

POSTBELLUM EDUCATION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

Race, Economy, Power, and the Pursuit of a  
System of Schooling in the Rural Virginia Counties of Surry and Gloucester

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## DEDICATION

Dedicated to my mother, Mary Signe Swenson, whose ceaseless devotion and years of tender nurturing have made me who I am. Her kindness, humility, passion, and acumen serve as standards to which I humbly aspire. Words are inadequate to express my love for her.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	v
Introduction: Thesis and Strategy	2
Chapter 1: A Brief History of African American Education	8
Chapter 2: Case Study – Northern Missionary Amelia Howard	19
Chapter 3: Social and Economic Interests in African American Education	27
Chapter 4: The Arts and Crafts Movement, Immigration, and Schooling in the United States	39
Chapter 5: Case Study – Samuel C. Armstrong and Hampton Institute	46
Chapter 6: Opposition to the Hampton Model of Education	56
Chapter 7: Two Case Studies – Smallwood Memorial Institute and Gloucester Agricultural and Industrial School	63
John J. Smallwood and Smallwood Memorial Institute	64
William Price and Gloucester Agricultural and Industrial School	69
Conclusion	79
Endnotes	84
Works Cited	88
Books	88
Journals	89
Government and Historical Documents	91
Vita	93

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the following study is to evaluate the system of schooling devised by educational reformers for African Americans in the late nineteenth century. As the United States entered a new social, political, and economic era after the Civil War, the enfranchisement of African Americans became an issue too large to ignore. Accordingly, numerous organizations and individuals undertook this formidable charge. But the peculiar circumstances during which African American education evolved ensured that it was to be no easy task. African American schooling was inevitably toned by contemporary notions of race, economy, and hegemony.

This work draws upon the research of educational scholars to shape an historical framework. Notable examples of African American schools and the debate surrounding them provide insight into the racial and political dynamics of the educational system in the United States. Within that context, several local case studies illustrate how African American education actually developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Rhetoric and reality were not often aligned.

I aim to show that the challenges faced by educators and their attendant successes and failures were contingent on much more than prevailing attitudes about race following the Civil War. The architects of the African American educational system who exerted the most control for the better part of the late nineteenth century had financial and authoritative interests. As a result, they broadly touted industrial education as the most prudent pedagogy. Further, I will argue that both a national dialogue and, perhaps most importantly, teachers and principles who often discreetly contravened the established educational model, undermined the system of industrial schooling. It was this resistance and daring that laid the groundwork for significant gains by the African American community, such as the Civil Rights Movement, in the latter half of the twentieth century.

## POSTBELLUM EDUCATION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

## INTRODUCTION: THESIS AND STRATEGY

In 1904, W.E.B. Du Bois penned a brief history of Atlanta University. He wrote:

Many men and women of energy and devotion have built their lives into this work. Every stone on that broad campus has meant the pulse of some man's life blood and the sacrifice of some woman's heart.<sup>1</sup>

In a sense, this description is a metaphor for the painstaking efforts that were advanced toward educating millions of African Americans in the wake of the Civil War. Du Bois's remembrance succinctly and appropriately characterizes an intricate movement that was as much a product of its historical context as it was a reflection of the labor of its participants. African American education in the United States did not materialize out of thin air. There was much that went into its making. It resulted from new relationships, passionate debates, and, perhaps most importantly, hard work.

The people who chose to accept the formidable charge of educating the freedmen hailed from all walks of life. Males and females, African Americans and whites, blue-collar workers and elites alike became part of this educational movement. There were philanthropists who saw economic opportunity in African Americans, missionaries who sacrificed their time – and in some cases their lives – and there were also former slaves themselves willing, yearning, and often testing their own limits, all in an effort to taste the sweet fruit of an education that had been denied their race for hundreds of years. There were reformers who were compelled by altruism, some who aimed for political expediency, and still others who sought to secure prosperity as the nation moved into a nebulous new era. But just as these

people were products of circumstance, so too were they, and by extension their task, a reflection of the time in which their crusade materialized. Even as plans to educate African Americans were still in their formative stages, the United States was a nation that embraced human bondage. Racism loitered in every part of the country. Decades of sectional crisis, violent civil war and failed reconstruction hardly purged the nation of bigotry and biased perceptions of race, gender, class, and social responsibility. Thus, every lesson taught to African American children in schoolhouses across the nation was a reflection of social developments and understandings much larger than anyone – student, teachers, and reformers – could have imagined.

Because African American education in the United States evolved amid peculiar circumstances, the experiments conducted by men and women to that end were themselves unique, if not somewhat erratic. There was not one definitive plan to educate the African American race. Voices that weighed in mightily from all sides left no conceivable stone unturned. When a weakness was perceived in one method, several alternatives were offered in its stead. Even the obvious successes in African American education were challenged for their merit and usefulness and not a scheme that was devised slipped by unscathed from the hordes of scholars who proposed alternative pedagogies. Cordial arguments about African American education sometimes devolved into personal attacks. Not a few reputations were tarnished by individuals who touted a specific agenda.<sup>2</sup>

But general trends in African American education did emerge. Specific ideologies and institutions became models from which much of the educational

system, particularly in the South, drew deep influence. Hampton Institute, for one, spawned other educational ventures that mimicked its procedures almost exactly. The hegemony of specific models like Hampton was undermined and ultimately overturned by the contentious nature of African American education. Schooling in the South was destined to be heterogeneous; only a few schools toed any consistent line.

