century increasingly interested in subjects related to race, education, and the plight of African Americans more specifically. Boas, who dominated the Department of Anthropology at Columbia for forty-one years, from

1896 until his retirement in 1937, furthered his ideas about the fallacy of race as a biological category of human difference while at Columbia. Boas corresponded with Du Bois, whom he considered to be a member of his intellectual circle. He was also the architect of the concept of ethnicity as his work in anthropology emphasized culture in understanding human diversity, not biology. Boas worked alongside Ruth Benedict while at Columbia, and Margaret Meade joined the teaching faculty in 1948. The Columbia Department of Anthropology also pioneered applied anthropology particularly as associated with the field of anthropological studies of education.

Dewey, considered by most to be "the father of modern education" in America, taught in the Department of Philosophy. At Columbia Teachers College, he taught courses in the philosophy of education from 1905 to 1930. Dewey conceptualized the American classroom as a type of "laboratory of democracy", which for him eventually meant extending educational opportunity to all, including African Americans. A social reformer and educator, Carney came to Columbia Teachers College in 1918, where she served as chair of the Department of Rural Education until 1942.

Carney began lecturing on what was then termed "Negro education" as early as 1921 and eventually taught a course called "Special problems in the education of Negroes in the United States."[702] This course, according to one observer, "dealt with problems of Negro life as they affect education and social work, and the functioning of separate schools for Negroes."[703] Offered in the winter, spring, and summer sessions, the course was involved field work that allowed for the "more intensive study of certain problems"

[702] Walter G. Daniel, "Current Trends and Events of National Importance in Negro Education: Section A: Negro Welfare and Mabel Carney at Teachers College, Columbia University," *Journal of Negro Education* 11, no. 4, (October 1942), 560.

[703] Daniel, "Current Trends and Events of National Importance in Negro Education," 560.

regarding the education of blacks.[704] This course of Carney's would have been fundamental to Wright's work on the education of blacks in New Jersey as it was likely one of the first courses at an elite university devoted to the examination of the education of blacks with consideration given to segregation in education.[705]

Carney took her students, some of whom were black, abroad to places such as Mexico and Nova Scotia to study educational systems beyond the United States while also serving as a mentor to her African American students. She also traveled extensively to Africa and is credited with advancing the field of comparative education studies at Columbia. In 1927, Columbia's Negro Education Club was formed with an average of fifty students during the regular term and about 150 students in the summer, most of whom were black.[706] The club's major activities included a speaker series, teas, dinners, professional forums and other social activities.[707] *The Journal of Negro History*, founded at Howard University, was a major outlet for Carney in terms of her scholarly writings on black education. Carney, upon her retirement from Columbia in 1942, was given an honorary degree from Howard University.[708]

An intellectual corridor connected Howard University to Columbia University in the first four decades of the twentieth century. Many black Howard undergraduates found faculty mentors at Columbia who were willing to support their admittance into the

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[704] Ibid., 561.

[705] Crocco, Munro, Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*, 67.

[706] Daniel, "Current Trends and Events of National Importance in Negro Education," 560.

[707] Ibid., 561.

[708] Richard Glotzer, "The Career of Mabel Carney: The Study of Race and Rural Development in the United States and South Africa," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 29, no. 2 (1996): 334.

University such as the case with Slowe. Black graduates who acquired their graduate or professional degrees at Columbia often returned to Howard as professors and, in turn, were in a position to recommend their own undergraduates at Howard for admittance into various Columbia graduate programs. This was the case with Wright. Slowe, having already established connections with liberal-minded whites at Columbia, while she herself was student there, was able to recommend several of her own students such as Wright and others for admittance into programs at Columbia. Most of the architects of *Brown vs. Board of Education* were educated at both Howard and Columbia, where ideas about equity in education had been promoted by the cohort of faculty that comprised the intellectual corridor between the institutions.

In her 1940 doctoral dissertation, "The Education of Negroes in New Jersey," Wright argued that "planned programs of social engineering," for the purpose of creating a more just and democratic society, might be secured by understanding the attitudes and achievements of blacks and whites in both segregated and integrated schools.[709] Wright's graduate work laid the foundation of "comprehensive and systematic evidence of segregation in the North,"[710] and the nation as a whole. She further argued in this text that prejudice is detrimental to society as a whole.[711] Wright was an associate professor at Howard University from 1940 to 1946, and later became a full professor at Howard in the 1950s.[712] Horace Mann Bond asked Wright to join the NAACP's legal Defense Fund to

[709] Marion Thompson Wright, *The Education of Negroes in New Jersey* (New York: Teacher's College of Columbia University, 1941), 203.

[710] Crocco, Munro, and Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*, 69.

[711] Wright, *The Education of Negroes in New Jersey*, 203.

[712] Crocco, Munro, and Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*, 70-71.

helped conduct social science research for litigation that would culminate in the historic *Brown* decision of 1954 based on her contributions to the study of race and education in US society.[713]

Wright was among many black women "first" graduates at Columbia in the 1940s along with women such as Mamie Clark. These firsts include Beverly L. Greene, who was one of the earliest African American women to secure a graduate degree in architecture from Columbia in 1945. Marie Maynard Daly obtained a doctoral degree in chemistry from Columbia in 1947, making her the first black woman in the nation to secure such a degree. There was an intellectual corridor between Howard University and Columbia's graduate programs that helped to facilitate the emergence of a group of black intellectuals who came to distinguish themselves in the black freedom struggle. Many of the black first graduates at Columbia had been undergraduates at Howard University.

