Building Within Our Borders: Black Women Reformers in the South from 1890 to 1920

Tonya D. Blair
The University of Southern Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations
Part of the American Studies Commons, Women's History Commons, and the Women's Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
Blair, Tonya D., "Building Within Our Borders: Black Women Reformers in the South from 1890 to 1920" (2015). Dissertations. 188. https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/188

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.
BUILDING WITHIN OUR BORDERS: BLACK WOMEN REFORMERS IN THE SOUTH FROM 1890 TO 1920

by

Tonya Dé Neé Blair

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2015
ABSTRACT

BUILDING WITHIN OUR BORDERS: BLACK WOMEN REFORMERS
IN THE SOUTH FROM 1890 TO 1920

by Tonya Dé Neé Blair

December 2015

This dissertation examined the reform work of four unsung black women reformers in Virginia from the post-Reconstruction period into the early twentieth century. The four women spearheaded social reformist institutions and organizations, such as industrial training schools, a settlement house, an orphanage, a home for the elderly, a girls’ reformatory/industrial school, and a state federation of black women’s clubs. One of the selected women included Jennie Dean, a former slave from northern Virginia, who founded an industrial training school for African-Americans in post-Civil War Manassas. Dean’s industrial school resulted from her tenacious drive to imbue former slaves with literacy and vocational skills. The second woman was Della Irving Hayden, an 1877 graduate of Hampton Institute, who founded the Franklin Normal and Industrial Institute in 1904. The third woman was Janie Porter Barrett, an 1884 graduate of Hampton Institute, who established the Locust Street Settlement House in Hampton, as well as the state’s first reformatory/industrial school for delinquent black girls. The fourth woman, Amelia Perry Pride, an 1885 graduate of Hampton Institute, established a home for the elderly, an orphanage, and a cooking/sewing school, all of which served Lynchburg’s black community.

Although Jennie Dean is the only one of the four women who did not attend Hampton Institute, she, like Hayden, Barrett, and Pride, took strong inspiration from the
Hampton Model as designed by the school’s founder, Samuel Chapman Armstrong. While the model placed primary emphasis on a vocational/industrial curriculum, it also stressed the virtues of piety, thrift, hard work, racial uplift, and self-sufficiency. Due to its all-encompassing components, which provided a logical and practical resolution to post-Reconstruction black southern plight, reformers such as the dissertation’s four women integrated the Hampton Model into their reformist objectives and initiatives.
COPYRIGHT BY

TONYA DÉ NEÉ BLAIR

2015
BUILDING WITHIN OUR BORDERS: BLACK WOMEN REFORMERS

IN THE SOUTH FROM 1890 TO 1920

by

Tonya Dé Neé Blair

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
and the Department of History
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

__________________________
Dr. Douglas Chambers, Committee Chair
Associate Professor, History

__________________________
Dr. Pamela Tyler, Committee Member
Associate Professor, History

__________________________
Dr. Chester Morgan, Committee Member
Professor, History

__________________________
Dr. Deanne Nuwer, Committee Member
Associate Professor, History

__________________________
Dr. Matthew Casey, Committee Member
Assistant Professor, History

__________________________
Dr. Karen S. Coats
Dean of the Graduate School

December 2015
DEDICATION

While my doctoral process has been a long road of individual sacrifice, hard work, tenacity, and dedication, its completion yields forth a sense of accomplishment and ease. I share this triumphant feeling and moment in my life with my family and colleagues, all of whom offered me support and encouragement throughout this process.

I would also like to extend a special dedication to my late grandmother, Mrs. Essie M. Blair, whose passion for higher learning kept me focused on completing the degree.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to extend special thanks to my committee chair, Dr. Douglas Chambers, and my other committee members, Dr. Pamela Tyler, Dr. Chester Morgan, Dr. Deanne Nuwer, and Dr. Matthew Casey, for their dedicated review of my dissertation.

I would also like to extend special thanks to the staff of the Graduate School at The University of Southern Mississippi for all of the years of support and encouragement.

Additionally, I would also like to thank my former colleagues at Elizabeth City State University for their support and encouragement.

Lastly, I would like to thank the staff members of the following repositories who invaluably aided my research: Hampton University, Old City Cemetery, The Library of Virginia, and the Manassas Museum.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT........................................................................................................................................................ ii

DEDICATION........................................................................................................................................................ iv

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ....................................................................................................................................... v

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION.............................................................................................................................................1

II. THE BASIS FOR BUILDING: PROGRESSIVISM AND THE AMERICAN SOUTH..................................................17

III. BLUEPRINT FOR BUILDING: SAMUEL CHAPMAN ARMSTRONG AND THE HAMPTON MODEL......................65

IV. FROM BONDAGE TO BUILDING: THE REFORM WORK OF JENNIE DEAN AND DELLA IRVING HAYDEN..................91

V. FROM CLASSROOM TO COMMUNITY: THE REFORM WORK OF JANIE PORTER BARRETT AND AMELIA PERRY PRIDE .................................................................142

VI. BOUND BY BUILDING: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF JENNIE DEAN, DELLA IRVING HAYDEN, JANIE PORTER BARRETT, AND AMELIA PERRY PRIDE .................................187

VII. CONCLUSION .............................................................................................................................................217

BIBLIOGRAPHY.................................................................................................................................................231
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In no way could we live up to such a sentiment [“lifting as we climb”] . . . than by coming into closer touch with the masses of our women . . . Even though we wish to shun them, . . . we cannot escape the consequences of their acts. So, that if the call of duty were disregarded altogether, policy and self-preservation would demand that we go down among the lowly, the illiterate, and even the vicious to whom we are bound by the ties of race and sex, and put forth every possible effort to uplift and claim them.

Mary Church Terrell

The above quotation by Mary Church Terrell (1863-1954) encapsulates the inclusive nature of African-American women’s reformism from the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. As a founding member and first president of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), Terrell stood at the helm of one of the many key organizations which spearheaded numerous social reform initiatives that infinitely improved the quality of life within the nation’s black communities. Black women’s clubs along with other organizations and individual efforts were paramount in mobilizing resources which created public health care/sanitation programs, prohibitionist campaigns, penal reform campaigns, and instructional institutions. All of these initiatives, which were largely implemented by black women, served early twentieth-century black communities well. Many middle-class African-American women, singly and in groups, devoted themselves to designing programs and building institutions to aid black communities mired in poverty and shackled by racial discrimination. Historian Glenda Gilmore stated flatly that “southern black women

initiated every progressive reform that southern white women initiated, a feat they accomplished without financial resources, without the civic protection of their husbands, and without publicity."

The inclusive and independent nature of black southern women’s social reformism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is the subject of this dissertation. It focuses on four main individuals: Janie Porter Barrett (1865-1948), Jennie Dean (1852-1913), Della Irving Hayden (1851-1924), and Amelia Perry Pride (1857-1932). The familial and academic backgrounds as well as ideological perspectives (spiritual and secular) of these women influenced their reformist interests and initiatives. An understanding of their institutional operations provides a significant gateway into the concerns and values of these reformist leaders as well as members of the southern black communities whom they set out to assist.

Late nineteenth-century southern black women through individual and collective efforts independently crafted a social reform movement that was often a separate extension of the larger white-led progressive movement which enveloped the entire nation. Racial and regional gaps in mainstream progressivism led to the emergence of a separate southern black reform movement, largely initiated by black women, at national, state, and local levels. The centrality of black women within the history of southern social reform was indicative of their social consciousness, leadership and organizational abilities and their power to effect positive change on local and national levels. More significantly, the influence wielded by black women during the

progressive era happened amid the backdrop of political disfranchisement and institutional racism.

Early scholarship on southern black ideology and reform often focused on prominent black men such as Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. Despite the influence and prominence of such men during the early twentieth century, the scholarly focus on them obscures the contributions of their black female contemporaries, some of whom (e.g., Washington) studied at Hampton Institute and were inspired by its self-help philosophy. Also like Washington, several of Hampton’s female graduates, including the subjects of this dissertation, engaged in industrial institution building. By focusing on the initiatives of four southern black female reformers, this study continues the inclusive nature of late twentieth-century American and southern historical scholarship, affording more central significance to the contributions made by black women.

The flourishing of black American women’s history was facilitated by the civil rights and feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s. By igniting interest in the past and present lives of the nation’s minority groups, these movements made historical scholarship more expansive and specialized in the new fields of African-American and women’s studies. Despite their unique place within both minority groups, black women were initially marginalized in the new scholarship, partly because of a lack of sources. Since the 1970s, however, genealogists, civic/professional organizations, personal acquaintances, and family members have been more thorough in the preservation of primary records and in documenting the lives of black women. As a result, several prominent scholars have been able to study the individual and collective achievements
of black women and help bring black women’s history to the forefront of post-revisionist American history.

One of the first was Cynthia Neverdon-Morton. Her 1989 study of *Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895-1925* argued that by emphasizing the conflict between Washington and Du Bois, previous histories had obscured their underlying solidarity among early twentieth-century black leaders as well as the accomplishments of the era. In particular, she pointed to the ways that black women used social reform as a means of racial advancement and uplift.³ Neverdon-Morton noted that socially conscious black women engaged in reform campaigns to eradicate ills, such as poor health and sanitation, inadequate instructional and recreational facilities, and poor housing. These campaigns revealed that black women reformers effectively tackled those social ills through their establishment of welfare institutions, such as settlement day houses, industrial schools, and women’s clubs. She concluded that, due to their public visibility and influence as community leaders, reformist black women served as culturally-refined and civic-minded models to be emulated by the black masses.⁴ Lastly, Neverdon-Morton’s work examined the significant role that southern black colleges played in preparing black women for their roles as social reformers. This correlation between institutional philosophy and its application within black social reform was also a central argument within this

---


⁴. Ibid., 163.
dissertation, which focused on the reformist initiatives of three Hampton Institute graduates.⁵

Dorothy Salem’s *To Better Our World: Black Women in Organized Reform, 1890-1920*, also focused on black women’s reform as a means of racial empowerment and uplift. Its publication in 1990 introduced a flood of scholarship on black women’s social reform. Like Neverdon-Morton, Salem sought to fill a historiographical void, in this case the tendency of mainstream studies of both women and progressivism to portray African-Americans merely as marginal recipients of white benevolence. Just as Neverdon-Morton assessed that there was a void within the historiography of progressive black leadership at the turn of the century, Salem also attested to a historiographical void as a catalyst for her scholarship. Salem asserted that her work came about because of gaps within progressive era and mainstream women’s historiography. Salem noted that when traditional progressive-era histories only vaguely mentioned African-Americans, they portrayed them as passive beneficiaries of white benevolence.⁶ In contrast to this slighting, Salem’s work emphasized the pivotal role that black women played within social reform by examining a plethora of grassroots and national institutions and organizations which were created by them for the purpose of community uplift and betterment. Some of these institutions included similar institutions which were created by this dissertation’s four women, such as reformatories, settlement houses, industrial schools, and public health campaigns. In addition to black-based institutions and organizations, Salem also examined black

---

⁵. Ibid., 226-27.

women’s participation within interracial organizations and philanthropic groups, such as the American Red Cross, the Rosenwald Foundation, the Russell Sage Foundation, the NAACP, and the National Urban League. All of these organizations afforded black women reformers more resources and monetary support to sustain their reformist initiatives.  

Like Neverdon-Morton, Salem focused on the duality of black women’s identity as both black and female. As black people, reformist-minded black women had to contend with ostracism and sometimes outright exclusion from mainstream progressive organizations, such as the Home Missions, Young Women’s Christian Association, American Red Cross, and the Woman’s Committee, all of which operated within the parameters of racially segregated chapters. By virtue of their gender, black women, like their white counterparts, were expected to serve as domestic nurturers of their homes and communities. This gendered expectation charged black women with the task to enter the public space of social reform. Consequently, Salem noted that through their roles as social reformers black women were afforded some inclusion into co-gender and interracial organizations. Affiliation with these larger mainstream organizations like state welfare departments also provided black women reformers with more monetary and administrative resources to support their racially-segregated institutions and initiatives. This assertion made by Salem is also espoused by Glenda Gilmore in her 1996 work *Gender and Jim Crow*. In this work, Gilmore argued that rather than deterring black social reform, the entanglement of race and gender in the age of

7. Ibid., 3.
8. Ibid., 3.
segregation enabled black women to find a visible and public role as reformers and leaders. 9 Both Gilmore and Salem noted examples of grassroots’ interracial coalitions and philanthropic foundations between black women and white people, which afforded black women more material and monetary resources to advance their agendas within the era of segregation.

Despite gaining more disposable resources through their affiliation with mainstream organizations, constraints of race and gender often restricted black women reformers. An exploration of this racial/gender duality enabled Salem to note the complex and oftentimes seemingly counterproductive intersection of race and gender which played out during the Progressive Era. While mainstream progressivism’s agenda was to create a more productive and efficiently ordered society, it sought to accomplish this within the parameters of a racially-segregated society. Mainstream progressivism endorsed racial separation and, undoubtedly, white supremacy. While marginalizing and excluding black women’s participation within certain mainstream progressive organizations, progressivism also relied upon them as community builders by virtue of their gendered domestic roles as nurturers. This paradoxical interconnection of race and gender characterized black women’s social reformism during the Progressive Era.10

In Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945 (1993), Elizabeth Lasch Quinn also examined the paradox of mainstream progressivism’s exclusion of African-Americans, even though the

---


10. Salem, To Better Our World, 3.
movement revered itself as a “bastion of cultural pluralism.” Quinn’s main thesis was that the black settlement house movement was not orchestrated solely as a means of black racial uplift but also as a means for black women to effect positive change within society at large. Black women’s work within the settlement house movement was a reflection of their sense of obligation to their racial community and the mainstream, both of which placed a feminized domestic responsibility on them to reform their communities. Race is central to Quinn’s analysis of the settlement house movement as she had placed black women within this movement by defining new characteristics of what constituted settlement house work. Quinn expanded these characteristics by examining the various institutions in which black women performed settlement work, such as YWCAs, home missions, southern industrial schools, churches, and black women’s clubs.12

Incidentally, the dissertation’s four women created those same institutions of social reform. Even more directly relevant to this dissertation is the fact that Quinn briefly discussed such unsung black women reformers as Janie Porter Barrett and Amelia Perry Pride, both of whom are discussed in the dissertation. Aside from the acknowledgement of unheralded black women reformers, Quinn significantly provided an analysis of why the mainstream progressive movement excluded African-Americans and why it subsequently faltered by the mid-twentieth century without producing a consistent black constituency within its fold. This probe into mainstream progressivism’s exclusion of African-Americans provided some explanation of the


12. Ibid., 4.
numerous impediments faced by reformist black women in their quest to improve their communities. Quinn suggested that the main reason for this demise was white progressives’ perceptions of African-Americans as intellectually, morally, and ethnically inferior and, therefore, unworthy of being indoctrinated into middle-class, progressive Protestant virtues.\(^{13}\) She noted that mainstream progressive organizations failed to establish an interracial coalition with black-based reformist organizations. Moreover, the mainstream progressive movement concentrated its energies on urban areas while the vast majority of African-Americans were still concentrated in the rural South.\(^{14}\) Quinn’s overall examination of the systematic and racially discriminatory nature of mainstream progressivism provided further validation of the necessity for black women reformists to create and sustain institutions of social betterment. One such organization which created a foundation for black women’s reformist initiatives was the black church.

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham’s *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (1993) examined the roles women played within the black church, more specifically, the Baptist Convention and its auxiliary Woman’s Convention.\(^{15}\) Higginbotham demonstrated that black women were instrumental in making the black church a multipurpose institution of racial self-help. She essentially charged that black women used it as an organizational base to create reformist institutions, such as community service projects, settlement day homes,

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 5.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 7.

food/clothing banks, orphanages, homes for the elderly, and neighborhood recreational centers. The black church also served as a springboard to promote black women’s agenda to address the social ills of lynching and gender discrimination, as well as the promotion of women’s suffrage. The success of black women’s creation of church-based social reform institutions and initiatives afforded black women a considerable amount of influence within their communities. While serving in a leadership and reformist capacity within the black church, black women conveyed and promoted to the black masses the virtues of thrift, industry, temperance, honesty, and piety, which were to be emulated and used as a medium for achieving racial self-sufficiency and credibility.  

While Higginbotham chose to examine black women’s reform activism through the church rather than secular institutions, Susan Lynn Smith explored the role of black women in the healthcare movement. In *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: Black Women’s Health Activism in America, 1890-1950*, Smith offered a creative and interdisciplinary approach to the tangled impact of gender, class, and politics upon black women’s role in progressive reform. Smith argued that black women, working as grassroots organizers and healthcare personnel, helped to initiate a black healthcare reform movement in the U.S., which served as an extension of the larger movement of black women’s social reformism.  

Stephanie Shaw’s *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do: Black Professional Workers During the Jim Crow Era* also explored black women reformers across gender

16. Ibid., 17.

and ethnic lines. Shaw attempted to examine individual black professional and reform-minded women not wholly within the oppressive context of race and gender (though neither are ever truly escapable) but as individuals who were guided by the expectations set forth by their families, communities, and themselves. The influential role played by familial institutions in mobilizing black women to act as agents of community reform was the hallmark of Shaw’s thesis.18

These works illustrate the expansion nature of the historiography of black American women in the past two decades. Gaps remain, however, particularly regarding lesser known figures, such as the subjects of this study. All four women, working in the same state (Virginia), created valuable social institutions which significantly enhanced the quality of life within their respective communities. Jennie Dean founded the Manassas Industrial School for Colored Students; Della Irving Hayden created the Franklin Normal Industrial School in Franklin; Janie Porter Barrett established the Locust Street Settlement House in Hampton and the Virginia Industrial School for Colored Girls in Hanover County; and Amelia Perry Pride created the Dorchester Home for the Elderly, the Polk Street School, and the Theresa Pierce Cooking School, all in Lynchburg.

The four subjects in many ways embodied the model of middle-class African-American womanhood. These women appeared to believe, as Gunnar Myrdal famously stated, that it was “to the advantage of American Negroes as individuals and as a group to become assimilated into American culture, to acquire the traits held in esteem by the

dominant white Americans.” Yet, they also demonstrated a fierce pride in their race. Understanding whites’ tendency to attribute to all African-Americans the character of the lowliest and least educated among them, these women strove to uplift, purify, cleanse, and educate the poor and uneducated black masses. In the process, they lived lives of value and heroism.

Despite their contributions, these women have generally been ignored by most scholars. Dean and Barrett have received some attention. One published work which chronicled Jennie Dean’s life and her creation of the Manassas Industrial School is *Undaunted Faith: The Story of Jennie Dean.* This book, authored by Stephen Lewis, alumnus of the Manassas Industrial School, was published in 1942. In addition to Lewis’ work, Geraldine Lee Susi authored a 2002 biography of Dean entitled *For My People: The Jennie Dean Story.*

Aside from full-length biographical publications, Janie Porter Barrett and Jennie Dean also received more attention within graduate-level research. The first such work was a 1954 master’s thesis written by Winona R. Hall, “Janie Porter Barrett, Her Life and Contributions in Social Welfare in Virginia.” In 2001, Karen A. Ford completed a Ph.D. dissertation entitled “Building an Institution: Janie Porter Barrett and the Virginia


Industrial Home School for Colored Girls: 1915 to 1920.\textsuperscript{23} Jennie Dean was also a central focus within a 2001 dissertation. In 2001, Angela David Nieves completed a Ph.D. dissertation entitled “We Gave Our Hearts and Lives to It: African-American Women Reformers, Industrial Education, and the Monuments of Nation-Building in the Post-Reconstruction South, 1877-1938,” in which Dean was discussed. Nieves’ work placed Dean within a larger context of southern black reformers who endorsed industrial education for black youth.\textsuperscript{24} Taking a more historical and analytical approach, this dissertation will place Barrett and Dean within the historical framework of post-Reconstruction, black women’s reformism, which materialized during the late nineteenth century and largely concluded by 1920.

Aside from minimal graduate-level scholarship, Barrett and Dean, as well as Hayden and Pride, remain largely understudied within black American women’s historiography. Barrett has been the focus of a few sociological journal articles. “Janie Porter Barrett and the Virginia Industrial School for Colored Girls: Community Response to the Needs of American Children” by Wilma Peebles-Wilkins examined Barrett’s operation of the Virginia Industrial School for Colored Girls as it served as a model for institutional social welfare. Another article was a collaborative work entitled “Janie Porter Barrett (1886-1948): Exemplary African-American Correctional Education.” In addition to the sociological-based scholarship that has been conducted on Barrett, these four women are sparsely discussed in secondary reference works, such


as comprehensive encyclopedia, which pay homage to notable black American women. Some of those works include Women Builders by Sadie Daniel, Paula Giddings’ 1984 When and Where I Enter, as well as encyclopedic works, Notable Black American Women, Great African-American Women, and African-American National Biography.  

How does one explain mainstream scholarship’s relative neglect of these and other black women? One cause has been the historic racial and gender discrimination within mainstream scholarship of southern progressivism which, with few exceptions, continues to neglect the contributions made by black women reformers. Even those exceptions typically focus on a select few black women, such as Lugenia Burns Hope and Charlotte Hawkins Brown, who have been repeatedly researched. The result has


been to obscure the work of others like Janie Porter Barrett, who in the 1920s chaired
the National Association of Colored Women’s executive board. Finally, research on
black women reformers has suffered from a lack of sources. To overcome this problem,
scholars must devise unconventional methods of acquiring information about more
obscure individuals. One example would be to approach such people within the context
of their association with better known figures.

The chapters that follow will recount the social reform efforts of Barrett, Dean,
Hayden, and Pride and to place them in the context of national and regional
progressivism. This researcher’s main chapters will answer the four aforementioned
questions. Chapter II will provide an historical backdrop for the four women’s social
reform activism, as it chronicles the mainstream national and southern progressive
movement, both of which largely excluded black Americans. This exclusion from the
mainstream movements warranted the emergence of a separate black progressive
movement. This chapter also will examine the complicated and sometimes paradoxical
nature of the white benevolence which helped to sustain a number of southern black
social reform initiatives. All four women utilized some aspect of white philanthropy.
Chapter III will examine the significance of Hampton Institute and its founder, Samuel
Chapman Armstrong, as an architect for black southern industrial education. Chapter IV
will examine the social reform initiatives of Jennie Dean and Della Irving Hayden, both
of whose enslaved parents endowed them with a tenacious spirit toward civic

(September 1991), 559-90; Tera Hunter, “The Correct Thing: Charlotte H. Brown and the Palmer
Institute,” Southern Exposure 11 (September/October 1983), 37-43; Gerda Lerner, “Early Community
Work of Black Club Women,” Journal of Negro History 59 (April 1974), 158-67; Joan Davis Ratteray,
Negro Education 61 (Spring 1992), 138-47; Sandra N. Smith and Earle H. West, “Charlotte Hawkins
Brown,” Journal of Negro Education 51 (Summer 1982), 191-06.
responsibility and community uplift. Both women also held prominent affiliation with church-based reformist works, i.e., Sunday schools, home missionary societies, and Christian temperance unions. Chapter V will examine the social reform campaigns of Janie Porter Barrett and Amelia Perry Pride who (like Hayden) were graduates of Hampton Institute (now University) and who (like other early graduates) absorbed the school’s principles of thrift, piety, industry, and civic responsibility. Adoption of those virtues by Barrett and Pride was certainly influential in shaping their sense of community responsibility and their construction of reformist campaigns. Chapter VI will highlight some character traits that shaped all four women’s social reform agendas: spiritual faith, strong familial/academic institutional influences, the employment of interracial cooperation, and the consciousness of color and class. Lastly, Chapter VII will provide a summative overview of the dissertation as well as acknowledge some potential questions to be addressed within a more expansive examination of the four women.

While each chapter focuses on specific individuals and their initiatives, the chapters weave into a solid historical narrative with supporting themes that convey and validate the main thesis: Black southern women, both within and outside the black community, became agents of change in an era of institutionalized racial segregation. By remaining undeterred by the gathering forces of racial disfranchisement and white supremacy, these four black women reformers of the early twentieth century were able to cultivate public and reformist spaces for themselves and for their communities. They were able to “build within their borders.”
CHAPTER II

THE BASIS FOR BUILDING: PROGRESSIVISM AND THE AMERICAN SOUTH

The intersection of black and white life in the segregated South was tense based on the region’s historical reliance on institutionalized racial subordination. This subordination happened as a result of two centuries of enslavement followed by systematic segregation and political disfranchisement. Despite social and political stagnation, a number of black southerners attained social mobility during the “nadir” era. Upwardly mobile black southerners, such as this dissertation’s four women reformers, were central figures within black social activism. These reform-minded and middle-class black southerners were endowed with intellectual prowess, cultural refinement, social awareness, and personal initiative. All of those attributes invaluably aided them in their procurement of white benevolence. Henceforth, when these more educated black reformist leaders did interact with white leadership and benefactors, they did so as cultured, intelligent, and confident ambassadors of the black community. This seemingly exceptional dynamic prompts the following question: How were select members of the South’s black community able to internally lead and reform the black masses and externally project investment-worthy progressive potential to the white mainstream in an era of increasing segregation and disfranchisement? The explanation for this achievement rested in early twentieth-century black southern communal self-sufficiency and initiative. This dynamic of internal and collective black agency was the foundation for black reformist women to effect significant improvements to the quality of southern black life amid the backdrop of white supremacist domination.
By the turn of the twentieth century, the American South had entered the dawn of a new era of institutionalized racial segregation. Legalized racial segregation created two distinct societies within a larger society: one black and the other white. The creation of these separate societies necessitated that each be self-sufficient and independent from the other. Hence, the South’s black community was a self-sufficient and self-contained entity, which afforded its residents racially separate institutions of worship, education, occupational pursuits, socialization, and commerce. The necessity and the ubiquity of these racially separate institutions often rendered many of the South’s black communities virtually independent of the outside mainstream.27

Largely self-contained segregated black communities, though never totally devoid of looming white encroachment on the margins, operated as safety nets free of the daily direct indignities of white domination. Freedom from daily white hostility and scrutiny endowed these self-contained communities with a social space where black professionals (both male and female) could service and empower the black masses. In essence, these progressive and civic-minded individuals were able to build within the borders which were relegated to them. The implementation of black reformist building evolved amid the backdrop of progressivism.

The period from the 1860s to the turn of the twentieth century marked a transitional era of integrating a new socioeconomic and political infrastructure into the South and the nation as a whole. While the United States stood on the threshold of modernization and world power, the South experienced two significant transitional eras. The first era was Reconstruction; and the second, marked by the resurgence of white

conservative domination and black disfranchisement, has generally (if unfortunately) been referred to as “Redemption.” Though its end dates varied throughout the South, Reconstruction’s general timeframe was from 1865 to 1877. Reconstruction was an inclusive era that integrated the once marginalized demographic groups into the mainstream. With universal emancipation and the post-war constitutional amendments, this period witnessed the historical extension of new social and political liberties to four million emancipated African-Americans. These freedoms came in the form of three landmark constitutional amendments. The Thirteenth Amendment (1865) abolished slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment (1868) granted African-Americans U.S. citizenship and its protections, and the Fifteenth Amendment (1869) granted the ballot to black men. These amendments allowed African-Americans to embark upon new occupational, academic, and political pursuits. Within this initial emancipatory phase, black freed people legalized marriages, reunited with displaced family members, became literate, and served within all levels of government—a dynamic which proved to be one of the most profound legacies of Reconstruction.

In significant numbers, African-American men served in southern governments at local, state, and national levels, such as magistrates, court clerks, sheriffs, justices of the peace, registrars, deputies, assembly members, congressmen, senators, attorneys general, and even governor. In addition to the political arena, black workers now exercised their right to negotiate the terms and conditions of their labor. This fact of


29. Ibid., 82.

“labor bargaining” is well illustrated, for example, by the documented frequent instances of black unionization in Atlanta throughout the 1870s and 1880s.\textsuperscript{31} The application of contractual labor bargaining was just one of the few ways that southern African-Americans used this first transitional phase to adjust themselves to and take advantage of autonomous daily life in a free society.\textsuperscript{32} Regardless of the attempts made by African-Americans to integrate themselves as productive citizens into the postbellum South, they still had to contend with the persistent and impeding nature of racial prejudice and exclusion.

Despite Reconstruction’s aim of restructuring a new more inclusive southern order, the persistence of white southern conservatism and supremacy sat along the margins and eventually permeated back into the fold of southern society. This late nineteenth-century regression back to white conservatism and supremacy characterized the South’s second transitional phase—“Restoration.” Late nineteenth-century white supremacy was fueled by a disgruntled white-landowning class, which was upset over Reconstruction’s abolition of slavery and its installation of new political and social freedoms to African-Americans (former chattel). Another segment of southern white resentment came from the other end of the social spectrum: landless poor whites that competed for jobs and government resources with newly freed blacks. Given the duality


of white hostility toward African-Americans, the campaign to restore a “Solid South” of white domination crossed class lines and united southern whites throughout the late nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{33}

The restoration of white supremacy was twofold. Many white southerners collectively adopted a reconstructed social memory of the South’s glorious past, both before and during the Civil War. This romanticized memory came to be known as “The Lost Cause,” an ideology that allowed disillusioned and disgruntled white southerners to look back on the antebellum South as an era of stability and prosperity.\textsuperscript{34} Proponents of this ideology also regarded the Civil War as a period in which a solidified South fought gallantly to preserve its social, political, and economic institutions. In addition, this ideology reconciled that despite suffering defeat, the South had boldly fought the good fight.\textsuperscript{35} This warped memory also directed its attention to Reconstruction and identified it as a “tragic era” of displaced white southern society amid the backdrop of federally sanctioned incompetent black rule and chaos. Believing that all was good prior to and during the Civil War, “Lost Cause” ideologues employed any means necessary to


rescue the South from further degeneration and restore its perceived once pristine character.36

One tactic employed within the objective of southern “restoration” was physical intimidation. Physical intimidation was implemented by white supremacist groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, night riders, and Pale Faces, who employed varied tactics of intimidation and violence against African-Americans and other groups dissident to white conservative rule. This aggressive behavior was further aided and abetted by President Rutherford B. Hayes’s withdrawal of federal troops between 1877 and 1878. Initially, these troops had been stationed in the region during the early 1870s in the wake of violent attacks on black southerners who dared to exercise their new social and political liberties.37 As federal troops left the South by 1878, black southerners once again became easy targets for white abuse. From the 1880s to the turn of the century, black southerners gradually lost the few social and political rights they had gained after the war.38

One of the final factors in black disfranchisement was the Supreme Court’s 1896 \textit{Plessy v. Ferguson} ruling, in which the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of

\footnotesize{36. Wheeler, \textit{New Women of the New South}, 4.}


\footnotesize{38. William A. Link, \textit{North Carolina: Change and Tradition in a Southern State} (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, 2009), 270.}
racial segregation within public accommodations. This landmark ruling set a precedent for institutionalized segregation throughout the entire nation. By 1900, for example, most states had anti-miscegenation laws in place to prevent black and white people from privately associating with one another.\(^{39}\) The institutionalization of racial segregation and black political disfranchisement which resulted from late nineteenth-century southern “restoration” severely affected black southern economic and social mobility. More specifically, the bleak nature of this “nadir” era brought changes that challenged black Americans carefully and efficiently to navigate amid the backdrop of white domination. The re-emergence of conservative, albeit racist domination in the South, rested on two factors: (a) the un faltering white assertion of inherent black inferiority and (b) the enforcement of black subordination and black people’s compliance in their own subordination.\(^{40}\) This latter dynamic was mercurial in that black people devised a multitude of ways to adjust themselves to the immeasurable indignities of white supremacist domination.

Some black people adopted the ideology of accommodationism. This ideology, espoused by prominent educator and orator Booker T. Washington, asserted that the best response for nadir-era black southerners was collectively and internally to cultivate the virtues of economic self-sufficiency, vocational preparation, piety, and frugality as opposed to the direct agitation for inclusion into mainstream white institutions.\(^{41}\) Other segments of the black community gravitated to a more integrationist and exclusive

---


“Talented Tenth” ideology articulated by Harvard-educated black scholar W.E.B. Du Bois. The main premise of Du Bois’ “Talented Tenth” stance was that the most educated, cultured, and accomplished members of the black community should serve as “integrationist ambassadors” of the race. Du Bois argued that by virtue of this group’s exceptional credibility, they were deserving of immediate political and social equality alongside their white contemporaries. Aside from their entitlement to integration, Du Bois also perceived this minority group as “race leaders” for the black masses to emulate.42 Given the dichotomous nature of Washington’s and Du Bois’ ideologies, nadir-era black people found themselves at a crossroads of dilemma in which they were forced to confront and adopt some variation of the two philosophies. The task to efficiently adopt and integrate the philosophies of Washington and Du Bois also fell upon black women who emerged as public leaders of community social reform during the Jim Crow era of disfranchisement and segregation.

Despite the seemingly pessimistic mood of the Jim Crow era, black women, such as Jennie Dean, Della Irving Hayden, Janie Porter Barrett, and Amelia Perry Pride, by virtue of their gendered roles as “domestic gatekeepers,” were able to move into the public sphere of social reform. Institutionalized segregation and the restoration of white supremacy generally did not deter black female empowerment but rather encouraged it. As chief architects of racially-separate social reformist initiatives and initiatives, southern black women were afforded a public platform of activism, which undoubtedly enhanced their roles as community leaders and guardians. This consequential

empowerment of reformist southern black women emerged as an extension of a mainstream social progressive movement, which resulted from the economic and social vices that accompanied late nineteenth-century industrialization.

While late nineteenth-century industrialization largely flourished in the North and Midwest, it also spread into the South. Although the South continued to be predominantly agricultural well into the mid-twentieth century, the postbellum era also saw numerous experiments with the factory system. The main institutions of southern industrialization were textile and tobacco mills. Despite the innovation of machine-operated production in contrast to grueling manual farm tasks, southern industry was limited at best. Lack of diverse finished goods (either cotton- or tobacco-based), limited extension of industrialization, and low industrial wages plagued the South. The factory system did not become as widespread in the South as it did in the North. Stagnated industrialization was related to the South’s distinct geography of vast tracts of arable land and the persistence of a culture and power base, both of which centered on agrarianism and maintaining farming as the main economic mode of the region.

Another factor was that most southern mill jobs were unskilled entry level as opposed to specialized vocational positions, which were more prevalent in northern factories.

Despite its shortfalls, industrialization did ignite the extension of a railway system into the South, which enabled southern goods and people to flow into other parts of the South and the nation. With the flow of these goods and encouragement of


southern urbanization, people left isolated rural areas in search of industrial jobs, resources, and the comforting proximity of more people. Southern cities, such as Charlotte, Durham, Memphis, Birmingham, Nashville, Atlanta and Richmond, emerged as industrial centers during this period.45

In essence, urbanization, with its concentration of a more diverse populace and occupational opportunities, brought the South a new slightly cosmopolitan character. Budding southern cosmopolitanism coincided with the emergence of a distinctively new class which not only surfaced in the South but also in the North. This class system consisted of a new entrepreneurial class of factory owners at the top, with a new middle-class of educated white-collar professionals followed by a novice working class of industrial workers. African-Americans also became entrepreneurs, professionals, and industrial workers. Richmond, Raleigh, Birmingham, Nashville, Durham, and Atlanta experienced the emergence of visible and prominent black middle-class communities, which consisted of educators, doctors, attorneys, ministers, morticians, and journalists—many of the same professions practiced by their white counterparts.46 The middle class of both regions and races took responsibility in eradicating the ills laid forth from industrialization as a whole. This nationwide effort toward industrial-era social reform became known as progressivism.47 The fact that industrialization necessitated a national reform movement is indicative of its paradoxical and complex


46. Brown, Gender, Class, and Black Community Development, 14.

nature. Essentially, industrialization revolutionized the American economy through the mass production and availability of goods, but its operation also created disparities within the nation’s social order.

Given industrialization’s main appealing advantage of being able to mass produce goods in a shorter period of time and yielding quicker and higher revenues, industrialization was not without its flaws. Industrialization spawned the growth of new labor institutions (factory), new social classes (in particular, the monopolistic entrepreneurial class), new business institutions (corporations), and urbanization, all of which may be perceived with ambivalence. Industrialization also undoubtedly played host to a number of undeniable national (both northern and southern) social ills, such as crime, poverty, alcoholism, poor wages, child labor, racism, poor sanitation, and prostitution, which would be addressed under the umbrella of a national Progressive movement imparted by the educated middle-class of both races and regions.48

Progressivism as a reform movement to eradicate the ills of industrialization drew from the Social Gospel movement of the 1870s. Social Gospel, led by people such as Josiah Strong and Walter Rauschenbusch, asserted that Christians had a civic duty to help reform society by eradicating the problems which plagued it.49 Progressives embraced this ideology of a responsible civic-minded Christianity and fashioned it into an integrated movement operated from both secular and religious-based organizations and initiatives. Incidentally, a number of white social gospelers sat on the board of trustees at historically black universities. For instance, Josiah Strong served as a trustee


of Talladega College in Alabama, and Francis Greenwood Peabody served on Hampton Institute’s board of trustees for nearly forty years.\textsuperscript{50}

Aside from its spiritual base, American progressivism was prominently shaped by European social reform. This fact stands for good reason as industrialization and its issues initially took shape in Europe a century before North America. Aside from progressivism’s ideology, its European-based institutions and economic ideologies also seeped into the American movement, as prominent American reformers extensively traveled abroad and witnessed the innovative construct of systematic reform sweeping across Europe. Main staples of American progressivism, such as multipurpose settlement houses, civic organizations, reform journalism, and interventionist government, were initially European in conception but took root in the United States. Reformers, such as Jane Addams (1860-1935) whose Hull House became the model for the American settlement house movement, were initially inspired by Toynbee Hall in England. Addams’s paradigm of the settlement house was that of a multipurpose facility, which offered temporary lodging, domestic/vocational training, citizenship/English proficiency classes, day nurseries, and recreational outlets, and was emulated by reformers of both races and regions throughout the nation.\textsuperscript{51}

In addition, economists, intellectuals, and journalists, such as Richard Ely and Ida Tarbell, were so inspired by the reforming interventionist policies of European governments that upon their return to America they engaged in occupational endeavors which provided national influence to the movement’s agenda. For instance, Richard Ely


(1854-1943), prominent American economist and progressive, completed graduate studies in Germany between 1877 and 1880. While abroad, Ely became impressed by the existence of interventionist European governments, which had established social welfare programs for its citizens by the mid- and late-nineteenth century.\(^\text{52}\) These social programs included subsidized housing for the low-income, compulsory school attendance laws for children, standardized work hours and wages for workers, and universal suffrage. Upon his return to the U.S. in 1880, Ely held a few posts at prominent universities and made a name for himself as an influential proponent of government reform intervention.\(^\text{53}\)

Ida Tarbell (1857-1944) was another leading American progressive who conducted post-graduate work abroad in Paris. Tarbell was central to a progressive-era journalistic genre of “muckraking.” This term, coined by then-president Theodore Roosevelt, refers to investigative journalism and literature, which exposed the harsh realities of industrial society. One of Tarbell’s best known works was a *History of Standard Oil* (1904).\(^\text{54}\) Within that work, Tarbell exposed the dangerous trickle-down effect of monopolistic power on the small-scale private business owner. Tarbell’s work was so prolific and influential that it is believed to have been the catalyst for the government-mandated breakup of Rockefeller’s Standard Oil monopoly.\(^\text{55}\) Another muckraker, also inspired by European socialism, was Upton Sinclair. Sinclair’s most


\(^{53}\) Ibid., 96.