This work explores the complex vicissitudes of African American education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In that regard, three broad areas are examined. First, this paper surveys the specific historical events out of which the educational system in the United States grew. During each notable era, certain occurrences defined the scope of educational movements, the achievements reformers were able to accomplish, and precedents that would ultimately be used as a justification for supplanting outmoded plans with novel designs. These chronological stages allowed individuals and institutions to surface that would eventually play decisive roles in the societal character of African American schooling. Further, this work analyzes African American education within its proper historical context, a construction that is critical to an unbiased study. The issue of race is not only contentious, but malleable as well; a twenty-first century interpretation of it is far removed from a nineteenth century one. Getting at the heart of what role race played in educational reform requires the deconstruction of its meaning. The definition of a racial perspective in this study is also accompanied by an historical educational investigation as well. Much of the debate about African American schooling after the Civil War focused on the value of manual education, specifically, training in industry

and agriculture. Again, a modern interpretation is a disingenuous one. This paper defines race and education according to nineteenth and twentieth century interpretations. Finally, this work provides specific examples of historical developments through the use of case studies. Two of the most notable African American schools, Hampton and Tuskegee, are given generous scrutiny since they generally serve as standards by which many other educational endeavors can be gauged. But the true exemplars of African American education were local instances of missionary work and common and secondary schools. This study explores educational undertakings in two specific localities, the counties of Surry and Gloucester in Virginia. Three names in particular, Amelia Howard, John Smallwood, and William Price, now relegated to all but obscurity, were in reality founders of African American education in the South. The churches and schools established by these individuals were real, if sometimes short-lived, and they embody the genuine dynamics of social engineering, historical development, and concealed resistance as reformers forged a scheme for educating former slaves and their descendants.

The most important role that African American education played was on a local level. Indeed, all of the deliberation in the world would have amounted to nothing had local schools not functioned as the machinery of the educational system. Because of that fact, this exploration will draw upon educational scholarship to construct a general history of African American education and use local sources to illustrate that chronicle. I will show how power, and specifically the maintenance of control, was an important concern in the creation of an educational system for African Americans. Dominant groups had an interest in perpetuating the caste system that

was destroyed in name only after the Civil War and many educational endeavors were modeled toward that end. Additionally, this work will demonstrate that race, although it was an enormous determinant of the African American educational system, was not the sole factor explaining why schools developed according to a prescribed agenda. One of the most notable proponents of education that accommodated the wishes of the privileged elite, Booker T. Washington (a man who attracted thousands of followers), was an African American. This study will examine several other factors that influenced the decision to steer African Americans toward a course that diverged from a classical education. Finally, I will examine why educators eventually abandoned industrial and agricultural education for African Americans. As the system evolved, African Americans argued both sides of the educational debate. Some reformers, such as Washington, viewed manual training as the most prudent path to enfranchisement while others, like Du Bois, sought to uplift the race through a more classical curriculum consisting in part of college preparatory courses. Nonetheless, African American schools, manual and otherwise, had a consequence that shook the foundations of the United States. An African American intelligentsia and its white allies became emboldened by the end of the nineteenth century and were prepared to challenge the aristocratic class and racial dominance of American society. Teachers began, almost unnoticeably, implementing a classical curriculum, one that prepared students to become engineers, doctors and, most importantly, social critics. This was a slow, tacit resistance, one that laid the groundwork for larger movements many decades in the future. This educational subterfuge did as much for the African American race as any check from a northern

philanthropist ever did. This was bold and dangerous, innovative and inspirational, selfless and empowering. And W.E.B. Du Bois was right – it was work. It was hard work.

## CHAPTER 1

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION

Enslaved African Americans remained largely illiterate during the antebellum period. Particularly among whites in the South, there was an awareness that literacy among slaves had potentially grave consequences for the existing social order. By the time of the Civil War, however, suppression of slave literacy was an entrenched phenomenon. Reluctance to allow literacy among African Americans stemmed from perceptions among early European colonists that Africans were somehow inhuman and, as a result, should not necessarily enjoy the educational benefits accorded whites. As slavery became established as a permanent institution in America, the reluctance to allow literacy among African Americans expanded. For slave owners, real fears motivated their unwillingness to formally educate bondsmen. They regarded with apprehension literate slaves who would protest their condition. The status quo was particularly vulnerable to literature such as David Walker's 1829 *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*, a publication that called for slaves to change their condition through violent action. Revolts such as those of Denmark Vesey in 1822 and Nat Turner in 1831, an uprising inspired by Walker's *Appeal*, prompted whites, particularly in the South, to use all means at their disposal, statutory and otherwise, to block literacy among African Americans. For example, a Wilmington, North Carolina letter dated November 3, 1831 from James McRae to police in Mobile, Alabama, urged them to be on the lookout for a slave who had allegedly made his way there. In North Carolina, McRae wrote, the slave had "received 200 of [David Walker's] pamphlets for the purpose of being distributed,"