The assemblage of black intellectuals that gathered at Howard in the 1930s and '40s became the basis for a network of prominent black scholars. Connected to Howard and elite Ivy League schools such as Harvard, Radcliffe, and Columbia, this group of black intellectual elites was created largely by the mechanizations of Howard's first black president, Mordecai Johnson, after 1926. [714] Johnson had been educated at Morehouse, University of Chicago, and Harvard before coming to Howard. He recruited leading black intellectuals in law, religion, education, history, philosophy, and art to Howard at the height of the New Negro Era. Historian Zachary Williams has stated that

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[713] Ibid., 72.

[714] Zachary R. Williams, *In Search of the Talented Tenth: Howard University Public Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Race, 1926-1970*, (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2009), 40.

during this era Howard became in many ways "the national Negro University."[715] Johnson managed to convince Charles Hamilton Houston, Ralph Bunche, Alain Locke, Charles Drew, Howard W. Thurman, Benjamin E. Mays, and Rayford Logan to join Howard as faculty or administration.[716] Houston, who held degrees from Amherst College and Harvard Law School, became Vice Dean of Howard Law School in 1929. Prominent women scholars liked Merze Tate, Dorothy Porter Wesley, and Lorriane A. Williams also joined the Howard community under the tenure of Johnson.[717]

This intellectual community and corridor to the Ivy League was critical in the development of Wright's life as an academic but also the formation of a black intelligentsia more generally. The community of intellectuals gathered at Howard allowed black intellectuals such as Wright to discuss their ideas in an "affirming environment."[718] In other words, the black intellectual community at Howard was important in motivating black thinkers to discuss, share, and develop their ideas unencumbered by Jim Crow standards. Such an environment allowed black intellectuals to argue and make bold claims about equality without fear of derision or violent retribution from whites. In some respects, it was an intellectual enclave. The corridor between Howard and the Ivies ensured the scholarly advancement of ideas such as those related to black empowerment.

In her academic career at Howard, Wright was among a contingent of intellectuals who worked towards ending school segregation. Charles H. Thompson, Dean of the

[715] Ibid., 35.

[716] Ibid., 55; 60-61.

[717] Ibid., 61.

[718] Ibid., 82.

College of Education, ensured Wright's acquisition of a fellowship while completing her master's degree at Howard. Thompson was responsible for supervising her master's thesis and was the founder of *Journal of Negro Education*, where many of Wright's more significant writings on blacks and education were later published. Carter G. Woodson, Charles Wesley, and E. Franklin Frazier (with whom Wright worked directly as well) made up some of the core intellectuals at Howard during this era.[719] Wright became active in the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History founded by Woodson and published regularly in the association's *Journal of Negro History* as she became a more seasoned scholar.

Historian Zachery R. Williams in his text *In Search of the Talented Tenth: Howard University Public Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Race, 1926-1970* (University of Missouri Press, 2009), notes that segregation helped to solidify the relationship between Howard and the black community as well as between black scholars and their experiences as academics being that they were "black Americans subjected to second-class status."[720] The old-money black elite once defined by skin tone, wealth, family name, religious denomination, and proximity to the white community, as a result of segregation, began to define itself in terms of the progress of the race as a whole. The new professional class that emerged from the old money elite sought ways to uplift the black masses through education and civil rights activism as they came to exemplify a new black political leadership in the early twentieth century. Further, membership in the new black elite often came by way of educational achievement or in the professions as in the

[719] Crocco, Munro, Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*, 65.

[720] Williams, *In Search of the Talented Tenth*, 82.

case of Wright, who lacked an elite family pedigree though many of her peers at Howard hailed from prominent black families.

A social worker, sociologist, and historian, Wright was also a prolific scholar who published in the leading academic journals of her day. She was the first professionally trained black woman historian in the United States and the first African American historian to earn a doctoral degree from Columbia University.[721] Wright served as an expert for the NAACP legal team on the series of legal cases that culminated in *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, demonstrating in her research that the United States as a whole exhibited widespread patterns of discrimination.[722] She produced several key scholarly studies for *Journal of Negro Education, Journal of Human Relations, Journal of Negro History,* and *Journal of Educational Sociology*, including articles on the history of African American education, suffrage, and civil rights. Wright held memberships in multiple professional associations, including American Association of University Women, National Education Association, American Teachers Association, New Jersey Historical Association, and Association for the Study of Negro Life and History.

Wright was one of six black women who earned doctorates in history in the 1940s, and her work proved to be fundamental to the development of the NAACP's campaign to desegregate public schools at the local and then national levels.[723] This was a time in which the majority of black professional women were socialized for work in "feminized"

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[721] Margaret E. Hayes and Doris B. Armstrong, "Marion Manola Thompson Wright," in *Past and Promise: Lives of New Jersey Women*, edited by Joan N. Burstyn et al., (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 435-437.

[722] Ibid., 437.

[723] Dagbovie, "Black Women Historians from the Late 19th Century to the Dawning of the Civil Rights Movement," 252-253.

professions such as social work, nursing, or teaching.[724] Her dissertation on the educational and social history of black Americans in New Jersey was one of the first books to be published on the topic.