\(^{55}\) Ibid., 259.
celebrated work, *The Jungle* (1906), exposed the unsanitary and exploitive conditions of the meat packing industry. The work was instrumental in securing the passage of a 1906 Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906. Tarbell and Sinclair were part of a generation of journalists whose gripping and telling work played a significant role in arousing public consciousness about social ills and also ignited the federal government to take steps toward their eradication.

National progressivism was so far-reaching that it also launched in the South as an after-effect of industrialization. Southern progressivism encompassed the efforts of educated and middle-class black and white women and men. Prior to progressivism, white women had historically been placed on a pedestal as paradigms of pristine feminine beauty and virtue, “the southern belle” stereotype, to be exclusively relegated to the private domestic sphere. By contrast, black women had to bear the brunt of dual duty in which they were expected to labor in both the public and private domestic sphere, free of protected virtue. These sometimes contrasting expectations of middle-class domesticated femininity were further perpetuated during the Victorian era of progressivism. For example, historian Shirley J. Carlson asserted that socially-conscious and ambitious black women during the Victorian era of progressivism adopted mainstream white and black standards of womanhood. This integrative stance taken by Victorian era black women reformers was twofold. Firstly, as middle-class race representatives, it was imperative for black women to exhibit mainstream Victorian


standards in order to gain credibility and influence among prominent and philanthropic white reformers and organizations. This access to white benevolence could invaluably aid black women’s reformist initiatives. The second reason was rooted in the historical necessity for black women to labor within and outside of the home as well as assume responsibility for community uplift. Given the extensive nature of expectations placed upon them, black women seemingly had no other recourse but to extract elements from both standards of female expectation and to re-fashion a distinctive brand of reformist Victorian womanhood.\(^{58}\)

The urgency for black Victorian redefinition was endorsed by black women reformers such as Margaret Murray Washington (1865-1925). Margaret Murray, who was the third wife of Booker T. Washington and a founding officer within the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), vocally rejected white Victorian perceptions of womanhood as obsolete and inapplicable to the experiences of black women. Washington’s disregard for white Victorian expectations of femininity prompted her to proclaim: “It is no longer a compliment to a girl or woman to be of a frail and delicate mold. It is no longer an indication of refinement in woman to possess a weak and fastidious stomach.”\(^{59}\) In contrast to the white Victorian perception of female “delicacy and frivolity,” Washington asserted that black women distinctively exercised more agency and autonomy over their lives by engaging in professional/vocational employment as well as community reform.\(^{60}\) Despite the complex nature of white and

\(^{58}\) Anne Firor Scott, “Most Invisible of All: Black Women’s Voluntary Associations.” *Journal of Southern History* 56 (1990), 20.


\(^{60}\) Ibid.
black Victorian standards, both groups of women were able to skillfully navigate themselves through its commonalities and differences and create public spaces of recreation and reform.

Comparatively, both white and black middle-class women were committed to the domestic sphere where they served as wife and mother and as loyal companions to their husbands. In addition to fulfilling household duties, these women also engaged in leisure social activities, such as teas, luncheons, women’s clubs, and church activities.  

Another common trait of Victorian middle-class respectability rested on physical appearance, mannerisms, and morality. Black and white Victorian-era women were expected to dress with modesty and style as well as exhibit a pleasant personality and moral probity.

In addition to adhering to these commonly shared expectations, Victorian-era black middle-class women possessed attributes which were specifically espoused by the black communities. For instance, black communities placed a high premium on the pursuit of education as a medium toward self-improvement and community and racial uplift. Given the significant influence of academic instruction, black Victorian-era women, such as the four women addressed in this dissertation, were expected to be well-educated, intelligent, racially conscious, and community-oriented. Black communities’ emphasis on female intellectual development drastically differed from the mainstream’s perception of female intelligence as a “masculine quality” which served to “defeminize” women. Given the mainstream’s negative perception of women’s

---


62. Ibid., 62.
pursuit of education, white Victorian-era wives typically confined themselves to the private domestic sphere. In addition, white Victorian wives often deferred to their husbands’ perspectives and judgments as opposed to independently formulating and verbalizing their own views.\(^{63}\) By contrast, black Victorian women who publicly engaged in social reformism and professional careers (usually as educators) typically entered into more egalitarian marriages in which they married men of comparable social and academic rank to their own.\(^{64}\) This was particularly the case with three of the dissertation’s women (Jennie Dean never married), as Hayden, Barrett, and Pride married professional or skilled men who were supportive of their wives’ roles as educators and reformers.

The frequency of equalized marriages between educated black men and women was rooted in their coeducational academic experiences. From the late nineteenth century onward, southern black academic and training institutions such as Hampton Institute offered admission and equally rigorous curricula to both its male and female students. In addition, these institutions fostered a balanced expectation of achievement and racial responsibility in both sexes.\(^{65}\) An exemplary case in point is Livingstone College in North Carolina. Like Hampton Institute, Livingstone operated on a coeducational policy and encouraged service work among its male and female post-graduates. In 1898, an editor for an AME Zion Church-based newspaper, *Star of Zion* wrote the following:

\(^{63}\) Ibid., 63.


“Livingstone College is doing for women what no other institution is doing, bringing her up to be the equal of her eternal antagonist, man, in debate, in public spirit, in morals and thought; and side by side with him she determines to help solve the problems of human life.”

Glenda Gilmore provided an encapsulating assessment of the progressively balanced nature of marriage among the educated black middle-class:

Educated black women sought to establish partnerships that maximized the potential and efficiency of both members, and they tended to do that by avoiding hierarchical ideas of male dominance and female subordination. Men and women were different, but they had complementary work to do; once trained for that work, women were anxious to establish domestic relationships that allowed them to get on with the job.

The balanced social and academic interaction experienced between black male and female students was not afforded to their white counterparts. By stark contrast, white southern education operated on a policy of “separation of sexes,” in which education leaders made a concerted effort to institutionally segregate the sexes within the academic realm. This gender segregationist policy which also thrived on the longstanding, albeit sexist perception of white women as being the more “delicate and frivolous sex,” manifested itself in the creation of separate academic institutions and curriculums for white men and women. Essentially, white male collegiate curriculum focused on a classical course of study while white women’s curriculum focused mostly on teacher training. This gender-based academic separation served as an effective and additional reinforcement to the perpetuation of white patriarchy over white women. The undisrupted and unequal nature of white patriarchy undoubtedly influenced most facets

66. Quoted in Gilmore, Gender and Jim Crow, 42.
67. Ibid., 44.
68. Ibid., 37.
of white women’s lives but did not completely deter them from engaging in social reform.

By the late 1800s, white and black women used their gendered roles (“guardians of domesticity”) as a launching pad into public social reform. Late nineteenth-century women of both races asserted that since they were expected to guard the home, then they should also have a say in issues which ultimately affected domesticity. Alcoholism, poor wages, poor working conditions, child labor, compulsory attendance, feminine virtue, public health, and sanitation became issues that southern women addressed.69

Black and white women addressed these issues and implemented initiatives by organizing themselves into segregated chapters of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), Southern Methodist Mission Society, and national women’s clubs. Although these organizations consisted of cooperative segregated branches, the WCTU stands out as an exceptional organization, which sometimes employed direct interracial cooperative efforts in the late nineteenth-century South.70 An example of this was Atlanta during the 1885 city elections. During these elections, Lily Hardy Hammond reported that the WCTU set up lunch vendors near polling places “with substantial help from scores of Negro women.” She observed the same pattern during the city’s 1887 elections in which the WCTU


luncheonettes near the voting polls reportedly attracted a “bevy of dames of white and colored complexion [who] served lunches to white and colored voters.”

Aside from women’s clubs, one of the mainstays of women’s progressivism was the YWCA. The YWCA’s American branch was founded in 1858 with the purpose to uplift and enrich the lives of young women through the instruction of moral and civic duty. YWCAs in the North and South provided young women and the community with day and residential facilities, which offered a multitude of vocational, child care, and recreational services. Home missions and southern settlement houses also served the same multipurpose as YWCAs. Finally, southern women’s clubs carried forth the torch of reform by designing initiatives and institutions, such as orphanages, retirement homes, industrial training schools, and sponsored constitutional proposals. These initiatives sought to pacify the cries of poverty, racism, child labor, protective female labor, public health, public education, elder care, and juvenile delinquency.

These social welfare initiatives which were implemented by women’s reform organizations played a significant role within the enrichment of community life. In addition, women’s reform organizations in themselves significantly served its female leaders and members in other ways. Historian Anne Firor Scott noted that progressive-era women created reform organizations as a medium to forge for themselves freedom from the constraints of the private sphere. Scott further argued that working within the confines of reformist associations enabled women a place within the public domain of

71. Ibid., xii.
social reform activism. Women’s participation within reformist associations also enabled them the opportunity to hone leadership, money management, and oratorical skills. Finally, women’s participation within reformist organizations enhanced their consciousness of issues which impacted their communities; these were all invaluable skills which could and did prepare women for larger and more permanent roles within professional careers and politics. To a larger degree, organization building served as an invaluable source of empowerment for progressive-era’s women.  

Progressivism as it was implemented by region experienced many successes on the national front, such as the passage of reform legislation and the creation of new government bureaus, both of which attacked social issues head on. In accompaniment to its successes, the movement also experienced some pitfalls. Two of the biggest setbacks of mainstream and southern white progressivism were that this movement, designed to improve society and to push it forward into the twentieth century, was tinged with elements of nativism and racism. This dynamic is rooted in the fact that both mainstream and southern white progressivism were orchestrated largely by white, middle-class, native-born Protestants, many of whom subscribed to the ethnocentric views of the day, which accepted and celebrated white Anglo-Saxon “superiority.” This nativist view was supported by the era’s Social Darwinist pseudo-science and fueled by widespread immigration to North America.


Between 1880 and 1900, over 23 million immigrants arrived in North America. This immigration wave, ignited by American industrialization, brought to the U.S. new and distinct ethnic groups from Greece, Italy, Eastern Europe, and East Asia. These vast numbers of non-Anglo immigrants brought into American cities distinct languages and customs, which aroused the concern of middle-class white Americans who viewed these alien groups with suspicion and disdain. Essentially, many native-born Caucasians feared economic competition with these immigrant groups, some of whom, eager for employment, often worked for less pay than native-born laborers.76

In addition, the presence of so many distinct cultures ignited concern that their traditional American identity of culture, customs, and language would be lost among these “alien” groups. These concerns facilitated the need to resolve the immigrant problem—acculturation. Progressives believed that European immigrants, especially in northern cities, could be saved and reformed if they were taught to assimilate American traditions, customs, and values. Acculturation was implemented within progressive institutions, such as the settlement house, YWCA, and public schools, under the guise of aiding immigrants to adjust to American life. These institutions provided classes in English proficiency, which stressed the necessity to embrace it over the immigrant native tongue in public and private sectors. These facilities also offered citizenship classes, which provided instruction on American government, history, customs, dress, and diet. There are a few documented incidences in which public school teachers and

---

administrators anglicized the names of immigrant students, often to the chagrin of the students’ parents.  

In addition to an assimilationist campaign, progressives also endorsed organizations and legislation which on the surface honorably sought reform but, nevertheless, had nativist undertones and motives best exemplified within the issues of alcoholism and prostitution. Northern and southern white progressives alike associated these vices with non-Anglo immigrants and African-Americans. In the South, white progressives promoted prohibition on the grounds of protecting white feminine virtue from the ravages of drunken black male lust. The same double standard was applied to prostitution. In the North, white progressives sought to rescue wayward immigrant girls from the sins of prostitution, while white southern progressives charged wayward and “innately” promiscuous black women were falling prey to the vice.  

Despite the omnipresent nature of early twentieth-century American racism, it is worth noting that a few reform-minded Caucasians, southern- and northern-based, put forth noble efforts to improve the plight of black life in the South during this period. One example of this group is Lily Hammond (1859-1925), a leader within the southern Methodist home mission movement, who promoted the establishment of settlement homes and educational facilities for southern African-Americans. Another example is Julius Rosenwald (1862-1932), president of the Sears and Roebuck Corporation, whose foundation funded the building of over 5,000 schools for black southerners from 1910.

---


to 1933. Despite the efforts of reformers such as Hammond and Rosenwald to close the gap of disparities within the dissemination of progressive-era resources, the mainstream movement was characterized by racism.

In the northern-based mainstream movement, most of the initiatives operated on segregationist policies which provided separate services for black and white beneficiaries, such as YMCAs, YWCAs, and settlement home missions. Some northern relief agencies excluded a black clientele altogether. Within white southern progressivism, black exclusion was often blatant.

A large number of southern white women progressives remained steeped in notions of white supremacy. These “conservative progressives” sought only to reform the South’s white populace at the expense of black subordination and sometimes annihilation. One example of white southern progressive women’s racist and nativist conservatism is revealed in a speech by Mississippi suffragist Belle Kearney (1863-1939) at the 1903 National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) convention in New Orleans:

The enfranchisement of women would insure immediate and durable white supremacy, honestly attained, for upon unquestioned authority it is stated that in every southern State but one there are more educated women than all the illiterate voters, white and black, native and foreign, combined. As you probably know, of all the women in the South who can read and write, ten out of every eleven are white. When it comes to the proportion of property between the races, that of the white outweighs that of the black immeasurably. The South is slow to grasp the great fact that the enfranchisement of women would settle the race question in politics.


Another southern progressive suffragist who echoed the conservative sentiments of Kearney by lobbying for white female suffrage on racist grounds was Kate M. Gordon (1861-1932). Gordon, a Louisiana native, initiated a number of reformist campaigns in New Orleans which included improved city-wide water and sewage systems, the creation of an Anti-Tuberculosis League, and the admission of women into Tulane University.\(^8^2\) As a tireless suffragist, Gordon was elected as secretary of the NAWSA in 1901. Upon being elected as an officer in the nation’s leading women’s suffrage association, Gordon issued a statement to the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* which encapsulated her racist endorsement of white woman’s suffrage as a necessary tool to eradicate the menacing threat of black enfranchisement:

> The question of white supremacy is one that will only be decided by giving the right of the ballot to the educated intelligent white women of the South . . . Their vote will eliminate the question of the negro vote in politics, and it will be a glad, free day for the South when the ballot is placed in the hands of its intelligent, cultured, pure and noble womanhood. . . . The South, true to its traditions will trust its women, and thus placing in their hands the balance of power, the negro as a disturbing element in politics will disappear . . .\(^8^3\)

Gordon’s concern of a black threat to the southern electoral system prompted her to create the Southern States Woman Suffrage Conference in 1913. This conference, whose objective was to lobby for individual state’s ratification of the woman’s suffrage amendment, was unsuccessfully used as an attempt to counteract national ratification which would have been inclusive of the black vote.

---


Another embodiment of conservative white southern women’s progressivism was Rebecca Latimer Felton (1835-1930). Felton was an educator, suffragist, writer, orator, and the first and only woman to serve as a Georgia senator (albeit for one day in 1922). In addition to women’s suffrage, Felton also had an interest in agricultural affairs, which prompted her invitation to speak at an 1897 Georgia Agricultural Society annual meeting. Felton’s speech is indicative of the mindset that was present within the conservative element of southern white women’s progressivism. Within this speech, Felton addressed the chief problem which she thought plagued the fate of white farm wives—uncontrollable black male lust. To this perceived threat on white feminine virtue, Felton offered the following commentary and resolution:

When there is not enough religion in the pulpit to organize a crusade against sin; nor justice in the court house to promptly punish crime; nor manhood enough in the nation to put a sheltering arm about the innocence and virtue---if it needs lynching to protect woman’s dearest possession from the ravening human beasts---then I say lynch, a thousand times a week if necessary.

Rebecca Felton’s racialized endorsement of black male lynching as a measure to maintain southern societal “order” correlated with the racially driven initiatives of conservative white progressivism. Although southern black women reformers had the motives and measures to affect positive change amid the hostile and denigrating backdrop of institutionalized segregation and white supremacy, the nature of those two dynamics within southern progressivism warrants a more detailed discussion.

National progressivism (mainstream progressivism) held as its general objective to create a more efficient and productive society. However, southern progressivism

84. Ibid., 190.

distinguished itself from mainstream progressivism because of its reliance upon institutionalized racism as a medium to create an efficient social order. This distinction was based largely on the South’s historically unique economic, political, and ethnic character. All three of those character components were rooted in the South’s two and a half century’s reliance upon a slave-based agricultural economy. In the aftermath of Reconstruction’s failed attempt to create a sustainable new southern social, political, and economic order, the South experienced a resurgence of white conservative political domination alongside a gradual progression of industrialization and urbanization. These changes within the South’s political and economic landscape, along with the precarious status of black people (most of whom were still largely concentrated in the region), warranted institutional and legislative policies to confront the specific needs of the South as it stood on the threshold of early twentieth-century modernity.

While conservative Democratic rule, which largely rested on black disfranchisement, solidified white political and social supremacy, the development of a southern industrial system enabled the emergence of southern progressivism. As southern cities, such as Atlanta, Birmingham, Richmond, Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio, began to expand, their populations became more ethnically and economically diverse. An ethnically and economically pluralistic population of middle-class educated professionals along with semi-skilled and unskilled laborers prompted concerns for the creation of an efficient and stabilized social order. Middle-class urban professionals, many of whom worked within the “service” fields of education, law, medicine, and social welfare, spearheaded progressive and reformist campaigns in the South as a

means to establish industrial-era efficiency. This initiative is specifically addressed by historian Dewey Grantham, who noted that the objective of southern progress was to implement economic development and efficient standards of living in the South. More specifically, Grantham argued that the overall goal of southern progressivism was “to modernize the South and to humanize its institutions without abandoning its more desirable values and traditions.” Grantham’s assessment of southern progressivism’s objective and nature was an attestation of its ironic impulse to improve southern communities but maintain the stagnation of racial subordination. In essence, southern progressivism’s reliance upon a seemingly corrosive dynamic (institutional racism) gave it a paradoxical nature.

Seemingly ironic, progressivism in the South coincided with emergence of white conservative political control and the legislation of institutional segregation. White conservative southern leaders used segregation as a remedy to impede and eradicate black economic, social, and political mobility. Tennessee passed the first segregation law and other states followed suit throughout the 1890s. The emergence of southern segregation laws also coincided with a regional political transition. More specifically, during the late 1800s, interracial political coalitions, such as the Populists and Republican Readjusters, formed in the South. These interracial political unions, which espoused equalized economic and social reform initiatives, threatened the power base of southern white conservatives. As a measure to stave off the potential diminution of conservative white political dominance in the South, conservatives devised and enacted

87. Ibid., 5.
88. Ibid., xvi.
laws socially and politically to disfranchise black southerners. In Virginia, there was a political standoff between conservative Democrats and a biracial coalition of Readjusters and Republicans.\textsuperscript{89} 

In Virginia (the geographical base of the dissertation’s four women), like other states in the South, the political transition to white conservatism yielded restrictive voter registration and election laws. Virginia’s conservative political transition cemented with the ratification of the 1902 constitution. This new state constitution disfranchised black and poor illiterate white men by the inclusion of a comprehension clause and poll tax requirement.\textsuperscript{90} Aside from the mandatory submission of a voter application and an annual one dollar property tax, the 1902 constitution stipulated one of the following criteria for male voter eligibility: (a) could be a Union or Confederate war veteran or the son of one and (b) could read and interpret any section of the constitution. The stringency of these provisions drastically curtailed voter activity among Virginia’s poor white and black citizens. It is estimated that Virginia’s overall voter participation was reduced by nearly fifty percent as a result of the new voter prerequisites. Although white male voter activity noticeably decreased, black male activity all but completely disappeared.\textsuperscript{91} For instance, the city of Richmond had 6,000 registered black voters in 1900, but by 1902 that number dramatically dropped to 760. Other areas of Virginia, such as Norfolk and Petersburg, and black-majority counties, such as Brunswick,


Elizabeth City, and Goochland, witnessed a reduction of black voter activity by 75 percent.92

Aside from political demobilization, Virginia’s black communities also experienced a systematic exclusion from public facilities as the state passed one of its first segregation acts in 1904 for railway travel. Over the next two decades and beyond, Virginia, like its southern counterparts, passed additional public segregation statutes. While Virginia and the South adopted a rigid and racialized social order, which codified and enforced white domination and black subordination, it also ironically integrated progressive reform campaigns into its communities that benefitted the region’s black and white communities. This ironic and paradoxical dynamic has enabled historians of the progressive era to examine the “why,” “how,” and “successes/limitations” of southern progressivism.

Historian Hugh C. Bailey examined the paradoxical nature of southern progressive reform and its proponents. Bailey closely examined the reform initiatives of black and white southern men and concluded that both groups of men, regardless of personal subscription to white racial superiority, were motivated by a sense of nationalist civic duty to improve living standards within their respective communities. Although black and white southerners remained committed to the reformist agenda of the progressive era, white southerners (inclusive of reformist-minded ones) remained unflinching in their reinforcement and endorsement of institutional racism. The persistence and exacerbation of racism during the age of progressive reform were rooted in the South’s longstanding and unbalanced racial history. Aside from over two

centuries of slavery and the decades following Reconstruction, black people in the South became an increasing “problem” for white southerners. More specifically, the precarious nature and existence of a newly freed black population presented white southerners with the challenge of where to place them within the South’s social hierarchy. Bailey reflected on this challenge in the following quotation: “. . . in the two decades following the war, and (1870s through the 1880s) the docile, old time plantation Negro began to disappear.”93 The disappearance of docile-mannered black people prompted white southerners to experience alarm against what many perceived to be a more assertive black population. This analysis is confirmed by an 1894 commentary by historian George Fort Milton who wrote that, “These blacks are morally and intellectually inferior to their antebellum ancestor . . . all their old cheerful, happy nature, with its tinge of romance, has gone forever . . . to be replaced by poverty and wretchedness.”94 The necessity to maintain a “controlled” social order, in which white conservatives could maintain social and political dominance, was facilitated by institutionalized segregation and black political disfranchisement.

The centrality of institutionalized segregation and black political disfranchisement coincided with the era’s adoption of Social Darwinist ideologies. Social Darwinism was not only embraced in the South, but accepted by the nation’s leading reformers and scholars of the day. While Social Darwinist views took aim at the influx of non-Anglo immigrants who came to the U.S. in search of low-skilled factory jobs, this ideology also targeted American-born black people, most of whom were still


94. Quoted in Ibid., 53.
concentrated in the South before 1915. An example of Social Darwinist attacks on black people is illustrated in an assessment made by Harvard historian Albert Bushnell Hart during the 1890s: “Race measured by race, the negro [sic] is inferior and his past history in Africa and America leads to the belief that he will remain inferior in race stamina and achievements.” Writer Robert Watson also weighed in on his negative perception of black southerners during the 1890s: “The modern negro by his idleness and worthlessness, as a laborer, has rendered the average Southern farm unfit to live upon, and has endangered the industrial basis of the average Southern home.”

The above Social Darwinist quotations not only illustrate the prevailing racist social culture of early twentieth-century America, they also provide yet another observational checkpoint for the paradoxical nature of southern progressivism. Contextually similar to Bailey is William A. Link, who also addressed the complex nature of white southern reformers that remained solidified in their subscription to white supremacy. This commitment to white social and political supremacy did not deter them from lobbying for reform, which benefitted both the South’s black and white communities. This fact is the main thrust of Link’s thesis, which affirmed that, despite an espousal of supremacy control, white middle-class, urban reformers in the South were relatively enlightened and socially conscious enough to agitate for legislative measures, which would eradicate societal ills that plagued both races. Link further maintained that white urban southern reformers were inspired by the doctrines of Protestant humanitarianism (Social Gospel), which charged Christians to take an active role in reforming their communities. Link noted that, paradoxically, white southern

---

95. Quoted in Ibid., 51.
reformers embraced the extension of uplift and progress and equalized reform extension to both communities while still advocating paternalistic and sometimes coercive control to both poor white and black recipients.96

This dynamic of white paternalistic aid was a staple feature within black southern reform. In addition to black communal aid, all four of the dissertation’s women utilized a myriad of white philanthropic assistance, which included pedagogical/academic instruction (as was the case with Hampton Institute’s founder Samuel Chapman Armstrong), institutional monetary benevolence (as was the case with organizations such as the American Missionary Association, as well as the Slater, Jeanes, and Rosenwald funds), and individual benevolence (such as Marriage Allen, who provided early assistance to Della Irving Hayden’s Franklin Industrial Institute, and Alice Freeman Palmer, who helped to fund Charlotte Hawkins Brown’s Palmer Institute). Though all of these philanthropic sources were noble in their aid to black southern reform initiatives, their benefactors were undoubtedly imbued with and motivated by white paternalism.

The paradoxical nature of southern progressivism also extended to white southern women progressives who also aided the initiatives of black southern reform. Rebecca S. Montgomery has assessed the nature of white southern women’s reform activism. Montgomery affirmed that southern white women entered the public sphere of reform activism based on a growing consciousness and frustration with their sexualized subordination to the white male powerbase. Montgomery further noted that, even during and immediately after the antebellum period, white southern women were conscious of

their subordinate status but, because of socioeconomic complexities, were impeded from stepping outside the confines of gendered domestic expectations. The impeding complexities were largely rooted in the South’s antebellum and postbellum reliance on an agrarian economy. This economy necessitated white women’s physical and social participation. Since white women enjoyed some social and economic benefits within an agricultural economy, they generally remained reserved on the issue of equalization agitation.\(^\text{97}\) Despite the South’s persistent reliance upon agriculture, the introduction of late nineteenth century industrialization brought white southern women new economic and social opportunities, which extended beyond the home. Economically, industrialization provided working-class and middle-class white women with industrial and service sector jobs. Socially, southern industrialization, like its northern counterpart, created problems such as inadequate public standards, child labor, alcoholism, female labor exploitation, and other issues that needed to be addressed and eradicated, hence the emergence of middle-class, reform-minded southern white women.\(^\text{98}\)

Southern white female reformers’ agendas included female admission to public state colleges/universities, female suffrage, alcohol prohibition, child labor laws, home extension services, rural school construction, and the establishment of kindergartens, as well as other initiatives. While white southern female progressives attained some newfound social and economic empowerment through their reform, the vast majority of these women ardently supported white supremacy and institutionalized segregation as


\(^\text{98}\) Ibid., 16.
exemplified by Rebecca L. Felton. Incidentally, white southern women’s commitment to white supremacy and a subscription to black inferiority prevented many of them from taking an active role in assisting black southern reform. However, some southern white women provided governance and monetary support to black reform campaigns, transcending the endemic racism of their day. Like their male counterparts, some white southern women provided benevolence from a paternalistic standpoint.99

White southern female benevolence significantly aided black southern reform campaigns. White southern reformist women most commonly supported black progressivism within the context of interracial cooperation with black female reformers. Again, it must be reiterated that, in general, a large number of Jim Crow-era white southern women were dismissive of black reform campaigns. Despite the limitations of white supremacist views, which permeated the South’s white female populace, Virginia and North Carolina stand out as exceptional southern states that experienced a significant frequency in black and white female cooperation.

Some of the organs from which southern black and white women engaged in reformist initiatives were women’s clubs and branches of the YWCA. Although the two organizations operated on a grassroots level within local and regional chapters, they were governed by a larger and national leadership body. In effect, the broader-based and sometimes racially sensitive objectives of the national governing bodies allowed its members (especially white women) the opportunity to marginally engage in interracial and cooperative reformism within the parameters of racial segregation. Glenda Gilmore asserted this point as she wrote the following:

99. Ibid., 18.
The state boards and national offices that supported the women’s clubs and YWCA’s gave women the opportunity to view interracial work from a distance. This remove provided space to lift interracial civic concerns out of complicated and personalized local contexts and facilitated the search for structural solutions. Moreover, the national networks allowed white women to see past the parochial racism that surrounded them at the same time that they afforded black women opportunities to orchestrate regional strategies to fight Jim Crow.100

As the above quotation implies, reformist-minded southern white women, while willing to engage in some interracial cooperation, typically remained unflinching in their commitment to racial segregation and subscription to white superiority. Given this sobering reality, the logical questions of “why” and “what” present themselves: Why did reformist-minded southern white women participate in interracial cooperation? What did black and white women hope to achieve by engaging in interracial cooperation? In response to the first question, the major driving force behind southern white women’s willingness to engage in interracial cooperation was domestic commonality. Regardless of race, reformist white southern women were able to identify with the domestic roles that black women played as wives, mothers, and community leaders.101 While domestic commonality serves as a simplistic yet significant response for the ”why,” the “what” involves a more complex evaluation of southern white and black reformist agendas. Southern white women’s interracial cooperative mission was to aid in improving black communities by equalizing facilities and resources. It is important to note that this equalization did not extend to the political and social status of black people. This limitation of objective was indicative of interracialist southern white women’s long-range goal to “progressively” create more efficient southern

100. Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 177.

101. Ibid., 178.
communities within the framework of Jim Crow. In short, reformist-minded southern white women did not seek to end Jim Crow but to “refine Jim Crow, to make it work better.”

By contrast, southern black women aspired to secure an eventual end to racial segregation and indignation through their reformist initiatives. This lofty objective, even from a gradualist approach, had to be handled in a delicate and covert manner. The strained nature of early twentieth-century southern race relations made it imperative for black women to exercise caution in their public promotion of reform. This caution rested on the necessity for black women to reassure potential southern white benefactors of their compliance to the established southern social order and their intention to not disrupt or dismantle it:

Black women wanted to end segregation and reverse political powerlessness, but they did not speak of these goals to white women. Instead, they set their shoulders, fixed their facial expressions, watched their language, and undertook interracial work without illusion because they knew that racial progress depended upon it.

To this end, black women’s reformism was double-masked in what they publicly advocated to southern white women interracialists and what they more privately espoused away from their white counterparts. Publicly, black women reformers lobbied for improved community resources within the areas of public health, sanitation, education, recreation, and penal reform. In a more covert manner, southern black women’s reformist agenda included initiatives and roles that would collectively and individually afford them more social and political empowerment. This is evident from

102. Ibid.
103. Ibid.
some of the dissertation’s four women, who enjoyed professional administrative and civic leadership roles as a result of their reformism.

Virginia’s Dean, Hayden, Barrett, and Pride utilized some aspect of interracial female cooperation to aid their own reformist agendas. Clayton Brooks noted that interracial cooperation in Virginia was motivated by separate agendas. According to Brooks, “White southern women desired to mold and strengthen the developing system of segregation in what they considered a socially responsible manner.” In short, middle-to upper-class genteel white southern women were imbued with a paternalistic duty to aid all segments of the southern social order regardless of ethnicity. Despite the condescension, black southern women utilized interracial cooperation as a means to secure external resources to further aid their community reform initiatives. In addition to its paternalistic nature, interracial cooperation efforts before the 1920s reinforced racial segregation.

White men headed most interracial cooperatives in Virginia while black and white women engaged in the field work of fundraising and program design. White society’s perception of the historical mistress/maid relationship sanctioned such collaboration. Some black reformers also publicly acknowledged, if not exploited, this shared bond between southern white and black women. A good case in point is North Carolina social reformer and educator, Charlotte Hawkins Brown (1883-1961). As one of the state’s leading black leaders of education, Brown was able to garner a significant amount of influence among prominent white philanthropists within and outside of the

---

state. To Brown’s credit, a good amount of her rapport with white benefactors was due in part to perseverance. In addition, the notability and appeal that Brown achieved among white reformers were also rooted in her own ability to manipulate the moral sensibilities of white southerners. Brown was able to accomplish that with the publication of her 1919 novel, *Mammy*. In short, the novel is about a genteel southern family that employed the care of a dutiful and nurturing mammy who provided them with years of dedicated service. Unfortunately, Mammy’s unflinching loyalty was not reciprocated on the part of her “employer family.” Toward the novel’s end, an aged and terminally ill Mammy is virtually ignored by the planter family and is left alone to perish in her tiny plantation cabin.\(^{105}\) Undoubtedly, Brown intended for the moral of this tragic story to strike an ethical impulse on the part of white reformers to aid black southern plight. Glenda Gilmore provided a more in-depth assessment of the novel’s intended purpose as she concluded that the novel “is an indictment of white neglect of African Americans.” Gilmore further charges: “Brown calls upon white women to remember their duty to black women and redefines that duty in new ways. It is no longer enough to be fond of ol’ Mammy; white women must act on that affection.”\(^{106}\)

In addition to a shared “historical” familiarity, black and white female interracial cooperation was free of the taboo sexual undertones which would have plagued white male/black female and black male/white female cooperative efforts. Although an imbalanced black and white female interracial cooperation prevailed amid a social climate of Jim Crow that yielded unprecedented negative consequences for

---


black southerners, the separatist nature of the era minimally aided black and white female reformers. More specifically, black and white women benefitted because institutionalized segregation created the need for separate reformist agencies and institutions, thereby giving both groups of women a public space to serve as decision makers and leaders. In addition, these leadership roles afforded black and white women respectability and influence. The dissertation’s four women all spearheaded reformist institutions which exclusively served a black clientele. The establishment of these segregated facilities brought their black female creators interracial influence and occupational opportunity, which was atypical for black southerners during the era of Jim Crow.

Although progressive era southern black reformers typically had to operate within the context of segregation and strained race relations, they nevertheless successfully navigated those impediments in order to secure resources which aided their reformist agendas. A part of that navigation included identifying and affiliating with white philanthropic organizations and individuals who were supportive of black reform initiatives. This task was undertaken by most black reformers, including the dissertation’s four women, all of whom launched their initiatives in Virginia.

As was the custom throughout the South, white Virginian benefactors of black reform were governed by a paternalistic perception of black people as a “childlike” race with a financial dependency on white people. White philanthropic reformers used their philanthropy as a means to assert more control over the black community while

simultaneously fulfilling the progressive objective to maintain order and efficiency.\textsuperscript{108} Some of the leading white reformers in Virginia were Jackson Davis, Joseph Mastin, Walter Bowie, Mary Munford, Annie Schmelz, Adele Clark, Nora Houston, Orie Latham Hatcher, and Elizabeth Cooke. All of these notable progressives subscribed to racial segregation which would afford black people quality public services and facilities—the chimerical “separate but equal” ideal of \textit{Plessy v. Ferguson}. Interracial cooperation was a means for accomplishing that laudable, if necessarily limited, goal because black reformers and institution founders served as spokespeople for and representatives of the employment of interracial cooperation; they were even more committed to racialized paternalism.\textsuperscript{109} Black reformers, such as the dissertation’s four women, took advantage of the “institutional autonomy” that resulted from their control of black reformist organizations and institutions, all of which exclusively served a black membership and clientele.

The autonomy afforded to the dissertation’s women also resulted from the unique nature of their geographical locale: Virginia. Virginia stood as a unique place within the progressive era because of its postbellum racial history. Virginians, both black and white, perceived Virginia as the epitome of southern gentility and moderate race relations. This view coincided with white Virginians’ subscription to “Lost Cause” sentiments, which romanticized the antebellum South as a time and place in which aristocratic planter families and their enslaved servants lived peacefully and cooperatively. This Virginia version of the “Lost Cause” ideology is illustrated in a

\hspace{10cm} \textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 123.
\hspace{10cm} \textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 124.
speech delivered in 1926 at Hampton Institute by Walter Bowie, a Virginian activist. In his public remarks, Bowie recollected his grandfather being wounded at Gettysburg and that he was attended by a black man:

Such devotion only an ingrate could forget . . . We, the white race, are bound to the Negro people by ties too deep and sacred to be severed . . . [b]y the growing instinct of co-operation the Negro can be assured of that fairness of opportunity which will best build up the self-respect and the creative social values of a race.\textsuperscript{110}

For Bowie and other white elites, their progressivism not only aided black people but also served as a way to honor their southern white heritage and antebellum fore parents. Essentially, white southern reformers in Virginia and throughout the South correlated white supremacy control with a civic duty to help the supposedly inferior masses. This analysis is further supported by the following quotation from an anonymous white author who wrote: “My only fear for white supremacy is that we should prove unworthy of it . . . Supremacy is for service. It is suicide to thrust other races back from the good which we hold in trust for humanity.”\textsuperscript{111}

Black southern reformers were all aware of white progressives’ “noblesse oblige” in their orchestration of societal improvement. In exchange, black reformers used this “noblesse oblige” as lobbying ground for program funding. While black reformers benefitted from the material gains of paternalistic interracial cooperation, white philanthropic leaders also used interracial cooperation as a measure to deter black unrest and resistance to white authority. This systematic effort to contain southern racial

\textsuperscript{110} Quoted in Ibid., 125.