and as a result had been “sold into the interior of other Southern States where he would be deprived the opportunity afforded by a Sea port town to receive and distribute such books.”<sup>3</sup> Potentially damaging occurrences such as this compelled state legislatures to enact slave codes that, in part, reserved literacy only for whites. Laws that forbade both literacy and the instruction of it to slaves were ratified within years of one another: Georgia in 1829; Louisiana in 1830; Virginia in 1831; Alabama and South Carolina by 1834. These statutes represented the codification of nearly two centuries of slaveholding customs. Blocking literacy was an effective approach to bolstering the continued subordination of the African American race.<sup>4</sup>

Despite these sweeping restrictions, however, some slaves *did* learn to read. Many whites risked personal penalty – jail time, fines, even beatings – in their often-clandestine attempts to teach enslaved African Americans to read. Although the motivations were diverse, these white instructors often had the slave in mind as the beneficiary of literacy. Perhaps primary among the reasons that whites taught slaves was the idea that they should be taught “Bible literacy.” Although many whites believed in the innate inferiority, if not inhumanity of Africans, slaves were nonetheless souls that needed to be saved. Some slaves, therefore, were taught to read the Scriptures. Some of the whites who defied laws to teach slaves to read the Bible maintained that promoting literacy exclusively in one content area – scripture – controlled slaves’ access to literature. Indeed, many of the instructors of Bible literacy taught reading but not writing, recognizing that penmanship allowed slaves to forge documents, such as travel passes, that facilitated mobility in their otherwise stringently restricted environment. African Americans who did enjoy some measure

of instruction in Bible literacy risked further punishment by sharing their knowledge with others of their own condition.<sup>5</sup> Aside from the intent of religious instruction, still other slaves were taught by whites who recognized some advantage to owning a literate slave. These individuals might conduct fair financial or commodity transactions, or assume managerial duties where whites might not have the needed time.<sup>6</sup> Whites recognized the value in literacy. Clearly, therefore, a percentage of slaves were literate. While garnering authoritative numbers is impossible, certain surveys conducted in the postbellum period indicate that laws seeking to impose wholesale restrictions on slave literacy were porous. Contemporary analyses varied widely and were far from empirical but, on the whole, signify that some slaves could read. Estimates range from a low of 5 percent, as that maintained by W.E.B. Du Bois in *Reconstruction* to a high of 20.2 percent as put forth by an historian of Kentucky slavery who analyzed 350 runaway slave advertisements.<sup>7</sup> While the overwhelming majority of slaves were illiterate, then, reading among that community was not abnormal. If the object of statutory restrictions on literacy imposed by southern states amid a climate of uprising and fear was to prevent book learning across the board in enslaved communities, those regulations entirely missed their mark.

The political and social disorder of the mid-nineteenth century was a crucible for African American education in the United States. But educational concerns initially took a back seat to the needs of a broken and bloodied nation. The need for real and immediate government intervention in the United States in 1865 was significant. Specifically, there were two areas that needed to be addressed: the governance of the former Confederate states and the enfranchisement of roughly four

million enslaved people who would be formally emancipated upon ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment. Thus, Congress created, as a branch of the War Department, the Federal Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees and Abandoned Lands. Better known as the Freedmen's Bureau, the tasks of the agency were developed to meet the needs of the war-torn nation. The whole of the former Confederacy was divided into military districts, each headed by an army general to whom all agents of the Freedmen's Bureau reported.<sup>8</sup>

There was no provision in the original Freedmen's Bureau Act for the education of emancipated slaves. Realizing this critical need, however, the Freedmen's Bureau, along with other governmental functions, assumed superintendence of schools and instruction in the southern states. The first head of the Freedmen's Bureau was General Oliver O. Howard, a northerner deeply concerned about and committed to the education of former slaves. But when the Bureau took the helm, its agents had to negotiate educational institutions that already existed in the South. In fact, numerous benevolent societies had established schools devoted to African American education prior to the end of the Civil War. One of the first benevolent societies to enter the South was the American Missionary Association (AMA), which, along with interested individuals, established schools at Fortress Monroe in Virginia and the Sea Islands of South Carolina, among other places, where escaped bondsmen received education. In its first widespread attempt to implement an educational system for African Americans, the AMA swept through Georgia behind William Tecumseh Sherman's 1864 invasion of the South. It embarked on such a risky venture with the intention of dominating the state's new educational

system that would result from the federal occupation and, inevitably, victory. Other benevolent societies that followed the AMA included the Friend's Freedman Association, the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the American Freedmen's Union Commission. Yet early efforts by benevolent societies to educate former slaves were themselves not unprecedented. The national superintendent of schools for the Freedmen's Bureau, John W. Alvord, observed in December 1865 what he termed "native schools." These were assorted educational ventures: sometimes merely gatherings of individuals, where pupils were already being furnished basic tutoring by individuals whom the various African American communities saw fit to deem instructors. Alvord observed in Goldsboro, North Carolina, for instance, a school at which two African American men who, without the aid of a benevolent society, supervised a school that maintained a roster of 150 pupils. According to Alvord, "at least 500 schools of this description [were] already in operation throughout the South." The vast majority of these "native schools" observed by Alvord were established either solely by African Americans or with minimal white assistance at least as early as 1861.<sup>9</sup>