The text was published as a book by Columbia University in 1941. Her survey, which covered from the late seventeenth century to 1881, found that "almost every conceivable practice governing the education of Negro children could be found" in the state.[725] Wright explains her findings:

> These practices vary from the complete segregation of these children in the elementary schools in some of the southern counties of the state to situations in certain of the northern counties where there is complete integration of the Negro children in the regular schools, which are staffed with teachers appointed according to merit without regard to their racial identity.[726]

The state of New Jersey prohibited segregation in public schools by law in 1881. The majority of northern states outlawed segregation in the public schools by 1890; however, segregation persisted in northern states despite laws, and Wright's work illustrated the persistence of segregation in the public school systems of New Jersey while at the same time noting evidence of integration in the state:

> Between these two extremes there exists varying combinations of segregation and integration, such as: separate elementary schools and mixed junior and senior high schools; separate elementary and junior high schools and mixed high schools; divided building, one-half for whites and one-half for Negroes; separate classes and teachers for each race within the same building; separate elementary schools for each race on the same school site; separate elementary schools joined by a common auditorium.[727]

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[724] Stephanie Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and Do: Black Professional Women Workers During the Jim Crow Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 3.

[725] Wright, *The Education of Negroes in New Jersey*, v.

[726] Ibid.

[727] Ibid., v.

In her study, Wright found that there were at least seventy separate schools for black children in the state by 1940 even though the state legislature had enacted a statute in the late nineteenth century outlawing the exclusion of any child from a public school on the basis of nationality, religion, or race.[728] She further argued that at the time of her writing, the tendency in the state was "away from rather than toward the democratic ideal in education" and "clearly evident."[729] Wright's study used data from various sources, including reports from boards of education, legislative records, the State Department of Public Instruction, studies completed by civil rights organizations such as the Urban League, newspapers, journals, magazines and personal interviews. Horace Mann Bond said of Wright's dissertation:

> This volume is a significant contribution to the literature of a number of fields. The method will commend itself to the critical historian of the wide field of American culture, and the calm and dispassionate exposition unearths material which will be useful to students of social trends as well as educational institutions. Dr. Wright's style is . . . nothing short of possessing distinction.[730]

Wright continues in her findings that:

> Provisions of the law of 1881 have been circumvented through the placing of schools in districts of heavy Negro concentration, and the transferring out of the district of the few white children who remained. Discrimination in quality of educational facilities have in the smaller districts tended to follow segregation in school housing.[731]

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[728] Ibid.

[729] Ibid., vi.

[730] Walter G. Daniel, "A Tribute to Marion Thompson Wright," *The Journal of Negro Education* 32, no. 3 (Summer 1963): 308-310.

[731] Wright, *The Education of Negroes in New Jersey*, 198.

Marion Thompson Wright's work became the ideological foundation of local struggles against school segregation (and discrimination more generally) first in New Jersey and then nationwide.

In her work, Wright also demonstrated that New Jersey as a state that "never followed a consistent policy"[732] in the education of African Americans in fact represented a microcosm of the nation. Thus, in terms of its customs, New Jersey followed both northern and southern patterns of social organization, as Wright states:

> North Jersey has tended to follow the practices of New York while South Jersey has been inclined to adopt the social patterns of the contiguous southern areas. Consequently, when New York passed a fair employment practices act in March, 1945, New Jersey passed a similar law the next month. The statutes of both states became effective the following July.[733]

The education of blacks in North Jersey tended to follow the lead of states such as New York by largely eliminating a dual system of education; but, South Jersey often followed the lead of states such as Pennsylvania and Delaware, where separate schools remained the rule in many instances.[734] Wright also notes that in northern New Jersey African Americans gained greater access to economic opportunities and political power as compared to the limited opportunities they faced in the southern section of the state. In her work, Wright provides useful historical data that was crucial in demonstrating national patterns of discrimination as associated with segregation in the public school

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[732] Ibid., 199.

[733] Marion Thompson Wright, "Extending Civil Rights in New Jersey through the Division Against Discrimination," *The Journal of Negro History* 38, no. 1 (January 1953): 91-107.

[734] Wright, *The Education of Negroes in New Jersey*, 200.

system that she argued was connected to limited opportunities in housing and employment.[735]

The patterns of discrimination identified by Wright in her research on the education of blacks in New Jersey using data compiled by civil rights organizations (such as the 1935 Urban League study on employment discrimination in the state) provided the NAACP with vital historical research for litigation in the case of *Hedgepeth-Williams vs. the Trenton Board of Education* in 1944. The New Jersey Conference of the State branches of the NAACP led by Dorland Henderson and Fred Martin used Wright's work and the data collected by the Urban League to advocate for the desegregation of the New Jersey public school system in Trenton and Asbury Park, working in collaboration with local groups such as the Trenton Committee for Unity.[736]

The publication of *The Education of Negroes in New Jersey* in 1941 coupled with the data compiled by civil rights agencies such as the NUL and the Urban Colored Population Commission encouraged civil rights reformers to demand an end to segregation in the state. The work of the Urban Commission paralleled the activism of both individuals and groups in the state. The significant school desegregation case in 1944 Trenton occurred while the Commission was in the process of investigating discrimination cases throughout the state.

Hedgepeth-Williams vs. the Trenton Board of Education opened the door to greater opportunities in New Jersey for African Americans. Trenton, the state capital located in southern New Jersey, had a varying pattern of segregation by the early

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[735] Ibid., 198.

[736] Washington, *The Quest for Equality*, 110-111.

1940s.[737] African American children in Trenton, regardless of place of residence, were sent to the all-black Lincoln Junior High School.[738] In terms of the instructors, a black principal remained in charge of the non-segregated school while two black teachers were sent to the senior high school (one as a teacher of social studies and one as a school counselor).[739] Trenton students were segregated up to grade nine until two African American mothers in 1943 attempted to enroll their children in the white junior high school.