\textsuperscript{111} Quoted in Ibid., 125.
unrest through the employment of cross-racial cooperation may have possibly accounted for Virginia’s comparably lower volume of racial violence.\textsuperscript{112}

Despite a lower frequency of overt racialized brutality, black Virginians still suffered the brunt of white hostility and the inequities of segregation. Prominent Richmond banker and social activist Maggie L. Walker (1864-1934) stated the following: “Hasn’t it crept into your minds that we are being more and more oppressed each day that we live? There is a lion terrorizing us, preying upon us . . . The name of this insatiable lion is PREJUDICE.”\textsuperscript{113} Walker’s statement is indicative of the overwhelming nature of institutionalized segregation and white dominance that prevailed during the early twentieth century. Virginia’s inauguration of Jim Crow came after the ratification of its state constitution in 1902. The state completed the construction of its Jim Crow society by enacting the 1926 Massenburg Bill, which required racial segregation in all public assemblages. Virginia’s gradual progression toward complete institutional segregation happened as a result of its white progressive leaders’ need to properly compartmentalize specific groups and their specialized problems amid the revolutionary nature of industrialization and urbanization. These dynamics were further compounded by the white leadership’s objective in the state to project a public image of civil yet paternalistic race relations.\textsuperscript{114}

Within the area of black and white female interracial cooperation, white southern female reformers also committed themselves to progressivism’s objective of

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 126.

\textsuperscript{113} Quoted in Ibid., 127.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 128.
creating societal efficiency and congenial race relations. Some white southern women progressives directly invited black women into cross-racial cooperatives in order to affect widespread community reform. One example of this effort is illustrated by a 1911 speech delivered by Mary Johnston. Johnston was a prominent white author and activist who in 1911 spoke to a group of black women at a Richmond hospital. Within her speech, Johnston encouraged her black female audience to become active in community reform initiatives and to engage in interracial cooperation: “... think about the good of your people, of your State, our State ... every woman with every other Woman, every small group or societies with other groups or societies, cooperation means working together, organization means drawing things ... It means united we stand: divided we fall.”

Negotiations between black and white women reformers about state resources also served as a forum to discuss and reinforce institutional racial segregation. In Virginia, one institutional vehicle that facilitated black and white women’s cooperation was the Board of Charities and Corrections, a precursor to the Virginia Department of Public Welfare. The Board was created by the General Assembly in 1908. The Board’s objectives were to regulate and reform the state’s healthcare, correctional facilities, orphanages, and maternity homes. Its responsibilities included visiting and inspecting charitable and public facilities across the state, investigating charges of misconduct, and lobbying the General Assembly for more funding. Initially, all of the Board’s members were white, while a select few black community leaders served as “informal” advisors on the needs of black social service institutions. White female board members were

115. Ibid., 137.
relegated to presiding over charities which served an all-female clientele, such as maternity houses, female reformatories, orphanages, and other child-oriented efforts. Essentially, women who participated within the Board did so from a “feminized” domestic capacity. In the 1910s, the board began to appoint black and white female parole officers to work with female parolees of their own race. This sexualized and racialized segregation of professions necessitated cross-racial reform efforts among Virginia’s black and white women, both of whom used this new professional autonomy and empowerment to their advantage.\footnote{116}

Ora B. Stokes is an example of a black woman who took advantage of leadership opportunities created by reinforced institutionalized segregation. Stokes, a minister’s wife in Richmond, helped to organize the Richmond Neighborhood Association in 1911 which aided black girls from low-income homes. The organization coordinated a sewing department to train young women for domestic employment. In addition, the organization also operated a nursery for working mothers. Stokes wanted to expand the organization’s initiative to offer more vocational training to black women; she realized that more resources could be secured by an interracial alliance.\footnote{117}

Stokes was able to secure funding through a white acquaintance, Latham Hatcher, who headed the Virginia Bureau of Vocations for Women. Stokes’ cooperative effort with Hatcher resulted in the creation of a Home for Working Girls which served a black clientele. Incidentally, Stoke served as the institution’s president. While serving as president, Stokes garnered statewide acknowledgement as a public advocate for the

\footnotesize{\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 131.
\item Ibid., 131.
\end{enumerate}}
underprivileged. In 1917, Virginia governor H. C. Stuart selected Stokes to represent Virginia at the National Conference of Charities and Corrections meeting in Indianapolis. The board recommended Stokes for a probation officer appointment, which she received in 1918, making her one of the state’s first African-American probation officers. Stokes’ parolees were all black as this correlated to the state’s policy of institutionalized segregation. Despite serving within a segregated capacity, Stokes nevertheless secured professional mobility and institutional support through the existence of institutionalized racial separation. Since segregation necessitated separate institutions and personnel, Stokes as well as other black female southern reformers could utilize that dynamic in order to procure resources which advanced their efforts to uplift black community life. Interracial cooperation provided a gateway to those fundamental resources.

While all of these reform initiatives benefitted from some degree of interracial cooperation, one institution which perhaps benefitted the most directly from interracial cooperation was Janie Porter Barrett’s Virginia Industrial School for Colored Girls in Hanover County, Virginia. In the case of Barrett, white supremacist “progressive” objectives to maintain efficiently operated and segregated institutions coincided with and enriched her personal mission to address the plight of delinquent black girls. Barrett created the school to save black girls from a life of crime and poverty. Paternalistic white leaders harbored another agenda and perception by supporting the school as a venue that would remove the societal threat of problematic delinquent black girls from the streets and overpopulated jails. White leaders also approved the Industrial School’s

---

118. Ibid., 132.
curriculum which focused on domestic training. This latter feature fit well into a prevailing segregationist social order which relied on a black vocational and domestic labor force. Barrett’s accommodation to white southern progressive expectations of segregated industrial training afforded her the dual benefit of white philanthropy and black adulation. Black adulation came as a result of the school’s representation as an institutional paradigm of racial uplift.  

Despite its flaws, progressivism, including the state of Virginia, from a balanced standpoint, deserves credit for increasing the social consciousness and responsiveness of the American populace and government. By the second decade of the twentieth century, the nation’s focus began to shift toward international affairs and the role that the U.S. would play in burgeoning conflicts abroad. This happened in the midst of European mobilization toward World War I. Two of the biggest gains of progressivism, however, came in 1919 and 1920 with the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment (prohibition) and the Nineteenth Amendment (women’s suffrage), respectively. After those gains, large scale progressivism faded but would eventually resurface in the guise of a more ethnically inclusive and southern-based civil rights movement. Prior to its later inclusive nature, early twentieth-century American progressivism should be regarded as a dynamic driven by complex, region-specific, and sometimes paradoxical objectives and measures.  

Most relevant to this research was the impact that progressivism had on southern black female reformers and their initiatives. Amazingly, but not unusually, black southern women reformers had to confront and passively conform to many racialized aspects of mainstream progressivism. Progressivism stood as the epochal backdrop of

119. Ibid., 138.
the nation’s consent and the South’s adoption of institutionalized segregation and conservative white political dominance. This was also the period in which this dissertation’s four main women reformers conducted their reform campaigns in Virginia. These campaigns not only invaluably served Virginia’s black communities, but also the South’s communities as a whole, and empowered these black women reformers to build within their borders.
CHAPTER III
BLUEPRINT FOR BUILDING: SAMUEL CHAPMAN ARMSTRONG AND THE HAMPTON MODEL

Black women reformers in the post-Reconstruction South were inspired by various sources to reform their communities. Familial, religious, and academic institutions played an integral role in arousing concern for social reform among numerous black women who took up the task of improving their communities. Three important reformers, Della Irving Hayden, Janie Porter Barrett, and Amelia Perry Pride, were directly motivated by the values instilled in them while they attended Hampton Institute (now Hampton University). The values of hard work, thrift, moderation, sobriety, piety, and service to the community were Hampton’s core founding principles. Hayden, Barrett, and Pride believed in these values and applied them to their individual reform campaigns.

Late nineteenth-century black education in the South was greatly influenced by white northern interest to economically and socially revitalize the war-torn South. African-American education factored centrally within this scheme because there was an urgent need to socially and academically mobilize the region’s four million freed people, 96 percent of whom were illiterate. In order to secure this academic mobilization, religious and secular organizations, such as missionary associations and the Freedmen’s Bureau, worked in conjunction to establish black grammar and normal schools and colleges in the South. For example, in 1867 and 1868, the American Missionary Association (AMA) founded eight teacher training schools in Macon,

---

120 Clyde McQueen, The Black Army Officer (Bloomington: Author House, 2009), 19.
Savannah, Atlanta, Charleston, Louisville, Nashville, Talladega, and Hampton, respectively. All of those schools began as grammar schools and transitioned into colleges. Among these early AMA schools, Hampton stands as a relevant case study and exceptional example of black southern industrial education.121

Hampton Institute’s origin dates back to 1861, when Mary S. Peake, a biracial seamstress in Hampton, Virginia, began a makeshift school for the area’s black contraband community near Fort Monroe, conducting classes under a tree near the fortress. Peake’s student enrollment quickly increased to include both traditional school-aged students who received day instruction and nontraditional adult students who attended evening sessions. After a few months, the AMA hired Peake as its first black teacher and provided her with the “Brown cottage,” a building that enabled her to teach classes indoors. “Brown cottage” would blossom into Hampton Institute. Sadly, Peake, who died in 1862 from tuberculosis, did not live to see her “cottage school” materialize into one of the nation’s preeminent black institutions of higher learning.122

At present the Negro’s resources as a laborer are of the most limited description. The first steps toward any radical improvement in his condition must be taken in the direction of increasing his skill as a workman…Throughout the South the demand for skilled labor in all departments is imperative, and with proper training that demand can be supplied from the ranks of the colored people. What the Negro needs at once is elementary and industrial education and moral development.123


123. Samuel Chapman Armstrong, Ideas on Education Expressed by Samuel Chapman Armstrong (Hampton: Hampton Institute Press, 1908), 22. This work published posthumously after Armstrong’s death is a compilation of speeches and journal articles authored by him.
The above quotation was spoken in 1880 by the person who would eventually expand the Hampton “cottage school” into an exemplar of black industrial education to be emulated throughout the South—Samuel Chapman Armstrong. Armstrong was born in 1839 on the Hawaiian island of Maui, the sixth child of Reverend Richard A. Armstrong (1805-1860) and Clarissa Armstrong (1805-1901), who worked as Presbyterian missionaries in Hawaii. He attended school in Hawaii until his sophomore year in college, when he was sent to complete his studies at Williams College in Massachusetts, from which he graduated in 1862. Upon graduation, Armstrong volunteered for military service in the Civil War. He served as brigadier general of the Eighth and Ninth Regiments of the U.S. Colored Troops. Armstrong’s experience with African-American soldiers apparently impressed upon him blacks’ potential for progress, if presented with opportunity and discipline. During his tenure as a commander of black Union troops, Armstrong observed a number of admirable and positive character traits among black soldiers, such as tidiness, commitment to duty, valor in battle, and an unrelenting desire to become literate. Armstrong wrote that he often observed his troops studying spelling books under the camp fire light. These observations conveyed to Armstrong that some black people had the potential and initiative to improve themselves.

After leaving the army in 1865, Armstrong decided to devote his life to helping newly freed slaves. In 1866, Armstrong, now employed by the Freedmen’s Bureau, was appointed as a regional superintendent by the Ninth District of Virginia. Within this capacity as a bureau agent, Armstrong’s primary responsibility was to implement and

supervise education and employment programs for over 35,000 former slaves who resided in his district. Upon his appointment as a regional superintendent agent, Armstrong discovered that the vast number of black residents were jobless, homeless, and lacked basic industrial job skills needed to become economically self-sufficient. Armstrong took on the task to aid freed people in securing employment within the sectors of agriculture and domestic service. Armstrong accomplished this feat by securing agricultural work for a significant number of unemployed ex-slaves. He also enlisted the aid of northern philanthropic women to employ thousands of former slaves as domestics. Although noble in intent, these efforts provided only a temporary remedy to the problem of black plight. The reality and prevalence of an unskilled southern black populace prompted Armstrong to devise a long-range initiative/institution that would indefinitely sustain black empowerment and self-sufficiency.

Consequently, Armstrong turned his attention toward the establishment of a training institution that would provide the region’s black community with the essential vocational and social skills necessary to be productive in free society. By June 1866, a letter sent by Armstrong to a northern philanthropic group makes it apparent that Armstrong had aspirations of establishing a black industrial school. Within the letter, Armstrong stated: “There is another and most important field for philanthropic effort. It is the building up of industrial schools.” Armstrong further expanded on his priority of black education in a report issued to the Freedmen’s Bureau in June 1866: “The

125. Ibid., 17.
126. Engs, Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited, 73.
education of the freedmen is the great work of the day. It is their only hope, the only power that can lift them as a people . . . The South will do nothing for the education of the Negroes; the North cannot very long conduct it. They must do it for themselves.”

The latter quotation not only reveals Armstrong’s steadfast commitment to black education, but it also reflects his belief in the inevitable necessity of black self-sufficiency, a virtue that was eventually stressed and instilled in the minds of Hampton’s early graduates. This urgent need to eradicate black socioeconomic disparities prompted Armstrong to devise a plan for a black training institute that would be modeled on the principles of Hawaiian missionary training schools, which catered to dark-skinned Polynesians. Armstrong saw a cultural and moral correlation between Polynesians and former black slaves. Armstrong, governed by the prevailing scientific racism of his era, perceived both of these nonwhite Anglo-Saxon groups as morally and economically inferior to white Europeans. Armstrong revealed his paternalism in an 1880 statement regarding Hampton’s role within the lives of its black students:

Our work has been to civilize; instruction in books is not all of it. General deportment, habits of living and of labor, right ideas of life and duty, are taught in order that graduates may be qualified to teach others these important lessons of life.

In addition, Armstrong’s notions of paternalistic white superiority were also possibly passed down to him by his father who assumed a guardian-like role over the Hawaiian natives whom he was charged with educating as he was appointed Minister of

127. Quoted in Pleasant, *Hampton University, Our Home by the Sea*, 17.

128. Ibid., 17.

Public Instruction of Hawaii in 1847. In an 1849 journal entry, Samuel’s father Richard commented on a recent trip to Maui in which he visited schools and instructed natives on how to engage in land transferal negotiations: “I am glad to serve the people in any way that will promote their temporal or spiritual welfare. They are a poor, helpless race and need aid at every turn and at all times.” It is evident that Richard Armstrong considered native Hawaiians to be a separate and underdeveloped race in need of white guardianship in order to achieve development and progress. Samuel Armstrong obviously embraced these same ideas as he constructed Hampton as a type of training lab to civilize underdeveloped black students by instructing them to embrace manual industrial vocations as a pathway to collective black economic self-sufficiency. He acknowledged that select and exceptional members of the aforementioned groups possessed some potential to achieve vocational and moral productivity albeit under the initial supervision of white benevolence, observing frankly that there was “negro blood among those in the higher ranks of success of many kinds.” Despite the acknowledgement of marginal black exceptionalism, Armstrong believed that the nation’s black populace was an industrially and morally deficient breed, who were indefinitely unsuited for enfranchisement, but were in immediate need of the guiding hand of white paternalism. Armstrong cited that the primary shortcomings of black people were:


131. Quoted in Engs, Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited, 76.
Improvidence, low ideas of honor and morality and a general lack of directive energy, judgment and foresight. His deficiencies of character are I believe, worse for him than his ignorance. But with these deficiencies are docility and enthusiasm for improvement and a perseverance in pursuit of it, which forms a basis for great hope.¹³²

Armstrong’s precise assessment of the “black problem” ignited his mission statement of a suitable resolution: “The race will succeed or fail as it shall devote itself with energy to agriculture and the mechanic arts . . . and its teachers ought to be men inspired with the spirit of hard work.”¹³³ This advocacy for black industrial training provided Armstrong with the premise for Hampton Institute’s mission:

The thing to be done was clear: to train selected Negro youth who go out and teach and lead their people first by example, by getting land and homes, to give them not a dollar that they could earn for themselves; to teach respect for labor, to replace stupid drudgery with skilled hands, and in this way to build upon an industrial system for the sake of character.¹³⁴

Inspired with an institutional mission, Armstrong pressed forward with establishing the school.

In July 1867, Armstrong officially applied to the American Missionary Association to establish a normal school on the Wood Farm, a former Civil War encampment, located in Hampton, which consisted of 160 acres of land, a mansion, a flour mill, and forty hospital barracks; the surplus barracks would serve as a source for building materials. Additional monetary donations came from individual northern philanthropists and organizations such as the Freedmen’s Bureau and the American Missionary Association. Having secured an adequate network of philanthropic support,

¹³² Quoted in Ibid., 77.
¹³³ Quoted in Ibid., 77.
Hampton Normal & Agricultural Institute opened on April 1, 1868, with fifteen students, a teacher, and a matron. By the month’s end the student population had doubled. Students performed manual work in the morning and completed academic study in the afternoon and evening. Male students worked on the farm, and girls performed housework within their residential facility. Students were organized into afternoon squads in which one squad worked two days a week and studied four days a week. In addition to these mandatory work details, economic hardship students were afforded a work-study arrangement in which their labor could be applied to their tuition expenses. Biographers Everett T. and Paul G. Tomlinson wrote that Armstrong’s insistence of student work detail created a balance between the cultivation of good labor and study habits which would aid Hampton’s graduates within their vocational lives.135 The Tomlinson’s further concluded that Armstrong’s student labor mandate was designed with the good intention of fostering a sense of responsibility and work ethic within Hampton’s students:

It was therefore his object to teach the negroes that labor could be lifted out of drudgery by putting thought and skill into it; he wanted to give them an idea of the dignity and civilizing power of working with the hands; he saw that through the medium of industrial education he could bring two races in the South into closer relations with each other; through the industrial system at Hampton he wished to give the students an opportunity to work out a portion of their expenses, and so produce students who could help themselves and become independent.136

In his first report to Hampton’s board of trustees in 1870, Armstrong outlined Hampton’s educational philosophy, whose manual labor curriculum was modeled on


136. Quoted in Ibid., 64-65.
the Hilo Boarding and Manual Labor School for Boys in Hawaii. Hilo as well as Hampton employed an interdisciplinary curriculum which integrated industrial training with academic subjects, such as intermediate level reading, arithmetic, and the physical sciences.\textsuperscript{137} The purpose of this dual curriculum was to prepare graduates to become skilled laborers and teachers. The practicality of a dual curriculum was necessitated by the reality of a drastically shorter academic year afforded to black southern children, who had to fulfill agricultural obligations. A shortened academic year made it imperative for black schoolteachers to supplement their income by the pursuit of a vocational trade.\textsuperscript{138} The duality of this economic necessity prompted Armstrong’s 1880’s proclamation: “Teaching and farming go well together in the present condition of things (in the South). The teacher farmer is the man for the times; he is essentially an educator throughout the year,”\textsuperscript{139} Armstrong proclaimed. He further explained the practical value of his double-pronged pedagogical approach:

The discipline of the farmer is as strict as that of the teacher. The man who leads in the debating club may be the last and the laziest in the field; one who is dull in mathematics may be at the head of the working squad. Thus we are guarded against the one-sided estimate of ordinary schools. With us, position is achieved in the field as well as in the recitation room.\textsuperscript{140}

Hence, southern black training institutions set out to provide students with instruction in the disciplines of the industrial arts and teacher training. Hampton, from its inception, initiated this multi-purpose institutional mission, which would permeate

\begin{footnotes}
\item[137] Engs, \textit{Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited}, 17.
\item[138] Ibid., 80.
\item[139] Samuel Chapman Armstrong, \textit{Ideas on Education}, 25.
\item[140] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
the landscape of postbellum black southern academia. To this end, Hampton, under the direction of Samuel Armstrong, stood at the vanguard of black southern education.

When Hampton opened in 1868, it admitted students from ages fourteen to twenty-five years, regardless of race and gender. During Hampton’s early years, the institution’s white students were the relatives of Hampton’s all-white faculty. These middle-class white educators were charged with indoctrinating black students to accept and adhere to the mannerisms and mores of the white mainstream. This enculturation to prevailing Victorian standards was reflected in Hampton’s early rigorous curriculum which included the “good English” course, which was personally designed by Armstrong, as well as classes in mathematics, British history, universal history, pedagogy, civics, business, and biblical scripture. The initial three years that students spent at Hampton were devoted to earning the equivalent of a high school diploma, though by 1879 the trade school course of study expanded to four years. In addition to completing the diploma, students were also encouraged to spend a year working in their home communities during the gap between their first and second year. Third-year students (seniors) were required to hone their pedagogical skills by student teaching within the school’s laboratory school. Upon the completion of year three, Hampton graduates were expected to return to their communities as leaders. Even more significant, they were charged with disseminating and indoctrinating the black masses with the virtues of Hampton’s philosophy. These virtues included hard work, frugality,

143. Ibid., 102.
temperance, and piety. Armstrong’s design of Hampton’s rudimentary yet rigid curriculum reflected his notions of the practical roles that black people should play within the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century south as cited in an 1870 Annual Report:

Our three years’ courses, without little preliminary training cannot be expected to furnish much. Our students could never become advanced enough in that time to be more than superficially acquainted with Latin and Greek; their knowledge would rather tend to cultivate their conceit than to fit them for faithful educators of their race, because not completing enough to enable them to estimate its true value. The great need of the Negro is logic, and the subjection of feeling to reason; yet in supplying his studies we must exercise his curiosity, his love of the marvelous, and his imagination, as a means of sustaining his enthusiasm. An English course, embracing reading and elocution, geography, mathematics, history, the sciences, the study of the mother tongue and its literature, the leading principles of mental and moral science and of political economy, would I think make up a curriculum that would exhaust the best powers of nineteen-twentiyths of those who would, for years to come, enter the Institute.144

As revealed in the above quotation, Samuel Armstrong believed that the most pragmatic academic curriculum for black students was vocational and domestic. Armstrong’s endorsement of a vocational and domestic course of study coincided with the prevailing expectation for black southerners to enter into the manual trades. Even though Armstrong took a seemingly mild, back-to-basics approach in his design of a vocational trade’s curriculum, he held Hampton’s students to a stringent standard of discipline.

Aside from the rigors of coursework, Hampton’s early students also had to contend with a highly structured and regimented daily schedule which consisted of the following: 5:15 AM “rising bell,” 6:00 AM breakfast, followed by room inspection, and

mandatory chapel attendance twice a day. It is significant to note that while Christian virtue was a significant component within the Hampton model, its nature and influence were skillfully crafted to accommodate Armstrong’s ulterior objectives to secure the following: diverse philanthropic resources, a stable flow of student clientele, and autonomous institutional governance. This assertion is made by Susan Jones. Jones wrote that aside from a daily-institutionalized reinforcement of Christian virtue and Armstrong’s longstanding familial relationship with the AMA, he made a concerted effort to maintain Hampton as a nondenominational school. According to Jones, Armstrong did that as means to secure a multitude of funding sources which would not have been available to a single-denominational school. A second reason for secularizing Hampton was to attract a large student population; attracting a large student population would have been more difficult to accomplish if Hampton was a single-denominational school which only attracted students from one specific denomination. Jones cited that a final motive behind keeping Hampton secular was to enable Armstrong to maintain total control over the school. To this end, Jones noted that if Hampton were denominational-affiliated, some of its governance would be placed in the hands of denominational convention representatives who would serve on the school’s Board of Trustees.\footnote{145 Susan H. Jones, “Creating a Tradition: Early Campus Planning at Hampton Institute: 1868-1893” (PhD diss., The College of William and Mary, 1992), 89.} Needless to say, Armstrong did not want to concede any of his power and influence of Hampton to an outside entity. Jones’s analysis of Armstrong’s decision to maintain Hampton as a secular institution is not so much a criticism of Armstrong as it is an attestation of Armstrong’s unrelenting drive as an institutional builder. When one takes into account Armstrong’s insistence of institutional secularization as well as his
thoroughly regimented design of Hampton’s mission and curriculum, it is apparent that he had a definitive vision for what he wanted the school to be and how he wanted it to be governed.

The interim between morning chapel and 9:30 PM “lights out” consisted of farm and kitchen details, followed by classes and evening study hall. By 1871 the curriculum included specialized studies within agricultural science, bookkeeping/accounting skills, commercial law/contract development and comprehension, mechanical drawing, printing, and domestic science. This broad-based curriculum served to empower Hampton’s graduates with practical and fundamental life skills. Although Hampton provided all of its students with marketable skills, its curriculum was divided along gender lines. Male students were steered towards following a vocational, business, and agricultural science track, while female students pursued a domestic arts and teaching track. In addition to occupational preparation, Armstrong sought to provide Hampton’s students with direct and applicable instruction of economic self-sufficiency. To meet this instruction of economic independence, Armstrong mandated all students to perform on-campus work details on Saturdays. Male students performed carpentry, mechanical, and grounds keeping details, while female students completed domestic details of sewing and cleaning their dormitories. In addition, both male and female students shared the responsibility of helping to maintain the school’s farm. Most significant is the fact that both students who could pay the monthly tuition fee of $10.00 as well as financial hardship students who labored in exchange for tuition settlement were required to perform campus chores. This institutional prerequisite was proclaimed in the school’s 1871-1872 catalogue: “LABOR IS REQUIRED OF ALL, for purposes of
discipline and instruction.”146 Hampton’s endorsement of self-help was further proclaimed by Armstrong in an 1873 Annual School Report:

At Hampton our whole work is based upon the theory of self-help, and we force it upon our students at the point of the bayonet, so to speak . . . Students have not been pauperized. The idea of self-help has been adhered to. Value for value is made fundamental, and the formation of character rather than of polished scholarship is regarded.147

Another testament of Armstrong’s insistence upon regimentation was reflected in his expectations set for Hampton’s male students. Male students were organized into a corps of cadets and were mandated to wear uniforms every day; uniforms were not required during the once-a-week campus-wide “free day.” They were even required to march to every on-campus destination, such as classes, meals, and work detail.148 Armstrong’s militaristic drill of Hampton’s male students was another way to orient students toward the adoption of self-discipline, leadership, and efficiency:

Our military drill has been found of decided assistance, not only because of its effect in making certain minor virtues habitual, but also because it makes possible a training in self-discipline through our students’ court martial, which could not easily be secured in any other way; which does much to promote healthy organization and that esprit de corps in which the Negro is markedly lacking.149

Aside from Hampton’s objective to cultivate discipline and leadership ability within its male students, the school was also progressively established as a coeducational institution. The design of Hampton as a coeducational institution was rooted in Armstrong’s perception about the plight of postbellum southern black women. He observed that southern black women, like their male counterparts, had been

146. quoted in *Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute Catalogue 1871-1872*, 16.
148. Ibid., 106.
149. Ibid., 32-33.
displaced after institutionalized slavery and were also in need of practical industrial training. In an 1870 Annual Report, Armstrong discussed his rationale for establishing Hampton as a co-educational institution:

The question of co-education of the sexes is to my mind, settled by most favorably with the present plan; our school is a little world; the life is genuine; the circle of influence is complete. The system varies industry and cheapens the cost of living. If the condition of woman is the true gauge of civilization, how should we be working except indirectly for a real elevation of society by training young men alone? The freedwoman is where slavery left her. Her average state is one of pitiable destitution of whatever should adorn and elevate her sex. In every respect, the opportunities of the sexes should be equal, and two years of experience have shown that young men and young women of color may be educated together to the greatest mutual advantage, and without detriment to a high moral standard.150

Notwithstanding the liberal inclusion of women to Hampton’s student body, Armstrong employed a strict policy of gender segregation, which was undoubtedly shaped by the era’s mainstream, middle-class, Victorian notions of propriety. With the exception of classroom sessions, Armstrong expected Hampton’s male and female students to remain separated from one another. Only during special occasions were male and female students allowed to mingle and even then they were closely supervised.

Despite its austere nature, Hampton’s code of student expectations yielded long-term benefits of an industrially productive and reform-oriented alumni and alumnae, many of whom were vocally expressive in their appreciation of Hampton’s role as a preparatory for the “real world.” Mary Melvin, an 1874 Hampton graduate, wrote in 1911:

I so often say that I’m glad I was born colored…as it now is, no one can keep the best things from me. And I owe all of this to Hampton and the accident of being born Negro [. I tell my girls that all good things have come to me that I may pass them to others. General Armstrong always made us feel that Hampton students gathered to scatter.  

Mary Melvin’s statement reinforces Armstrong’s insistence that Hampton graduates become leaders and reformers within the black community at large. Nationally known late nineteenth-century black educator and civic leader, Booker T. Washington, also gave a vocal testament for his admiration of Samuel Armstrong and Hampton’s mission to train future black industrial laborers and teachers who would serve as models of industry and piety to be emulated by the black masses. Washington, an 1875 Hampton graduate, stated in his 1901 autobiography, *Up from Slavery*, that the two most significant aspects of his Hampton experience were his introduction to Samuel Armstrong and his orientation to Hampton’s mission philosophy. Washington wrote that Armstrong was “the rarest, strongest, and most beautiful character that it has been my privilege to meet.” In addition, Washington heralded Hampton’s mission for teaching him to appreciate manual and domestic labor as a way toward independence and self-sufficiency. Washington elaborated on this appreciation by declaring: “At that institution I got my first taste of what it meant to live a life of unselfishness, my first knowledge of the fact that the happiest individuals are those who do the most to make others useful and happy.”

153. Ibid., 38.
Washington’s words indicate the central role that Armstrong and his Hampton model played in the life and work of one of black America’s preeminent figures of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Washington was so moved and inspired by Armstrong’s model that he used the school as a paradigm for his Tuskegee Institute, which he established in 1881 in Alabama. Washington designed Tuskegee as a normal and industrial arts institution just like Hampton. In addition, Tuskegee under Washington’s leadership also instilled in its students the virtues of hard work, frugality, temperance, social reform, and piety. Consequently, Washington, who maintained a close relationship with Hampton until his death in 1915, employed a significant number of Hampton graduates to teach at Tuskegee. Washington’s unflinching commitment to Armstrong’s Hampton model provides another strong illustration of the school’s impact on its early graduates.

Della Irving Hayden (1851/1854-1924), an 1877 Hampton graduate, also acknowledged Armstrong’s influence on Hampton’s graduates. After years of administrative and instructional work, she established the Franklin Normal and Industrial Institute in 1904 in Franklin, Virginia. Just like Washington, Hayden attributed much of her success as an educator and school founder to her tutelage under Armstrong:

. . . I feel that what has been my privilege to do is in a great measure the result of the training and inspiration received here (Hampton), and is simply the reflected influence of that sainted man, General Armstrong, who gave his life for this work at Hampton... Hampton’s influence in fostering industrial education, in advocating better regulated homes, sound moral and religious training and the making of better citizens is doing much towards solving the Negro problem. He (General Armstrong) bestowed a blessing on his graduates and they are passing it on to thousands of others. Had there been no General Armstrong most likely there would have been no Hampton Institute; no Hampton, no
Booker Washington; no Booker Washington, no Tuskegee; no Tuskegee, no Farmers’ Conference.\textsuperscript{154}

Della Irving Hayden also shared Washington’s view of Hampton’s impact on black southern communities. To this end, Hayden asserted that Hampton helped create cadres of trained educators and civic leaders, who then went out and reformed many black communities during the worst decades of institutional racial segregation.

Other examples of Armstrong’s commitment to Hampton graduates were evident in his efforts to assist graduates with employment searches. To this end, Armstrong corresponded with southern schools throughout the South to solicit teaching jobs for graduates. He also served as an advocate to rally for better salaries allotted to Hampton-trained teachers. Aside from encouraging domestic reform initiatives among Hampton graduates, Armstrong also challenged former students to globalize their reform initiatives by serving as missionaries in Africa.\textsuperscript{155} Armstrong’s tireless campaign to gain support for Hampton came to an end in 1891 when he suffered a debilitating stroke while on a fundraising trip in Stoneham, Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{156} Up until his death in 1893, Samuel Chapman Armstrong remained steadfast in his efforts to secure productive futures for his students, both current and past. Indisputably, Armstrong nobly provided Hampton’s early graduates with a consistent, sincere, and almost parental guidance in their transition to vocational life and civic leadership. To this end,

\textsuperscript{154} Della Irving Hayden, “My Life Work,” \textit{The Southern Workman} 38 (1909), 689, in Della Irving Papers, Hampton University Archives. The Farmers’ Conference began in 1891 at Tuskegee Institute as a forum for black farmers and their wives to discuss and learn the latest innovations within agriculture and the domestic sciences.

\textsuperscript{155} Engs, \textit{Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited}, 138.

\textsuperscript{156} Pleasant, \textit{Hampton University, Our Home by the Sea}, 18.
Armstrong wielded an indelible impression on a vast number of Hampton’s early graduates.

Years after his passing, Armstrong was still fondly and honorably remembered by former students, colleagues, and acquaintances that held direct observation of his commitment to the school and its graduates and would carry forth his philosophy of black uplift. One such acquaintance was a former assistant U.S. Attorney General, William H. Lewis. In a 1916 commencement address at Hampton, Lewis provided his audience with a definitive summation of each pivotal stage in Armstrong’s life in which he acted as a champion for southern black empowerment. Lewis chronicled Armstrong’s first stage as a white commander of an all-black regiment during the Civil War:

He rose through all the grades, captain and lieutenant colonel, colonel and brigadier-general, but it was as a leader of colored troops that he found his greatest happiness. He wanted to help them prove their right to freedom. He wrote, “Dear Mother, it is no sacrifice for me to be here. It is rather a glorious opportunity I would be nowhere else if I could, and nothing else than an officer of colored troops if I could”. He proved the valor and worth of his colored troop in the hard fought battle before Petersburg.157

Lewis further asserted that Armstrong’s tireless initiative for black empowerment transcended from the battlefield into the classroom as he embarked upon the establishment of Hampton Institute as a training ground for black academic, vocational, and moral enrichment. Lewis proclaimed that despite critical responses to the school’s manual and industrial curriculum, Armstrong remained undeterred in his mission to socially mobilize a formerly marginalized community:

He at once introduced his Hampton School the system of manual training with which much fault was found in his day. The critics said that his method of education was based upon an admission of the Negro’s inferiority; but he was providing a system of education for the masses and not the selected few. He said, “We are not testing the capacity of the Negro mind. It is like all minds, no limits. We are trying to send men and women into the world with a purpose”. 158

Additionally, Lewis maintained that while Armstrong’s critics may have found him to be slightly condescending and paternalistically dominant, his employment of this authoritative stance enhanced the efficacy and influence of his leadership: “In dealing with students, General Armstrong was a strict disciplinarian, with a keen sense of justice, and yet with a heart of pure gold, full of human sympathy and understanding.” 159 Finally, Lewis heralded Armstrong for his progressive attitude toward co-education, which was an exceptional concept for late nineteenth-century academic institutions:

Long before the day of the feminist, he recognized the equality of the sexes and led the institutions of America in the matter of co-education. Said he, “The condition of woman is the gauge of progress. The past rests more heavily upon the colored woman than the colored man; quite as much should be done for her as for him. Mingling in recitations, at meals, in personal intercourse, always under reasonable restraint, is good for both. Our work is never secured till it terminates in family life, which is the unit of Christian civilization.” 160

William H. Lewis’s memorialization of Armstrong, though clearly hagiographic, affords the man credibility due to his progressive initiative of black institutional building. By contrast, the memorialization also opens some space for critical analysis due to Armstrong’s proven subscription to white authoritative superiority. To this end, it

158. Ibid., 14.

159. Ibid.

160. Ibid.
is significant to note that Armstrong’s legacy was shrouded in controversial criticism during and after his lifetime. For example, at a Hampton Institute Founder’s Day program in 1909, Booker Washington cited in his speech some of the early black criticism directed toward Armstrong’s model:

How well do I remember, and there are some older graduates sitting here to-day who also remember, how my race complained against the Hampton idea, how in some quarters it was condemned. How well do some of us remember how the older people said over and over again to General Armstrong and other: “we have been worked for two hundred and fifty years and now that we are free we ought to have a chance to rest”- and some of them have been resting most of the time since. They said: “We have been worked for two hundred and fifty years and you ought not to start a school where we shall be worked some more.” Others said that a school, in their opinion, ought to be the very last place on earth where the subject of work is ever mentioned.161

The above quotation is illustrative of the skepticism that some late nineteenth-century black people held toward Armstrong’s Hampton model. Past and present black critics of the Hampton model perceived it as a thinly veiled attempt to institutionally subordinate and stagnate black people to second-class citizenship via an emphasis on manual labor and a systematic dismissal of political participation. One prominent figure of the early twentieth century who emerged as a critic of the Hampton Model was W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963). By the early 1900s, Du Bois was a well-known educator, scholar, civil rights activist, and one of the nation’s first black Harvard Ph.D. graduates. Du Bois regarded the Hampton model as an impediment to black economic and intellectual development. He perceived the model as an impediment because of its sole objective to train elementary-level rural teachers and manual laborers. While Du Bois was not entirely dismissive of the Hampton model, he was largely a proponent of an

integrationist and alternative approach which also favored black liberal arts education. Du Bois’ critical stance of the Hampton model is revealed in one of his 1906 retrospective commentaries on the state of black education:

In 1906, the United States was obsessed with what may be called the Hampton-Tuskegee idea of Negro education. It was in a sense logical and sincere and I would have said in 1900 that I believed in it, but not as a complete program. I believed that we should seek to educate a mass of ignorant sons of slaves in the three R’s and the technique of work in a sense of the necessity and duty of good work. But beyond this, I also believed that such schools must have teachers, and such a race must have thinkers and leaders, and for the education of these folk we needed good and thorough Negro colleges.