Wide-ranging efforts to educate former slaves in the Confederate states reflected a collection of ideas and resources from several factions. The Freedmen's Bureau generally supplied the capital, infrastructure and supervision necessary for instruction to occur. And while the Bureau did furnish some educators, it was primarily northern benevolent societies that flooded the South with missionaries, themselves both white and African American, who served as teachers. These missionaries, although they did teach a secular elementary education, were often

motivated by the desire to proselytize. All the while, it was former slaves who created the conceptual and practical framework for their education and exhibited an insatiable eagerness for learning. When the blueprints for African American schooling were implemented, therefore, instructional facilities and techniques were quite diverse. These schools generally fell within one of four categories: day schools for the unemployed, night schools for working children and adults, industrial schools that taught domestic skills to young ladies and Sunday schools, which were intended to offer a rudimentary secular education as well as instruction in Christian teachings and principles.<sup>10</sup>

After a lull at the end of Reconstruction, resurgence in interest of African Americans, civil rights, and schooling occurred during the 1880s and 1890s. Numerous schools for African Americans were firmly in place by these decades but larger social concerns sparked an evaluation of the public education system as a whole. This quasi-educational movement was largely an outgrowth of popular interest in the platforms of the Farmers' Alliance and Populist parties. Because the nation was plagued by a minor, though sustained depression during these years, the parties were able to obtain significant numbers of seats in state and local governments. From these positions, party members made important gains in public education. This movement, however, was generally part of larger social reform. Educational improvement was one element of party platforms designed to challenge the dominant planter aristocracy in the South and northern business interests that seemed at odds with the well-being of the increasingly-empowered working class electorate.<sup>11</sup>

The third and by far the most comprehensive of the educational movements in the United States began in 1898. Whereas previous efforts to engineer a specific plan for educating African Americans had necessarily been a product of larger social reforms, efforts around the turn of the century were aimed at implementing specific educational plans by mustering some of the most powerful, wealthy, and well-respected public officials. Also unlike earlier movements, this brand of educational reform was less threatening to the southern aristocracy, who were viewed as partners rather than adversaries in this venture. Instead of clashing with southerners on ideological terms, these reformers sought to gain the support of planters by proving to them that certain educational principles, if implemented and nurtured properly, could produce industrious and comfortable African American industrial and field workers rather than simply shelling out citizens who would be competing for jobs with whites. Further, reformers sought to use elite white support as insurance against violent reprisal. Particularly in rural localities, racist groups and individuals, many of whom were white but far from elite, stymied efforts to educate African Americans by brutally intimidating participants and destroying the infrastructure necessary for instruction to occur. If educators could muster the support of the elite class, aggressive countermeasures by opponents of African American schooling would be significantly undermined. Because of meticulous strategic planning by its architects, therefore, this phase of educational reform enjoyed a broader, though still deeply handicapped, base of support and its proponents were able to make demonstrable gains, however racially prejudiced, towards African American education.<sup>12</sup>

This educational movement that began around the turn of the century itself actually consisted of two distinct periods. From 1898 to 1900, meetings between southern educational reformers and northern philanthropists were intended to be a forum at which widely varying ideas and interpretations about the scope and nature of African American education could be coalesced. Through a series of annual Conferences for Education in the South, which met in Capon Springs, West Virginia, this dialogue was able to occur. Since the men who attended these maintained roughly the same ideological mindset, the meetings were invitation only and generally informal. The participants were male, wealthy, and had a vested interest in the economic health of the nation. In fact, no African Americans attended the first three conferences. The meetings were simply an opportunity to rub elbows with like-minded reformers. But three annual conferences were enough to confirm and formalize certain notions among these individuals. William H. Baldwin, a railroad entrepreneur and cofounder of the southern education movement, expressed these ideas well in an address at the Capon Springs conference in 1899.