Gladys Hedgepeth and Berline Williams took action against the Trenton Board of Education after their two children, Janet Hedgepeth and Leon Williams, were refused entrance into their local middle school (Junior High No. 2) that was reserved for white students. The all-black Lincoln Junior High School was 2.5 miles away from the Hedgepeth and Williams' homes. With the assistance of the Trenton Committee for Unity and the NAACP, the two mothers filed a lawsuit against the Trenton Board of Education.[740] The attorney for the plaintiffs was Robert Queen described by some as "the staunchest supporter"[741] of the NAACP and civil rights for the black community in Trenton. Queen was one of two black lawyers in Trenton and the executive director of New Jersey's NAACP. Queen was an ardent crusader for civil rights for African Americans in the public schools, recreational facilities, and the courtroom. He would

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[737] Ibid.

[738] Ibid.

[739] Ibid.

[740] Ibid.

[741] Cathy D. Knepper, *Jersey Justice: The Story of the Trenton Six* (New York: Rivergate Press, 2011), 17.

later go on to defend a member of the "Trenton Six."[742] The suit was first filed in the District Court of Trenton; however, when this court denied the suit, Queen appealed to the New Jersey Supreme Court. *Hedgepeth-Williams vs. the Trenton Board of Education* ended in a decision favorable to the plaintiffs rendered by the New Jersey Supreme Court on January 31, 1944. The court decided that Junior High School No. 2 had unlawfully (citing the New Jersey law of 1881) discriminated against the African American students. Leon Williams and Janet Hedgepeth were granted admission in February 1944.[743] This was the first *state* anti-segregation legal precedent in the nation before the *Brown* decision was rendered a decade later in 1954, despite the fact that northern school districts continued to flagrantly violate anti-segregation laws by practice.[744]

The *Hedgepeth-Williams* decision led to a series of sweeping civil rights legislation in the Garden State related to public accommodations more generally (using the case as a standard) under the Democratic governor Alfred Driscoll. Following the decision, the Urban Colored Population Commission helped to secure the desegregation of the dormitories at Glassboro Teachers College (a state-sponsored college) in 1944.[745] The Fair Employment Act (FEA) was enacted in 1945 prohibiting discrimination in employment on the basis of race. Moreover, that same year, the New Jersey Division Against Discrimination (DAD) was created in the New Jersey Department of Education to help protect the civil rights of individuals in schools, employment, and housing in an

[742] Washington, *The Quest for Equality*, 113-114.

[743] Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North*, 241.

[744] Ibid.

[745] Ibid.

effort to administer the FEA.[746] This agency was also empowered by the governor to withhold state funding from school districts that refused to comply with New Jersey state civil rights laws.[747] The DAD was one of the first state agencies in the nation empowered to proactively eliminate discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity.[748] The *Hedgepeth-Williams* decision helped facilitate an end to segregation in other parts of New Jersey such as with Asbury Park, where children were separated within schools and recreational facilities.[749] The NAACP successfully pressured the Trenton School Board to establish geographic districts along nonracial lines for all of the city's schools by 1946.[750]

The functioning of the DAD had far-reaching impact as administered through the New Jersey Department of Education. The DAD consisted of the Commissioner of Education, who had the power to appoint a director, and a non-salaried State Council of seven members appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the state senate.[751] John H. Bosshart, the State Commissioner of Education in New Jersey, appointed Joseph L. Bustard, then supervising principal of Roselle Public Schools, to serve as director of the DAD. Bustard served as both the Assistant Director of Education and Director of the DAD.[752] The State Council Against Discrimination, created as a result

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[746] Marion Thompson Wright, "Extending Civil Rights in New Jersey through the Division Against Discrimination," *The Journal of Negro History* 38, no. 1 (January, 1953): 97.

[747] Wright, "Extending Civil Rights in New Jersey through the Division Against Discrimination," 97-98.

[748] Ibid., 94-96.

[749] Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North*, 243.

[750] Ibid., 241.

[751] Joseph L. Bustard, "The Operation of the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, 1947-1948" *The Journal of Negro Education* 18, no. 2 (Spring 1949): 123-133.

[752] Wright, "Extending Civil Rights in New Jersey through the Division Against Discrimination," 96.

of the 1945 law, in conjunction with the DAD, was the policymaking body for the DAD and was under the jurisdiction of the State Commissioner of Education.[753] African Americans served on the DAD, the State Council, and the various regional and local agencies created to assist the State Council. Harold A. Lett, former executive secretary of the New Jersey Urban League (1934-1945), served as the Assistant Director of the DAD while two African Americans—a physician named Dr. Thomas Bell and later a lawyer named Herbert Tate—were members of the State Council.

The State Council as the policymaking body of the DAD acted to create advisory agencies and conciliation councils at the local, regional, and state levels to aid in the administration of the new anti-discrimination law.[754] This agency functioned largely at the grassroots level through the development of local councils that represented the larger citizenry. The councils working in conjunction with the DAD received complaints concerning discrimination, conducted employment surveys, held conferences, and supported numerous educational activities related to human relations development.[755] In addition to being authorized to create advisory agencies and conciliation councils to study discrimination in all fields of human relations, the State Council conducted employment surveys throughout the state and held conferences with high school guidance counselors concerning the training of minority youths for employment.[756]

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[753] Ibid., 96-97.