While Du Bois criticized the Hampton model for its stagnating impact on black intellectual and professional potential, late twentieth-century scholars, such as James Anderson, more extensively examined and critiqued the Hampton model as a conspicuous device whose design had an ulterior motive to navigate black students into industrial vocations. Consequently, these critics argue that the Hampton model with its espousal of black political neutrality, labor work ethic, and Christian obedience served to aid black southerners in their accommodation within a Jim Crow social order. Historian James Anderson argued that Hampton’s integration of manual labor served a twofold objective. The first objective was to teach students a consistent work ethic and Christian morals. Additionally, a manual-based curriculum would provide the vocational instruction appropriate for transitioning black people to a subordinate place within the social strata of a Jim Crow South. Anderson further charged that Armstrong, who personally endorsed black disfranchisement, challenged industrial school-educated


163. Ibid., 21.
black teachers and leaders with the responsibility of promoting the value of industrial
education and political neutrality to the black masses.\textsuperscript{164} Anderson wrote:

Most important, however, Armstrong viewed industrial education
primarily as an ideological force that would provide instruction suitable
for adjusting blacks to a subordinate social role in the emergent New
South. Significantly, he identified Hampton with the conservative wing
of southern reconstructionists who supported new forms of external
control over blacks, including disfranchisement, segregation, and civil
inequality. Armstrong’s philosophy of “Black Reconstruction,” widely
publicized as the “Hampton Idea,” essentially called for the effective
removal of black voters and politicians from southern political life, the
relegation of black workers to the lowest forms of labor in the southern
economy, and the establishment of a general southern racial hierarchy.
He expected that the work of adjusting blacks to this social arrangement
would be carried out by indigenous black educators, particularly teachers
and principals, aided by Hampton-styled industrial normal schools, state
departments of education, local school boards, and northern white
philanthropists. Hence Hampton developed an extensive manual labor
routine because the school’s faculty believed that a particular
combination of hard work, political socialization, and social discipline
would mold appropriately conservative black teachers.\textsuperscript{165}

Anderson’s assessment of Armstrong’s trickle-down expectation of Hampton-
trained educators and leaders is substantiated by an 1872 address delivered by
Armstrong at the National Education Association in which he stated: “The normal
school graduate of the South should be of the people-above them, yet of them-in order
to make natural or probable, a lifelong service in their behalf.”\textsuperscript{166} Within this same
address, Armstrong identified his criteria for the idyllic character traits to be
exemplified by Hampton graduates. Armstrong proclaimed that Hampton’s graduates as

\textsuperscript{164} James D. Anderson, \textit{The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935} (Chapel Hill:

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 36.

\textsuperscript{166} Armstrong, \textit{Ideas on Education}, 34.
ambassadors and leaders of the black community should exhibit social etiquette, piety, thrift, temperance and intelligence.\textsuperscript{167}

Apart from Armstrong’s paternalistic and at times racist expectation of black submission to a racially segregated and white supremacist southern social order, it is appropriate to employ a more objective examination of Armstrong’s legacy and his perceptions of black people. In an essay entitled “Paved with Good Intention: A Missionary Son and the Road to Hawaiian Annexation,” written by Haley Cohen (2011), the author chiefly chronicled the missionary work of Samuel Chapman Armstrong’s brother, William Nevins Armstrong (1834-1905). While Cohen primarily focused on William Armstrong, he did include a discussion and analysis of Samuel Chapman Armstrong’s paternalistic mindset and its influence on the design of Hampton Institute. Cohen observed that despite Armstrong’s paternalistic views and presumption of inherent black inferiority, it was conceivable to perceive Armstrong within his capacity as an architect of black southern industrial education as acting based upon “good intention” but nevertheless stagnated by racial bias. Cohen charged that Armstrong’s racial presumptions about black people often projected him as a person who was culturally insensitive or indifferent to the sensibilities of the community that he sought to uplift. An example of this insensitivity was Armstrong’s constant insistence that Hampton’s students sing Negro spirituals at special school events, but his failure to realize that those spirituals were reminiscent of the drudgery of slavery.\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., 34.

\textsuperscript{168} Haley Cohen, “Paved With Good Intention: A Missionary Son and the Road to Hawaiian Annexation,” (Davenport College, April 2011), 25. This is a brief paperback booklet based upon Cohen’s analysis of correspondences left by Samuel Chapman Armstrong’s son William Nevins Armstrong.
Aside from Armstrong’s shortfall of cultural insensitivity, Cohen, just like historian James Anderson, also examined Armstrong’s paternalism as reflected within his design of Hampton’s curriculum:

Consequently, Hampton’s faculty and the academic and manual program they designed were not dedicated to helping these people integrate with whites, but were instead oriented to help them live more comfortably and independently under whites, further perpetuating the vicious cycle the school professedly sought to end.¹⁶⁹

Cohen observed that Hampton’s history classes, which were designed and often taught by Armstrong, centered on the study of racial and cultural development. These classes theorized that the historical imposition of institutionalized oppression upon nonwhite people was a natural sequence within the process of racial evolution. Cohen maintained that while some of Hampton’s students did not openly challenge this ideology of inherent white superiority, some students devised other ways to publicly exhibit their dismissal of such an absurdly pseudo-scientific racist claim, which was nevertheless prevalent during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Black students’ subtle resistance to Hampton’s attempted institutional indoctrination of innate white superiority was illustrated in another example. Cohen cited an American history teacher at Hampton who challenged his students to cite a number of ways in which white people were superior to black people and Native Americans; needless to say, none of the students were able or willing to provide substantiating examples of white superiority. From this example, Cohen concluded that, while a number of Hampton’s black students were willing to learn from white instructors and work for white people,

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 26.
they were not willing to mentally subscribe themselves to the acceptance of white superiority.\textsuperscript{170}

Although Cohen and Anderson accurately noted the racist and paternalistic nature of Hampton’s industrial curriculum, it is imperative to place Armstrong’s racially-based paternalism within a proper context. Armstrong’s paternalistic stance toward nonwhite people was prevalent among many late nineteenth-century white social reformers. Although paradoxical in nature, white progressives’ proclivities toward ethnic supremacy yielded either a complete disregard for the plight of ethnic minorities or, at its possible best, paternalistic benevolence as practiced by Armstrong.

Indifference among more socially conservative white progressives conveyed no shocking revelation to black people, given the nation’s history of strained race relations. By contrast, more engaged, yet paternalistic, white reformers sometimes ignited feelings of condescension among black beneficiaries. Despite the resentment of white reformers’ assumed superiority over the downtrodden black masses, reform-minded black people channeled their discomfort into inspiration. To this end, black reformers adopted and refashioned the goals and objectives set by benevolent “white friends of the Negro race” and employed them as a blueprint to build within their own communities. This autonomous redefinition of black-led reform provided an entrance way for the individual and collective initiatives of women, such as Jennie Dean, Della Irving Hayden, Janie Porter Barrett, and Amelia Perry Pride.

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., 26.
“It is a noble thing to break a slave’s fetter, but it is equally noble to help the slave to manhood and give his race a future.” This quotation was delivered by the eulogist of John Fox Slater (1815-1884).\footnote{John F. Slater Fund, \textit{Proceedings of the Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund for the Education of Freedmen} (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1885), 41.} Slater, a white Connecticut industrialist, was a leading benefactor of postbellum southern black education. In 1882, he established the Slater Fund, which initially allocated $1 million for “the uplifting of the lately emancipated population of the Southern States.”\footnote{quoted in John F. Slater Fund, “Organization of the Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund for the Education of Freedmen” (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1882), 3. Available online at http://www.sefatl.org/pdf/SEF’s%20Place%20in%20History.pdf (accessed November 4, 2011).} The Slater Fund was one of a few benevolent and white-led philanthropic agencies that aided in the sponsorship of southern black industrial and collegiate institutions. These late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century northern-based philanthropic groups developed as a necessary combatant to the racially-based economic and academic disparities that historically plagued the South.

Authors Henry N. Drewry and Humphrey Doermann estimated that over one million school-age southern black Americans had been deprived of educational resources prior to 1865. After emancipation, there was a hunger for formal education that continued into the first decades of the twentieth century as evident in the high surge of southern black student enrollment. Drewry and Doermann asserted that between 1865 and 1915, the enrollment of black pupils from ages five to nineteen years
increased by 35 percent.\textsuperscript{173} This significant increase of black student enrollment reflected black aspirations of educational attainment as well as the expansion of resources and institutional facilities to accommodate those academic pursuits. This gravitation toward academic attainment marked an impressive departure from the 76 percent illiteracy rate which plagued southern blacks in 1880.\textsuperscript{174} The progression of black southern education was aided largely by a myriad of philanthropic sources.

The leading financial resources for southern black education came from the Freedmen’s Bureau, individual benefactors, and religious-based organizations such as the American Missionary Association. The Freedmen’s Bureau bankrolled $1.8 million to establish Freedmen’s schools from 1867 to 1870. From 1870 into the early twentieth century, religious-based denominational organizations provided at least fifty percent of the monies allotted to their respected, affiliated black institutions. This period of the late nineteenth-century southern black educational reform was further enhanced by the emergence of philanthropic foundations. These foundations funded black southern education at the elementary, industrial, and collegiate levels. Two of the leading foundations were the Peabody Fund and the aforementioned Slater Fund.\textsuperscript{175} The former Fund was established by George Peabody in 1867. Peabody, a wealthy investment broker from Massachusetts, gave $2 million to establish an educational fund that would “benefit the destitute areas of the South” by providing educational opportunities for


\textsuperscript{175} Drewry and Doermann, \textit{Stand and Prosper}, 66.
“children of the common people.” The Peabody Fund, which focused exclusively on elementary and industrial schools in the South, dissolved in 1914. Upon its dissolution the Fund provided a $350,000 gift to its counterpart—the Slater Fund.

The Slater Fund, inspired by the Peabody Fund, was established in 1882 and had a more ambitious philanthropic scope. The Slater Fund provided sponsorship to southern black education at all levels from elementary to collegiate. While the Slater monetary funds came from the North, its circle of administration consisted of both white northerners and southerners. Despite a variety of geographical origins, members of the Slater circle generally came from an evangelical Protestant background and were college-educated, white-collar professionals. In addition to being educated, its members also aligned themselves with late nineteenth-century progressivism and held interests in prison reform, conservation, civil service reform, compulsory education, juvenile delinquency, temperance, and the “Negro problem.” While the Slater Fund members held a noble interest in eradicating societal ills, a number of them were shaped and impeded by personal racial prejudices. For example, one of the circle members was Dr. Jabez Lamar Monroe Curry, a Georgia native and Harvard Law School graduate. Curry characterized black workers as “stupid, indolent, and shiftless . . . , with a low tone of morality.” Curry claimed that black people had “loose notions of piety and morality and


177. Drewry and Doermann, Stand and Prosper, 67.

with strong racial peculiarities and proclivities. . . Had not outgrown the feebleness of the moral sense which is common to all primitive races.”

Another member of the Slater group was Dr. Atticus G. Haygood, a Methodist minister from Georgia, who had served as a president of Emory College. Haygood, who had proclaimed in 1880 that white people were to be “the keepers of our brothers in black,” delivered a number of speeches and published articles, which attested to his belief in black inferiority and debasement. More specifically, Haygood charged that black people were innately savage and primitive. He further cited that black “apprenticeship” during slavery had established a “habit of submission” and “a fear of the white man’s vengeance.” Based upon this perceived notion of the historical relationship between black enslaved labor and white guardianship, Dr. Haygood rationalized that black southerners needed an instructional curriculum that promoted black manual industry and behavioral docility. To this end, Haygood concluded that a liberal arts education (undoubtedly, a curriculum that he believed most black people had little mental acumen to master) would compound black inefficiency and unleash black savagery onto the South’s white populace. Haygood, like most late nineteenth-century white educational reformers, concluded that the most beneficial and practical instructional curriculum for southern blacks was industrial education. Haygood and his fellow Slater Fund colleagues, which also included former U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes, staunchly advocated for a widespread industrial curriculum for southern blacks.

180. Quoted in Ibid., 76.
181. Ibid., 77.
In 1880, President Hayes, in particular, cited Gen. Samuel Armstrong’s Hampton Institute as an industrial institutional paradigm which “hits the nail on the head” and solved “the whole negro problem.”\textsuperscript{182} The Slater group lauded Hampton for its emphasis on industrial/domestic training and its instructional emphasis on hard work, thrift, piety, and community uplift. Given the Slater Fund’s reverence for the Hampton model, it is no surprise that Hampton and its sister institution, Tuskegee, initially received a lion’s share of the fund’s initial endowment. For example, from 1894 to 1914, the Slater Fund gave $956,000 to black colleges and thirty-five percent of those monies were dispersed to Hampton and Tuskegee. By 1928, Slater funding to Hampton and Tuskegee was discontinued under new leadership within the endowment group. Despite dissolution of aid to Hampton and Tuskegee, the Slater Fund impressively contributed $3.8 million in educational grants from 1882 to 1932; $1.2 million was exclusively disbursed to black colleges and universities.\textsuperscript{183} Without question, southern black instructional institutions greatly benefitted from the monetary and administrative philanthropy of benevolent and reform-minded white people and their organizations—both religious-based and secular.

Beyond white benevolence, it is equally significant to acknowledge the focal role that southern black women played within the realm of educational reform in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century South. Black women’s establishment of schools served as a tangible example of their effort to reform and uplift their communities.

\textsuperscript{182} Quoted in Ibid., 82.

\textsuperscript{183} Drewry and Doermann, \textit{Stand and Prosper}, 67.
Southern black women, operating through collective organizations and individual initiative (despite the obstacles of rampant, hostile institutionalized racism, and condescending white paternalism), were able to design and implement campaigns and institutions of community uplift. Campaigns and institutions spearheaded by southern black women included settlement houses, elder care facilities, sewing/domestic schools, women’s clubs, juvenile rehabilitation schools, and industrial training schools as vehicles for their reform progressivism. The latter institution, the industrial training school, served as a social reform outlet for Jennie Dean.

Jane (Jennie) Sereipta Dean was born circa 1852 near Sudley Springs in Prince William County, Virginia, to slave parents, Charles and Annie Dean. She had two sisters, Ella and Lay, and one brother, Charles. There was also a half-brother named Henry Bennet. By all accounts, Dean’s parents, though formerly enslaved, were considered “intelligent.” Dean’s father was literate and had served as a house servant. After the Civil War, Charles Dean, acting on ingenuity, set out to purchase a family farm near Sudley Springs. Although Charles Dean died before officially securing complete land ownership, thirteen-year-old Jennie took the reins of initiative to pay the farm’s remaining balance. With a bare elementary education, Jennie Dean went to Washington, D.C. to work as a domestic in order to earn money for the farm’s purchase. She also used her domestic earnings to help her sister Ella attend Wayland Seminary in D.C. Ella eventually graduated from Wayland and became a teacher in the Manassas area.


185. Ibid., 6.
This early example of Jennie Dean’s consciousness of social responsibility was a foreshadow of her lifelong commitment to community reform. Stephen Johnson Lewis, a biographer of Jennie Dean, hypothesized that Dean’s ambitious parents instilled the values of responsibility, tenacity, and self-sufficiency within her. In turn, Dean applied those virtues to her reform work. Lewis also suggested another source that inspired and aided Dean’s community building: her spirituality. Lewis asserts that Dean’s Christian-based work as a missionary, establishing Sunday schools and churches, as well as her industrial school, were also outgrowths of her strong relationship to the Church and its principles. More specifically, Dean’s social reformism was illustrative of progressivism’s Social Gospel expectation to act upon Christian duty by engaging in community uplift. Black adherence to progressivism’s Social Gospel ethics was endorsed by a few leading black figures of the late nineteenth century. One black proponent of Social Gospel was noted author, feminist, scholar, educator, and activist Anna Julia Cooper (1858-1964), who lived to be 106 years old. In an 1886 convocation speech to an all-black assembly of clergymen at D.C.’s Protestant Episcopal Church, Cooper made a gender inclusive plea for Christian black men and women to engage in community uplift:

Is it not evident then that as individual workers for this race we must address ourselves with no half-hearted zeal, to this feature of our mission? The need is felt and must be recognized by all. There is a call for workers, for missionaries, for men and women with the double consecration of a fundamental love of humanity and a desire for its melioration through the Gospel; but superadded to this we demand an

186. Ibid., 7.
intelligent and sympathetic comprehension of the interests and special needs of the Negro.\textsuperscript{187}

After going to D.C. to work, Dean was often able to spend a full summer break with her family in nearby Sudley Springs. Dean’s summers in Sudley Springs provided her the time and space to embark upon community reform work. One of Dean’s first reform ventures was the establishment of a summer Sunday school for area black youth. After two summer sessions in 1887, Dean, encouraged by her students’ commitment to biblical instruction, decided to organize the meeting sessions into a church. Calvary Church (built in Manassas in 1886) was the end result of this effort. Beyond Calvary’s founding, Dean was instrumental in establishing other Sunday schools and churches within the surrounding Manassas area. Some of the other churches included Prosperity Chapel (built in 1899) and Dean Divers Chapel (built in 1909). In addition to church building in her home county, Dean also conducted Saturday afternoon sewing and cooking classes.\textsuperscript{188} This productive period of numerous simultaneous reform activities between 1887 and 1894 provided an entrance way into Dean’s most celebrated institution: The Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth.

The Manassas School, founded in 1894, was an outgrowth of Dean’s Sunday school and weekend industrial training sessions. It was within those sessions that Dean observed her students’ quest for knowledge and their potential to attain it. One parent in particular, a farmer whose surname was Shellington, made a lasting impression on Dean. Mr. Shellington was the father of seven sons, and he wanted all of them to


acquire an employable trade. Dean’s conversation with Shellington regarding his aspirations for his sons prompted her to reflect on the lack of adequate training facilities available to black residents in northern Virginia.189

Mr. Shellington’s interest in his children’s education was indicative of postbellum black Americans’ aspiration for themselves and their children to receive full participation within the political, social, and economic opportunities in their communities. To that end, black people were conscious of the fact that full participation rested on their access to education. Acknowledging the significant and essential nature of education prompted a number of postbellum black parents to assert a proactive and prioritizing role within their children’s academic pursuits. This point is illustrated within the academic backgrounds of the dissertation’s four main women; all of whom had assertive parents who stressed the necessity and virtues of education. Historian Heather Andrea Williams provided further assertion of the interventionist nature of postbellum black parents: “For parents, freedom meant nothing if it did not mean taking control of their children’s lives and deciding what was best for their well-being.”190

The legacy of black people campaigning for the establishment of schools grew out of a larger agenda for black people to gain more social and political freedoms. This black mobilization toward improved social and political rights began during the antebellum period and manifested itself in the form of statewide formal conventions in which black delegates advocated for the extension of black participation within municipal capacities, such as jury duty, the vote, and the establishment of schools for

189. Lewis, Undaunted Faith, 23.
black students. By 1865, freed people in Arkansas, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee held conventions in which delegates rallied for the aforementioned amenities. Prior to the 1865 conventions, black delegates in Kansas met in an African Methodist Episcopal church in Leavenworth. This meeting was presided over by Reverend John Turner, who emphasized the virtues of morality, self-help, and education as the fundamentals of black progress in the United States. Turner proclaimed to his audience: “If we would be great, we must be good, and to be considered good, black people would have to be even more industrious, sober and truthful than others.” Turner further charged: “knowledge is power, therefore we must get education for ourselves and our children.” The education agenda of the Kansas convention was reflected in other state conventions.

For instance, the black South Carolina convention of 1865 also made an education-based plea similar to the Kansas convention. The South Carolina convention drafted a document directed to the U.S. Congress in which its members called for inclusion on juries, the constitutional right to bear arms, the repeal of “black codes,” and compensation for government-issued land. In addition, the delegates requested that “the three great agents of civilized society—the school, the pulpit, the press—be as secure in South Carolina as they were in New England.” Another example of the convention’s value on education is evident within the following proclamation: “Whereas, Knowledge is power, and an educated and intelligent people can neither be

191. Ibid., 72.
192. Quoted in Ibid., 75.
193. Quoted in Ibid., 76.
held in, nor reduced to slavery . . . we will insist upon the establishment of good schools for the thorough education of our children.”\textsuperscript{194} While South Carolina’s proclamation made a definitive plea for black education reform, the State Convention of the Colored People of Georgia issued an even more detailed resolution for black education. In an 1866 proclamation addressed to the all-white Georgia legislature, delegates within the black convention stated:

\begin{quote}
A few years will materially change our status. Education and wealth which are bound to be distributed in our ranks, will tell in power upon the resources of the state”. To this end, the delegates asked the legislature to establish schools and colleges as training institutions so that “our young men will be aspiring to the positions of doctors, lawyers, ministers, army officers and every capacity in which they can represent the interest of their people.\textsuperscript{195}
\end{quote}

Aside from collective organizational black efforts to secure the establishment of educational institutions, black people also employed individual attempts to secure academic opportunities for their children. One example of this type of individual effort is reflected in an 1864 incident. In February 1864, the Superintendent of Negro Labor in New Orleans testified before the Freedmen’s Inquiry Commission and stated that “a negro soldier \textit{demanded} his children at my hands. I endeavored to test his affection for them, when he said: ‘Lieut I want to send them to school.” Although the superintendent asserted that the children had a good home with their former owner, the soldier responded with the following: “I am in your service; I wear military clothes; I have been in three battles; I was in the assault at Port Hudson; I want those children; they are

\textsuperscript{194} Quoted in Ibid., 67.

my flesh and blood.” The black father’s determination to act as guardian over his children and their futures was eventually secured as the superintendent awarded him permanent and full parental rights over his children. This particular incident is exceptional for two reasons. The first exceptional aspect of this case is rooted in contextual time. More specifically, this case, which happened a year before the constitutional emancipation of enslaved black people, involved a black father who boldly asserted his parental authority while directly challenging white authority. The second anomalous aspect of this case is its outcome, which surprisingly concluded in favor of the black father instead of his children’s white mistress. The exceptional components of this case serve to highlight the efforts that postbellum black parents employed in order to secure protected and productive lives for their children.

This autonomous objective held by postbellum black parents was also prevalent within the manner in which they negotiated their children’s employment. An example of this type of black parental agency is reflected in an 1865 labor contract negotiation in Muscogee County, Georgia. Within the negotiation, the mother of a seven-year-old boy included a contractual provision in which her son’s employer/guardian would have to assume responsibility in providing the child with an education. In specific terms, the contract acknowledged that in exchange for the child’s labor the employer agreed to “provide for all his temporal wants and learn him to read and write if he will take it.”

Despite the mother’s consent to her young child being apprenticed as a laborer, she


actively negotiated her child’s employment. Undoubtedly, the mother’s proactive stance was shaped by a personal value of education. It was this longstanding legacy of black parental agency that prompted Manassas’s black community to propose that Jennie Dean create a school for their children.

By 1888, Dean began to design the prospective school’s curriculum (industrial and pedagogical training), its location, and its benefactors.\textsuperscript{198} The fact that Dean devised an industrial-based mission for the school was reflective of the late nineteenth-century era. Jennie Dean, like a vast number of late nineteenth-century leaders, both black and white, perceived manual/industrial training as a plausible preparatory curriculum for black southerners. While the era’s leading white philanthropists also advocated industrial training for both the black and white southern masses, Dean’s endorsement was steeped in personal racial consciousness. Dean’s social awareness was shaped by her sporadic and extensive stints living and working as a domestic in Washington, D.C., less than 50 miles from Sudley Springs. While living in D.C., Dean witnessed firsthand the negative impact that urban life had on young impressionable, rural black youth. Given the enticing nature of urban vices, Dean concluded that the most rational and effective resolution to the “southern Negro problem” was the creation of industrial schools.

Industrial schools provided black youth the opportunity to hone their manual and work-related skills. This preparation served a practical purpose because manual labor and classroom teaching were the most readily available jobs for black people in the postbellum South. Given this reality of occupational limitation, black people in the pre-northern migration era needed to acquire skills that would enable them to be

\textsuperscript{198} Lewis, \textit{Undaunted Faith}, 23.
productive and self-sufficient, hence Dean’s and the majority of early twentieth-century black people’s endorsement of industrial institutions.

Another reason for southern black leaders’ endorsement of industrial training was rooted in white expectation. Most southern black people knew that they were expected to enter manual vocations, which would place the white establishment at ease and maintain a nonthreatening racial status quo. It is logical to conclude that this latter dynamic of maintaining a harmonious southern racial order ranked secondary to black people’s priority of securing a means toward vocational training, occupational productivity, and economic mobility. More often than not, the achievement of such education-based mediums came at the expense of black indignation which resulted from the condescending nature of paternalistic white philanthropy. Black indignation also sprang from the prevalent and blatant white racial hostility which characterized postbellum southern race relations.

Despite the potentially impeding nature of white paternalism and white hostility, black people took solace in the invaluable long-range benefits which educational opportunities brought. More specifically, black education reformers and advocates rationalized that formal academic/vocational training would provide prospective black students with the civic, leadership, and vocational skills to be productive members of society within their respective communities. Historian Heather Andrea Williams noted the long-term significant role that education held for postbellum black people:

These freed people foresaw an immediate future in which neither white southern mistresses and masters nor white northern superintendents would hold sway over their lives. They looked forward to the day when they would have the tools they needed to live without interference from whites. They were certain that education would provide those tools.199

199. Williams, Self-Taught, 72.
Postbellum black people were able to remain optimistic in their objective to gain access to education because they collectively perceived education as a medium toward their empowerment and transition away from institutionalized enslavement. More specifically, educational opportunities also gave black people the “tools” which enabled them an outlet to hone vocational and civic skills. These two fundamental skills provided black people with the economic self-sufficiency and social consciousness to significantly improve life within black southern communities. It was this trickled down significance of industrial education compounded by the predominance of manual trade jobs in the South that further influenced Dean’s decision to create an industrial school.

Initially, Dean was able to secure “promotional promises” of the school from area ministers who vowed to use their pulpits as a platform to promote the school to their congregations. Dean also relied on her friends from religious and secular institutions outside of the Manassas area. By 1890, Dean had organized a group of trustees and a board of directors for the unconstructed school. Dean’s success in organizing an advisory administrative board reflected interracial and interregional cooperation, as its members were both black and white, as well as both northern and southern. Dean’s biographer, Stephen Johnson Lewis, interpreted Dean’s ability to appeal to potential white philanthropists as yet another testament to black parental enculturation. More specifically, Lewis suggested that postbellum black parents, like Dean’s, encouraged their children to be courteous to white people. Lewis wrote that the

indoctrination of this trait should not be interpreted as an instruction of black subordination, but rather its intent was to teach black youth how to appeal to the sentiments of white benevolence which could aid black reformist initiatives.\(^\text{201}\)

The invaluable potential of white and interracial benevolence was fully recognized by Jennie Dean during her preliminary planning of the Manassas school.

Dean’s achievement of interracial support for her new industrial school in the 1890s was evident by the roster of program participants and well-wishers noted during the school’s dedication ceremony held on September 3, 1894. Some of these individuals included famed abolitionist and orator, Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), who delivered the ceremonial address; Dr. H.M. Clarkson, Superintendent of Prince William County Schools; Hoke Smith and William Harris, from the U.S. Department of Interior; the famed Clara Barton from the American Red Cross; and Dr. J. L. M. Curry, an agent from the Peabody and Slater Funds.\(^\text{202}\) Although Dean successfully secured interracial support for the launch of the Manassas school, the institution’s largest endowments came from white philanthropic agencies and individuals. Despite its favorable impact on black reformist initiatives, benevolent white philanthropy was often a double-edged sword in relation to black southern social reform.

Late nineteenth-century white people, largely in the North and sporadically in the South, made individual and organizational gestures of kindness and support to southern black people. This white benevolence was almost never conducted on a level of racial egalitarianism. Given the historical relationship of black and white people in

\(^{201}\) Lewis, *Undaunted Faith*, 8.

\(^{202}\) Ibid., 4.
the U.S. up to the late nineteenth century, it was inconceivable for the latter group to view former enslaved people as their racial equal. To this end, white benefactors to black social reform initiatives acted in accordance to paternalism. This essentially meant that white proponents of black reform assumed a “guardianship” role in their endorsement of black social progressivism. Notwithstanding the paternalistic position of white benefactors, Dean and Manassas’s black community were grateful for any philanthropic support of a beloved community institution: the Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth. The inclusive nature of the school’s philanthropic support was reflected in the contributions made by Robert H. Tyler.

Captain Robert H. Tyler from Haymarket, Virginia, was one of the school’s central board members. Tyler had served as a Confederate captain for the Eighth Virginia Regiment. At first glance, Captain Tyler’s southern planter and Confederate background would seemingly make him an unlikely proponent of southern black education. In light of this assumed paradox, a logical explanation for Tyler’s support and affiliation with Dean’s school rested in white, paternalistic benevolence. Dean’s regard for Tyler is evident in a newspaper editorial that she composed in the wake of his death in 1902:

MR. EDITOR: -We wish the readers of your paper to know that we, as colored people of Prince William, feel as if we have lost a friend in Capt. Tyler. . . . In 1899, we called on Capt. Tyler and Dr. Clarkson to ask their advice concerning the Industrial School at Manassas. These gentlemen, at once endorsed the work and it was their endorsement that opened the way for me to get the friendly aid of the Southern people in the North. . . . May God send us another to take his place, for we as a people, greatly feel his loss, and we knew that such a friend is not easily found.203

203. This was an unsigned letter, but Jennie Dean more than likely wrote this editorial which appeared in Manassas’ primary periodical, The Manassas Journal, n.d., no page number provided, in Jennie Dean Papers, Manassas Museum.
In addition to securing a wide range of philanthropic support, by 1891 Dean began to engage in fundraising campaigns for the school. In keeping with her character of selflessness, Dean tirelessly immersed herself in speaking engagements and paid domestic duties throughout the Northeast and New England, as an effort to supplement monies for the school. Dean’s self-sacrificing and undying commitment to the school’s success is evident in a *New York Evening Post* article that paid homage to Dean’s legacy and impact on the school. The *Evening Post* article described how by the 1890s her influence had grown very strong in the community, and the people received with confidence anything she said to them. She reportedly called a number of them together and said: “Keep your children at home. Don’t send them to the cities. You must buy your lands; become taxpayers. Make all you can and save all you can. Meanwhile, I will go out and raise the money to build a school where your children may be educated to trades. You do your part here, and I will do mine in the world.”

Dean’s aspiration for the creation of an industrial school, which would serve as a vehicle toward black self-sufficiency and industry, was realized in October 1894 when the Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth opened. The school initially enrolled just six students; however, enrollment soon increased to seventy-five. The practical needs of the school’s growing population were met by food and furniture donations supplied by Manassas’s local Sunday schools, churches, and individual benefactors from both northern and

---

204. Quoted in Jennie Dean’s Efforts Among Her Own People,” *The New York Evening Post*, 1913, 10, in Jennie Dean Papers, Manassas Museum.
southern states. The opening of the Manassas School in 1894 was a great feat for Dean.

The remarkable nature of Dean’s accomplishment as a late nineteenth-century school founder rests on three aspects of her identity: black, female, and southern. Given the timeframe of Dean’s social reform activism, the late nineteenth century, those three aspects of her identity afforded her an exceptional place within southern reform. The exceptionalism of Dean’s reformism was due largely to the fact that she engaged in the initiative of institution building during an era of institutionalized racial segregation and white supremacy. Seemingly, the systematic restrictions and exclusion of black people within the postbellum southern social order would have served as a deterrent to black initiative and empowerment. However, despite its impeding nature, institutionalized segregation, which spatially and socially divided black and white southerners, provided civic-minded black people with a purpose and community space to engage in social reform. This separate reformist space endowed initiative-oriented and reformist-minded black women such as Jennie Dean with the agency and urgency to create positive change within their communities. To this end, Dean and a number of other black women helped to cultivate a late nineteenth century tradition of social reformism.

While Dean’s legacy as the founder of the Manassas Industrial School is notable, it is significant to note that the school’s creation was part of a larger tradition of institution building often initiated by southern black women. Aside from Dean, other black female institution builders of the progressive era included women, such as Lucy Craft Laney (1854-1933), who founded the Haines Normal and Industrial Institute in

---

Augusta, Georgia, in 1883, and Della Irving Hayden, who founded the Franklin Normal and Industrial Institute in Franklin, Virginia, in 1904. Just like Dean, Laney and Hayden met the challenge to uplift and socially reform their communities through the efforts of teaching and institution building. Laney’s background and personal history, in particular, closely parallel that of Dean.

Lucy Craft Laney was born in Augusta, Georgia, in 1854 to free parents. Laney’s parents, just like Dean’s parents, were literate and industrious black southerners, who instilled in their daughter an appreciation for higher learning. Laney’s interest in education is evident in her being admitted into Atlanta University at the age of fifteen; she graduated in its first class in 1873. Upon graduation, Laney began a lifetime career as an educator, teaching first in Savannah and then in Augusta. Laney’s return to Augusta was by design, as she had promised a local Baptist pastor, Reverend W. J. White, that she would return in order to establish a school for black children. Before her official return to Augusta, Laney read an article in the Savannah Daily News, which charged that black women were too incompetent to care for white children. This outlandish proclamation inspired Laney’s burgeoning reformist mentality. Laney, like a number of black women in the Jim Crow-era South, was conscious of the prevailing negative stereotypes and views that white people projected upon them and their community. External racial hostility compounded by social and economic disparities within the black community further prompted Laney to dedicate her life to training and
morally uplifting black people, especially black women, whom Laney believed bore the dual burden of having to combat both racial and gender discrimination.²⁰⁶

In 1883, with aid from the Presbyterian Board of Missions for Freedmen (Laney’s father was a Presbyterian minister), she was able to open a day and boarding school in the basement of Augusta’s Christ Presbyterian Church. Although Laney’s school started out with only six students, enrollment ballooned to two hundred within the next year. This sharp increase in enrollment reflected postbellum black Augusta’s aspirations to attain formal education. By 1886, Laney’s school received a state charter and was eventually named after its most prominent benefactor, Mrs. F. E. H. Haines of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Haines had served as secretary of the Women’s Executive Committee of Home Missions.²⁰⁷ This organization was one institutional organ of the mainstream progressive movement that sought to create multipurpose residential and vocational facilities for women within the South. To this end, Laney, like Dean, was able to benefit from the endorsement and endowment of white philanthropic benevolence.

In addition to her creation of the industrial school, which like Dean’s Manassas School, offered an interdisciplinary curriculum of industrial, college preparatory, and teacher training, Laney was instrumental in establishing Augusta’s first kindergarten. Another notable accomplishment of Laney was the initiation of a black nurses’ training curriculum in Augusta. Laney’s campaign for trained black nurses to serve Augusta’s black community was prompted by her consistent observation of blatant racial


²⁰⁷. Ibid., 296.
discrimination that had unethically prevented black people from receiving vital healthcare services.\textsuperscript{208}

Just like Jennie Dean, Lucy Craft Laney’s unrelenting commitment to reform garnered her public recognition. Much of the acclaim directed to Dean’s and Laney’s community building work was spiritually based, as their admirers cited Christian background as the impetus to their reform. For instance, Dean’s Christian virtue was cited within her community, as chronicled in the \textit{Manassas Democrat}: “Jennie Dean had an abiding faith in Christian religion, and it was this, her friends say, that upheld her and helped her win success.”\textsuperscript{209} Laney’s Christian character was heralded in 1893, some twenty years earlier, by one Reverend Dr. E. P. Cowan, Secretary of the Freedmen’s Board of the Presbyterian Church. Rev. Cowan reflected on her deceased father’s legacy in a funeral elegy by praising her: “He has put no son into the Gospel ministry to succeed him, but his worthy daughter Lucy is today practically doing the work of a faithful minister or servant of Christ.”\textsuperscript{210}

A final segment of Laney’s reform campaign in Georgia was her emergence as a public proponent for black women teachers in the South. Laney’s proclamation of the pressing need for black female teachers was made in a speech entitled “The Burden of the Educated Colored Woman,” which she delivered at Hampton’s Negro Conference in 1899:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{208} Ibid., 296.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{209} Quoted in \textit{Manassas Democrat}, May 8, 1913, n.p., in Jennie Dean Papers, Manassas Museum.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
No one suffers under the weight of this burden as the educated Negro woman does; and she must help to lift it. Ignorance and immorality, if they are not the prime causes, have certainly intensified prejudice. The forces to lighten and finally to lift this and all of these burdens are true culture and character, linked with that most substantial coupler, cash. We said in the beginning that the past can serve no further purpose than to give us our present bearings. It is a condition that confronts us. With this we must deal, it is this we must change. The physician of today inquires into the history of his patient, but he has to do especially with diagnosis and diagnosis has often been made let us attempt a cure. We would prescribe: homes better homes, clean homes, pure homes; schools better schools; more culture; more thrift; and work in large doses; put the patient at once on this treatment and continue through life. Can woman do this work? She can; and she must do her part, and her part is by no means small.211

Laney’s excerpted speech above is indicative of the social reformist spirit, which enveloped a significant number of southern black women during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Jennie Dean was a part of this group of women, who like Lucy Craft Laney, felt an engendered responsibility as traditional “gatekeepers of domesticity” to extend their matriarchal influence beyond the private sphere of home into the public sphere of community. As these women entered the public sphere of community reform, they gave tirelessly of their time and professionalism in order to uplift their communities.

Following in this tradition of institution building and community uplift was educator Charlotte Hawkins Brown, who was also a contemporary of the dissertation’s four women. Charlotte Hawkins Brown wrote, “I have devoted my life to establishing for Negro youth something superior to Jim Crowism.”212 Brown gained notability and


acclaim as the founder of the Palmer Memorial Institute in Sedalia, North Carolina. Aside from establishing a training institution, which provided black youth with an industrial and collegiate preparatory education, Brown engaged in numerous other campaigns to uplift life within the southern community in which she lived. Brown was born Lottie Hawkins to mother Caroline Hawkins in Henderson, North Carolina, in 1883. Brown’s mother was unmarried at the time of her birth, so the identity of Charlotte’s biological father remained a mystery. Despite the enigmatic nature of Brown’s paternal lineage, biographers Charles Wadelington and Richard Knapp asserted that on her maternal side, she descended from a “prominent” mulatto enslaved family who served the high-brow genteel planter families of Henderson. Wadelington and Knapp further noted that Brown’s family developed close bonds with the white families whom they served and observed firsthand the social graces of the white southern aristocracy. 213 Brown’s biographers also speculated that the family’s exposure to the values of aristocratic white southerners may have influenced their adoption and approbation of social etiquette and academic attainment. Although the amount of influence that the Hawkins’ aristocratic employers wielded over them is debatable, it is certain that the family’s subscription to etiquette and academic advancement shaped Brown throughout her personal and professional life. Brown’s acceptance of these values was later exemplified in her design and governance of the Palmer Institute.