In the Negro is the opportunity of the South. Time has proven that he is best fitted to perform the heavy labor in the Southern States... The South needs him; but the South needs him educated to be a suitable citizen... He will willingly fill the more menial positions, and do the heavy work, at less wages, than the American white man or any foreign race which has yet come to our shores. This will permit the white laborer to perform the more expert labor, and to leave the fields, the mines, and the simpler trades for the Negro.<sup>13</sup>

Baldwin asserted the beliefs shared by his colleagues at the conference: that universal schooling was necessary to maintain the social order; that African Americans must be trained in physical labor; and that whites were and would remain superior to their

African American contemporaries. And with these thoughts earnestly conceived, the southern education movement pressed full speed ahead.<sup>14</sup>

Whereas the first stage of the southern educational movement was largely insular and focused on standardizing an ideology, the second phase from 1901 to 1914 was intended to broadcast and implement the ideas made official by the men at the Capon Springs conferences. The annual conferences continued, but attendees met in various southern cities. At the onset of this second period of the educational reform movement, organizers of the Fourth Conference for Education in the South formed two organizations, the Southern Education Board and the General Education Board. The former was intended to create the modes of propaganda that would convince southerners of the value in African American education and the latter served to provide financial support as well as feedback on the progress being made on the educational front. Certain men emerged during this second phase as leaders of the educational movement including Robert C. Ogden, a northern philanthropist and onetime president of Hampton Institute's board of trustees, George Foster Peabody, a political activist and wealthy northern banker, and William H. Baldwin. The result of this period of educational reform was that reformers recognized and underscored industrial and agricultural training as the best method of education for African Americans. Schools with industrial curricula were praised as being models of economic efficiency. Reformers sought to prevent African Americans from leaving the southern fields and factories, their "natural environment" as Baldwin termed it, for more desirable positions. Hundreds of schools, inspired by the reformers' rhetoric, were founded toward that end. White southerners recognized the goals of

the southern education movement and did make concessions that they felt were in their interest, but nonetheless remained skeptical of universal schooling. African American education remained a dangerous proposition. Thus, the drive to educate African Americans, from Reconstruction well into the twentieth century, was perpetually tainted both by the reluctance of southerners to forsake a social order that their ancestors had spent hundreds of years perfecting and by the immediate urgency that reformers and philanthropists affixed to the task of training the descendents of slaves. Both of these groups foresaw an economic order in which African Americans were perennially and permanently subordinate to whites.<sup>15</sup>

The social upheaval that accompanied emancipation was, perhaps, inevitable. But the concerns of the dispossessed millions of African Americans after the Civil War were foremost in the minds of relatively few individuals and groups in the United States, and understandably so; the violence and destruction that had rained down upon the nation left few families unaffected. If the planter class in the South had perceived an end of slavery in their lifetimes, few had made plans for it. Thus, emancipation was marked by an acute lack of preparation for the overwhelming task of handling the problems that arose from the immediate liberation of four million individuals. As the nation began healing the wounds of war, it became clear that the government, organizations, anyone, had to arrive at some solution. The lack of definition of the scope of the problem further complicated efforts to ameliorate the unforeseen consequences of emancipation. Shifting demographics, extensive migrations, and forced repatriation combined with one another and necessitated a pragmatic approach to the African American problem in the United States.

The specific predicament about educating former slaves did not have, like most other social dilemmas, a fixed solution. In practice, African American education took many forms. From these assorted efforts, clear trends and movements evolved, such as the Freedmen's Bureau/benevolent society schools and the southern education movement. Still, no one model became the singular archetype of African American schooling; each form had its own benefits and drawbacks. The education of former slaves was (and had to be) a try-and-see approach. Several strategies were employed because one did not categorically meet the demands of the students, instructors, financial backers, and societies that shouldered the burden of the freedmen and their descendents. So African American education, despite the misgivings of many in the South, did begin to enjoy at least marginal support from the communities that were the milieus of the former slaves. To be sure, every attempt at educating African Americans was a product of its nurturing. The motivations for teaching former slaves ranged from personal financial gain to unconditional altruism. And it was the latter of these motivations, at least the professed belief in it, which motivated the first great wave of teachers that flooded into the South to tackle the task of educating the freedmen. While these northern missionaries may have harvested personal fulfillment there, efforts in the South by these apostles also strongly influenced the development of the African American community in the United States. Northern missionaries, through education, helped in the formation of African American identity as that community made the monumental leap from bondage to freedom.

## CHAPTER 2

## CASE STUDY – NORTHERN MISSIONARY AMELIA HOWARD

Amelia Howard's story is one that was duplicated throughout the South during Reconstruction. A fading granite memorial marker in a quiet cemetery in Surry County, Virginia reads simply, "In Memory of Amelia "Mother" Howard, Organized Mt. Moriah A.M.E. Church, 1865." This monument is one of the few tangible references to Amelia Howard remaining in Surry County. But if the memories of Howard have fallen by the wayside, the enduring fruits of her labor in Surry over a century ago have not. No less than five existing churches in Surry and one in neighboring Isle of Wight can trace their lineage to Howard's efforts which, in the tumultuous period following the Civil War, provided the fundamental instruction and infrastructure necessary for small congregations to serve as the genesis of these modern churches.<sup>16</sup>

Teachers like her were dispatched to "the remotest counties of each of the confederate [*sic*] states" to manage the task of educating African Americans recently freed from the yoke of slavery.<sup>17</sup> These sundry chronicles became part of the framework within which modern race relations evolved. The influence of Howard and others on modern African American material culture – specifically churches and schools – and the communities that developed were instrumental in constructing the tenor of modern race relations. But progressive, if imperfect, twenty-first century race relations have been a long time coming. The successes and failures of Howard and her contemporaries were products of prevalent notions and attitudes about identity as race relations developed in the United States. Surry's churches, and the

churches and schools of the South in general, evolved in a dense climate of hatred and violence. African Americans, however, have been able to make measured progress from those dark days of slavery while retaining elements of their unique culture that was imported from Africa and underwent modifications in the stratified society of the United States. This cultural retention and its attendant expression are due in no small part to the circumstance and evolution of African American culture.