[754] Ibid.

[755] Bustard, "The Operation of the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, 1947-1948," 123.

[756] Bustard, "The Operation of the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, 1947-1948," 123-130.

EPILOGUE

Throughout the northern states, black professionals played an important role in securing landmark civil rights legislation in the early freedom struggle; however, the achievements in the Garden State during this era were particularly notable. New Jersey enacted a series of important civil rights laws between 1944 and 1949 that had an impact at the state level. That said, the Garden State served as a proving ground for civil rights legislation that groups such as the NAACP sought to secure in states beyond the North and eventually at the federal level. New Jersey was also a place where activists such as Ernest Thompson advanced the black freedom struggle in significant ways before 1954 with the creation of the National Negro Labor Council, for example, that orchestrated the first national African American worker's strike in the nation's history.

The Urban Commission, created in 1938, continued to investigate riots, cross burnings, employment discrimination, school segregation, public accommodations issues and unemployment compensation cases. Its purpose was to ensure that the existing civil rights of the state would be upheld. The Commission functioned by first receiving complaints, conducting investigations, compiling records of complaints, and then making an attempt to settle cases out of court when possible. In 1946, the Commission investigated and recorded the incident of a cross burning on North Ohio Avenue in Atlantic City, with a report filed by L. D. Wright, an investigator with the South Jersey District of the Commission:

> …that a CROSS was burned, one that was attached to a telegraph pole in the 700 block of North Ohio Avenue on the early morning of December the 1st, 1946, and which proved that some sinister motive was at work to arouse the neighborhood in general but it was immediately knocked down

> and extinguished by three Negro police officers and taken to Police Headquarters in City Hall.[757]

Wright concludes his report by stating:

> The final and most plausible conclusion was the one that took into consideration the fight by members of a certain Labor Union to remove a Mr. Tasker, a Negro, as a bartender from his job in one of this [resort towns] resorts leading hotels.[758]

The August 23, 1947 event at Aqueduct Alley, Newark was also investigated by the Urban Commission. In this case, an African American man by the name of Robert Andrews, who lived at 21 Aqueduct Alley, had his home destroyed in a near "riot" following an incident in which a "colored boy" allegedly struck an Italian girl.[759] The report on the Aqueduct riot was submitted by A. K. Worde and Marcus H. Cooke, two investigators with the Urban Commission detailing the events:

> The father of the Italian child appeared with a mob and threatened to kill all of the "Niggers." He approached one of Mrs. Rainer's sons, who lived as a boarder with Mr. Andrews. She defended her son and was forced to hastily back up into her home by the oncoming mob.[760]

Worde and Cooke conducted an investigation that included interviews with several of the African American eyewitnesses to the incident. Mrs. Rainer, who was attacked by the mob, was able to point out one of the main perpetrators in a police line-up—Mr. Sam Fiore, who was described as the "leader of the gang."[761] Fiore was subsequently charged

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[757] Memo, L. D. Wright Investigator South Jersey District to UP Commission, December 5, 1946, Box 1, Folder 1, *Urban Colored Population Commission Records*, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, New Jersey.

[758] Ibid.

[759] Report, A. K. Worde Senior Investigator, and Marcus H. Cooke, Investigator, to UP Commission, August, 1947, Box 1, Folder 1, *Urban Colored Population Commission Records*, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, New Jersey.

[760] Ibid.

[761] Ibid.

with multiple fines for malicious damage to furniture and assault totaling $2,500.00.[762] The Urban Colored Commission, through an extensive investigation, was able to secure from an Essex County Grand Jury a "Bill of Indictment" for Fiore and four of his co-conspirators.[763]

The data collected by the DAD, the Urban Commission, as coupled with demands made by various civil rights agencies in the state culminated in the passage of a new state Constitution that was ratified in 1947 as well as several new civil rights laws. This Constitution barred discrimination in the public schools of New Jersey and in the state militia. New Jersey was the first state to *explicitly* ban segregation in the public schools and the state militia *constitutionally*. Marion Thompson Wright observed the following about the new State Constitution:

> This is the first state constitution to forbid *segregation* in the public schools and the state militia. Several states have legislated against *discrimination* in the provision of educational opportunities. This enabled state and school officials to insist that as long as "equal" facilities were afforded discrimination did not hold. But the new constitution of New Jersey outlawed *segregation* itself, an achievement which the NAACP hopes to extend to other states through cases now pending before the United States Supreme Court.[764]

There should be no doubt that the ideas of Wright and the activism of civil rights advocates in New Jersey provided both the ideological and strategic foundation for the modern black freedom struggle that took shape after 1954.

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[762] Memo, A. K. Worde Senior Investigator to Joseph P. Howser, September 5, 1947, Box 1, Folder 1, *Urban Colored Population Commission Records*, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, New Jersey.

[763] Ibid.

[764] Wright, "Extending Civil Rights in New Jersey Through the Division Against Discrimination," 91-107.