Brown’s eventual role as an institution builder was largely facilitated by the privilege of growing up in the less racially restricted North. Brown’s family relocated to

Boston in 1888. Growing up in Boston and Cambridge afforded Brown an opportunity to hone academic ambitions and potential, which would have been nearly impossible to secure in the segregated South. As a bright student, Brown attended the prestigious English High School in Cambridge. Celebrated as one of the best high schools in the nation, the English High School offered students an integrated curriculum of collegiate, domestic science, and scientific preparatory. The school also impressively had a female majority, which biographers believe enhanced Brown’s feminist legacy.  

Another institutional dynamic which had an early and lifelong impact on Brown’s reform activism was the black church. Just like Jennie Dean, Charlotte Hawkins Brown was heavily influenced by her community’s church and its teachings. More specifically, the church was instrumental in introducing Brown to the reformist work and ideologies of prominent black leaders, such as Booker T. Washington who spoke at Boston’s Ebenezer Baptist Church in 1897. Washington’s speech was entitled “The Negro in the South,” and within this piece he encouraged his northern black audience to return to the South and reform its disfranchised black masses: “You who have had the opportunity for education in Massachusetts should help your own people in the South. Massachusetts does not need you. Come over into Macedonia and help us.”

The church also acquainted Brown with the reformist work of Lucy Craft Laney.

Brown’s biographers, Wadelington and Knapp, believed that she took special

---


215. Quoted in Ibid., 28.
inspiration from Laney because like Brown, Laney was a dark-skinned black woman. Brown was impressed by the fact that Laney defied prevailing negative stereotypes about darker-skinned black people as being academically and culturally deficient and unproductive. Through Laney’s founding of the Haines Normal School in Augusta, Georgia, Brown perceived Laney as a paradigm of black exceptionalism, as she exemplified an intelligent and respected leader of black education reform. The church essentially planted within Brown a seed of interest in the reform work which was influencing the South’s black communities by the 1890s, and Brown’s next encounter would provide her with the resources to become a reformer in her own right.217

A chance encounter while babysitting gave Brown the opportunity to meet Alice Freeman Palmer, the woman who would provide the namesake to Brown’s school. Palmer was a New York native and the second female president of Wellesley College. Palmer was so impressed by the black teenager’s interest in classic literature and her enrollment at the prestigious English High School that she inquired about Brown’s character from school administrators. Upon learning about Brown’s graduating status, Palmer offered to finance Brown’s post-secondary education at the state normal school in Salem, Massachusetts.218 Incidentally, while still a student at State Normal, Brown became acquainted with the field secretary for the AMA (American Missionary Association). The field secretary offered Brown an opportunity to teach at the Bethany

216. Ibid., 30.
217. Ibid., 28.
Institute in Sedalia, North Carolina.\textsuperscript{219} This opportunity to teach in an AMA school in North Carolina served as the catalyst for her establishment of the Palmer Institute.

Charlotte Hawkins Brown arrived in North Carolina amid growing socioeconomic disparities between the state’s white and black communities. Upon her arrival at the Bethany Institute, Brown was dismayed by the surrounding community’s remote and rural location as well as the dilapidated conditions of some of the school’s facilities. Brown’s initial despair was promptly soothed by her spiritual faith: “... I did not then know, as I now do, that God knew what was best for me. I wanted to enter His service, but had not thought entering such a barren field. However, after thinking over my desire, I said, ‘This is God’s way; I must be satisfied’.”\textsuperscript{220}

Despite the initially bleak circumstances of the school’s appearance, Brown took the helm of leadership. During her first year at Bethany, Brown was able to secure separate dormitories for male and female students. Brown accomplished this feat by enlisting the aid of the school’s principal, Reverend Baldwin, who sequestered an old blacksmith’s shop and an old abandoned house to serve as dormitories. Once secured, the buildings were renovated by students, parents, and other community people.\textsuperscript{221} This reliance on and integration of community institutional involvement colored the school’s existence from its beginning to its end.

By 1902, the AMA decided to close the Bethany Institute so that it could focus on its more established normal schools and colleges. Brown decided not to abandon Sedalia’s black community, as she felt an obligation to uplift its rural and remote

\begin{footnotes}
\item 219. Ibid., 11.
\item 220. Quoted in Ibid., 39
\item 221. Ibid., 40.
\end{footnotes}
population. Immediately following the school’s closing in the spring of 1902, Brown embarked upon an effort to keep the school’s doors open. Throughout the summer of 1902, Brown launched a fundraising campaign to raise money to operate Bethany in the fall. Brown traveled tirelessly throughout New England and received donations of clothing and furniture from black churches and white friends. Brown even staged paid literary performances in which she sang melodies and recited poetry. These sold-out performances were showcased within resort hotels near Gloucester, Massachusetts. Brown was so tenacious in this venture that she performed at over four hotels in one night and walked six miles between hotels! Needless to say, Brown’s industrious perseverance paid off and she accomplished her fundraising goal of $100 by the summer’s end.222

Brown, like the other women in this dissertation, employed self-initiated fundraising strategies but also utilized white philanthropy to aid her reformist initiatives. One initial benefactor of Brown’s school was Daisy Bright, the wife of an affluent New York businessman who owned a hunting lodge near the Bethany school. Bright introduced Brown to other affluent northern visitors to the area. Bright and her cadre of northern friends were key financial sources for Palmer during its early years. Aside from northern white philanthropy, Brown was also conscious of the need to secure southern white support. To this end, Brown established correspondence with Charles D. McIver, president of the Southern Education Association and district director of the Southern Education Board. Although McIver seemed somewhat dismissive of Brown’s school initiative, his wife, Lula V. M. McIver, was intrigued with Brown’s determination to operate the school. Lula’s positive impression of Brown

222. Ibid., 33.
undoubtedly prompted Charles McIver to relent and recommend state appropriations for Brown’s school.\textsuperscript{223}

In 1903, Brown renamed Bethany as the Alice Freeman Palmer Memorial Institute. Along with a new name, Brown also redesigned the school’s curriculum, which she based on her own academic experience while living in Massachusetts. Elementary-grade subjects included spelling, drawing, reading, arithmetic, and hygiene. Upper grades’ subjects included literature, geography, history, and agriculture. In addition, students who planned to further their education by attending a normal school or college took advanced courses in education, civil government, North Carolina school law, and a foreign language. Academics aside, the school also offered its students industrial and manual training. Palmer’s students received hands-on manual training by working in the school’s blacksmith and carpentry shops. Domestic training was provided in Grinnell Cottage. This multipurpose facility housed six bedrooms, a dining room, kitchen, and reception room. Before graduation, every female student was required to spend a semester in Grinnell, learning meal planning, preparation, and caring from three small children. Finally, all students were required to share in the maintenance of the school’s farm.\textsuperscript{224}

The fact that Palmer initially included an industrial and manual training program makes it similar to the curricula offered in the institutions founded by the other women discussed in this dissertation. Brown, like other black school builders in the early 1900s South, was conscious of the utilitarian and philanthropic value of industrial education.

\textsuperscript{223} William Arthur Link, \textit{North Carolina: Change and Tradition in a Southern State} (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2009), 297.

Its utilitarian value rested in its ability to prepare black southerners with a marketable income source. Its philanthropic value rested in the fact that most of the era’s white benefactors of black education staunchly subscribed to a belief that industrial and manual training was the best preparation for an efficient southern black populace. An example of this fact is revealed in a letter received by Brown from a New York benefactor Frances Guthrie. Within the letter, Guthrie urged Brown not to attempt to teach her students “more than their natures are ready to receive . . . Poor rural blacks would require years of training before being able to use academic education productively without having it turn their heads.”²²⁵

By 1907, the school’s staff and campus had increased to three teachers and two primary school assistants, both of whom were Palmer graduates; and the campus consisted of several buildings and the school farm.²²⁶ The school’s promotional brochure projected the school as one which placed priority on quality education, industrial training, and Christian training—the same virtues emphasized at Dean and Hayden’s schools. Once Brown was able to publicly convey the school’s instructional mission, she was able to extend reformist initiatives to the school’s surrounding community.²²⁷

Brown believed that community cohesiveness and economic stability would enhance the school’s progression and longevity by providing it with a communal system of support. By 1908, Brown began selling acreage from the school’s farm to local black farmers. This venture helped to increase the number of black landowners in Sedalia.

²²⁵. Quoted in Ibid., 53.
²²⁶. Ibid., 56.
²²⁷. Ibid.
Eventually, this project materialized into the Sedalia Home Ownership Association, which also encouraged cooperative land purchasing. Brown’s initiative to endow Sedalia’s black residents with land ownership provided them with a welcomed alternative from exploitive tenant farming and sharecropping.228

As her school and community reform initiatives expanded, Brown also affiliated with local, state, and national civic organizations. In 1909, Brown founded the North Carolina Federation of Negro Women’s Clubs; this happened a year after Janie Porter Barrett founded the Virginia federation.229 In 1912, Brown became president of the federation and served as its president for twenty years. Brown also became a member of the North Carolina Teachers Association (NCTA) and also briefly served as its president. As a member of the NCTA, Brown advocated an improvement of inadequate black schools and an increase in black teacher salaries. Prior to her organization of a statewide teacher’s association, Brown established a local initiative in 1909 with the creation of the School Improvement League in Sedalia. The league’s purpose was to enhance the attractiveness of community schools and homes. Aside from beautification projects, the league also sponsored programs of cultural development and moral uplift patronized by Sedalia’s black community. A number of these programs included staged musical performances and fairs presented by Palmer’s students.230

In addition to providing Sedalia’s community with occasional entertainment outlets, the school also served as a “de facto social welfare agency.”231 The school

228. Ibid., 61.

229. Link, North Carolina: Change and Tradition in a Southern State, 298.

230. Wadelington and Knapp, Charlotte Hawkins Brown and the Palmer Memorial Institute, 64.

231. Ibid., 66.
housed two social relief programs which significantly improved the lives of the residents of Sedalia. The two programs were Brown’s Home Owners Association and an informal “Farmer’s Conference.” This conference consisted of local farmers consulting with the school’s farm expert on efficient agricultural techniques. In addition, the school’s farm provided the local community with pure-bred livestock for crossbreeding and high-quality crop seeds. The school’s crop production was so bountiful that in 1909 Palmer’s student farmers provided local farmers with 10,000 sweet potato plants. Aside from aiding local farmers, the school also provided vital childcare services to working mothers via a nursery and kindergarten housed on the school’s campus. Finally, the school housed a community health clinic staffed with a visiting doctor, dentist, and nurse.232

Brown’s tireless reformist campaign extended beyond the parameters of mere Christian morality, or the social gospel, or the soft progressivism of palliative programs, but also reflected Brown’s politicized social conscious as a woman and African-American living in the Jim Crow South of the early 1900s. To this end, Brown emerged as a vocal advocate for women’s suffrage and an unyielding opponent to institutionalized racial segregation. For example, there were numerous incidences during the 1910s and 1920s in which Brown sued train companies for their practice of racial segregation. One particular incident occurred in 1920 when Brown travelled by train to speak at an interracial women’s Missionary Convention in Memphis. After sleeping all night in a Pullman car, Brown was awakened by at least twelve white men who demanded that she move to a segregated section of the train or be removed from

232. Ibid., 66.
the train. Though embarrassed and humiliated, Brown relented and moved to a segregated train car. In the aftermath of this indignation, Brown filed a suit against the Pullman Company and received monetary compensation.233

Aside from her bold confrontation of institutionalized segregation, Brown’s determination to enrich the reputation of her school, its students, and its surrounding community was never-ending. From 1937 to its closing in 1971, Palmer existed as a college preparatory boarding school that served children from the nation’s black elite. An illustration of this reputation was exemplified in a 1947 issue of *Ebony* magazine, which chronicled Brown and her school. The article glowingly dubbed Palmer as the “Groton and Exeter of Black America.”234

The 1947 *Ebony* article marks the high point of the school’s existence. By the 1940s, the Palmer Institute exclusively provided its students with a liberal arts college preparatory curriculum in which ninety-nine percent of graduates attended college.235 As an exclusive collegiate preparatory institution, Palmer attracted students from the nation’s burgeoning black middle-class. Aside from a college preparatory curriculum, Palmer’s students were also instructed in the manners of social etiquette. A more detailed code of etiquette was chronicled in Brown’s 1941 book, *The Correct Thing To Do, To Say, To Wear*.236 Brown continued as Palmer’s principal until her retirement in 1952. Charlotte Hawkins Brown died of heart failure in 1961. The Palmer Memorial


Institute closed in 1971 and became a historic site in 1987; it was the state’s first historic site dedicated to an African-American woman.\(^{237}\) In life and in death, Brown’s legacy was clear. Brown’s creation and governance of the Palmer School as a multipurpose institution, which provided its community with formalized instruction and community outreach, encapsulated one woman’s mission to build within her border. Brown’s establishment of a multipurpose institution, which invaluably served her local black community, was similar in objective to the institution founded by another remarkable southern black woman reformer, Della Irving Hayden.

\[\ldots\] Among the noblest benefactors of womanhood or manhood enrolled in the Hall of fame none can shine with brighter luster than that of Mrs. D. I. Hayden. She was an industrious, a levelheaded, sagacious woman and her life and labors will ever stand as a monument of inspiration for generation of subsequent years.\(^{238}\)

Della Irving Hayden, an 1877 graduate of Hampton Institute, began her career as a teacher in the public black schools of Franklin in southern Virginia. Hayden was born around 1851/1854 in Tarboro, North Carolina, to an enslaved woman and an unknown white man. Della was separated from her mother during infancy and was reunited with her at the close of the Civil War in 1865. Upon the reunion of mother and daughter, the two moved to Virginia, where Hayden spent her life as a celebrated educator and community leader. Although Hayden later focused her reformist initiatives within black education, her own early academic aspirations were met by a dismal reality. Hayden and her mother were both dismayed by the lack of schools available to black students in postbellum Franklin. Since there were no Freedman’s schools in her community, young


\(^{238}\) Reverend Lloyd Heck, *Memorial Pamphlet for Della Irving Hayden*, 1924, 4, in Della Irving Hayden Papers, Hampton University Archives.
Hayden was tutored by a Caucasian family friend. Eventually, Hayden’s mother was able to enroll her in a Freedmen’s Bureau school in nearby Nansemond County, Virginia. Hayden later transferred to a public school in Franklin.  

In 1872, she entered Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute on an “economic hardship” scholarship. After her first two-year stint as a Hampton student, Hayden took a two-year hiatus from academic studies in order to gain field experience in teaching. By 1876 she returned to Hampton and graduated in 1877 with high honors. Hayden, like Janie Porter Barrett and Amelia Perry Pride, was profoundly inspired by her years at Hampton Institute.

Hampton’s significance in Hayden’s life was threefold. First, the school provided her an institutional venue, in which she could hone her professional skills as an educator. Second, Hampton’s mission philosophy encouraged her reformist spirit, which shaped her life as a civic leader. Third, Hampton provided Hayden (unknowing of her biological father) with a nurturing, paternal figure in the person of its founder and principal, Gen. Armstrong. Years after Hayden graduated from Hampton, she reflected on the positive ways that Hampton and Armstrong had influenced her professional success as an educator and civic leader:

My success in life is due not to Hampton only, but to General Armstrong. We tried to find a suitable name for him, and I said we will call him a ‘Bundle of Energy bound with Goodness’, and this is not half expressing my exalted confidence in him. I cannot tell his value to this nation, and especially to my race. When I look back to my school days

---

239. Ibid., 1.
240. Ibid.
241. Ibid.
and think of those grand lectures he used to give us each Sunday evening, I can but say, Thank God I lived when he did.\textsuperscript{242}

Upon graduation from Hampton, Hayden returned to Franklin and taught day and night school. Hayden recalled that Franklin’s black youth had such a passion for learning that they traveled for miles with torchlights to the night school! After Hayden’s first year of teaching in Franklin, she married her college sweetheart, Lindsey Hayden. Della met Lindsey during her sophomore year at Hampton. The two married circa 1878 (there are no identifiable court records) and settled in Liberty (now Bedford), Virginia, where Lindsey served as a school principal. As the school’s chief administrator, Lindsey hired Della as a first assistant teacher. Sadly, this union was very brief as Lindsey died five months after the marriage due to illness. In the aftermath of her husband’s untimely death, Hayden and her mother returned to Franklin where she resumed her teaching career.\textsuperscript{243} Hayden initially taught in Franklin for thirteen years before transferring to serve a fourteen-year stint as Lady Principal at the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute in Petersburg, Virginia (now Virginia State University). While employed at Virginia Normal, Hayden’s reformist initiative expanded beyond the classroom and trickled into Petersburg’s black community at large. Hayden like Dean was actively involved in her church. From adolescence into adulthood, Hayden held numerous church offices, such as Sunday schoolteacher and superintendent, secretary, and choir director. After completing her education at Hampton and permanently settling into a career as an educator, Hayden affiliated with Christian-based organizations, such

\textsuperscript{242} Quoted in \textit{Twenty-Two Years’ Work of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute} (Hampton: Normal School Press, 1893), 82.

as the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), Bible board, the Home Missionary Society, and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). These organizations which espoused the virtue of social reform as a Christian duty served to undoubtedly further enhance Hayden’s stance toward community involvement and uplift.\footnote{244. Della Irving Hayden, “A Graduate Reminiscences,” \textit{The Southern Workman} 46 (1917), 63, in Della Irving Hayden Papers, Hampton University Archives.}

Southern black women’s reformism occurred within the midst of white southern women’s reformism. Southern women’s reformism grew out of Protestant-based women’s organizations such as the WCTU, the YWCA, the Woman’s Board of Foreign Missions, and the Woman’s Board of Home Missions. The latter two organizations sprang from the southern Methodist Episcopal Church.\footnote{245. Dewey W. Grantham, \textit{Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition} (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 201.} During the late nineteenth century these Christian-based organizations were instrumental in implementing numerous reformist initiatives throughout the South. For example, by the 1890s, the Southern Methodist Woman’s Parsonage and Home Mission Society created and operated several mission, training, and industrial schools throughout the South. One of the first of these industrial schools was created in 1877 in Birmingham by women from the home mission society of Birmingham’s First Methodist Church. By 1899, southern home mission societies had created such a vast social reformist network that it employed seventeen workers in ten cities whose duties included “friendly visiting,” Bible reading, scripture teaching, the teaching of kindergarten, and “rescue work.”\footnote{246. Ibid., 221.}
Sharing a similar Christian base as home mission societies was the WCTU, whose primary reformist initiative was prohibition. The issue of prohibition in the South as well as in the North was motivated by the progressive objective to maintain social order and efficiency. For instance, progressives concluded that excessive alcohol consumption detracted from industrial workers’ job performance. Poor industrial job performance had a trickle-down effect that yielded industrial deficiency and domestic displacement as alcoholism brought unemployment and violence. Prohibitionists also regarded saloons as places which harbored and sanctioned prostitution and corrupt political machinery. This association was because prostitutes and political machine enforcers often gathered in saloons for the purpose of solicitation.

In the progressive-era South the attack on alcohol distribution and consumption was also rooted in a racist attempt to socially control the presumed lascivious nature of drunken black men, who posed a potential threat to white women’s virtue. Despite its secular nature, prohibition, especially in the South, became a part of a social gospel progressive agenda which engaged white and black reformers alike. Historian Dewey Grantham asserted:

The struggle for prohibition, like other important social movements of this period, attracted support for several different reasons. It reaffirmed the evangelical ideals of southern Protestantism. It was both a coercive reform with strong racial and class overtones and an expression of social concern for those victimized by the South’s new urbanization and industrialization.

Despite the racial overtones attached to southern prohibition, black reformers such as Della Irving Hayden initiated prohibitionist campaigns as a way to ensure order,

247. Ibid., 176.

248. Quoted in Ibid., 177.
stability, and efficiency within their own communities. It was Hayden’s voluntary departure from Virginia Normal in 1903 that marked the beginning of her remaining life’s work as an institution builder and community reformer. This last chapter in the reformist life of Della Irving Hayden took place in her hometown of Franklin.

By the dawn of the 1900s, Hayden became more conscious of and dismayed by the educational disparities suffered by Franklin’s black students. Since Hayden had previously been a resident of Franklin and completed school there before attending Hampton, she felt an obvious connection and regard for the town’s black community. As an administrator and educator, Hayden was particularly concerned about the lack of instructional facilities for the city’s black student population. More specifically, the city did not have a high school for black students. Hayden perceived this academic disparity as a particular disservice to adolescent black girls, who were often left without employable and marital domestic skills.249 The realization of this dire consequence prompted Hayden to establish an industrial training school for Franklin’s black youth that placed priority on female students:

But deep down in my heart I felt that I ought to go back to Franklin, my former home, and do something there for my people, who were in great need of a good boarding school where the students, especially girls, could get better home training as well as book training; for most of our girls leave the public school at thirteen or fourteen…Then too, the girls have had no opportunity to get industrial training and are therefore not prepared to support themselves.250

Hayden’s consciousness of the racial-based educational disparities in Franklin was an extension of a larger issue which plagued the entire South. In 1900, there were


250. Ibid.
only ninety-four public high schools for black students, within the seventeen southern and border states. Consequently, Hayden like Jennie Dean was inspired by selfless spiritual faith to embark upon a major feat of community reform: “It took great faith and I lost many tears to give up my position and a good salary, but remembering those sacred words, ‘Through Christ I can do all things’- I decided to carry out my heart’s desire.”

Inspired by a sense of Christian duty and community commitment, Hayden secured local black support along with external white philanthropy and began to organize the Franklin Normal and Industrial Institute. Hayden’s personal reflection on the first year of the school’s founding year was telling of the local black community’s drive to attain formal education and black leaders’ resolve to provide them with adequate institutional resources:

I rented a little room 15 by 20 feet, bought two dozen chairs, got a blackboard, stove, table and broom. I had twenty-one students the first month. We had five acres of land donated to us by Mrs. Marriage Allen of London, England. I taught school in the week and went on Sundays and begged money at churches, so we were finally able to put up a building with four classrooms that cost about $1,000. The first year I was alone, but now I have three teachers besides myself. In addition to this building we have a dormitory for the girls, with 22 rooms, costing $6,000. We borrowed the money for ten years, and we still owe $3,800 of it. Eight hundred fifty students have attended this school and 40 have graduated. Some are teaching, others are in business, and several have gone to other schools.

Hayden’s school opened in January 1904 with a statement of purpose to graduate well-trained teachers for Franklin and the surrounding counties. Aside from


the instruction of teaching pedagogy, the school also sought to enrich the entire character of each student: “. . . the training by the school will be along religious, moral and intellectual lines to qualify the young people for the many duties of life.” The school’s mission of cultivating every aspect of a student’s character coincided with its admissions policy, which required all applicants to present “testimonials of good character.” Upon the attainment of admission, students at Hayden’s Franklin Institute embarked upon a four-year curriculum, which included reading, writing, spelling, mathematics, geography, drawing, sewing, rhetoric, Bible study, moral training, and teaching pedagogy. In addition, students were required to assist with livestock raising and other work details within the school’s farm. Hayden’s instruction of character-building extended beyond the classroom into Franklin’s black community at large. For she not only provided it with an institution to train efficient educators and leaders, but through her reformist initiatives of temperance and Christian missionary groups, Hayden also served as a tangible and inspirational model of black self-help and moral authority.

While Christian principle significantly characterized Hayden’s reformism, the nucleus of her “community building” rested on a lifetime commitment to the philosophy of self-help. Hayden’s unrelenting initiative of self-help was cited in a pamphlet which retrospectively memorialized her life:

Mrs. Hayden’s eminence as an instructor was characterized by the spirit of self-help. She believed that the spirit of self-help was the root of all genuine growth

254. Quotations from *Franklin Normal and Industrial Institute Catalogue, 1907-1908* (Franklin, VA: Southampton Democrat Job Print, 1907), 6, in Della Irving Hayden Papers, Hampton University Archives.
in an individual. She believed that help from without was often enfeebling in its effect, while help from within invariably invigorates.255

Aside from an observer’s view of her legacy, Hayden herself acknowledged the central role that a self-help philosophy had on her campaign to reform Franklin’s black community: “I cannot save the whole race, but every boy and girl that I can train in the right way will make the race stronger and the state better. It has been my privilege to urge thousands of my people to buy land, build homes, educate themselves, and become good citizens.”256

Hayden’s endorsement and encouragement of self-sufficiency were far-reaching in Franklin. One of the most visible manifestations of the black community’s adoption of Hayden’s self-help principle was exemplified through their financial support of the Industrial school in Franklin. While Hayden’s school marginally relied on white philanthropy, it was predominantly supported by Franklin’s black community. This earnest financial support among the black community is suggested by a 1909 school budget report, which documented black donations at $1,199.52 in comparison to the $410.00 provided by white “Friends of Baltimore.”257 In a 1916 article by Hayden, she again proudly acknowledged that Southampton County’s black community had provided a majority of the school’s financial support. This reflected Hayden’s successful effort to encourage the county’s black community to embrace an ethic of self-sufficiency, which was a fundamental virtue instilled in her at Hampton: “I have


257. No Author Provided, “Donor Pamphlet for Franklin Normal and Industrial Institute,” 1909, in Della Irving Hayden Papers, Hampton University Archives.
been trying to teach my people to help themselves. It has been my heart’s desire to help elevate my race and whatever I have done and all my success, I owe to Hampton.”

Della Irving Hayden’s life came to an abrupt end on December 10, 1924, after sustaining fatal injuries from a car accident. In the wake of her passing, Hayden had provided Virginia’s black community with fifty years of service as an educator and community leader. She had also set in motion a legacy of black academic excellence in Franklin, which would endure for several decades, as her Industrial Institute eventually developed into a fully accredited public secondary school. Franklin Industrial’s dramatic evolution from a one-room cottage to a modern campus with multipurpose residential and classroom buildings demonstrated the unyielding determination and commitment of its founder and its beneficiary community. The combination of external philanthropy along with internal community support significantly helped to sustain Hayden’s Franklin School as well as Dean’s Manassas School.

Dean’s Manassas School, like the schools founded by Laney, Brown, and Hayden, began with a small enrollment which promptly and progressively increased. Another commonality among Dean and her contemporaries, all of whom had experienced an enslaved childhood, was a skillful networking and fostering of resources, which enabled their institutions to buy land. The Manassas School spanned across one hundred acres of farm land, some of which had been the battle site of Bull Run in 1861. By 1899, the school’s campus had expanded to include residential and


259. Heck, Memorial Pamphlet for Della Irving Hayden, 3.
instructional facilities for the student/faculty community. Howland Hall was named in honor of Emily Howland, a white woman from Sherwood, New York, and one of the school’s earliest benefactors. Howland Hall was a four-story building which included a kitchen, dining room, four recitation rooms, the school’s sewing department, a reception room, and twenty-eight bedrooms for female students. A second building, Hackley Hall, bore its name from Frances Hackley of Tarrytown, New York. Hackley was just under construction in 1899. However, once its construction was completed, it stood at three stories (including its basement). Hackley housed the school’s chapel, administrative offices, the millinery department, and residential accommodations for male students. A third building, Bailey, was used as a carpentry and laundry shop. By 1909, the school had added more buildings. Additions included a storage building donated by Emily Howland. The storage building housed farm products and commissary supplies. Another building, Orchard Cottage, was an eight-room farmhouse and residence of the school’s farmer. Another eight-room building was constructed to serve as the principal’s residence.

The expansion of campus buildings at Dean’s Manassas School in the decade from 1899 to 1909 reflected the vast amount of external support given to the school, which was due largely to Dean’s tireless promotion. Throughout her affiliation with the Manassas School, whether as “school matron” (residential director) or Board of Directors member, Dean constantly travelled and spoke throughout the Northeast and New England states in an effort to raise funds for the school. Oswald Garrison Villard,


grandson of noted abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison and also the owner of the *New York Evening Post*, cited his own explanation for Dean’s success in fundraising:

> . . . I think it was her own straightforward honesty and refusal to pretend to be anything else than what she was, a plain woman, unashamed of being a cook who made money to help the School and her people. I was much interested by the deep impression she made upon my Southern wife. There was nothing servile about her. She did not play up to or toady to the whites. She was just a plain, simple, dignified Black woman with no gift of oratory and no charm beyond what I have said her straightforwardness and sincerity.²⁶²

During the school’s first years of operation, Dean served as a residential matron and supervisor for the domestic arts department. Despite her marginal influence on the school’s academic and disciplinary code, the Manassas School, nevertheless, provided its students with a straightforward set of performance expectations within and outside of the classroom. The key objectives of the school were as follows:

1. To train in habits of usefulness those committed to its care, by developing them mentally, morally and physically.
2. To teach the dignity and importance of labor, and by means of trades to perform it skillfully and with pride.
3. To give a sound, English, common school education.
4. To teach the value and use of money.
5. To train young men and women for useful, intelligent citizenship.
6. To make its students self-reliant, careful thinkers, thorough in their work, manly and womanly in their bearing, and to cultivate habits of industry.²⁶³

While the school operated as a coeducational facility, the curriculum course of study was gender-based. Girls were taught the trades of sewing, dressmaking, cooking, housekeeping, laundry cleaning, poultry raising, and woodcraft. The male students’ vocational curriculum placed an emphasis on carpentry, gardening, blacksmithing, shoemaking, and farming. Manual and vocational instruction was accompanied by liberal arts courses. The school’s first year of academic courses included reading, spelling, mathematics, linguistics, geography, penmanship, physiology, natural science, drawing, music, and oratory. The second- through fourth-year courses of study included most of the aforementioned subjects, but also included more advanced levels of science and math, such as physics, geology, and algebra. The latter course of study also included more classes within history, government, ethics, and pedagogy. Aside from the rigors of academic instruction, students were expected to adhere to an orderly and ethical code of discipline. As cited in an annual school report: “The aim is to establish in the student body the habit of respectful obedience to authority, of courtesy, of faithful application to duty, of regulating conduct by high moral principles, and of confidence and pride in the race.”

The school’s mission to cultivate its students’ moral character manifested itself in a strict conduct policy. Manassas School students were expected to refrain from the use of profanity, alcohol, tobacco products, the possession and use of firearms, and card playing. Both the male and female dormitories were assigned a residential director, who served as a residential adult guardian to the students. Students were not allowed to leave

264. Ibid., 7.

campus without authorized permission. Students were also expected to practice good hygiene. These policies were insured by a daily inspection of their rooms and student uniforms. Finally, male students were required to participate in military drill; by the third and fourth year, they were assigned to conduct periodic guard duty. This inclusion of a militaristic regimen for male students was commonplace among the era’s other industrial schools such as Hampton Institute.

Another correlation between Dean’s Manassas School and Hampton was drawn by George Carr Round. Round was a Unionist Civil War veteran and Manassas resident who had served a single term as a representative to the Virginia Assembly from 1873 to 1875. Round also helped charter Dean’s Manassas School. In a 1908 article published in the *Southern Workman*, Hampton’s quarterly journal, Round reflected on his visit to Hampton during the early 1870s. The purpose of this visit was for regional legislators to observe and assess the school’s progress and eligibility for state funding which incidentally was secured. The procurement of this endowment resulted from the positive impression made by Hampton’s students and staff. Round acknowledged that his favorable first-hand observation of Hampton’s model profoundly encouraged efforts to support other regional black academic institutions, namely the Manassas School:

> It will be clear from what I have written that I have known something of Hampton from the beginning, the inspiration I received from observations has had much to with my work in chartering and carrying on the Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth, which I consider an outgrowth of Hampton and the Hampton spirit.

266. Ibid.


268. Quoted in Ibid., 41.
The Manassas School’s maintenance of Hampton’s standards garnered it and Dean presidential recognition and acclaim during a February 1906 White House address made by President Theodore Roosevelt:

... There are a great many very, very excellent charitable people in the country, but some of them tend to forget at times that the only charity that does permanent good is that kind of charity that is not a charity at all, that teaches someone how to help himself or herself. The only way in which any section of our citizens, of no matter what color, can be permanently benefited is by teaching them to pull their own weight, to do their own duty, their duty to themselves, their duty to their neighbors, their duty to the State at large. ... The white man needs just as much as the colored man to learn that for the average man the education that fits him to do work in life is industrial. ... Of course, Miss Dean, the good that comes with any such school as this is increased tenfold when the school is founded, as you found this, and as Mr. Washington founded Tuskegee, by a colored man or colored woman to help the colored boys and colored girls of to-day to make the best type of self-respecting, self-supporting American citizens of the future.269

Roosevelt’s speech conveys two significant points. First, it reinforced the era’s white mainstream progressives’ approbation of industrial education for the black and white southern masses, as Theodore Roosevelt was a prominent ally of the national progressive movement. Second, Roosevelt’s speech revealed the magnitude of Dean’s legacy as the founder of the Manassas School. Although Manassas was in close proximity to the nation’s capital, the scope of Dean’s significance was nevertheless evident in the fact that she received the honor of national recognition from a U.S. president.

Ironically, President Roosevelt’s words of esteem came at a point in which Dean’s direct role within the Manassas School was curtailed. By the early 1900s and leading up to her death in 1913, Dean’s primary responsibility for the school was that of

a fundraising board of trustees member. Dean’s biographer, Stephen Johnson Lewis, attributed Dean’s diminished responsibilities within the school to a progression of increased faculty standards. By the early 1900s, the school began to employ instructors and administrators who possessed advanced degrees from larger and more prominent institutions. Their academic credentials overshadowed Dean’s elementary level education.270 Regardless of the elimination of supervisory responsibilities, Dean remained as the school’s most publicly acknowledged affiliate and its most ardent promoter to the end.

Jennie Seriepta Dean died from stroke complications on May 3, 1913. In the decades following Dean’s passing, the Manassas School became a state-funded regional high school for black students in the northern Virginia area.271 While the Manassas School gradually evolved into an interdisciplinary industrial and college preparatory institution, its one constant and indelible feature was the historical legacy of its founder—Jennie Dean. The capstone epilogue of Dean’s enduring legacy was chronicled in the *New York Evening Post*:

. . . From the history of Jennie Dean’s life one comes to a realization of what simple determination can accomplish. Here was a country girl, born a slave of slave parents, with only a few months’ schooling for several years in a primitive country school—the very first started in Virginia after the war—starting out to uplift and benefit and educate a whole community of people, and actually doing it. The mayor of Manassas says of the school that the colored community all love it and work for it, and forget to get drunk and get into jail. One mayor told us several years ago he attributed his empty jail to the influence of the Industrial School.272


271. Ibid., 86.

The above editorial excerpt captures the essence of Dean’s self-sacrificing character. Dean’s selflessness and perseverance enabled this woman of modest education and personal resources to found a successful school that infinitely enriched her community. Another reflection of Dean’s dedication to community enrichment was espoused in an eulogy sonnet entitled *A Tribute to a Worthy Colored Woman*, composed by Prince William County’s Superintendent and Manassas Industrial School Board of Trustees member, Dr. H.M. Clarkson:

Sweet sleep be thine, thou faithful child of God,
Kind benefactress of thine humble race,
May angels guard thee in thy resting place,
Beneath the silence of thy native sod.
Tho’ thou hast often felt grief’s chastening rod,
Yet God has marked the good that thou hast done,
And thou shalt wear the crown that thou hast won,
For He has watched the ways thy feet have trod
Then calmly sleep; and on that day of days
When all shall wake, and every race shall rise,
‘Mong countless voices singing songs of praise,
Thine own will ring, and great will be the prize,
For Heaven itself shall be thy resting place,
Loved benefactress of thy lowly race.273

The sonnet, while authentically celebratory of Dean as a proponent of social reform and racial uplift, nevertheless overtly conveys an element of white paternalism.

and assumed racial supremacy. As previously stated, white paternalism, whether of a malevolent or benevolent nature, characterized the backdrop of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century black, southern, social reformism. Undoubtedly, Dean and the other civic-minded black women within this dissertation were conscious of the condescending nature of white paternalism. Despite the potential limitations of white racism, black female reformers in the South were able to skillfully navigate around white prejudice and orchestrate full-scale campaigns of reform. The social reform legacies of Dean and Hayden, even if of a neo-Victorian kind, provided a gateway into the reform activism of two other reformers: Janie Porter Barrett and Amelia Perry Pride. Despite the fact that Dean comparably received less formal education than Hayden, Barrett, and Pride, all four women skillfully and efficiently inspired others and raised funds within and outside of their black southern communities. The women’s utilization and mobilization of diverse resources invaluably aided efforts to build beyond bondage and to build within their borders.
CHAPTER V
FROM CLASSROOM TO COMMUNITY: THE REFORM WORK
OF JANIE PORTER BARRETT AND AMELIA PERRY PRIDE

Samuel Chapman Armstrong was undoubtedly a chief architect of postbellum southern black education. Armstrong’s Hampton Institute, which focused on a manual industrial arts curriculum along with an endorsement and adoption of thrift, piety, community uplift, and self-sufficiency, served as a practical, yet fundamental, facilitator for southern black economic mobility and social reformism. Two Hampton graduates whose social reformist initiatives took direct inspiration from Armstrong’s model were Janie Porter Barrett and Amelia Perry Pride. It was through their establishment of Hampton-inspired reformist institutions, such as settlement houses, retirement homes, industrial arts schools, and rehabilitative schools, that Barrett and Pride were able to enrich life within their communities. The success of these initiatives enabled the two educators to build from classroom to community.

Janie Porter Barrett was born in 1865 in Athens, Georgia, to a former slave named Julia and an unnamed white man. By the time of Barrett’s birth and childhood, Julia worked as a seamstress for the prominent Skinner family in Macon, Georgia. Barrett developed such an affinity for the Skinners that she opted to live with them after her mother married and moved away from Macon. By the age of thirteen, Mrs. Skinner suggested that Barrett “pass” for white and attend a prominent preparatory school in the North, and the Skinner family was willing to finance her academic endeavors. With that suggestion, Barrett’s mother, though a black woman of less educational and economic means in comparison to the Skinners, asserted herself as a parent. Julia adamantly
insisted that her daughter identify and affiliate herself with the black community and its institutions, and she suggested that her daughter attend Hampton Institute. A possible reason for this suggestion was because Hampton by the early 1880s stood at the vanguard of southern black education. The school by this time was lauded for its industrial/vocational curriculum and reinforcement of Christian duty and Victorian-era social reform. Undoubtedly, Julia’s suggestion was based upon her impression of the school’s reputation. Barrett, though initially skeptical, did in fact follow her mother’s suggestion and attended Hampton Institute. She had no idea of the many ways that Hampton would transform her personal and professional life. This transformation first happened by the school’s mission to awaken its students’ consciousness of selfless civic duty.