It was Sunday schools that Howard evidently intended to establish after her arrival in Surry, probably in 1865. No records have been found that definitively identify the date of Howard's arrival in Surry, but she clearly lost no time executing her mission. Legend purports that Mt. Moriah A.M.E. and Cypress Baptist were established in the waning months of 1865. Official documentation places Howard in Surry no later than January 1867. In a letter to the superintendent of the Second [Military] District of Virginia dated January 30, 1867, Captain J.F. Wilcox expresses regret at being unable to locate "Aunt Amelia Howard."<sup>18</sup> A handful of other correspondences offer candid glimpses into Howard's otherwise undocumented mission in Surry. She writes a letter, for instance, on November 7, 1867 assuming the title "Superintendent of Colored Schools for the County of Surry in the State of Virginia."<sup>19</sup> The last known correspondence by Howard was a letter probably written in March 1868 in which she explains local opposition to the building of a school in Surry County. Her death remains as shrouded in mystery as her life; the only known reference to her passing is an invoice, dated July 28, 1884, in which one Cornelious Clayton is paid \$3.00 for the "making of a coffin for Mother Howard."<sup>20</sup> Her final resting place is not certain, although local scholar William Paquette claims to have

found the overgrown cemetery in which she is interred at the direction of an elderly deacon of Cypress Baptist in 1981. No headstone there bore her name. Paquette reasons this as the prompting of the creation of the memorial marker on the grounds of Mt. Moriah.<sup>21</sup>

Howard's race is similarly as ambiguous as the mostly undocumented details of her work in Surry. Primary evidence indicates that she was at least partially African American. Both whites and African Americans were sent to the South to serve as instructors in the burgeoning educational endeavors. While proportionately more whites tended to have the formal education necessary to serve as instructors, the need to have African Americans teaching former slaves was quite clear. Conflicting information prevents Howard's placement into one racial category. Captain Wilcox, in 1868, refers to "Amelia Howard the colored woman."<sup>22</sup> Census records from 1850 in Baltimore, her city of origin, claim Howard to be 30 years old, female, and African American. William Paquette claims that she was white and refers to his interviews with church elders as corroboration. Howard was an Episcopalian by faith and sometimes took African American children to the all white Lawns Creek Episcopal Church. Two Surry residents, now deceased, who were acquainted with Howard recall her complexion as olive-skinned, further complicating a certain race classification. Paquette notes, however, that she was warmly regarded by the African American community and her race played little part in the opinion formed by the community about her. "She was so accepted by the black community," claims Paquette, "that to some, she was black."<sup>23</sup>

Aside from providing a time frame for Howard's work in Surry, the scant documentation, supplemented by oral history, demonstrates that Howard and the churches created under her wing developed according to historical patterns prevalent in Virginia and throughout the South during Reconstruction. As noted, the Freedmen's Bureau assumed charge of African American education in the South only after the practice was well underway at the hands of myriad northern benevolent societies. According to Captain Wilcox, Howard was being paid \$20.00 per month by the Friends Freedmen's Aid Association of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This benevolent society was one of many that, along with the Freedmen's Bureau, sponsored teachers and provided instructional necessities. As would be duplicated in all areas of the South, Howard received funding from the Friends Freedmen's Aid Association as well as the Freedmen's Bureau. These dual sources of funding, however, far from secured the success Howard's articulated goal to "go forward and set up schools in every direction of the County."<sup>24</sup> Staunch opposition lurked in these remote corners of the South, entrenched in doctrine, embittered by defeat and wanting nothing of northern missionaries whose focus was the dispossessed race whose emancipation was impossible for many southerners to stomach.