The Urban Colored Population Commission, although ultimately subsumed into the New Jersey Division of Civil Rights, continued to investigate racial disturbances in the state. The African American response to some of these incidents, such as the 1948 cross burning incident in Wall Township, suggest the existence of an increased militancy among blacks in the state despite the gains in civil rights reform. In the Wall Township disturbance, a twelve-foot cross was burned on the property of an African American radio engineer named Leroy Hutson. Hutson immediately summoned NAACP members from Asbury Park (about six miles from Wall), including F. Leon Harris, a leader with the Monmouth County Republicans. Mr. Harris was entertaining members of a "Sportsmen Club" at his residence when he received the call concerning the cross burning.[765] This club included twelve men, several of whom were members of the NAACP. The men loaded their shotguns and hunting rifles and headed to Mr. Hutson's place in a station wagon and two automobiles, where they preceded to patrol the grounds with loaded guns and flash lights for several hours.[766] In response to the incident, investigators with the Urban Commission recorded comments by black veterans with the Asbury Park Servicemen's Club, who stated "The Klan could scare people 20 years ago, but this is 1948. We've been to war and we're not afraid to fight for our rights."[767] In a New York newspaper supplement to the *Herald Tribune*, the event was described:

> Mr. Hutson stood in his doorway with a shotgun while the cross burned out in about thirty minutes. An hour later, at 10:30 pm, a group of other Negroes, who police said were members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, arrived at the Hutson home armed

[765] Report, A.K. Worde to UP Commission, June 13, 1948, *Urban Colored Population Commission Records*, Box 1, Folder 1, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, New Jersey.

[766] Ibid.

[767] Ibid.

> with pitchforks, shotguns, and rifles, baseball bats and sticks. They kept an all-night vigil and departed at dawn for their homes.[768]

The increased militancy among African Americans in New Jersey, despite the significant legislative measures passed in the state, was in some respects a precursor to the emergence of calls for armed resistance later advanced by movement radicals. In 1949, a year after the Wall Township cross burning, legislation passed in New Jersey prohibiting discrimination in public accommodations and public housing. The Freeman Act that allowed victims of discrimination to seek compensation through the DAD was also passed that same year.

The state of New Jersey continued to struggle with discrimination and school segregation beyond 1949. Six African American men were sentenced to death in 1949 for the murder of a white shopkeeper in Trenton. The case, known as "the Trenton Six," galvanized members of the local NAACP and the Communist Party, who rallied around what they perceived to be a wrongful conviction. The case also came to be known as the "Scottsboro Case of the North" and ultimately led to a new trial for the six men who had been sentenced to death. Black intellectuals continued to make the Garden State the center of civil rights activities after 1949 as exemplified with the activism of Ernest Thompson.

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[768] Newspaper Article, Special to the *Herald Tribune*, "Flaming Cross Placed on Lawn of Jersey Negro," June 12, 1948, *Urban Colored Population Commission Records*, Box 1, Folder 1, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, New Jersey.

Ernest Thompson is one of the more important, though least known, civil rights activists of the "Long Civil Rights Movement". Specifically, Thompson played a major role in the development of the black labor-left coalition politics that evolved out of the struggle for black equality in the Garden State. He organized an independent union at the American Radiator Company and was elected the union's first president. He held this position for more than a decade.

The independent union organized at the ARC eventually became part of the American Federation of Labor under Thompson's direction and later became affiliated with the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America (UE), a major militant union associated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The first African American field organizer for the UE, Thompson conducted organizing campaigns in Jersey City and Baltimore. He also held the position of executive officer of the Hudson County CIO Council from 1942 to 1950, where he both supported and ran candidates for city, county and state government positions.

Ernest Thompson is the quintessential organic intellectual. He was a man who made a living as a factory worker in northern New Jersey; but, Thompson like Marion Thompson Wright was also a producer of knowledge. Thompson fits the definition of intellectual in that he produced knowledge through the written word for the public good as a trade unionist who advocated for worker's rights. He is an *organic intellectual* in the sense that he was a man of the people (the factory class) and an advocate *for the people* as a trade unionist who authored two texts on the history of worker's rights.

Thompson was a prolific writer of letters, newsletters, pamphlets, speeches, and treatises along with two book length manuscripts that detail his life story and ideas. He

was the lead theoretician and strategist for the National Negro Labor Council who also worked closely with black intellectuals such as Paul Robeson and organizations such as the C.I.O. (Congress of Industrial Organizations) to demand equality in the workplace. Thompson embraced an intersectional approach to empowerment by advocating for the rights of the working class, as a supporter of cross-racial coalition building, and allied with women trade unionists, he argued vigorously for the rights of women in employment including equal pay for equal work.[769]

Ernest "Big Train" Thompson was a thinker, strategist, writer, organizer and indefatigable activist for employment equity and civil rights. He was referred to as "Big Train" by his friends and fellow trade unionists for his ability to "deliver the goods" in negotiations with factory owners.[770] Thompson did not have a formal education beyond high school but early in his life, he became committed to trade union activism and civil rights. Coleman A. Young, who worked with Thompson, and held the position of mayor of Detroit from 1974 to 1994, described the critical role that Thompson played as a "towering figure" in the history of trade unionism in the United States:

> "Big Train" was a towering figure among that group of Blacks who saw that World War II was a turning point in the status of racism in the United States, who saw the labor movement as a critical arena in the struggle for liberation, and who understood the decisive importance of coalition.[771]

Thompson co-wrote the speech delivered at the founding convention of the National Negro Labor Council in 1951 that was delivered by the NNLC's first president

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[769] Ernest Thompson and Mindy Thompson, *Homeboy Came to Orange: A Story of People's Power* by (Newark: Bridgebuilder Press, 1976), 22.

[770] John W. Alexander, "In Memoriam," in *Homeboy Came to Orange: A Story of People's Power* by Ernest Thompson and Mindy Thompson (Newark: Bridgebuilder Press, 1976), vii.