By Barrett’s own admission, she was often restless at Hampton and was prone to playing pranks. One striking revelation made by this woman who would dedicate her life to uplifting the black community was that when she initially entered Hampton, in 1881, she did not have an affinity for other black people. In a 1915 article, Barrett remembered that: “I did not love my race! I didn’t want the responsibility of it. I wanted fun and pretty things. At the Institute we were always hearing about our duty to our race


and I got so tired of that!" This apparently incessant weeklong call to reform duty caused Barrett to anticipate Sundays, which were considered the weekly allotted “free day” of leisure at Hampton. Barrett stated that she would wake up on Sundays and joyfully note that “today I don’t have to do a single thing for my race!”

Barrett’s initial resistance toward social reform eventually changed during her time at Hampton. While at Hampton, Barrett read a novel which, along with Hampton’s mission philosophy, would profoundly influence her civic activism. The book, entitled *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, was written by British writer Walter Besant (1836-1901) in 1882. Although Besant authored several novels which included *All in a Garden Fair* (1883), *The Children of Gideon* (1886), and *The Rebel Queen* (1893), just to name a few, it was his 1882 work that had a profound impact on Barrett. The novel’s main plot centers on a wealthy protagonist named Angela Messenger who upon graduation from Cambridge University inherits a great sum of money. Instead of living a life of opulent indulgence, Messenger, along with another lead character named Harry Goslett, decide to establish a settlement house in the working-class slum area of London’s East End. In the novel, Messenger referred to the settlement house as a

---


“palace of delight.” Many years later, Barrett borrowed from the novel she had read as a young woman at Hampton, when she referred to the Locust Street Settlement House, which she founded in 1890, as her own “palace of delight.” Besant, a mathematician-turned-novelist, also had an interest in social reform. Besant took inspiration for the novel’s main plot by observing the people and life within London’s East End. From this observation he was able to create the novel’s characters who were composite representatives of real life East Enders. In addition to the East End’s diverse and eclectic population, Besant, being socially conscious, was also observant of the social, cultural, and recreational gaps which needed to be filled in this lower income section of London:

And presently I understood that one of the things very much wanted in this great place was a centre of organized recreation, orderly amusement, and intellectual and artistic culture. So I pictured an heiress going down to the place under the disguise of a dressmaker, and I showed how little by little the same idea was forced upon her; how she was aided in this discovery by a young man who by birth, not by education, belonged to the place; and how in obedience to their invitation the Palace of Delight arose.

Besant further noted that *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* served as the inspiration for the creation of an actual London settlement house called the People’s Palace which operated from 1887 to 1931. The Palace was established by businessman and philanthropist Sir Edmund Currie (1834-1914) whom Besant proclaimed read his

---


novel and used the fictitious Palace of Delight as the model for the People’s Palace: “Sir Edmund Currie, trying to create such a place used the book as a textbook.”  

In a greater context, the People’s Palace was a part of a larger Social Settlement movement which was initiated in London in 1884 by Samuel Barnett, an Anglican clergyman, who served as vicar for the city’s impoverished St. Jude’s parish. The Social Settlement movement was precipitated by a widening economic gap between the wealthy and poor which in itself was a by-product of late nineteenth-century industrialization. Within this movement, the main institutional agency was the university settlement which yielded a multitude of services to its surrounding community. The university settlement house varied in its status as some were solely day facilities while others were residential facilities. Aside from its alternating residential status, the university settlement house served as a social science-type experimental lab as well as a social services agency. The settlement house’s function as a social science lab was due to its initial objective to offer residency to reformist-minded college students who were interested in studying the plight of the inner-city poor as well as socializing with them. Historian Allen F. Davis asserts that Barnett essentially envisioned that this ongoing integration of the different social classes under one roof would serve to bridge the gap of separation between the college-educated upper class and poor:

The university settlement idea, as Barnett explained it, and as he put it into operation at Toynbee Hall, was deceptively simple; to bridge the gulf that industrialism had created between rich and poor, to reduce the

---

284. Ibid., 244.

mutual suspicion and ignorance of one class for the other, and to do something more than give charity, university men would live in a poor neighborhood of a great city. They would make their settlement in the slums an outpost of education and culture.\textsuperscript{286}

The above quotation encapsulates the overall expectation of Toynbee Hall in a more practical sense. The facility offered residency to male college students from Cambridge and Oxford universities with the commitment of understanding the plight of the urban poor as well as devising a reformist initiative of academic and cultural enrichment. To this end, Toynbee Hall placed an emphasis on cultural arts and education by offering art exhibitions, university extension classes, and symposiums. In addition, Toynbee Hall with its architectural design of diamond-paned windows and spacious dining and lecture halls projected such a collegiate atmosphere that an American visitor commented: “Toynbee Hall is essentially a transplant of university life in Whitechapel.”\textsuperscript{287} While Toynbee Hall and other British university settlement houses received criticism for being unrealistically idyllic, the settlement house movement sprang forth throughout Great Britain and the United States.

Although the American Settlement House movement has largely been associated with white Progressives such as Jane Addams (1860-1935) who founded Hull House in 1889 in a Chicago Italian immigrant neighborhood, black reformers such as Janie Porter Barrett also established settlement houses. Incidentally, Jane Addams like Barrett had read Walter Besant’s \textit{All Sorts and Conditions of Men} and also was inspired by its story. In addition, another catalyst for Addams’ settlement initiative was

\begin{flushright}
286. Ibid., 6, 7.

287. Ibid., 7.
\end{flushright}
her 1888 visit to London’s Toynbee Hall. Toynbee Hall impressed upon Addams the viability of an inclusive institution that could enable people across denominational and economic lines to foster a productive environment which celebrated honest labor, cultural enrichment, and individual diversity. Addams, the daughter of an upper middle-class Illinois family, was raised within a tradition of Victorian ideas and expectations. Addams’s stepmother Anna, an accomplished classical musician, subscribed to the Victorian notion that women’s proper place was as hostess of the home. Historian Steven Piott notes that the Addams family’s affinity for female domesticity influenced Addams’ college choice. Although Jane’s first choice was Smith, her father encouraged her to attend Rockford Female Seminary, which provided young women with a Christian-based interdisciplinary curriculum of domestic arts and cultural enrichment. As detailed in an 1889 memorialization of Rockford’s founder, and principal from 1849 to 1889, Anna Sill (1816-1889), the school’s mission was to:

1. To reach especially the poorer and less favored classes of young women, hitherto debarred from the higher education-farmer’s daughters growing up in their wild beauty like the prairie flowers that bloom around them; daughters of Home Missionaries, and other pioneers who had left cultivated homes in the East to plant Christian civilization in the West.

2. To combine, to a limited extent, domestic and industrial training with the intellectual culture imparted by classical and literary study; realizing that the chief end of woman’s education is not simply to shine in society but to elevate and purify and adorn the home. She aimed


to make the Seminary in the truest sense an educational home where certain domestic duties were daily required of every pupil.

3. To infuse as the inmost spirit of the school, *moral and religious culture*, recognizing what should be a first truth in every educational institution, that *character* is the end of knowledge, and the culture of the heart is the true spring of all intellectual culture, since out of it are the issues of life; and that the Bible is the only true textbook of practical morality.

4. With this, and as the blossoming of this beautiful rod of culture-to inspire a missionary spirit, or a spirit of self-denying benevolence toward all, especially the ignorant and the sinful; to teach the great Christian that the true end of life is not to *acquire* the most good, whether of happiness or knowledge, but to *give* oneself most fully and worthily for the good of others.291

As evident by Rockford’s four-point mission, its graduates, like Hampton’s graduates, were instructed within a curriculum of domestic and industrial arts and emphasized a post-graduation encouragement to engage in social service benevolence. To this end, Addams, just like Barrett, was inspired by the founding principles of the school that she attended. In addition, Barrett’s application of Armstrong’s ethics of piety, self-sufficiency, and industrial competency within her reformist initiatives was parallel to Addams’ application of Sill’s Christian-based social service mission.

While Barrett was influenced by mainstream white progressives, such as Jane Addams, it is obvious that her reformist mindset was first cultivated at Hampton Institute. In a 2001 dissertation which examined Barrett’s creation of the Virginia Industrial Home School for Colored Girls, Karen Anne Ford wrote: “Hampton Institute contributed a race-oriented education, a strong foundation in facilitating skills and

lifelong connections that enhanced her institution building drive and prowess." In addition to learning the importance of civic responsibility, Barrett’s Hampton experience also provided her with a sound academic background. During Barrett’s senior year (1883-1884), she took courses in reading, algebra, literature and composition, bookkeeping, political science, philosophy, pedagogy, and teacher observation. Like other senior-, junior-, and sophomore-level female students, Barrett was also required to engage in biweekly domestic arts training which included bread-making, sewing, cooking, and fundamental household maintenance details. All of the courses taken by Barrett during her senior year were directly useful to her professional life away from Hampton. For instance, Barrett’s domestic arts training gave her the competency to offer instruction to other young girls and women within her Locust Street Settlement, whose club divisions slanted toward domestic and industrial arts activities. Most immediately useful were the pedagogy and teacher observation courses which prepared Barrett for her first career venture away from Hampton—classroom teaching.

Barrett graduated from Hampton in 1884 and took a teaching job at the Lucy Craft Laney Haines Normal and Industrial Institute in Georgia. While at the Haines School, Barrett taught the children of sharecroppers. Barrett’s stint at the Haines School


293. No Author Provided, Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute 1883-1884 Catalogue (Hampton: Hampton Institute Press, 1884), 33, Box 4, in Samuel Chapman Armstrong Papers, Hampton University Archives.

was brief; by the late 1880s, she returned to Hampton as a teacher. While teaching at Hampton, she met Harris Barrett, also a graduate of Hampton who worked as a financial aid administrator for the school. Harris and Janie married in 1889 and eventually raised four children: May, Harris, Julia, and Catherine.

Upon marriage, the Barrett’s set up their home on Locust Street in Hampton. Their home became a launching pad to Janie’s career in community social reform. One of the first institutional achievements of Barrett’s social reform activism was her establishment of the Locust Street Settlement. Barrett began this settlement house in 1890, after watching a group of neighborhood girls playing idly in the street. Barrett thought that these children as well as other area youth needed a more organized and constructive outlet in the afternoon, which could cultivate their vocational, domestic, civic, and athletic skills. The initial girls observed by Barrett formed a sewing class and became the first club within the Locust Street Settlement. Barrett taught these girls various Victorian-era skills of domestic living, such as ironing, dinner preparation, laundry details, and dinner table etiquette. Essentially, Barrett used her home as a “laboratory” of instruction, where the girls could observe the Barrett family as they

299. Ibid., 13.
performed domestic details, central to the home’s operation. The Locust Street Settlement’s modest origins in the Barrett home reflected Barrett’s perception of the invaluable influence that even the most mundane of efforts could have on the overall objective of community uplift:

> When we hear one speak [of?] social work, we are apt to think only of the larger things with which it concerns itself, such as government, public health, punishment of crime, reforming criminals, etc.; and we are inclined to feel that there is nothing along that line we can do, forgetting that the most valuable social work is done in the home and immediate neighborhood, and is within the reach of every man and woman. If we do no more than make a good, clean home, whose inmates are honorable and upright, it matters not how humble the home, we have done valuable social work in our community.

Gradually, the girls brought parents, siblings, and grandparents to the Barrett’s Locust Street home for club meetings and to learn these new Victorian-era ways of keeping “a good, clean home.” In a short span of time, the number of people attending the afternoon meetings increased so much that the Barretts had to build a separate clubhouse beside their home.

The Barretts furnished their new Locust Street settlement clubhouse with furniture and equipment donated by Hampton’s faculty. In addition, the settlement house’s clubs were led by Hampton students. An article written by Florence Lattimore cited the significant influence of Hampton’s mission philosophy, as it was crafted by Hampton students within Barrett’s settlement house. According to Lattimore, the clubs

---


at the Barrett settlement house were mostly led by Hampton Institute students “who bring into the work the spirit and standards which have made the school famous.”

Another direct illustration of Hampton’s impact on the Locust Street settlement house was evident in occasional Sunday evening celebrations which were attended by such prominent Hampton associates as Samuel Armstrong and Booker T. Washington.

In addition to Sunday evening socials, the Locust Street Settlement had nine clubs and classes that met seven days a week for eight months out of the year. They were organized into departments and divisions. Each club served a goal specific to the department’s industrial and domestic-based objective. Given the domestic and industrial slant of the departmental objectives, the clubs worked in conjunction to improve the quality of life within Hampton’s black community. The Woman’s Club, also known as the Home Maker’s Club, was composed of different departments for the purpose of promoting home improvement. The Child Welfare Department had two divisions. One was designed to teach mothers how to use modern Victorian methods to “properly” care for their infants. The other branch instructed mothers on new ways to care for and manage older children. The Poultry Department assisted people in taking care of chickens and showing them how to improve their breeding stock. The Home Garden Department provided information about the best seeds and fertilizers. The department also instructed people on how to maintain a steady supply of vegetables year round. The Flower Lovers’ Department distributed plants and cuttings to beautify the yards and

303. Ibid., 9.
304. Ibid., 11.
305. Ibid., 12.
promote the “gospel” of clean backyards. The Quilting Department was conducted by the community’s grandmothers and older women. This department served two purposes: (a) provided families with warm bedcoverings during winter months and (b) provided the elderly with a creative outlet. The Plain Sewing Department made clothing for neighborhood children. The Cooking Department trained women in the skill of efficient and healthy meal preparation. The department also provided women with instruction in canning fruits and vegetables. The Rug Weaving Department made and sold inexpensive and durable floor coverings. Barrett’s summation of community women’s clubs and the Locust Street Settlement’s departmental clubs in teaching people improved methods in farming and cooking are revealed in a 1910 article:

For nearly twenty years we have been directing our energies toward home improvement and these are a few things we are learning: How to have more attractive houses with our limited means; how to have cleaner back yards and more attractive front yards; good gardens that will yield vegetables the year round; chickens that will lay eggs when the price of eggs is highest; what to eat that will best develop brain and muscle as well as how to cook and serve food; and, last but not least, how to train our boys and girls so that they will grow to be honest, upright, and intelligent men and women and good citizens. These clubs have also been successful in doing a great deal toward improving the social life of the community.

Aside from these domestic arts and crafts departments, Barrett’s settlement-house clubs also provided young people in the surrounding neighborhood with offsite and onsite recreational and academic outlets. One hugely successful offsite recreational venture was the annual picnic at Bay Shore, a local beach resort in Hampton. The

307. Ibid., 2.
308. Ibid., 3.
annual picnics began in 1895 and impressively garnered yearly attendance of over eight hundred participants. Onsite recreational activities for boys and girls included basketball, croquet, tennis, and football. Athleticism was a useful way to cultivate leadership and a cooperative spirit among neighborhood youth. One person who fondly remembered the settlement house and its activities was William Cooper. During his childhood, Cooper was a neighbor to the Barrett family and spent a lot of time at the Locust Street Settlement. In a 1953 interview Cooper commented:

I grew up in Mrs. Barrett’s home and backyard. My father fished and oystered in the river nearby and I was obliged to accept Mrs. Barrett’s hospitality and kindness in order to be cared for while my father worked. I actually stayed around the settlement house until I was old enough to go out in the boat with my father. When it was too bad for fishing or oystering, I went there until time to go home. I can give credit to Mrs. Barrett for having developed in me the type of thoroughness and conscientiousness which has characterized my whole life.

As reflected upon by William Cooper, Barrett’s Locust Street Settlement cultivated all areas of its participants’ lives, including academic pursuits. Academic enrichment came by way of the settlement house’s night school program. Night school gave young people the opportunity to work during the day and attend classes in the evening. Barrett took particular pride in this program because it successfully prepared several young men and women to gain admission into Hampton Institute and other schools, while earning the money to pay their own tuition. This initiative taken by these young people exemplified the influence of Armstrong’s mission of black self-sufficiency.

311. Ibid., 14.
The adoption of self-sufficiency and manual arts training among the Locust Street Settlement’s patrons was an exhibition of the far-reaching influence of the Hampton model. This fact was not the result of consequence but rather by intentional design. Barrett’s creation of the Locust Street Settlement was based upon the virtues of community uplift and black economic self-sufficiency which were instilled in her at Hampton. Given the practical popularity and feasibility of the Hampton model for black southern communities, Barrett understandably created her settlement house based upon its principles.

In an exploratory work on the settlement house movement, Ruth Crocker acknowledged the extensive impact that the Hampton and Tuskegee models had on the early twentieth century creation of black settlement houses. Crocker cited the influence of the two models within her examination of Flanner Guild, an Indianapolis settlement house created in 1903 by white reformist Frank Flanner (1854-1912) for black patrons. Crocker noted the influence of Hampton and Tuskegee:

The purpose of the agency, its constitution of 1903 stated, was to promote the ‘social, spiritual, moral and physical welfare of Negroes in Indianapolis, the establishment and maintenance of industrial and other lines of education’. If the name ‘Guild’ recalled the settlement’s debt to contemporary English, Christian Socialism, a more immediate influence was American—the Tuskegee and Hampton ideal of racial progress through gradual economic improvement. The blending of these two reform traditions was nicely captured when the settlement adopted the name ‘Flanner Guild Industrial Neighborhood House’ in 1904.313

Crocker noted that because of racial discrimination within manufacturing jobs, black men and women were usually relegated to employment within lower paid and unskilled jobs. Crocker further proclaimed that consequently this race-based job disparity

prompted the emergence of Indianapolis industrial arts-based institutions such as Flanner House: “Declaring that the jobs assigned to blacks were often ‘unfit for educational and moral advancement,’ the settlement announced its intention to train them for better paid jobs—‘bookkeepers, carpenters, dressmakers, works, etc.’” These vocational forums offered at Flanner were similar to the domestic and industrial enrichment classes and clubs offered at Barrett’s Locust Street facility. The Locust Street Settlement’s patron success rate is largely immeasurable due to a lack of official annual report records and the fact that the Locust Street facility appears to have operated on a less formal level of personal interest clubs and classes in comparison to Flanner House, which had a chief goal of occupational training. A 1905 Flanner House report cited that 150 young women had graduated from its millinery classes offered by the settlement and that all of the graduates had found employment as milliners or millinery teachers. Flanner House’s documented success rate did not overshadow the significance of Barrett’s Locust Street Settlement, which although largely steeped within the Victorian doctrines of Hampton’s industrial mission still stood as an invaluable social, recreational, and vocational resource for Hampton’s black community.

While Barrett’s Locust Street Settlement endorsed ideas and values which were closely associated with the Hampton model, its myriad of services also made it comparable to the nation’s most preeminent settlement house: Jane Addams’ Hull House. Both Locust Street and Hull House settlements offered neighborhood patrons a

314. Ibid., 76.
315. Ibid., 76.
wide variety of similar and useful vocational and recreational services. For instance, Addams’ Hull House, which served the neighborhood’s largely Italian immigrant population, offered classes in English language proficiency, cooking, sewing, woodworking, telegraphy, and a kindergarten. In addition to her operation of Hull House, Addams (just like Barrett) engaged in civic reform initiatives, such as the lobbying for paved streets, public playgrounds, and the establishment of a juvenile court system. Addams’ interest in youth penal reform astoundingly resonated with the later reformist initiatives of Barrett, whose interest in juvenile penal disparities prompted her eventual founding of an industrial-style reformatory school for black girls. Incidentally, Barrett’s establishment of the industrial school in 1915 was an outgrowth of the youth-centered work that she conducted within the Locust Street Settlement. Again, the Locust Street Settlement wielded a far-reaching influence in the lives of its patrons as well as its founder. Its extensive influence for Barrett was reflected in the fact that it served as a launching pad for the last phase of her social reform activism. In creating the Locust Street Settlement House, which invaluably served Hampton’s black community through its myriad of services and activities, Barrett successfully implemented the Hampton motto of “gathering to scatter.”

Another Hampton graduate who “gathered to scatter” was Amelia Perry Pride. She was born in 1857 in Lynchburg, Virginia, to skilled and prominent mixed-race

316. Steven L. Piott, American Reformers, 1870-1920: Progressives in Word and Deed, 98.


parents. Both of Pride’s parents died before she reached the age of sixteen. Despite her personal tragedy, Pride persevered and enrolled at Hampton Institute in 1876. She graduated from Hampton three years later with a teaching degree specialty in the domestic arts. After a brief teaching stint at Hampton, Pride returned to Lynchburg in 1880 and began a thirty-year teaching and administrative career within that system. Pride’s decision to become an educator and social reformer was undoubtedly cultivated during her time as a student at Hampton. Pride’s remarkable commitment to social reform is reflected in an 1889 statement, which she published in the *Southern Workman*:

“My heart seems to yearn to be among my people and try and teach them in every way, both educationally and morally.” While working as an educator, Pride also turned her attention toward community social reform. In her 1889 *Southern Workman* account, Pride told a heartfelt and revealing anecdote within the framework of her own dedication to community building:

One very cold night a poor woman with five little children came near freezing in an open attic. The children’s clothes were thin and their feet bare. I got our Sunday school to furnish some clothes. The city gave me fuel for the poor creatures. My day school pupils gave them dishes to eat out of. I bought a chair. Nothing was in the attic room but two old beds. One bed was covered with an old oil cloth and the children were eating out of tin bucket tops for dishes…I told my pupils about them and the next day some came with dishes of some kind and many others with little things for them. ..This is only a small part of the work I have to do, and only one case.

---


322. Ibid., 1.
Just as Barrett had relied upon communal and collective resources of townspeople, Pride also utilized contributions made from her students, the city government, and her church to aid the homeless family. Pride’s assistance to that homeless family sometime in the 1880s served as one early illustration of her commitment to progressive reform. Pride’s next progressive initiative was the creation of a home for elderly women to serve an even larger population of Lynchburg’s marginalized black population.

In the winter of 1897, Pride, along with a number of other black women Hampton graduates in Lynchburg, established the Dorchester Home, a residential facility for the elderly. By her own account, Pride had written that she felt a particular affinity for elderly African-Americans, most of whom had spent the first decades of their lives as slaves. According to Pride, she often encountered elderly black people in Lynchburg who felt unwanted, burdensome, or invisible. In 1897, Pride and a group of Hampton alumni rented a house for eight dollars a month to house the community’s black homeless elders. Initially, the home’s organizers held weekend community bazaars to raise proceeds for the home’s maintenance. Shortly after the home opened, it was officially named the Dorchester Home. The home was named in honor of philanthropists from Dorchester, Massachusetts, who contributed the facility’s first thirteen-dollar donation. Pride’s appreciation and application of interracial cooperation were parallel to Barrett. Pride was quite aware of white philanthropy’s value to sustain black-based institutions:


324. Ibid., 1.
The greatest strain upon us has been for rent, fuel and food, and there have been times during this winter when were in actual want. The skies were dark, the clouds seemed heavy, we had no money, our women were just as earnest but they were poor; still full of faith I appealed to the president of the white Benevolent Association, which receives aid from the city council. I told her of our embarrassments and struggles, of our almost despair. She listened earnestly and with feeling replied, “age always for itself; make a list of your needs and I will do all I can for these old women.” Next day there was no thought as to what they should eat or how they should be warmed. The president of the association herself visited the home on the day following.325

Aside from the philanthropy of the city’s white women’s council, Hampton Institute also provided bedposts and linens for Pride’s Dorchester Home. Pride’s Dorchester Home was a noble mission to shelter Lynchburg’s dispossessed black elderly. However, it enjoyed a brief lifespan; the home closed by 1904, when all but one of its original residents passed away. Once most of the original residents died, a man named William J. Calloway continued the work of Pride by establishing another home for Lynchburg’s elderly black community. Pride sold the original Dorchester Home and applied the sale’s proceeds toward the Theresa Pierce Industrial School, which she served as principal. Pride explained this transition in a 1904 letter addressed to a “Miss Davis”:

The Old Ladies Home has gone directly out of my hands into the hands of Mr. William J. Calloway whose picture appears in the photograph, though I am still interested in the work, Mr. Calloway has always identified himself in caring for the old folks: All of the Old women that were connected with the [“Home”] when I had charge are dead except one and that work seemed to have been done, so the old home was sold and the proceeds used in the Theresa Pierce Industrial School of which I now have charge.326


326. Amelia Perry Pride, Letter to Miss Davis, March 5, 1904, in Amelia Perry Pride Papers, Hampton University Archives.
The Dorchester Home’s closing ca. 1903-1904 was not a matter of shortfall. It was instead the result of its last occupants dying. Pride, who was still employed as a teacher and administrator, then turned her efforts to enrich industrial education for Lynchburg’s black female youth.

Like Barrett, who first established a settlement house that served a smaller scale neighborhood clientele and then later created a state-funded industrial reformatory school which reached a larger beneficiary clientele, Pride also enjoyed a second tenure of community building that would enable her to serve a more consistent and larger patron base. Each woman cultivated a different type of institution. Pride ran a sewing school, and Barrett led an industrial-based rehabilitation school for delinquent black girls. However, both institutions shared commonalities in their mission to enrich the quality of life in southern black communities. By design, both of these institutions emphasized the Hampton model mission of industrial arts enrichment.

Barrett’s Locust Street Settlement, which was steeped within the principles of self-sufficiency and civic duty, served as a springboard for her second phase of reform activism. Its Child Welfare department instructed mothers on the new ways to properly care for their children. This department also had a committee that maintained contact with the local jails and helped underage children get released from unjust and age-inappropriate incarceration, as there was no separate juvenile penal system in tidewater Virginia during this time. By 1910, the committee had successfully removed four children from criminal adult jail. One child was a little girl around the age of nine who was placed in the Newport News, Virginia, jail for stealing $40.00 which was never proven. Barrett addressed court officials and advocated on the child’s behalf.
Eventually, Barrett secured the child’s reassignment to an orphanage in Hampton. Another case involved a boy who was removed from “criminal adult jail” and sent to a boys’ juvenile reformatory school in Hanover, Virginia. After reading one of the letters that the boy sent to his mother, Barrett also identified this case as a success story. The boy had detailed his tenacity in trying to improve his behavior. The letter also contained the child’s enclosed math exams with grades of 100 percentile. These two examples of young people reformed within the parameters of institutionalized guardianship motivated Barrett to advocate for penal juvenile reform. It was also during this time that Barrett, conscious of the horrid penal conditions which plagued black and white youth alike, circulated a petition that was signed by both black and white residents of Hampton and Newport News and successfully lobbied for the creation of a juvenile court system. Aside from advocating for localized juvenile penal reform, Barrett launched a larger reform initiative by creating a state-level correctional and residential school for wayward black girls.

Barrett founded the historical Virginia Industrial School for Colored Girls in 1915 under the auspices of the Virginia State Federation of Colored Women (VSFCW). The VSFCW was organized in June 1908 at the Hampton Negro Conference. The purpose of this conference held at Hampton Institute was for regional black women’s organizations to affiliate with the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs Incorporated, which had been founded in 1896 in Washington, D.C. Hampton Institute and its mission philosophy played significant roles within the establishment of

the Virginia federation. Firstly, Hampton Institute provided black club women with meeting space to convene their organizing campaign. Secondly, the federation was composed of a large number of Hampton graduates, who were undoubtedly endowed with a responsibility of civic duty to be carried out through organization. As Barrett wrote in 1910, many of the conference women were Hampton graduates and represented social reform groups from the surrounding southeastern Virginia region:

In Norfolk, under the efficient management of Mrs. Laura E. Titus, one of Hampton’s daughters[,] is an association of women doing a splendid work. Among the many things they are doing is the establishing of a home for the protection of girls. In Lynchburg Mrs. Lucy Stevens, another Hampton woman, is doing a good work for the working girls. Many of the clubs connected with the federation have as their leaders or faithful workers Hampton women.329

Upon its founding in 1908, the Virginia State Federation of Colored Women cited as its chief mission to foster the cultural, intellectual, and civic enrichment of black women. According to the Federation’s handbook, “The objectives of this organization shall be to secure harmony of action and cooperation among women in raising to the highest standard home, school, and community life.” The Federation handbook further cited measures that would be employed to accomplish the goal of domesticated female empowerment. The objective would be secured by the implementation of the following:

1. Promoting the education of women and youth.

2. Protecting the rights, welfare and safety of women and children who work.

3. Obtaining equal opportunities for qualified women in all areas of employment.

329. Ibid., 1.
4. Striving to promote the moral, economic, social and religious welfare of the family.

5. Promoting interracial understanding so that justice, goodwill, and peace shall prevail among all people.\textsuperscript{330}

The establishment of black women’s clubs emerged amid the backdrop of a mainstream, middle-class, white-led progressive movement.\textsuperscript{331} Although the mainstream progressive movement worked to eradicate an assortment of societal ills associated with industrialization, the movement often ignored the plight of African-Americans. Hence, by the close of the nineteenth century, a significant number of black southern communities, which were plagued by poverty, illiteracy, and institutionalized racial discrimination, turned inward and cultivated their own organizations and institutions to address issues which affected black people. One specific organization, which confronted the challenge to reform black women and the black community, was the black women’s club.

The black women’s club movement began on a local level and transitioned into a nationally unified network. On the local level, an individual city could have from one to thirteen different organizations. For example, a 1908 recap of the Virginia Federation’s first conference included the participation of representatives from twenty-five women’s clubs in the tidewater Virginia area. A number of those represented clubs gave a report of their ongoing campaigns and accomplishments. The Home Improvement Club of Phoebus made and dispensed clothing for school-age children.


\textsuperscript{331} Cheryl D. Hicks, \textit{Talk With You Like a Woman: African American Women, Justice, and Reform in New York, 1890-1935} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 65; Stephanie Shaw, “Black Club Women and the Creation of the National Association of Colored Women,” 10.
Another unnamed club in Norfolk provided Christmas dinners for needy children. The Flower Lovers’ Club of Hampton hosted annual flower shows and distributed plants to neighborhoods to aid in beautifying their local neighborhoods. A youth organization, The Busy Bees of Norfolk, sponsored Thanksgiving dinners for the elderly and engaged in neighborhood beautification projects.332

Virginia’s tidewater region and Richmond, which also had over twenty-five “female benevolent orders” during the turn of the twentieth century, both stand out as exemplary locales for black women’s social reform activism. However, Boston, New York, and Washington, D.C. stood at the epicenter of the national black women’s club movement.333 One reason for this development is that most of the nation’s wealthiest African-Americans lived in those cities. Many of the black residents in these cities had been free for generations and thus had access to formal education, which gave them entrance into specialized professions, such as medicine, law, and education. Another source of black urban affluence and respectability was entrepreneurship. Boston, New York, and Washington had a significant number of black male and female business owners within the trades of dressmaking, barbering, and cosmetology. Many of the women who became active in the black women’s club movement were often the wives of professional/entrepreneurial men or they themselves were business owners or active in a skilled profession.334 Regardless of their locale, a number of reformist middle-class black women in major U.S. cities during the late nineteenth century were conscious of

332. Brown, “Social Settlement Work in Hampton”, n.p..
334. Ibid., 179.
the need to address pressing issues which plagued them and their communities. This work to confront issues of economics, education, morality, and health was first conducted at the local level, but by the end of the 1890s local organizations clustered into a national institution: the National Association of Colored Women (NACW).  

Two major incidences provided the impetus toward a national black women’s association. The first incident involved the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair, which failed to include black women on any of the planning committees. The rationale given by the Fair’s board of lady managers was that, since there was no existing national black women’s organization, there could be no black representation on the Fair’s ladies’ board. This act of institutional discrimination by the Fair’s white administration motivated black women to mobilize into a national organization. Undeterred by racial ostracism, black women’s groups such as the Woman’s League of D.C. initiated an 1895 meeting, which created the first leg of a national black women’s front, The National Colored Women’s League. The second incident involved a slanderous indictment against black female virtue made by white journalist, James W. Jacks. Jacks was perplexed and disturbed by the amount of admiration that prominent white Europeans held for Ida Wells Barnett and her anti-lynching campaign. Jacks sent an incensed letter to one of Barnett’s most prominent supporter, Florence Belgarine of England. Within the letter, Jacks charged black women with having “no sense of virtue and of being altogether without characters.” Jacks further charged that all black women


336. Ibid., 179.
were “prostitutes, thieves and liars.” This letter circulated and created shockwaves throughout the nation’s black women’s clubs. Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, founder of Boston’s Woman’s Era Club, and wife of a wealthy judge, responded to Jacks’ letter by drafting a summons to black women’s organizations. Ruffin’s letter was entitled, “A Call: Let Us Confer Together.” Within this letter, she urged black women to come together “to teach an ignorant and suspicious world that our aims and interests are identical with those of all good aspiring women.” Ruffin insisted that the best way to complete that lofty objective was for black women to consolidate into one unified national organization. Ruffin’s call for a unified black women’s convention resulted in the 1895 formation of the National Federation of Afro-American Women (NFAAW). In 1896, the NFAAW merged with the National Colored Woman’s League and created the National Association of Colored Women (NACW).

The consolidated effort to combat prevailing negative views about black women and their communities was reflected in the NACW’s motto: “Lifting as we climb.” The motto represented the members’ agenda to build social programs and civic initiatives that would recognize the virtues of black womanhood and enrich and improve the quality of life within black communities. To this end, reform-minded women at the local and national level worked tirelessly to implement initiatives and institutions that would have an enduring influence on their legacies as community leaders as well as the people in need whom they helped.


338. Ibid., 180.

339. Ibid., 109.
The women’s club within early twentieth century southern black communities played a central role in local society. Institutionally, the women’s club served as a multipurpose entity which implemented initiatives to improve home life, educational facilities for black youth, and healthcare and residential facilities for the elderly. The significance of black women’s clubs is shown in a decree issued by the women’s auxiliary of the Negro Reformatory Association. The association was founded in Richmond in 1897 by John H. Smyth (1844-1908) who had served as a diplomatic minister to Liberia. Although the association’s primary focus was on penal reform, it did include a women’s auxiliary which was officially titled the Committee on Domestic Economy. Amelia Perry Pride served on the committee and was one of the signatories and drafters of the circa 1897/1898 decree which endorsed the establishment of more local women’s clubs. The decree issued by the committee shows how black women’s clubs worked to improve their local communities:

Your committee recommends:

1. The organization of woman’s clubs in all communities where an intelligent domestic economy may be taught in mothers meetings and the young girls sewing, cooking, and reading classes, which would naturally grow out of such club work, as well as become the centre of social life in city, village, town and district.

2. Your committee recommends the club idea as the most rudimentary and democratic, covering all the people and allowing for activity where it may be needed in any given locality. It could readily give direction to all of the small but necessary details of domestic science of which the masses are ignorant and which leads to much of the home discomfort and disease growing out of intemperance, exposure, bad home sanitation and the like. The dignifying of labor and economy in expenditures could more readily be inculcated, and appeals made to

---

employers in factories and homes with confidence through club organization than through any other medium.

3. We recommend that the women of these clubs actively engage in the work of creating a sentiment which will result in providing homes for the aged and infirm, and for orphans (the absence of which now is a scandal and reproach).

4. We recommend that the women of these clubs take an active interest in the convicts in our jails and penitentiaries, giving them such moral, spiritual and other assistance as may mitigate the hardship of their position and lead to possible reclamation; and that an agitation against the herding of male and female convicts together be at once begun and continued until the abuse has been removed.

5. We recommend that juvenile asylums for both races be established in all the Southern States, as the absence of them is not only a calamity but a reproach to the States in which there are none and in which juvenile offenders are doomed to a life of criminality by being forced to associate from beginning to end with hardened criminals of both races and sexes, and that where the State refuses to make such provision, effort be made to secure such by private and philanthropic assistance.

The proposed inclusion of penal reform within the initiative agenda of black women’s clubs parallels with one of the last phases of Janie Porter Barrett’s tenure as a social reformer and state leader within the women’s club movement.

The Virginia Industrial School for Colored Girls marked the capstone initiative of Janie Porter Barrett’s social reform career. According to Barrett, there were two main reasons she founded the school. The first reason was that the state federation had to meet the requirements of the NACW, which required its auxiliaries to implement a public service program. Second, the women within the state federation wanted to

341. Ibid., 2.

employ a program to improve some aspect of life within Virginia. These two necessities also coincided with racial and gender disparities within Virginia’s correctional system. One specific area of disparity that concerned Barrett was how few resources existed to help young, wayward black girls. The idea for the establishment of a Virginia-based home for wayward girls originated with the 1897 creation of a Negro Reformatory. The Association had a black board of directors and an advisory board of seven white members. The Association and board’s overall objective was to rescue juvenile offenders. In 1897, the Association purchased 423 acres of land from the Broadneck estate in Hanover County, Virginia, the same county as Barrett’s eventual Industrial School, and opened Broadneck Farm for Men. Initially, from 1897 to 1900 the Broadneck facility was financed by private philanthropy, but in 1900 the state of Virginia began to fund it. In a 1920 annual report to the governor and general assembly the Broadneck facility was officially identified as the Virginia Manual Labor School of the Negro Reformatory Association. The citing of the facility’s official title indicated the institution’s emphasis on industrial training, just like Barrett’s neighboring school for black girls.

Significantly, the Negro Reformatory Association included the women’s auxiliary in which Pride served as a member, and its president was Rosa Dixon Bowser (1855-1931). Bowser was a prominent Richmond educator and clubwoman who chaired


several women’s civic organizations in Virginia. As a member of the 1897 Reformatory Association, Bowser also advocated for the creation of a female rehabilitative facility as a means to “reclaim or save the youth of the race.” Just like Barrett, Bowser was also active within the National Association of Colored Women. It is significant to note that both women, who were interested in eradicating racial and gender disparities within correctional institutions, were affiliated with the NACW. As a national cluster of chapters of women’s clubs, the NACW adopted a national objective to support social welfare reform, especially as it related to children. This national agenda was conveyed by its first president, Mary Church Terrell, in 1899:

As an Association, let us devote ourselves enthusiastically, conscientiously, to the children...Through the children of today, we must build the foundation of the next generation upon such a rock of integrity, morality, and strength, both of body and mind, that the floods of proscription, prejudice, and persecution may descend upon it in torrents, and yet it will not be moved. We hear a great deal about the race problem, and how to solve it...but the real solution of the race problem, both so far as we, who are oppressed and those who oppress us are concerned, lies in the children.