Hostility towards African American education in the South derived from two sources. First, many southerners resented what they considered intrusion into their territory, not only because it was viewed as an invasion of privacy, but also because the bulk of the would-be educators were from the North. In light of the sweeping control of southern government by the Freedmen's Bureau, the migration of northern teachers was painfully tantamount to continued federal aggression in areas of the

country where sympathies were solidly stacked on the side of states' rights. Southerners took issue, moreover, with the fundamental charge of the northern missionaries. Slavery was defended with everything from Bible to bullet and de jure illiteracy was prevalent throughout the South. Resistance to African American education was particularly acute among poor whites who were loath to debase their perceived superior status over African Americans. Regardless of class, however, there existed a general sentiment in the South that African American education was disingenuous because full racial equality would never be attained. But whatever the motive, the perception, or the argument against African American education, it was nonetheless well underway even as the last Confederate flags were being forever furled. Thus, an aura of contempt and distrust was conceived and nurtured simultaneously with the plan to educate former slaves. And throughout the South, even in tiny Surry County, opposition to African American education made itself quickly and readily apparent.<sup>25</sup>

“Sir,” wrote Howard in March 1868, “I have met with great insult from Mr. Joseph Barne cursing and abusing me in a shameful manner.”<sup>26</sup> Her struggle was that of many missionaries and civil rights activists for decades to come. The education of the African American was much more to unwelcoming southerners than a humble and altruistic attempt to ameliorate the spite of war. It represented an attack against a livelihood two hundred years in the making and anything or anyone who stood poised to undermine that status quo was fair game. The South suffered a wave of violence after the Civil War that made the challenges faced by Howard and other missionaries much more formidable. Reports persisted throughout the tenure of the

Freedmen's Bureau's existence of insults, like those received by Howard, and violence effected against bureau teachers and schools.

But these campaigns of terror unleashed against symbols and institutions that represented former slaves, though often lethal, were not enough to bring the struggle for equality to its knees. Accordingly, domestic terrorism assumed a supplemental role in intimidating African Americans after the passage of the Jim Crow laws. These statutes, so named for a minstrel show popular in the 1830s, were designed and implemented as a way of skirting the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. Segregating African Americans was a way to preserve at least the perception that the races were meant to be separated. Throughout the South, the Jim Crow era witnessed unparalleled acts of violence that were intended to intimidate African Americans and force them to accept the status of second-class citizens. There is no dearth of evidence in this regard; beatings, bombings and lynchings were frequent and painful reminders that the system imposed on the South after the Civil War was, to many, unacceptable. Politicians ran on openly segregationist platforms. The equal integration of the African American into southern society was openly and vehemently opposed until recent memory. The task of Howard and others like her who worked toward that end, therefore, was made all the more difficult in light of such stringent antagonism.<sup>27</sup>

In the eyes of many southerners, the education of African Americans clearly crossed a threshold of acceptability that made its proponents and adherents deserving of violent reprisal. From beneath this existence, cloaked in fear and suspicion, the African American community, and churches specifically, emerged in solidarity,

prepared to face the world that offered pleasant opportunities amid the violence and insult. Howard's work in Surry again furnishes specific examples of this historical pattern. The small group of African American Sunday school students who would serve as the genesis for Mt. Nebo Baptist, under the direction of Howard, met under a brush arbor in lieu of a more suitable structure. The arbor was destroyed by a fire and it was widely believed that the culprits were members of the white community who harbored unkind feelings about the presence of that nascent African American church there. Despite this setback, however, these keystone members of Mt. Nebo continued their worship and a barn was shortly erected on the ground on which the modern church now stands. From the brush arbor in Surry and in the cases of every church burned in between, African Americans have borne the brunt of violence intended to eliminate, or at least subjugate these very congregations that emerged in the wake of the Civil War. That the African American church has triumphed and remains a cornerstone of the community is adequate testament to the community's brawn and endurance.<sup>28</sup>

That African American communities suffered violence at all raises questions about the role of northern missionaries in their social development. To what extent would these communities have evolved differently without the influence of Howard and hundreds like her? How might the violence aimed at African Americans have varied without the presence of northern influences? Clearly the African American church would have remained a potent force in the development of these various communities. The church was one element of social function that slaves were allowed to retain under the system of slavery. In fact, most of the missionaries who

migrated south found burgeoning communities of worship already in existence. The group of worshipers who would eventually found Mt. Nebo, for instance, maintained devotional gatherings prior to Howard's arrival. Further, African American education and religious development began to receive a modicum of support during Reconstruction from southerners who realized the grave consequences of not assisting these dispossessed millions residing among them. African American churches, thus, clearly would have developed, but the scope and sequence of their growth minus the northern missionaries is moot.<sup>29</sup>

This ultimate question, then, comes to the fore: What was the influence of the northern missionaries on the development of African American communities in the South? African Americans were given instructional, emotional, material and financial support by those who were sent and supported by northern benevolent societies and the Freedmen's Bureau. The church was to become an integral part of the African American community and it was done so in no small part at the guidance of missionaries. It was a mission to which former slaves were quite welcoming. "I went to Bacons Castle [in Surry County] on last Sunday to see how many scholars I could bet [*sic*]," wrote Howard in 1868, "and to my surprise, I taken in [*sic*] 150 freed persons and children."<sup>30</sup> From these humble, eager beginnings emerged pillars of the community with names like Lebanon, Mt. Moriah and Emmanuel. Thousands of African Americans find solace, fortitude and guidance from these churches, now over one hundred years old, which represent the enduring power of their community.