[771] Coleman A. Young, "Introduction," in *Homeboy Came to Orange: A Story of People's Power* by Ernest Thompson and Mindy Thompson (Newark: Bridgebuilder Press, 1976), i.

Bill Hood.[772] This speech revealed Thompson's continued commitment to interracial cooperation but insisted on "cooperation" from whites as opposed to reliance on their leadership or "permission" to act in the interest of black labor equality with whites.[773] Dr. John W. Alexander's eulogy for Thompson echoed the sentiments of Coleman by pointing to Thompson's ability to organize workers, negotiate, and his continued support of coalition building across class and racial divides.

> Home [Ernie] taught us Blacks to fight for equality…he then taught us tactics. And finally he taught us coalition—how the minority can seek allies in the white community and give leadership to the resulting alliance.[774]

Big Train was well-known for his leadership of both black and white workers as a trade unionist. He held elected positions in locals with a majority of white workers in northern New Jersey early in his career as an activist. Alexander not only mentions Thompson's prowess as an organizer, strategist, and negotiator, he also notes that "Big Train" was a man interested in knowledge and a man capable of understanding complex ideas in the company of ivy league educated intellectuals.

> Home [Ernie] has researched education from Pavlov's experiments in teaching dogs to the computerized teaching typewriter. He met with educational experts from Harvard, Stevens Institute of Technology, and many other universities. It was always with amazement and respect that I watched this unlettered Black man invade the ivory towers and match his wits against the best-trained minds in this country.[775]

Thompson was an "unlettered" man and knowledge producer who used his intellect for public good as a life-long advocate of employment equity. His closest associates such as

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[772] Ibid., 23-25.

[773] Ibid., ii.

[774] John W. Alexander, "In Memoriam," ix.

[775] Ibid.

Coleman and Alexander insist that "Big Train" was comfortable with ideas and many publics while exhibiting a tireless energy.

> He helped direct one city election from a hospital bed and he negotiated a quarter million dollar agreement within one week after discharge from the hospital, not to mention several lesser accomplishments. He could always talk on the telephone to reach his old friends, union leaders, elected officials, and artists, and corral their resources for such efforts as electing the first Black mayors in Newark and East Orange and the first Black commissioner in Orange.[776]

Thompson spoke to and from the masses but also recognized that coalition was integral to any successful movement. He understood that cross-racial and cross-class alliances were necessary for employment equity to benefit the masses.

At the American Radiator plant in Bayonne, New Jersey, workers were routinely organized by racial-ethnic divisions. Anglo-Saxons, as Thompson notes in his autobiography, worked in mechanical and warehouse jobs while Blacks and Hispanics worked in the foundry.[777] Recognizing that segregation in work fostered disunity among workers, as well as presenting a barrier to trade unionism, Thompson began to organize Black and Hispanic workers around common interests with white workers at the American Radiator plant in 1934 by supporting a strike that eventually led to the creation of an independent union that became affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. In 1940, Thompson is elected president of this union. Thompson then led the struggle to join the United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers of America (U.E.) that was then a part of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.).

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[776] Coleman, "In Memoriam," iv.

[777] Ibid., 7.

During the WW II Era, Thompson became increasingly involved in Bayonne and Hudson County politics while becoming recognized as a competent union organizer for the U.E. He believed that workers needed political power to maintain unions as well as secure improved living conditions outside of the workplace.[778] As early as 1935, he supported the running of union men for statewide offices through the two-party system and ran union candidates against the regular ticket when opposed. With these actions, Thompson challenged the machine-politics of Frank Hague ("the Boss") who at the time controlled "much of the politics" in Jersey City, Hudson County, and significant portions of New Jersey during the first four decades of the twentieth century.[779] In 1943, Thompson became the first black organizer for the U.E. He organized both black and white workers for the U.E. eventually becoming the business manager for an amalgamated local in Hudson County, New Jersey—the majority of workers in this local were white.[780]

The National Negro Labor Council (NNLC) emerged from increased discussions about fair employment practices for black workers. Thompson became the secretary of the U.E.'s fair employment practices committee in 1950. In 1951, the founding conference of the NNLC took place in Cincinnati, Ohio. Bill Hood, who was affiliated with the United Auto Workers (UAW), was elected the first president of the NNLC, and Coleman Young a trade unionist from Detroit became executive secretary.[781] Thompson became director of organization. He drafted the founding speech for the council and

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[778] Ibid., 9.

[779] Ibid.

[780] Ibid., 12.

[781] Ibid., 23-24.

became the NNLC's lead strategist. Women such as Vicki Garvin were invited into the leadership structure of the NNLC. Garvin became one of the NNLC's vice-presidents.[782] It was also an organization that did not exclude whites from leadership roles. Maurice Travis, a secretary of the Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers union, was a vice-president for the NNLC.

The goals and objectives of the NNLC were focused on the rights of black workers and black leadership in the labor movement but it was not an *exclusionary* body in terms of race.[783] This approach was likely because of Thompson's influence. The founding speech as the "brainchild" of Thompson espoused the strategy of coalition in the interest of black freedom:

> The Negro Labor Council is our symbol, the medium of expression, of our aims and aspirations. It is the expression of our desire and determination to bring to bear our full weight to help win first class citizenship for every Black man, woman and child in America. We say that these are legitimate aims. We say that these aspirations burn fiercely in the breast of the Negro in America. And we further say that millions of white workers echo our demands for freedom. These white workers recognize in the struggle for Negro rights, the prerequisites of their own aspirations for a full life and a guarantee that the rising tide of fascism will not engulf America.[784]

NNCL demonstrations and job actions were often interracial endeavors. Some 1500 NNLC members staged demonstrations in the airline ticket center in downtown Cleveland in 1952.[785] This campaign was made possible as a result of interracial cooperation between workers. The NNLC platform emphasized the development of black

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[782] Ibid., 24.