Undoubtedly, Bowser and Barrett’s association with the NACW coincided with and reinforced their social reformist interests. In the case of Barrett, her affiliation with the state federation and national association helped her to fund a state reformatory school for black girls—one of the first in the nation.

By 1911, Barrett travelled throughout Virginia to promote the creation of a correctional school for black girls. Throughout her statewide travels, Barrett encouraged

---


local chapters of black women’s clubs to fundraise for the school. In addition to the women’s club federation, Barrett also received assistance from the Negro Organization Society. The Negro Organization Society was organized in 1909 for the purpose of helping rural black people acquire land, build homes, and improve health conditions. In 1913, the Negro Organization Society raised over $600 for Barrett’s school fund.\(^{349}\)

Equally significant to her fundraising efforts was the establishment of an institutional governing board. By December of 1911, nineteen trustees were elected to manage the school’s formation and administrative organization.\(^{350}\) By 1912, with a diversity of resources from both black and white benefactors at her disposal, Barrett was well on her way to pioneering southern black women’s rehabilitative education.

Prior to deciding on the school’s location, the trustees consulted with Dr. J. T. Mastin, secretary of the State Board of Charities and Correction, and Judge R. H. Cardwell, state Supreme Court justice. Judge Cardwell also served as executive board chairman for Broadneck Farm. Broadneck’s location in Hanover County undoubtedly influenced the Federation’s decision to also build in that region. In January 1913, Barrett signed the contract for the purchase of a tract of land which was located in Hanover County, Virginia; she paid $100 down and was given five years to pay off the remaining balance. Amazingly, and due to the tireless efforts of the Federation’s members, the remaining $6,000 was raised in a little over a year. The land that would house the industrial school was known as Mill Farm and was purchased by the

---


Federation in August 1914.\textsuperscript{351} It is significant to note that the purchase and historical opening of the industrial school were preceded by a shift within the school’s board of trustees. In a 1916 article, journalist J. E. Davis wrote:

Before the farm was finally paid for, however, the women of the Federation realized that they could not do a successful work for these colored girls without the assistance of the white women of the state. The project, put before the white women by Mrs. Barrett, at once appealed to their womanhood. The fact that several such institutions existed in the South for colored boys, but none for colored girls, seemed to them preposterous.\textsuperscript{352}

Given the nature of this gender-based disparity, black and benevolent reform-minded white women unified in the effort to establish the girls’ industrial school. In January 1914, the Industrial Home School was incorporated by a new integrated board of trustees in which Barrett served as secretary. From that point, the board secured appropriations, which enabled the school to open in January 1915 as the first reformatory school in the South for black girls.\textsuperscript{353} This milestone within black, female penal reform was directly aided by interracial partnership. Despite the prevailing racial turbulence of the era, interracial cooperation between black and white influential leaders played an instrumental role in encouraging various reform projects and institutions. Some of these initiatives included public health clinics, temporary home missions, day nurseries, and clothing drives. Janie Porter Barrett cited the necessity and invaluable nature of interracial cooperation during the early twentieth-century black nadir:

No one can deny that the Negro race is going through the most trying period of its history. The same would be true of any race developing

\textsuperscript{351} Ibid., p.464.
\textsuperscript{352} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{353} Ibid., 465.
under like conditions. The only thing to do is to face the situation with
unfaltering courage and live down conditions. We can only do this by
setting the highest standards and living up to them, day by day, it matters
not what comes. With the world-wide awakening of the sense of duty to
the man farthest down, conditions must grow better; but there can be no
permanent improvement until we learn to move together. The white, the
black, the rich, the poor, must work for the end sought. 354

One significant factor which influenced Barrett’s reliance upon interracial
cooperaon within her Industrial School was rooted in monetary beneﬁt. The Virginia
state budgetary system had a policy against allowing women of any race from receiving
and managing funds. 355 In order for the Industrial School to be eligible for state funds,
the school had to have an interraal board of directors and trustees. Given the monetary
inconsistency of managing a privately-funded institution, Barrett realized the necessity
of organizing an interraal board of directors and trustees which were comprised of
white women and men as a means of securing stable public funding. Aside from this
stipulation, Barrett’s comfort with interraal cooperation may well have stemmed from
two sources within her personal life. The ﬁrst source was Barrett’s childhood spent with
the Skinner family in Macon. She lived in their home and reaped the material and social
beneﬁts of being a part of an aﬄuent white family. The second source was the
consistent significance of Hampton Institute, which was founded by a white man who
assumed a surrogate and paternalistic guardianship over the school’s black students.

In addition to Barrett’s regard for interraal cooperaon, she also
acknowledged the need to close the economic gap between the races for the sake of
accomplishing social reform. As a result of Barrett’s subscription to interraal

(1912), 517.

cooperation and reliance upon interracial philanthropy, the Virginia Industrial School developed as an example of diverse people working for the common goal of human uplift. Barrett’s apparent belief in the usefulness of interracial cooperation was also illustrated in her perception of black juvenile delinquent behavior. Barrett’s response to the Virginia Christian incident in 1912 is a case in point. This case involved a young black girl who was executed for killing a white woman. Barrett chided the defendant’s mother for instilling in her daughter the mentality of “don’t ever let a white woman touch you!” While Barrett believed that black women had a right to defend themselves against unprovoked white attack, interracial cooperation would yield more favorable long-term results. To this end, Barrett and her Industrial School staff reiterated to the students the fact that interracial cooperation, especially that of white and black women, had enabled them to have the school. An example of this endorsement of interracial cooperation is illustrated in a retrospective statement made by the school’s first matron, Mrs. Harry J. Griffith. In a 1954 interview, Griffith reflected on the early students’ pleasant disposition and work-oriented discipline:

The girls appreciated what was being done for them. They had the feeling that they had a home and that they were being cared for. They did their work with pride and interest. We constantly told them of the good women (Negro and White) who were laboring for them and striving to have them help make the world better by having lived in it.

---


357. Ibid., 147.

Barrett and her staff periodically cited applicable examples of interracial cooperation as an effective measure to dissuade the students from harboring prejudicial and hostile feelings toward white people.

In addition, the school’s reliance upon interracial benevolence prompted its growth. For example, a new building added to the campus in April 1916 was funded by both black and white philanthropy. This building was named Federation Cottage in honor of the Federation women. The three-story brick building with a basement designed to accommodate thirty girls was drafted by Hampton Institute’s chief contractor. The building’s dedication ceremony in May 1916 was attended by supporters of both races. The enduring nature of interracial cooperation within the school’s growth is evident in a dedication speech made by Father Charles Hannigan:

At no time has there been a more sympathetic coming together of the races than there is now. We are about to demonstrate in Virginia that we can make good, that we can draw out of the colored people the qualities we believe are in them—honesty, fidelity and an undying affection for their friends.359

The initial phase of the school’s settlement further conveyed a consolidated effort by benefactors of both races to sufficiently sustain the school. The school’s buildings were largely furnished by various black women’s organizations within the state, such as the State Federation, the Council of Colored Women of Richmond, and the Dorcas Club of Hampton. The Council of Colored Women also contributed an annual Christmas turkey dinner to the school. Hampton Institute also contributed bed linens, and uniform fabrics were donated by the Ladies’ Aid Society of Hampton Institute. Barrett also transferred all of the Locust Street resources to the school.

Railroad companies, such as Norfolk and Western Railroad, Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, and Southern Railroad provided courtesy travel passes to Barrett and the students.\textsuperscript{360}

The school’s first students consisted of two girls who were admitted in January 1915. By the middle of 1915, the school’s enrollment increased to twenty-eight students who ranged in age from eleven to eighteen. These initial students were housed in a small farmhouse on Mill Farm. Mr. and Mrs. Harry J. Griffith, both Hampton graduates, were selected as the school’s farmer and matron. By the school’s first year-end review, a representative of the State Board of Charities and Correction provided positive acknowledgement of the discipline provided to the girls at the school: “. . . she would not have known these girls today for the same incorrigibles she tried in vain to place in families a year ago.”\textsuperscript{361}

Beyond its first year, the school grew rapidly. In one of the first seasons of the school’s operation, fifteen to twenty students assisted staff with cutting four and a half tons of hay, raised thirty bushels of peas, five bushels of lima beans, sixty-five bushels of sweet potatoes, and thirty bushels of corn. In addition, they built one hundred and fifty feet of walkway, one-fourth of a mile of roadway, and graveled it. They also cleared forty acres of land, posted two hundred feet of fence, built five gates, cut ten cords of wood, installed a shed house floor, and built a hen house.\textsuperscript{362} The laborious

\textsuperscript{360} Ibid., 472.

\textsuperscript{361} Ibid., 467.

\textsuperscript{362} Ibid., 469.
nature of the work details placed on the Industrial School’s students was comparable to Barrett’s own tedious schedule while a student at Hampton.

The aforementioned work detail at Barrett’s Industrial School was one example of the ambitious expectations placed on the school’s students. This rigid set of academic and industrious expectations was appropriately applicable and conducive to the school’s overall objective: to reform delinquent behavior and develop it into honest, pious, and industrious character. Central to this objective was Barrett’s and the school staff’s perception of the institution. Barrett was adamant that the school not be viewed as a stigmatized reformatory school. Instead, Barrett identified the school as a “moral hospital where each girl is studied and given individual treatment with the hope of removing the cause of her delinquency and of building character.”

Essentially, Barrett identified the school as an instructional institution for the educable as opposed to a penal facility for the unredeemable. This progression toward decriminalization began with each student’s entrance into the school. Virginia Cottage was used as an “orientation dormitory.” Within this residential hall, new incoming students were placed under preliminary surveillance in which their mannerisms were carefully observed and assessed. While residing in this cottage, new students were also instructed on the school’s rules and regulations. Students were given ten days to master the school’s code of conduct before being penalized for any infractions; the school used a demerit system to regulate misconduct beyond the probationary period. Some acts of misconduct consisted of the following offenses: escape, stealing, lying, quarreling,


364. Ibid., 12.
uncleanliness, inattention, rudeness, fighting, and laziness. After completing the ten-day probationary phase, new students could work toward an “honor dress” and being labeled as an “honor girl.” Honor girls stood out as students who consistently exhibited exemplary conduct and leadership skills. Leadership skills and character building were honed by assigning students various responsibilities such as “room matron.” A matron was assigned to each room to ensure that everyone in the room adhered to a suitable level of tidiness and noise control. Matrons were further assisted by “cottage captains and lieutenants.” In each of the cottages, the girls were divided into groups of ten, and the captains and lieutenants were responsible for the behavior and neatness of their assigned ten residents at all times. Only honor girls could be a matron, a captain, or a lieutenant. In addition, these students received a distinct white honor dress to wear on special occasions, as well as certain privileges and resided in a separate dormitory, Federation Cottage. Also significant to this status was the fact that being an honor girl placed students on the pathway to being paroled. The ultimate objective of being paroled could only happen by the design and implementation of a concise, consistent, and uncompromising conduct policy created and delegated by Barrett.

Barrett’s unrelenting belief in the girls’ ability to be properly nurtured and transformed by a given set of parentally enforced, stern, expectations, and values was a throwback to Armstrong’s paternalistic guidance directed toward Hampton’s students. Aside from the expected adherence to a strict code of discipline, students at the Industrial School were required to follow a detailed daily itinerary of classes and

365. Ibid.

chores. In the early years of operation, the school provided an elementary to eighth-grade curriculum. The five-day week schedule was divided into two blocks. From 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. half of the students attended class, while the other half performed farming and domestic work. The roles reversed during the second 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. class block. Academic and work details were intermixed with etiquette instruction. A nurse provided students with a weekly lecture on hygiene, personal grooming, proper behavior in public institutions such as school and church, and appropriate social greetings. Spiritual enrichment also centrally factored into the lives of the students as they were all mandated to attend Sunday school every week and regular church service twice a month. By Barrett’s own admission, the objective was to convert every student to Christianity. This emphasis on piety was also central to Barrett’s Hampton experience. Aside from the rigors of classroom and church, the school’s students had recreational outlets, such as basketball, volleyball, pageants, theatrics, glee club, hayrides, and dances.367

By 1917, the school had been in existence for two years and had begun to parole some of its initial students. Students who underwent parole were sent to the approved homes of Caucasian and African-American people where approval was issued by the State Board of Welfare. The nature of the relationship between parolee and host family was reciprocal. Both parties had to meet the satisfaction and expectations of the other; if not, the relationship was discontinued. Paroled students were expected to adhere to the standards set by their host family. In turn, the host family was responsible for providing its charge with a healthy, supportive, and nurturing environment. In addition, the host

family was responsible for providing parolees with an income-generating apprenticeship. In turn, the school expected its paroled students to save a portion of their wages. This expectation of gainful employment was twofold. First, it taught young women the virtue of saving and efficiently budgeting money. Second, frugality signaled a step toward self-sufficiency and independence upon the completion of their probationary parole and transition into the mainstream. These two entangled objectives served to reinforce the virtues of thrift, modesty, and self-sufficiency which, by no coincidence, were the basic principles of Hampton’s mission.

The Virginia Industrial School for Colored Girls changed governance in 1920 when the Virginia Federation amicably ceded the institution to the State of Virginia. This transfer of authority still left Janie Porter Barrett in charge of the school; she remained the superintendent until 1947—a year before her death in 1948. While the institution and its curriculum would experience more stringent standards under state regulation, the Industrial School revolutionized the field of southern, juvenile penal rehabilitation. For example, a commissioner who visited Barrett’s school in 1919 wrote:

I have visited all such institutions and I find that the money which the government has expended through the Peak School for Wayward Colored Girls has produced the largest results and has been the most efficiently administered of any funds which the Government has appropriated for like purposes anywhere in the U.S.

The above quotation impressively cited the pioneering legacy of Barrett’s Industrial School as being the first of its kind for black girls in the South. Despite its

368. Ibid., 18.


370. Ibid., 9.
racial exclusiveness, the school inclusively served as a model for other juvenile institutions in the South, which catered to both black and white youth. One facility modeled after the Industrial School was the North Carolina School for Girls which opened in 1925. The school’s superintendent had spent two months at the Industrial School in order to understand the efficient operation of a juvenile rehabilitation school.\footnote{371} The school also served as a case study for the School of Social Work and Public Health at the College of William & Mary.\footnote{372} Nearly one hundred years after its establishment, the Industrial School in Hanover County continues to serve an adolescent clientele. The school has been renamed the Barrett Juvenile Correctional Center and today serves an all-male population from ages thirteen to twenty.\footnote{373}

Amelia Perry Pride of Lynchburg also had a second phase of reform. In August 1898, Pride opened a free sewing school at the Polk Street School, where she served as an instructor and principal. In preparation of the school’s creation, Pride had spent the summer of 1898 taking a “refresher” cooking and sewing class at Hampton Institute. Pride’s inspiration to create this domestic arts facility for black youth derived from her indoctrination to Hampton’s original mission to instruct black students to cultivate and adopt the virtues of industry, piety, civic duty, and self-sufficiency. Pride’s commitment to aiding Lynchburg’s black youth toward productive industry is reflected in an 1898 statement made by her: “I believe in training the head, heart and hand. It is impossible


\footnote{372. Ibid., 9.}

\footnote{373. Founder’s Day Program, “The Legacy of the Barrett Learning Center.”}
to have good boys and girls unless they are industrious.”\textsuperscript{374} Pride’s reference to training the “head, heart and hand” directly reflected Hampton’s mission as a manual and industrial arts institution.

Shortly after opening, Pride’s new school was renamed the Mackenzie Sewing School in honor of a Dr. McKenzie of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Dr. McKenzie contributed the first five dollars to the school. Aside from McKenzie’s support, the school was further supported by benefactors of both races from the North and South. The school was a coeducational facility that provided sewing instruction twice a week by seven volunteer instructors, most of whom were Hampton graduates. Pride just like Barrett employed the talents and skills of Hampton’s graduates, who, in turn, were dedicated to enriching and uplifting black southern communities. Within a year of its opening, sixty students were enrolled at the McKenzie School. The program had become so popular that applicants had to be turned away due to a lack of space and resource availability.\textsuperscript{375}

Pride’s final project, which coincided with the sewing school, was her establishment of the Theresa Pierce Cooking School in 1903. The school, also intended as an instructional institution for black youth, was largely supported by a Mr. S. S. Pierce. The school was named in honor of Pierce’s deceased daughter. The school was housed in a home owned by Pride and her husband, Claiborne. The school instructed students on every aspect of preparing and hosting a meal. Although Pride did not teach

\textsuperscript{374} Amelia Perry Pride, Untitled Article in \textit{The Southern Workman} 27 (1898), 3, in Amelia Perry Pride Papers, Hampton University Archives.

\textsuperscript{375} Ted Delaney, “Industry, Economy and Pride,” 35.
at the Pierce school, she provided the facility with extensive financial and labor support. 376

By far, Pride’s most significant contribution to the Pierce school rests in the role that she played as the architect for the school’s mission and purpose. The Pierce School curriculum was so thorough and effective that it became the basis for the home economics program within Lynchburg’s public black schools. By the 1920s, both the McKenzie and Pierce schools were absorbed into Lynchburg’s black public schools. In most probability, the two schools served as “domestic lab facilities” which were utilized by the city’s black students. 377

Amelia Perry Pride died in 1932 from heart complications. In the wake of her death, a local Lynchburg paper heralded Pride as a “pioneer worker for the education and welfare of the Negro race.” 378 Pride, just like Barrett, would be posthumously acknowledged with community institutions that bear her name. Seventeen years after Pride’s death, in the fall of 1949, the Lynchburg City Schools officially acknowledged her legacy of academic and community building by naming the new home economics building at the city’s segregated Dunbar High School in her honor. Today, the building is a part of the city’s Dunbar Middle School campus. In addition to the Dunbar site, another Lynchburg institution pays homage to Pride by its name, the Pride Center. This center is an alternative secondary educational facility, which enables students to complete a high school education in a nontraditional setting. The center also provides

376. Ibid.


378. Ibid.
some post-secondary training in computer technology. This contemporary institutional mission is a salutation to Pride’s lifelong effort to economically empower her community. To this end, Pride and Barrett were both inspired by the tenets of Hampton’s mission, which endowed them with personal senses of civic duty to build sustaining legacies of social betterment and which continue to reverberate within their respected communities. More telling than statistical data are the longstanding legacies of Pride and Barrett whose reformist efforts are still tangibly present in the form of academic and vocational institutions that continue to bear their names. This fact alone is indicative of both women’s effectiveness as reformers who were able to build within their borders.

CHAPTER VI
BOUND BY BUILDING: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF JENNIE DEAN, DELLA IRVING HAYDEN, JANIE PORTER BARRETT, AND AMELIA PERRY PRIDE

While Chapters I through V provided an historical backdrop and individual examination of the four women’s reform activism, Chapter VI serves as a capstone comparison of Jennie Dean, Della Irving Hayden, Janie Porter Barrett, and Amelia Perry Pride and the varied personal and professional lives and objectives which influenced their common effort to improve the quality of life within their communities. Familial, religious, and academic institutions all played an integral role in arousing a consciousness of social concern within the minds of numerous early twentieth-century black women who took up the task of improving their communal spaces. In regard to this dissertation, all four women drew significant inspiration from voluntary associations, family, and spirituality. In addition, three of the women, Hayden, Barrett, and Pride, significantly drew inspiration from a shared academic institution—Hampton Institute.

Hampton Institute played a profoundly pivotal role in mobilizing Hayden, Barrett, and Pride as well as many of its early graduates toward community reform. This fact is rooted in the institution’s core founding principles which stressed the virtues of hard work, thrift, moderation, sobriety, piety, and community outreach. Hampton alumnae Hayden, Barret, and Pride adopted these values, and through personal civic drive they applied them to their individual reform campaigns. Although Dean was not a Hampton graduate, she and the other three women shared other relevant commonalities
which significantly interlinked them into a larger network of black southern social reform.

The home, from its first development in human economy, has been the basis of all influences operating upon society as individuals or states. The most demoralizing influence in the Slave System was the utter destruction of all home ties of the slave. When the war closed there were few homes, there were no married people among the freed people. They were compelled to begin at the bottom of this, as in all the other relations of life. The marvel is, therefore, not that so much has been accomplished in homebuilding by the mothers of the Afro-American race. That this has been accomplished, and that these slave mothers have educated since the war millions of virtuous young women who today preside over Christian homes, and make up the vast army of public school teachers and Sunday School instructors is a sufficient guarantee of the virility and moral force of the race: and that we can confidently from this Conference recommend to Afro-American mothers such necessary reforms as will assist them in the work of home building the foundation of which they have laid so strong and deep in the beautiful faith in God which was the North Star of their hope through the wilderness of two hundred years of bondage.  

The above quotation was taken from a decree (circa 1897/1898) issued by the Committee on Domestic Economy. The committee, which was a women’s auxiliary of the Negro Reformatory Association, included Amelia Perry Pride as one of its members. The decree is significant because it highlights the important role that black women played within reforming their communities in both the domestic sphere and the public sphere of institutions and organizations. The two most significant institutions which enabled black women to engage in social reform were women’s clubs and the Church; all four of the dissertation’s women were actively involved in one or both of those institutions. In assessing the broader women’s club movement, Anne Firor Scott asserted that a woman’s specific economic class was not a concise determinant of her likelihood to affiliate with a voluntary civic association. Scott argued that more
emphasis was placed on female character as a marker for their suitability to conduct woman’s club work.

Club work suitability extended from the traditional domestic-based expectation of women. More specifically, since women were expected to be maternal, compassionate, and virtuous nurturers, voluntary associations stressed those same character traits to be embodied within its female membership. Scott further asserted that women’s club presidents (Barrett headed the Virginia Federation) were women of “fine culture and great insight” and of “tact, high character and freedom from aggressive methods.”

Scott also noted that, despite the adoption of middle-class Victorian values among black female leaders and reformers, a significant number of them fostered a direct and unflattering commitment to aiding the black masses.

This fact of black reformist inclusion, which was cited in the dissertation’s introductory quotation taken from NACW president Mary Church Terrell, was also illustrated in the reform initiatives of the dissertation’s four women who created non-elitist institutions which served entire black communities. Although black southern women reformers employed an inclusive agenda to improve their communities, their academic and economic status often stood out from the black masses. For instance, all four of the dissertation’s women received formal education. In addition, Hayden, Barrett, and Pride received teacher training at Hampton Institute. Significantly, this professional training enabled the women to transcend beyond the domestic sphere and move into the public sphere as civic reformers, schoolteachers, and administrators.


Though not as formally trained as the other three subjects, Dean acquired valuable leadership and organizational and administrative skills through her work within the Church. Dean’s engagement with church-based responsibilities, such as teaching and organizing, was directly comparable to Hayden’s background and also rooted in church leadership roles. Although Hayden, Barrett, and Pride received more formal preparation for public careers as educators and civic leaders through their tenure as Hampton students, Dean’s church work more directly, but equally, facilitated her role as a teacher and organizer. Consequently, Dean’s ability to hone her leadership skills within a non-academic setting (the church) afforded her the ability and preparation to enter into the public sphere of institution building.

Hence, another commonality of reform among Dean, Hayden, Barrett, and Pride was the creation of training institutions as well as the design of their institutions’ curriculum; all four women created institutions which were domestic/industrial arts in scope. Dean established the Manassas Industrial School in 1894, Hayden created the Franklin Normal and Industrial Institute in 1904, Janie Porter Barrett created the Locust Street Settlement House and the Virginia Industrial School for Colored Girls in 1915, and Amelia Perry Pride created the Polk Street School in 1898 and the Theresa Pierce Cooking School in 1903. Their creation of industrial-based schools extended beyond coincidence and centered on a larger movement of southern industrial education, which characterized late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century progressive reform.

Within this research, Jennie Dean stands as a leading example of southern black leadership’s acceptance and gravitation toward industrial education for black youth. Jennie Dean, like a vast number of late nineteenth-century leaders both black and white,
subscribed to an acceptance of manual/industrial training as the most acceptable preparatory curriculum for black southerners. While white advocates of southern industrial education largely supported it from a stance of creating a productive populace, Dean’s endorsement was steeped in personal racial consciousness. Dean’s social awareness was shaped by her extensive stints living and working as a domestic in Washington, D.C. While living in D.C., Dean witnessed firsthand the negative impact that urban life had on young impressionable, rural, black youth. Given the enticing nature of urban vices, Dean concluded that the most rational and effective resolution to the “southern black problem” was the creation of industrial schools.383

Dean, like other proponents of industrial education such as Hayden, Barrett, and Pride, recognized a few of its far-reaching benefits for black southern communities. Most immediately, industrial schools would provide black youth the opportunity to hone their manual and pedagogical skills. This preparation served a practical purpose because manual labor and classroom teaching were the most readily available jobs for black people in the postbellum South. Given this reality of occupational limitation, black people in the pre-northern migration era would need to acquire skills that enabled them to be productive and employable, hence, the dissertation’s four women and the majority of early twentieth-century black American’s advocation of industrial education.

Also significant to this widespread black gravitation toward industrial training was white expectation. To this end, most southern black people knew that they were expected to enter vocations, which would place the white southerners at ease and not

upset the balance of southern white supremacy. Despite the inescapable reality of southern white supremacy, it is logical to conclude that among southern black reformers maintaining a harmonious racial order ranked secondary to the attainment of black occupational productivity. Hence, it was this latter collective objective amongst the dissertation’s four women which most readily prompted each of them to establish training institutions which could foster black southern employment and self-sufficiency. While the four women eventually succeeded in creating training schools, it is significant to note that the institution-builders were initially challenged and motivated by the lack of educational opportunities for black youth within their communities.

The prevailing lack of training institutions for black southern youth served as the catalyst to mobilize Dean and Hayden to create schools in their communities of Manassas and Franklin. While Dean and Hayden created industrial schools in their home communities, Barrett, like Dean and Hayden, was also conscious of the lack of social, instructional, and recreational resources for black youth within her racially segregated community. This paucity of programs prompted Barrett to create an initial home-based institution, which originated in her home but would expand into a separate building beside her residence: the Locust Street Settlement. The Locust Street Settlement’s modest origins reflected Barrett’s perception of the invaluable influence that even the most modest of efforts could have on the overall objective of community uplift:

When we hear one speak social work, we are apt to think only of the larger things with which it concerns itself, such as government, public health, punishment of crime, reforming criminals, etc.; and we are inclined to feel that there is nothing along that line we can do, forgetting that the most valuable social work is done in the home and immediate neighborhood, and is within the reach of every man and woman. If we do
no more than make a good, clean home, whose inmates are honorable and upright, it matters not how humble the home, we have done valuable social work in our community.\(^{384}\)

The above statement written by Barrett is contextually similar to Dean and Hayden’s objective of creating training institutions which would provide black youth with the opportunity to hone skills and make them employable and self-sufficient.

Amelia Perry Pride also developed a reform initiative which focused on teaching black youth useful skills. In August 1898, Pride opened a free sewing school at the Polk Street School where she served as an instructor and principal. Pride’s inspiration to create this domestic arts facility for black youth was based upon her indoctrination to Hampton’s institutional mission to instruct black students to cultivate and adopt the virtues of industry, piety, civic duty, and self-sufficiency.

Hampton Institute and its founder, Samuel Chapman Armstrong, jointly served as a catalyst for the reformist energy of Hayden, Barrett, and Pride. This dissertation consistently emphasized the lifelong impact that Hampton’s institutional mission goals had on its early graduates, which included three of the dissertation’s women. When Hampton opened in 1868, it admitted students from ages fourteen and twenty-five, regardless of race and gender. During Hampton’s early years, the institution’s white students were the relatives of Hampton’s all-white faculty.\(^{385}\) These middle-class white educators were charged with indoctrinating black students to accept and adhere to the mannerisms and mores of mainstream Victorian society. This emphasis of prevailing Victorian standards was reflected in Hampton’s early rigorous interdisciplinary


curriculum which also included a “good English” course personally designed by Armstrong.\textsuperscript{386} Even more significant, Hampton’s graduates were charged with the task to disseminate and indoctrinate the black masses to the virtues of Hampton’s philosophy as designed by Samuel Chapman Armstrong. These virtues included hard work, frugality, temperance, and piety.

Hampton’s mission, in short, was to provide instruction toward black community self-reliance. This institutional philosophy of black self-help, accentuated with the virtues of Christian morality, thrift, and industry, provided Hayden, Barrett, and Pride with a clear and concise purpose to reform their communities amid the drudgeries of institutionalized black southern economic and social disfranchisement. Additionally, Hampton had an even more profound impact on the personal and professional lives of Hayden and Barrett. The effect of Hampton on their lives also served as a bridge of commonality between the two women.

Hampton’s significance in Hayden’s life was threefold. First, the school afforded her an institutional venue in which she could hone her professional skills as an educator. Second, Hampton’s philosophy licensed her with a reformist spirit, which shaped her life as a civic leader. Third, Hampton provided Hayden (who never knew her biological father) with a nurturing, paternal figure in the person of its founder and principal, Samuel Chapman Armstrong. Hayden even drew inspiration from Armstrong’s Hampton Model as she designed the curriculum for her Franklin School.

\textsuperscript{386} Susan H. Jones, “Creating a Tradition: Early Campus Planning at Hampton Institute: 1868-1893” (PhD diss., The College of William and Mary, 1992), 89.
Additionally, Hayden integrated religious and moral instruction into the school’s curriculum.\textsuperscript{387}

Aside from its parallel to Hampton’s early interdisciplinary curriculum which centered on academic, religious, pedagogical training and livestock chores, Hayden’s Franklin School’s curriculum along with requisite domestic and livestock chores also closely mirrored that of Barrett’s Virginia Industrial school. In addition, both schools’ emphasis on spiritual enrichment was a central factor in the lives of the students, as both schools required their students to attend Sunday school every week as well as regular church service twice a month. By Barrett’s own admission, the objective of her school’s religious instruction was to convert every student to Christianity.\textsuperscript{388} This emphasis on piety was also central to Hayden’s and Barrett’s own Hampton experience.

Hayden and Barrett also came from similar backgrounds. Janie Porter Barrett was born in Athens, Georgia, to a former slave named Julia and an unnamed white man. Hayden was born in Tarboro, North Carolina, and also the product of an interracial union between a former enslaved black woman and an unidentified white man. Another similarity between Hayden and Barrett was that both women had mothers who were proactive and interventionist in their daughters’ academic development. For instance, both mothers placed a high premium on getting their daughters enrolled at Hampton Institute. A possible reason for this selection rested in the fact that Hampton Institute stood at the vanguard of southern black education and industrial training. Although

\textsuperscript{387} Della Irving Hayden, “My Life Work,” \textit{The Southern Workman} 38 (1909), 689, in Della Irving Papers, Hampton University Archives.

Barrett was initially uninterested in attending Hampton due to its emphasis on black self-sufficiency and responsibility, she, like Hayden and Pride, eventually embraced and acculturated herself to Hampton’s principles of civic duty, self-help, and racial uplift. The adoption of these Hampton-emphasized virtues is evident in the institutions created by the three women.

Although Dean was not a graduate of Hampton Institute, she took inspiration from its model. As a result, her Manassas School, with its emphasis on an industrial arts and domestic science curriculum along with religious and moral instruction, closely resembled the institutions created by Hayden, Barrett, and Pride. Another commonality among the dissertation’s four women was that they all designed social reform campaigns and institutions in the post-Reconstruction era and employed interracial cooperation as a means to garner white philanthropic support of their institution-building initiatives. These women, like other early twentieth-century black reformers, used white philanthropic support in conjunction with black communal resources to create and sustain programs and institutions which enriched the quality of life within black southern communities. Given the fact that the four women implemented social reform and interracial cooperation within the former nucleus of the Confederacy (Virginia), it is significant and appropriate to reiterate the unique nature of progressive-era interracial cooperation in Virginia as it applied to the dissertation’s four women.

Clayton Brooks’ 2006 essay, “Unlikely Allies,” examined the complex and seemingly paradoxical nature of interracial cooperation in Jim Crow Virginia. As an explanation of why interracial cooperation existed in a more harmonious context and frequent occurrence in Virginia than in other parts of the South, Brooks argued that
early twentieth-century Virginians, both black and white, perceived Virginia as the epitome of southern gentility and moderate race relations. This view coincided with white Virginians’ subscription to “Lost Cause” sentiments, which romanticized the antebellum South as a time and place in which aristocratic planter families and their enslaved servants lived peacefully and cooperatively.\textsuperscript{389}

In addition to Brooks, historian Charles E. Wynes also contended that a few factors facilitated better race relations in Virginia in comparison to other southern states. One factor was Virginia’s considerably larger free black population which had existed from the colonial into the late antebellum eras. Notably, out of the 260,000 free black people in slave states in 1860, fully half (about 130,000) were concentrated in Virginia and Maryland. Another factor was the lack of absentee landowning and the presence of few large plantations, where field slave labor was supervised by hired overseers. According to Wynes, smaller plantations and direct oversight fostered a more intimate relationship between the planters and slaves than was more common in the deeper South. As well, Virginia’s antebellum economy relied more on a tobacco and diversified agricultural economy. The diversity of Virginia’s economic system demanded greater worker skill and care, unlike the impersonal mass production nature of a cotton-based economy which developed in the deeper South. To this end, black antebellum labor in Virginia tended to be more skilled and more valued by the planter class. Wynes reinforced this point by citing Dr. Paul B. Barringer, chairman of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, who in 1900 claimed: “That the Negroes of

Virginia were the mental and physical superiors of any others in the South as a result of Virginia’s having been a ‘slave breeding state’ where only the progeny and culls were sold.”390 In light of these factors, the end result was Virginia’s exceptional race relations.

Despite the more favorable nature of Virginia’s race relations in comparison to other southern states, white reformers and benefactors in the state were governed by the progressive era’s prevailing assertion of white supremacy. Black southern reformers were all aware of the progressive-era white reformers’ and benefactors’ mindset of “noblesse oblige.” In assessing progressive-era black women reformers’ stance toward the era’s prevailing paternalistic and racist nature, Anne Firor Scott cited historian Darlene Clark Hine: “Darlene Clark Hine has recently argued that black women over the years have been forced to develop what she calls ‘a culture of dissimulation’.”391 An occasional woman like Ida Wells Barnett spoke her mind and attacked white people with all her considerable eloquence, but many black women simply avoided the subject, got such help as they could from their white counterparts, and kept their bitterness to themselves.392 The adoption of “dissimulation” appears to have been the stance of the dissertation’s four women, all of whom were conscious of the era’s institutional racism and the paternalistic mindsets of white philanthropists. Despite the potential impediments of racism, the four women utilized the black and white resources which were at their disposal to effect positive change and to build within their borders.


391. Quoted in Scott, Natural Allies, 81.

392. Ibid.
In addition to the employment of interracial cooperation, the dissertation’s four women also utilized inter-institutional cooperation. Inter-institutional refers to the dynamic of relying on Hampton Institute as a repository which met the material and human resource needs of various reformist campaigns and institutions created by its alumni who then employed inter-institutional cooperation within their reformist institutions. For instance, Barrett’s Locust Street settlement house was supplementally supported by donations of furniture and equipment made by Hampton’s faculty. Additionally, all nine of the settlement house clubs were led by Hampton students. A 1915 article written by Florence Lattimore cited the significant impact of the Hampton model as it was delegated by Hampton students within Barrett’s settlement house. According to the article, the settlement house clubs were mostly led by Hampton Institute students “who bring into the work the spirit and standards which have made the school famous.”

Similarly, Amelia Perry Pride employed inter-institutional cooperation to aid two of her community institutions: the Dorchester Home for the Elderly and the Mackenzie Sewing School (which was also referred to as the Polk Street School due to its location). While the Dorchester Home relied upon the philanthropy of the city’s white women’s council, Hampton Institute also provided it with bedposts and linens. In comparison, Pride’s Mackenzie School, which was supported by black and white benefactors from the North and South, also received significant “staffing” assistance from Hampton. The school operated as a coeducational facility that provided sewing

---

instruction twice a week by seven volunteer instructors, most of whom were Hampton graduates.\textsuperscript{394} To this end, Pride and Barrett were able to employ the talents and skills of Hampton’s graduates, who in turn were also dedicated to enriching and uplifting black southern communities.

Barrett, Hayden, and Dean each witnessed the significant growth of their reformist social institutions. Barrett’s Locust Street Settlement House which began in her home, eventually expanded to a separate facility which was built adjacent to the Barrett family home. During her tenure as principal of the Virginia Industrial School, Barrett played an interventionist role in securing philanthropic support which enabled the construction of new buildings which in turn prompted spatial growth of the school’s campus. Hayden’s Franklin School’s drastic evolution from a one room cottage to an expansive campus with multipurpose residential and classroom buildings demonstrates the unyielding determination and commitment of its founder and its beneficiary community. Finally, Dean’s Manassas School like the schools founded by Barrett and Hayden, began with a small enrollment but quickly increased over one hundredfold. The women’s ability to successfully generate and expand resources undoubtedly aided their institutional growths.

While the dissertation’s four women shared a commonality of intrinsic traits such as initiative and perseverance which aided them in their ability to successfully engage in institutional building, at least three of them (Hayden, Barrett and Pride)

shared an extrinsic trait of light skin and Caucasoid features due to their multiracial lineage. The prominence and influence garnered by these three women in an age of institutional segregation and “color elitism” within black communities warrant a discussion of colorism.

Charlotte Hawkins Brown’s biographer, Charles Wadelington, noted that Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Lucy Craft Laney felt a sense of commonality based upon skin color. More specifically, Wadelington asserted that Laney served as a source of inspiration to Brown because of her deep skin tone. While Brown undoubtedly respected Laney’s reform work as an educator and institution builder, she was equally moved by the fact that a dark complexioned black woman could garner professional accomplishment and public acclaim.\(^{395}\) Wadelington’s brief mention of skin color bears some significance to certain segments of the discourse within black American history. Colorism refers to the internal discrimination within a specific racial/ethnic group in which certain physical traits are preferred over others. Historically, “Caucasoid” features, such as light skin, straight long hair, and light-colored eyes, were favored over more traditionally broad and darker “Negroid” features. Although colorism/color consciousness holds a marginal status in the overall examination of the significance of the dissertation’s women as institutional reformers, its historical existence and contemporary persistence warrant some need to place it within the framework of Dean, Hayden, Barrett, and Pride’s personal and public lives.

It should be noted that the most immediate and relevant purpose of this dissertation was to examine the importance of black women reformers in the South

from 1890 to 1920. To this end and without any initial regard for skin color, all four women (Dean, Hayden, Barrett, and Pride) were selected because they are all equally representative of socially-conscious and reform-oriented black women in the post-Reconstruction South. Each woman implemented reformist campaigns and institutions which enhanced the quality of life within their respective southern black communities. Coincidentally, Hayden, Barrett, and Pride also all shared a commonality of being Hampton Institute graduates. Their shared Hampton past further enhanced one of the dissertation’s concerns to examine the significant impact that Hampton’s founder and its founding principles had on Hampton’s early graduates. Despite Dean’s direct dissociation with Hampton, she still met the primary and general requisite to be included in the dissertation’s narrative. This point of explanation was to reiterate that the subjects’ physicalities had no significance in their selection for this research. Nevertheless, the coincidental nature of the physical variation between Dean and the latter three women, all of whom were of multiracial lineage, dictates a certain amount of analytical consideration.

Colorism, also known as the “color complex,” has historically existed within the black American community since the 1800s and continues into the new millennium. Colorism/the color complex was particularly prevalent during the dissertation’s timeframe of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Historically, light-skinned people have been regarded as the most privileged segment of the black community. This perspective as held by both white and black people extends back to the era of slavery in which lighter complexioned, albeit biracial (mulatto) plantation slaves were afforded “better” treatment than their darker complexioned slave counterparts. “Better” treatment
included exemption from more intense labor duties, such as field and crop cultivation, in exchange for less strenuous and domestic-based chores within the planter family’s home. Presumably, these light-skinned enslaved people received preferential treatment of better tasks, food, clothing, and physical mobility by virtue of their “Caucasoid” and minimal “Negroid” features. This dynamic of light-skinned preference and privilege historically and presently serves as an internally divisive issue within the black community. From an historical context, the preference for light skin eventually manifested into a psychological and sociological institutionalization of colorism in which lighter complexioned black people have been perceived as being favored both within and outside of the black community. It should be noted that colorism distinguishes itself from white-based, anti-black prejudice in that it is internally supported and perpetuated within an already marginalized minority group. 396

Colorism, as historically perpetuated by light complexioned biracial black people, transcended the plantation community and became implanted within free black communities in the antebellum South. Incidentally, a significant portion of the antebellum South’s free black community was biracial: the children of clandestine sexual relationships between white men and enslaved black women. The nature of their interracial parentage enabled a number of biracial black people in the South to acquire free status, as their white fathers sometimes manumitted or purchased their freedom. Now licensed with a certain amount of personal autonomy, free-status, biracial people forged a distinct sub-community throughout the South. These sub-communities consisted of distinct residential enclaves, professional and social institutions and

organizations whose admission criterion was largely based upon the lightness of one’s skin. For instance, Willard Gatewood’s 1990 work, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920*, notes Charleston, South Carolina, as a southern city which was shaped by colorphobia before the Civil War and decades after it. Gatewood cited an observation made by Lura Beam, a white teacher who taught in southern black schools from 1908 to 1919. Beam’s observation about Charleston’s postbellum “old guard” mulatto community was that it

. . . looked into its own mirror and reveled in a past in which their grandparents owned slaves, Sheraton and Hepplewhite furniture, heavy silver tea services, portraits painted by itinerant artists, and plots in the cemetery for the fair-skinned caste. In a world rapidly disappearing, the mulatto aristocrats of the city by the sea held tenaciously to forms that tolerated no black teacher, no black friend, no black graveyard.

Another reaffirmation of Charleston’s mulatto community’s obsession with skin color during the postbellum period was made by an unnamed black Charleston native in 1876 who recalled that

. . . two of the prime requisites for entrance into the so-called best society were a light complexion and ‘good hair’ and that a Negro who was light was taught to feel, in consequence of that fact, that he was better than the man who was dark.

This dynamic of “blue veinism” in which light skin has historically served as a dominant determinant of one’s social mobility and prominence has been examined by a number of scholarly works, such as Joel Williamson’s *New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States* (1980), Willard Gatewood’s *Aristocrats of Color: The*  


399. Quoted in Ibid.

Willard Gatewood cited the color consciousness and light-skinned preference held by some white people during the early 1900s. For example, Gatewood quoted a white writer, H. Paul Douglass from 1909. Douglass described the mulatto elite as the “emerged class” of blacks who had exacted “leadership over the general negro mass.” Gatewood acknowledged another early twentieth-century white figure that held a more favorable view toward biracial black people. Mississippi planter Alfred Holt Stone had garnered a reputation as an authority on resolving “racial issues.” Stone’s deliberation on the “mulatto factor” prompted him to conclude that mulattoes were the true leaders of the black community. In contrast, Stone argued that non-mixed black people were “docile, tractable and unambitious” and unworthy of the vote and social equality with white people. Stone, like a few early twentieth-century white people, argued in favor of acknowledging biracial black people as a separate category from non-mixed black people. In addition, Gatewood charged that a number of white people perceived light-


401. Quoted in Gatewood, Aristocrats of Color, 150.
skinned biracial black people as the leaders of the black community who spearheaded reform campaigns and agitated for social equality.\textsuperscript{402}

The black community’s consciousness of white people’s preference and adulation for its lighter-skinned black people fostered colorism within the black community. According to Gatewood, some members of the black community believed that a persistence of colorphobia was a potential vehicle for fair-complexioned black people to organize themselves into a separate “intermediary” racial caste in which they could become immune from the racialized restrictions placed on darker skinned black people.\textsuperscript{403}

Similarly, darker complexioned black critics of the light-skinned elite accused the latter of running a “race racket” by operating as social leaders and spokespeople of the black masses in order to win recognition and support from white people who would in turn afford biracial black people greater social mobility and prestige.\textsuperscript{404} Historian Clayton Brooks draws an indirectly similar conclusion in theorizing that black women who emerged as social reformers within the black community enjoyed an anomalous amount of recognition, support, and acclaim from white leaders and philanthropists.\textsuperscript{405} To this end, it is notable to consider the fact that Hayden, Barrett, and Pride employed interracial cooperation as a means to supplementally support their reform initiatives.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{402} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{403} Ibid., 151.
\item \textsuperscript{404} Ibid., 181.
\item \textsuperscript{405} Brooks, “Unlikely Allies,” 121.
\end{itemize}
Given this fact, it is plausible to hypothesize that the three women may have nominally or completely capitalized on their exotic and “Caucasoid” features to garner white support.

While there is some amount of ambiguity surrounding Hayden, Barrett and Pride’s conscious effort to use their biracial appearance to advance their cross-cultural public appeal, they were a little more definitive in their social class consciousness. Among the three aforementioned women, social class consciousness was more detectable within the professional and personal lives of Barrett and Pride. Historian Clayton Brooks asserted that Barrett cultivated her public image as a lady of leisure who presided over the Virginia Industrial School not because of monetary necessity, but because of civic duty. This projection of reserved refinement also factored into Barrett’s personal life, as she valued material luxuries such as china, silver, and fine linens.  

This appreciation for refined décor probably reflected Barrett’s stint of living with the aristocratic Skinner family. Barrett’s gravitation toward cultivating this image of cultured refinement also coincides with what Willard Gatewood referred to as “genteel performance.” This dynamic refers to “a system of polite conduct that demanded flawless self-discipline practiced with an apparently easy, natural sincere manner.” The goal of this dynamic as practiced by a number of early twentieth-century black elites was to exhibit simple elegance as opposed to ostentatious display.

Clayton Brooks theorizes that as a fair-complexioned, biracial black woman, Janie Porter Barrett was conscious of her “Caucasoid” features which further reinforced

406. Ibid., 141.

her self-perception as an elite racial ambassador. Brooks further argued that Barrett’s self-assurance as a race leader, which significantly rested on her color consciousness, endowed her with a sense of equality with her white reformist counterparts, who also served as benefactors for black reform. Brooks supported this argument by citing a statement made by one of Barrett’s friends and civic colleagues—prominent Virginia banker, Maggie L. Walker. In an attempt to disprove widespread perceptions of paternalistic white philanthropy directed toward black social reform initiatives, Walker stated the following: “The white women don’t work for us--they work with us.”408 Another indicator of Barrett’s class consciousness and one that she shared with Amelia Perry Pride was spousal selection. Both women married men of prominence and biracial lineage which was similar to their ancestral backgrounds. Janie Porter Barrett married Harris Barrett, a fellow Hampton graduate and Hampton administrator.409 Amelia Perry Pride married Claiborne Pride, a prominent barbershop owner, who also hailed from a prominent biracial family in Lynchburg, Virginia.410 It is significant to note that Claiborne Pride was so status-conscious in the operation of his barbershop that he only served wealthy white patrons. Given these examples, it is fair to conclude that among some of the dissertation’s women, there was some degree of social consciousness which often was rooted in color consciousness.

While some biracial black people took an accepting or cautious approach to their sometimes “nominal” privilege, another segment of the black community remained

---

undeterred by white people’s acceptance and favoritism of fair-skinned mulattoes. A good case in point is Mary Church Terrell who gained national prominence as a leader within the black women’s club movement and was a fair-featured woman of multiracial lineage. Fanny Garrison Villard, the daughter of famed abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, considered Terrell to be “almost white with . . . most pleasing and prepossessing manners.” Villard further proclaimed: “That one so attractive should because of this slight indication of color be judged as belonging to the colored race is truly affecting, and seems in the highest degree unjust.” Despite this adulation of her “Caucasoid” features, Terrell remained unyielding and realistically practical in her identity as a black person. Terrell wrote: “But never once in my life have I ever been tempted to ‘cross the color line’ and deny my racial identity.”

While Terrell was firmly entrenched within the black elite because of her familial and marital lineage, she nevertheless remained secure in her black identity and commitment toward progressive initiatives which enhanced the quality of black southern life. These same character traits were applicable to Hayden, Barrett, and Pride, all of whom were light-complexioned women of multiracial lineage who identified as black and appointed themselves as leaders destined to reform black southern communities. The gravitation of these women toward a black ethnic identity stood in contrast to another ethnic alternative which was available to them and other fair-complexioned biracial people—passing.

411. Quoted in Gatewood, Aristocrats of Color, 173.

412. Ibid., 173.
*Passing* refers to the dynamic of black people who are so “Caucasoid” in appearance that they exclusively classify themselves as white and assimilate themselves into white society while abandoning the black community and their black lineage. Historians Willard Gatewood and Joel Williamson asserted that passing was conducted in two ways: occasional/temporary and permanent. Occasional passing meant claiming to be white for a brief stint for the sake of convenience. *Convenience* in this sense refers to the procurement of decent public accommodations as opposed to the inferior ones allotted to black people during the age of Jim Crow.413 Gatewood defined *permanent passing* as the complete dissolution of any connection with the black community and one’s black family. Both Gatewood and Williamson contended that this type of passing had significant long-term consequences as it meant a divorce from family, as well as loneliness and the constant threat of exposure. Despite the exorbitant risks involved in permanent passing, some biracial black people chose this option as a way to escape racialized restrictions that were placed on black people. Essentially, these people passed in order to permanently enjoy the unlimited social mobility which was exclusively available to white people.414

Janie Porter Barrett was offered an opportunity to relocate and attend school up North and pass as a white woman, but her mother interceded. Barrett was so “Caucasoid” in appearance that she garnered the affection and attention of her mother’s white employer, a prominent Georgia planter family. As a small child, Barrett was brought into the family’s home and was taught to read and write and essentially became


an informally “adopted” member of the Skinner family. Barrett was so integrated and beloved within the Skinner family that its matriarch suggested that Barrett pass as white and she would finance her education in a northern school. Barrett’s mother vehemently opposed this idea and insisted that her daughter not only remain in the South, but that she would attend an historical black institution that would instruct her in the virtues of racial pride, morality, thrift, industry, and self-help.415 Whether fostered by the initial insistence of her mother or eventual personal choice, the biracial Barrett, like Hayden and Pride, not only lived her life as a black woman in the black community, she worked staunchly as a leader to reform it.

Contrary to those who chose to pass, Gatewood speculated that some fair-skinned black people chose not to pass because they valued their black families and did not want to separate themselves from that familial link nor did they want to deny their black African ancestry, which was a source of pride for some. Finally, Gatewood attested that some “passable” biracial black people were so conscious of their elite social status within the black community that they were unwilling to abandon that security for the “uncertain status” they could be assigned within the white community.416 It is probable that all of these realities, compounded by their Hampton experience which stressed the necessity of community leadership and self-help, are what enabled Hayden, Barrett, and Pride to remain securely entrenched within their black identity and commitment to lead reformist campaigns within it.

Aside from color distinction, morality, academic accomplishment, economic wealth, and professional status also impacted a black person’s social status and respectability. Despite this fact of complexity surrounding admission into elite black society, well-educated, cultured, and respectable darker-complexioned black people were still often excluded from elite black social circles. White people were also conscious of this internal discrimination within the black community. White people such as Lura Beam, a teacher who taught in southern black schools from 1908 to 1919, stated that “a very dark stranger even if he were well educated by the standards of the day, would not have been accepted by the aristocracy in the circles I knew.”

Even though colorism remained a sociological reality, the institutionalization of segregation after about 1890 and the nadir of systematic black disfranchisement actually encouraged black solidarity regardless of skin tone. Historian Jacqueline Moore in her 1999 work, *The Transformation of the Black Elite in the Nation’s Capital, 1880-1920*, supported Gatewood’s argument. Moore asserted that institutionalized racial segregation, which emerged during the 1890s, made it imperative for black elites to turn “inward” and focus on their distinct role within the black community. Historians such as Moore and Gatewood asserted that white hostility toward the entire black community without any regard to biracial lineage intensified during the resurgence of white societal domination. Willard Gatewood provided a quotation which illustrates white racist

417. Quoted in Ibid., 151.

418. Moore, *Leading the Race*, 188.
hostility was often directed toward elite biracial black people. The citation was taken from an 1886 issue of the *Cleveland Gazette*:

> Despite all their social pretensions, and pride in ancestry…Washington’s aristocrats of color were in the same boat with the flat-nosed, wooley haired, kidney-footed Negro whom they…so heartily despise in their heart of hearts.419

This institutionalized racism ignited an introspective transition which prompted the black elite to align themselves with the interests of the black masses. This alignment also helped to reinforce and redefine the black elites’ roles as leaders at large of the black community.420 This transitional era of realigned southern black solidarity coincided with the emergence of progressive-era reform. Those two dynamics served to provide Jennie Dean, Della Irving Hayden, Janie Porter Barrett, and Amelia Perry Pride with the support and public space to reform their communities.

Despite a burgeoning solidarity between the black elite and black masses, the “color factor” continued to sometimes divide black Americans. By an ironic twist of fate, the move toward attacking colorphobia coincided with a reinforcement of it as darker-complexioned black people became more overt in their adulation for fair features. Gatewood cited Nannie Helen Burroughs as a black leader who emerged as a vocal opponent to dark-skinned black people’s indoctrination to colorism. Burroughs, like all of the dissertation’s subjects, was also a prominent social reformer and institution builder during the early 1900s. Burroughs established an industrial school for black girls in Washington, D.C. As an educated, articulate, and dark-complexioned


black woman, Burroughs spoke vocally about the tragic enculturation of complexion prejudice among black Americans in 1904:

Many Negroes have colorphobia as badly as the white folks have Negrophobia. Some Negro men have it [colorphobia]. Some Negro women have it. Whole families have it, and some Negro churches have it . . . The white man who crosses the line and leaves an heir is doing a favor for some black man who would marry the most debased woman, whose only stock in trade is her color, in preference to the most royal queen in ebony.  

In comparison, Jacqueline Moore noted that the black elite were divided on the skin color issue as some prominent biracial people expressed condescension toward darker-skinned black people. Moore supported this point by quoting a passage taken from Angelina Grimke’s diary. Grimke was a biracial, late nineteenth-century writer whose white mother was a member of a nationally prominent abolitionist family, the Grimkes. Grimke reflected:

[As fair as I am I find I am very sensitive to [any mention of color]. How much harder it must be to be black. God pity them. They [not] only have the white people’s prejudice to contend with [but] the light people’s too.]

Some biracial black leaders, many of whom were the illegitimate offspring of white men and enslaved black women, harbored resentment toward white people. Moore cited writer Anna J. Cooper as an example of this mentality. Cooper in a 1932 written survey to black college students wrote the following:

I owe nothing to my white father beyond the initial act of procreation. My mother’s self-sacrificing toil to give me advantages she had never enjoyed is worthy the highest praise and unyielding gratitude.

421. Quoted in Gatewood, Aristocrats of Color, 154.

422. Quoted in Moore, Leading the Race, 189.

423. Quoted in Ibid., 190.
This quotation’s stance mirrors the background of Barrett and Hayden, both of whom were chiefly reared by formerly enslaved black mothers who conceived them by absentee white men. Apparently, Barrett and Hayden’s mothers (like Cooper’s mother) were self-sacrificing as they assumed proactive roles in charting the academic and professional futures of their daughters.

Another example of a growing recognition for darker skin, if nothing more than for the sake of public representation, was illustrated in a 1906 incident which involved Josephine Bruce. Bruce was the wife of prominent reconstruction-era senator Blanche K. Bruce. Although Bruce hailed from a socially prominent family and was active in a number of black women’s civic organizations, her fair complexion derailed her ambition to serve as president of the National Association of Colored Women. Delegates within the organization’s 1906 convention in Detroit rejected her nomination for national president because: “The predominance of her Caucasian blood caused her to be considered a white woman, and that would be harmful to an organization that prided itself on being directed and controlled entirely by women of the colored race.”

One delegate provided further clarity for this stance:

> We prefer a woman who is altogether a Negro, because, while the lighter women have been the greatest leaders and are among the most brilliant in the Association, their cleverness and ability is [sic] attributed to their white blood. We want to demonstrate that the African is as talented.424

This candid backlash against “color privilege” not only prompted members of the black community to re-examine and disregard the inequities of “light-skinned privilege” but also created space for dark-complexioned black leaders, such as Jennie Dean, to emerge as notable social reformers. Traits of tenacity, honesty, humility,

modesty, and sincerity characterized Jennie Dean, Della Irving Hayden, Janie Porter Barrett, and Amelia Perry Pride. A range of external and internal influences (familial, spiritual, and personal) had shaped them. Despite institutionalized segregation and the prejudice of colorism, all of the dissertation’s women remained unrelenting in their quest to build within their borders.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

“Building Within Our Borders” conducted an examination of four women’s private and public lives in an effort to answer the following questions: What was the nationwide social and political climate that facilitated the emergence of a cross-regional movement towards social reform? What internal and external forces motivated black southern women such as the dissertation’s subjects to engage in social reform? What type of internal and external resources did the subjects utilize in the successful construction and operation of social reform institutions? What were some comparative commonalities that bound the dissertation’s four women to a tradition of southern social reform activism?

Chapter I served as an introductory chapter that included a historiographical discussion of major scholarly works and interpretations of southern black women’s reform. While Chapter I provided a historiographical context in which to place the dissertation’s four women as black southern reformers, it also indirectly highlighted the lack of primary and secondary sources that centrally focus on the women. The exploration of this historiographical void provided credence to the dissertation’s main objective: to provide a more thorough examination and analysis of four women whose legacies as reformist-minded institution builders have been significantly obscured if not excluded from the larger framework of black women’s social reform history. While Chapter I set a scholarly context of potential inclusion for Dean, Hayden, Barrett, and Pride, the succeeding chapters, each with a specific purpose collectively and
conclusively provided validation of the four women’s induction into southern reform history.

Chapter II addressed the onset of late nineteenth-century racial segregation as the period backdrop and catalyst for black southern women to engage in social reform campaigns. The chapter also argued some supporting points that conveyed institutionalized segregation as a facilitator to the women’s social reform. By the turn of the twentieth century, the United States at large, and most certainly the American South, entered the dawn of a new era of institutionalized racial segregation, which was upheld by local, state, and federal laws. Legalized racial segregation in effect created two distinct societies within a larger society: one black and the other white. The creation of these separate societies necessitated that each be self-sufficient and independent from each other. Hence, southern black communities were a self-sufficient and self-contained entity which afforded its residents institutions of worship, education, occupational pursuits, socialization, and commerce. The existence of those essential and universal societal traits often rendered southern black communities to be virtually independent of white control.\[425\]

The self-contained segregated black community (though never totally devoid of looming white supremacy on the margins) operated as a safety net free of the daily direct indignities of white consternation. Freedom from daily white hostility and scrutiny endowed the self-contained segregated black community with an unobtrusive space where black professionals (both male and female) could service and empower the

---

black masses. In essence, these progressive and reformist-minded individuals were endowed with an initial mission to build within the borders relegated to them.

Chapter II also recounted the emergence of a national movement referred to as progressivism. Progressivism, a by-product of industrialization, emerged as a social reform movement whose aim was to eradicate the societal ills of industry. This movement was predominantly spearheaded by middle-class, college-educated white professionals who generally minimalized or completely disregarded the social reform needs of the black community. This dissertation argues that exclusion from the agenda of mainstream progressivism also prompted the emergence of a separate and grassroots black reform effort. Additionally, the chapter also discussed some of the limitations of northern and southern progressivism, which could have potentially stagnated black southern reform initiatives; but, due to solidified and assertive black agency it did not. Despite black reformers’ attempts to combat discrimination, mainstream progressivism in the North and the South operated within a pervasive climate of institutionalized white supremacy. To this end, the charge that progressivism in the North and the South was plagued by racism held a lot of validity.

In regard to the northern-based mainstream movement, most of the initiatives operated on segregationist policies that provided separate services for black and white beneficiaries, such as YMCAs, YWCAs, and settlement home missions. Some northern relief agencies completely excluded a black clientele altogether. Within white southern progressivism, black exclusion was often blatant. To this end, the chapter cited the fact that a large number of southern white women progressives remained steeped in notions of white supremacy. These “conservative progressives” sought only to reform the
South’s white populace at the expense of black subordination and sometimes annihilation. Incidentally, this consistently blatant ostracism from mainstream progressive initiatives provided momentum and catalyst for a separate black southern reform movement.

Additionally, Chapter II provided a historiographical discussion of the complex and seemingly paradoxical nature of white southern progressivism and white southern benevolence, both of which influenced and aided black southern reformist campaigns. Two works discussed within the dissertation, Dewey Grantham’s *Southern Progressivism* and William Link’s *The Southern Paradox* encapsulate the complexities of southern progressivism that incidentally held a certain amount of governance over the success of black southern reform. Both works examined the complex nature of white southern reformers who, despite an internal dichotomy of geographical and interventionist ideologies, remained solidified in their subscription to white supremacy. This commitment to white social and political supremacy did not deter white southern reformers from lobbying for reform, which benefitted the South’s black and white communities. This fact is the main thrust of Grantham’s thesis which asserted that, despite an espousal of white supremacy control, white middle-class, urban reformers in the South were enlightened and socially conscious enough to agitate for legislative measures that would eradicate societal ills. Link further argued that white urban southern reformers were inspired by the doctrines of Protestant humanitarianism (Social Gospel), which charged Christians to take an active role in reforming their communities. Link noted that these southern reformers embraced uplift, progress, and

---

equalized reform extension to both communities, while still advocating paternalistic and sometimes coercive control.427

This dynamic of white paternalistic aid was a staple feature within black southern reform. This fact makes Grantham and Link’s argument a direct correlation to the dissertation’s four women, who all had to confront elements of white paternalism from their white benefactors. This dissertation revealed that, in addition to black communal aid, all of the women utilized a myriad of white philanthropic assistance. This assistance included the following: (a) pedagogical/academic instruction (as was the case with Hampton Institute’s founder Samuel Chapman Armstrong); (b) institutional monetary benevolence (as was the case with organizations such as the American Missionary Association and the Slater, Jeanes, and Rosenwald funds); and (c) individual benevolence (such as Marriage Allen who provided early assistance to Della Irving Hayden’s Franklin Industrial Institute and Alice Freeman Palmer who helped to fund Charlotte Hawkins Brown’s Palmer Institute). Although all of these philanthropic sources were noble in their mission to aid black southern reform initiatives, their benefactors were undoubtedly imbued with and motivated by white paternalism. Though mindful of the paternalistic proclivities of their white benefactors, the dissertation’s four women, like many post-Reconstruction black reformers, remained undeterred by systemic racism and steadfast in accomplishing their reformist objectives.

In addition to Grantham and Link, the dissertation’s argument was also informed by a discussion of Clayton Brooks’ essay, “Unlikely Allies.” Brooks’ 2006 work was integrated into the dissertation because it provided an in-depth examination of

interacial female cooperation in Virginia from 1910 to 1920. Brooks’ argument is so useful because Dean, Hayden, Barrett, and Pride all utilized some aspect of interracial female cooperation to aid their own reformist agendas. Brooks argued that interracial cooperation was motivated by separate agendas. According to Brooks, “White southern women desired to mold and strengthen the developing system of segregation in what they considered a socially responsible manner.” In short, middle- to upper-class, genteel, white southern women were imbued with a paternalistic duty to aid all segments of the southern social order regardless of ethnicity. Once again, even within the dynamic of same-sex interracial cooperation, black southern female reformers, such as the dissertation’s four women, were guarded by their own agenda of black community uplift. As a result, these unperturbed black reformers approached white, female-led paternalism (via interracial cooperation) with the same passive deference and determination as they had with white male-dominated philanthropic foundations. Undoubtedly, the women’s unyielding commitment to improve life within their black southern communities greatly served them in utilizing interracial cooperation as a means to secure external resources, which could further aid their reform initiatives.

Chapter III’s discussion of Samuel Chapman Armstrong reinforced Chapter II’s argument regarding the extension of white paternalistic benevolence toward black social reform initiatives. While Armstrong nobly founded an institution of higher learning to aid Virginia’s postbellum black community, he was nevertheless governed by a sense of white paternalistic duty to assist downtrodden people of color. Despite the potentially

---

crippling nature of Armstrong’s paternalism, he emerged as a respected and revered figure in the lives of Hampton’s early graduates, which included Della Irving Hayden, Janie Porter Barrett, and Amelia Perry Pride.

Chapter IV was an examination of the reformist initiatives of Jennie Dean and Della Irving Hayden. The chapter chronicled the women’s familial backgrounds, spiritual lives, and professional/academic pursuits as determinants that motivated the two women to adopt a civic responsibility to reform and enrich their communities amid the backdrop of racial segregation. Both Dean and Hayden were the children of former enslaved parents who instilled in their children the values of hard work, piety, education and community uplift. Dean’s adoption of those values, compounded with her concern over the lack of instructional facilities available to Manassas’s black youth, motivated her to create an industrial school for black students. The fact that Dean devised an industrial intent for the school is reflective of the nineteenth-century psyche. Jennie Dean, like a vast number of late nineteenth-century leaders, both black and white, subscribed to an acceptance of manual/industrial training as the most acceptable, if not convenient, preparatory curriculum for black southerners. With this preparatory curriculum, black southerners had to adjust themselves to a white-dominated social order dependent upon black industry and compliance.

While the era’s leading white education-based philanthropists advocated industrial training for both the black and white southern masses, Dean’s endorsement was steeped in both practicality and racial consciousness. While sporadically living and working in Washington, D.C. as a domestic, Dean observed firsthand the negative influence that urban vices had on newly arrived rural black youth. This observation
along with the reality of southern occupational limitations (which revolved around agricultural and manual trades) further sparked an interest in Dean to create a training institution that would allow black youth the opportunity to cultivate their vocational skills. Dean concluded that the creation of this type of training school would endow black youth with the fundamental skills to become productive members of southern society.

Aside from its practical value, industrial education was endorsed as an accommodation to white expectation. To this end, most southern black people knew that they were expected to enter vocations, which would place conservative southern white leadership at ease and maintain a non-threatening racial balance. While it is probable that maintaining a harmonious racial order stood secondary to black occupational productivity, it nevertheless served as a factor in Dean’s overall institution design. This fact also seemed to be applicable to the institution-building initiatives of the dissertation’s other three women.

While Hayden’s reform work was also inspired by the same familial and spiritual institutions that influenced Dean’s efforts, there were some contrasts between the two women. One marked difference was academic background. Dean received a sparse and rudimentary elementary-level education while Hayden received a formal teacher’s training education at Hampton Institute. Incidentally, Hayden’s Hampton experience was monumental in cultivating her social consciousness to uplift her community. Hayden, like Janie Porter Barrett and Amelia Perry Pride, was influenced by her years at Hampton Institute. Hampton’s mission, as designed by its founder, Samuel Chapman Armstrong, was to provide instruction toward black community self-
reliance. This multifold institutional philosophy of black self-help, Christian morality, thrift, and industry provided Hayden and other early graduates such as Barrett and Pride with a clear and concise purpose to reform their communities despite the impeding nature of institutionalized black southern economic and social disfranchisement.

Chapter V explored the backgrounds and reformist campaigns of Janie Porter Barrett and Amelia Perry Pride. While this chapter delved into the unique personal backgrounds of Barrett and Pride, both of whom descended from multiracial lineage, it also examined the influence of Hampton’s principles within their reform campaigns. Given the significance of Hampton’s impact, this chapter also referred back to Armstrong and the Hampton model as they applied to specific objectives and initiatives implemented by Barrett and Pride. Aside from the discussion of Hampton and Armstrong, the chapter also uncovered Barrett’s creation of a Locust Street Settlement house and the Virginia Industrial School for Delinquent Colored Girls. The chapter also detailed Pride’s establishment of the Dorchester Home for the Elderly, the Polk Street School, and the Theresa Pierce Cooking School. Just like Dean and Hayden, Barrett and Pride were also conscious of the lack of cultural and instructional facilities within their communities. This inadequacy of facilities, compounded by their cultivated consciousness of reform, prompted Barrett and Pride to create institutions that invaluably enriched their communities. To this end, the institutions established by Barrett and Pride served as illustrative and tangible examples of their commitment to civic duty and racial uplift.

Chapter VI, which serves as the dissertation’s capstone chapter, placed the four subjects within a comparative context. This chapter argued that organizational, familial,
religious, and academic institutions played integral roles in arousing a consciousness of social concern within the minds of numerous early twentieth-century black women who took up the task of improving their communal spaces. In regard to this dissertation, all four women drew significant inspiration from family and spirituality. In addition, three of the women, Della Irving Hayden, Janie Porter Barrett, and Amelia Perry Pride, significantly drew inspiration from a shared academic institution—Hampton Institute.

As argued and examined throughout this dissertation, Hampton Institute played a profoundly pivotal role in mobilizing Hayden, Barrett, and Pride as well as many of its early graduates toward community reform. This fact was rooted in the institution’s core founding principles that stressed the virtues of hard work, thrift, moderation, sobriety, piety, and community outreach. Incidentally, Hayden, Barrett, and Pride adopted these values and through personal civic drive applied them to their individual reform campaigns.

Although Dean was not a Hampton graduate, she and the other three women shared other relevant commonalities that significantly interlinked them into a larger network of black southern social reform. One specific commonality addressed in this chapter was parental intervention. This dynamic referred to the fact that Dean, Hayden, and Barrett had parents who assumed proactive roles in encouraging their children to pursue education and be actively involved in enriching their communities.

Another commonality was spirituality, which especially served as a central feature in the lives of Dean and Hayden. This gravitation to spiritual principles of duty and kindness also prompted Dean and Hayden to engage in selfless community
outreach. Hampton’s Christian-based institutional virtues of piety, thrift, industry, and civic duty further influenced the reformism of Hayden, Barrett, and Pride.

Interracial cooperation was another dynamic in which these four women were actively engaged. As cited in the dissertation, Dean, Hayden, Barrett, and Pride relied on some aspect of white philanthropy in order to sustain or enhance the scope of their reform initiatives. A final dynamic of commonality discussed was class/color consciousness. This dynamic of one’s social and economic status as it relates to one’s physical features (especially skin complexion and hair texture) was prevalent within the black communities during the dissertation’s timespan of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Given the fact that three of the women were formally educated and biracial women, the issue of colorism seemingly influenced some aspect of their private and public self-perceptions as community leaders. As discussed in Chapter VI, at least three of the women exemplified class/color consciousness in their spousal choices as all three women married men from backgrounds similar to their own. Both Hayden and Barrett married fellow Hampton graduates, while Pride married a prominent biracial entrepreneur who only serviced an elite white clientele. Aside from marrying men who held a comparable social status to their own, all three women chose spouses who apparently supported their professional and public initiatives as educators and reformers. This spousal support was illustrated through the longevity of their tenures as educators and reformers. In addition to the application of spousal selectiveness, Barrett exuded class-consciousness by identifying herself as a “lady of leisure” who did not work out of necessity but out of a commitment to civic duty.
While this dissertation marks a step toward presenting black women’s social reform history from a more grassroots approach, there are still some gaps left open within this research. These gaps refer to aspects of the dissertation that could be expanded upon for publication purposes. One area that warrants more examination is gender consciousness. Some major questions to be probed are as follows: How did the women perceive themselves as female community leaders who entered into a public sphere of activism? More specifically, did these women engage in social reform as just merely an extension of their Victorian-era prescribed roles as “domestic nurturers” or were they covertly motivated by a quest for liberation and empowerment? Although Hayden, Barrett, and Pride married men who supported their roles as educators and reformers, there is still the question of whether or not they had to confront any elements of chauvinistic patriarchal criticism outside their marriages. While Dean is the only one of the four women who did not marry, her perpetual single status in an era in which women were expected to marry lends itself to questions: Was her unmarried status a conscious choice? Did remaining unmarried give her greater autonomy in her career?

Another area to explore is the dynamic of color consciousness. Chapter VI’s discussion did not involve Jennie Dean as much as the other subjects. This marginalization of Dean was based on the fact that of these four women she was the only one who was deep complexioned and not biracial. Dean's lack of formal "professional status" as a public educator and administrator, along with her identifiably "Negroid" appearance, meant that she was most likely excluded from the realm of black elitism. Despite this probability, Dean’s deep complexion and exclusion from elite black social networks warrant a more intimate study into Dean’s own color consciousness.
This probe would address the following questions: How did Dean perceive herself as a dark-skinned black woman during an era in which lighter complexioned black people were approbated within and outside of the black community? Did Dean’s deep complexion and stereotypically “Negroid” features impede her influence, acceptance (both within and outside of black communities), and success as a black social reform leader? As an extension of the aforementioned question that relates to black social reformers’ ability to attract white philanthropy, another area to extensively examine is the dynamic of interracial cooperation networks that were utilized by these four women. This probe would examine the personal backgrounds and motives of individual white benefactors who aided the four women’s reformist initiatives.

Amelia Perry Pride was the least discussed subject in this dissertation, and a more in-depth examination of her is warranted. Pride’s familial background is research worthy due to its anomalous nature of being multiracial and “free status” in antebellum Lynchburg, Virginia. In addition, a more thorough investigation into the operation of Pride’s Dorchester Home for the Elderly, the Polk Street School, the Theresa Pierce Cooking School, and her role within the Negro Reformatory Association would add dimension and enrichment to Pride’s legacy as a southern reformer. While those areas should ideally be more thoroughly researched, Pride’s archival records are sparse.

This problem of inadequate primary sources that document the personal and public lives of unknown, but potentially historically significant, people infinitely impede the full growth of specialized fields of history. As stated in the introduction, the scarcity of primary and archival materials should not completely deter the research of lesser known, but historically relevant, people. This gap should mobilize energetic and
skillful scholars who would generate more creative measures to bring in obscure figures onto a centralized stage of historical recognition. Regardless of this dissertation’s limitations, the fact of its focus on lesser-known black women signifies a step toward a more inclusive study of black southern reform within the progressive era.

The remarkable nature of the subjects’ accomplishments as early twentieth-century community reformers rests on three aspects of their identity: black, female, and southern. Those identifying attributes require significant consideration given the timeframe of their social reform activism—the late nineteenth century. This period of institutionalized racial segregation came at the expense of unlimited black denigration and restriction. Despite the “racialized quarantine” of Jim Crow, which separated black and white communities and relegated black people to a subordinate social status, initiative-oriented and reformist-minded black women such as Jennie Dean, Della Irving Hayden, Janie Porter Barrett, and Amelia Perry Pride carved out a space for themselves that brought positive change to build within their communities and within their borders.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PUBLISHED SOURCES


________. *The Children of Gideon*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1886

________. *The Rebel Queen*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1893.


Committee on Domestic Economy. “Report of the Committee on Domestic Economy” (1897/1898). In Amelia Perry Pride Papers, Hampton University Archives.


______. *The Beginning of the Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth and Its Growth, 1888-1900.* Manassas, VA: Manassas Industrial School, 1900.


*Franklin Normal and Industrial Institute Catalogue, 1907-1908*. Franklin, VA: Southampton Democrat Job Print, 1907. Della Irving Hayden Papers, Hampton University Archives.


Hull, Gloria T., Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, eds. But Some of Us Are Brave: All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men: Black Women’s Studies. New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1982.


McQueen, Clyde. The Black Army Officer. Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2009.


______. “The Dorchester Home.” *The Southern Workman* 26, no. 6 (June 1897): 111.


UNPUBLISHED SOURCES


Heck, Lloyd. Memorial Pamphlet for Della Irving Hayden. 1924. Della Irving Hayden Papers, Hampton University Archives.


Pride, Amelia Perry. “Letter to Miss Davis” (March 5, 1904). Amelia Perry Pride Papers, Hampton University Archives.