[783] Ibid., 28,

[784] Ibid., 26-27.

[785] Ibid., 30.

trade unionism, across gender lines, together with white workers willing to sign on to their goals and objectives.[786] Thompson contends that the point of the opening speech was to make it clear that black workers "would now be the policy makers in the liberation struggle."[787] Blacks would control their own organizational base, but work in cooperation with whites who shared similar interests.

There were a series of jobs campaigns that took place between 1952 and 1953 that were orchestrated by the NNLC. These campaigns targeted the airline industry, department stores such as Sears-Roebuck, the railroads, and General Electric (GE).[788] A campaign to target the airlines was developed at the founding conference of the NNLC in 1951. In 1952, the NNLC leadership sent a letter to the Committee on Government Contracts, run by then vice-president Richard Nixon, asking the Committee to take over jurisdiction of the employment policies of the airlines.[789] The mass picket line and jobs demonstration targeting the airlines that took place at the second annual meeting of the NNLC in downtown Cleveland led to the breakdown of discrimination in the hiring practices of the airlines after 1952.[790] Sears-Roebuck's discriminatory hiring practices were also made the subject of major jobs actions/demonstrations orchestrated by the NNLC.[791] This campaign was focused on pressuring the national department store chain to hire black women as sales clerks and in clerical positions. Blacks were not hired by

[786] Ibid., 27-28.

[787] Ibid., 28.

[788] Ibid., 30-36.

[789] Ibid., 30.

[790] Ibid., 30.

[791] Ibid.

Sears above the position of janitor at the time. Several NNLC local chapters in places such as Newark, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Detroit staged demonstrations at Sears-Roebuck stores across northern cities. In 1953, the company began to make changes to its hiring practices in many of its northern facilities. NNLC's "Let Freedom Ride the Rails" initiative that urged black workers to apply for railroad jobs in restricted classifications gained support of state level FEPCs.

The largest operation led by the NNLC took place between 1954 and 1956 involving demonstrations against General Electric (GE). This movement was referred to as "Let Freedom Crash the Gateway to the South" and it was an attempt to make a major move against unfair labor practices in the southern region of the nation.[792] GE planned to move all of its appliance factories to a place called Appliance Park, a 700-acre industrial complex located in Louisville, Kentucky, with plans to employ 20,000 workers.[793] Louisville, as opposed to other cities such as Atlanta located in the Deep South, is considered a "gateway" city to the region. Therefore, the NNLC leadership embraced the idea that this was a way for the council to make significant inroads into gaining black workers rights in the southern section of the country.[794] Their platform focused on four major issues including wage differentials, runaway shops, discriminatory hiring practices and the hiring of black women in the factories. The Louisville chapter of the NNLC convinced the Louisville Board of Education to run classes to train blacks in the skills that they would need to secure jobs in the new industrial complex.[795] This was a way for

[792] Ibid., 34.

[793] Ibid.

[794] Ibid.

[795] Ibid., 34-35.

the NNLC to help these workers avoid being turned down for positions due to lack of training. Trade unionists and local chapters of the NNLC provided information concerning jobs skills/requirements so that applicants would be properly prepared before they applied for jobs with GE.[796] Workers, black and white, were mobilized across the nation with cooperation from several labor organizations to support the efforts of the NNLC.[797]

NNLC's organizing should be considered an example of one of the more successful efforts at black-led trade unionism in twentieth century U.S. history. Thompson was at the helm of the council's organizational endeavors. He reminisces on the achievements of the "Let Freedom Crash the Gateway" movement in such a way:

> With the help of many Black organizations and the UAW and other unions, two Jim crow barriers came tumbling down—after twenty years of discrimination, the Louisville Ford plant hired Blacks in categories above janitor, and GE hired some Black women on production: It was the first time in the history of the South that Black women had been hired as factory workers other than matrons.[798]

Thompson goes on to reflect on the work of the NNLC in general amid the rise of McCarthyism:

> NNLC had for the first time brought the skill and power of Black workers into the freedom fight. They had settled the questions of Black power and the right of Black people to have separate organizations, not to build separatism but to build a base from which a coalition could be developed. They had stood firmly on the principle of unity with other Black people and other workers.[799]

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[796] Ibid.

[797] Ibid.

[798] Ibid., 36.

[799] Ibid., 40.

The NNLC was decimated by the McCarthy purge as major leaders including Coleman Young and Bill Hood were summoned to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee.[800] Following the continued harassment by the U.S. government, Thompson recalls that upon the demise of the NNLC "many" of the leaders "wept" at their last meeting together.[801] When Thompson was summoned by government attorneys to come to Washington, to provide evidence as to why the NNLC should not be on the Attorney's General's list of subversive organizations, he answered by stating, "How can the dead show cause?"[802] Big Train continued to advocate for black civil rights and worker's rights, more generally, after leaving the UE in 1956. The modern Civil Rights Movement began in New Jersey, a garden of opportunity, but it also stalled in this same place a decade later.

[800] Ibid., 38.

[801] Ibid., 40.

[802] Ibid., 42.

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