## CHAPTER 3

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTEREST IN AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION

The hostile attitude of southern whites towards Howard and others like her undoubtedly intimidated them. For this reason, involvement in African American education by northern missionaries began to wane during the years of Reconstruction. Several other factors likewise influenced a shift in the nature of post-emancipation education. The attitude of many northern teachers towards freedmen became less than salutary. Many teachers witnessed wholesale defections from their schools by African Americans who became uncomfortable with the white teachers who conducted them. Still another issue prompted a general exodus from northern missionary schools. African Americans withdrew from northern-sponsored schools in favor of low tuition or free schools that the northerners felt were headed by incompetent African Americans or racist whites intending to preserve the antebellum social order. Dismay turned to anger as northern missionaries felt their efforts being undermined by alternative schools. This resentment was expressed well by Sarah Jane Foster, a northern missionary who taught a school for freedmen in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. In a personal diary about her experiences there, she remarked on April 13, 1866, "I had only fifteen scholars in. I felt all day as if I could scold and cry or anything else of the kind. I am foolish to feel so, but I can not get reconciled to [this new school at which I am teaching]. If I had a full school maybe I could."<sup>31</sup>

The living conditions faced by the northern missionaries in the South prompted many to abandon their work after spending an obligatory amount of time there. The housing arrangements in the South were often precarious and teachers were

repeatedly forced into less than comfortable accommodations because few others existed. Benevolent societies and other regulatory agencies were insistent that only white families could domicile the white female teachers but this demand could not always be met and many exceptions to the rule existed. Some women lived in houses that were dilapidated and overcrowded. The teachers often had to drastically alter their diets. One teacher in rural Georgia claimed that she sat down to a “nauseating mess” of bacon, collards, and cornbread each night. Many teachers were disheartened by the racial strife that they witnessed in the South. Northern missionary Minnie Hanson recalled seeing white southerners beat African Americans who were trying to vote in 1871 while they claimed that they would “wade knee-deep in blood before Niggers should represent Baker [County].”<sup>32</sup> While northern missionaries certainly enjoyed some measure of satisfaction in fulfilling their charge in the South, the conditions under which they labored made that happiness arrive at great cost.<sup>33</sup>

Only three years after the end of the Civil War, the Freedmen’s Bureau was a dying agency. Its detractors, according to historian Paul Peirce, claimed that the agency was “unconstitutional, expensive, injurious, fostering idleness among Negroes, arousing animosity between black and white, preventing proper cultivation of plantations, serving as a political machine and illegally confiscating property.”<sup>34</sup> Through legislative action, Congress was able to reduce the bureau’s staff to a skeleton crew by 1870 and by 1872, the agency was disbanded. The demise of the Freedmen’s Bureau spelled the end of intensive involvement by the federal government in educating former slaves. While private aid organizations and

benevolent societies continued to furnish relatively meager financial support to educational ventures in the South, most realized that the need was too overwhelming. There were too many African Americans who needed to be educated and not enough northern teachers willing to participate in the application of such a massive assignment. As noted, the northern teachers additionally found their assignments in the South to be rough. Thus, the supply of northern teachers diminished rapidly less than a decade after the Civil War. For those who remained involved in African American education, one thing was certain: some system, sponsored by northerners or sympathetic southerners, needed to be in place. Complete withdrawal would result in the seizure of African American education by southerners who would not champion the philanthropic principles that had drawn so many educators south in the 1860s. But the rush to clarify a broadly-implemented alternative to the Freedmen's Bureau-benevolent society manner of educating African Americans was stymied by emerging differences of opinion over the type of education that would work best to moderate the increasingly divisive enfranchisement of former slaves.<sup>35</sup>

Industrial education as a concept in the United States had its origin well before it was broadly applied in the mid-nineteenth century. The idea of including manual labor in secondary and higher education was originally intended to benefit affluent students, almost exclusively whites. Using industrial education as a supplement to a classical curriculum was perceived as a means of benefiting students by allowing them beneficial exercise that might otherwise have been absent. Industrial curricula, however, soon became an instructional technique that rendered education more accessible to less affluent students. Orphans and the children of

mentally and physically challenged parents, it was reasoned, would be the beneficiaries of industrial training. By teaching these youngsters employment skills with real-life applications, they were much less likely to become wards of the state when they matured. Industrial education taught hard work, economy, and morality. Further, having students work at a trade while they perfected it allowed poor students to earn their keep. Tuition was paid by a student's production, effectively opening the doors of education to people who might otherwise not have had that opportunity. Many of the early schools that offered industrial education required students to do work on a school farm, laundering, cooking, or engaged in some other trade associated with the school's upkeep. There was usually an arranged regimen that included class, study and work time to which the students had to strictly adhere.<sup>36</sup>

In the 1830s, several colleges experimented with an industrial-classical curriculum, which integrated manual training and bookwork. Included among the schools that used these instructional strategies were Andover, Amherst, Mt. Holyoke Seminary for Women, Oneida, Oberlin and Wesleyan. While industrial education was not the core of their instructional program, students in those schools did train for and work at trades that financially supported themselves and their schools. By 1861, however, the shortcomings of industrial education proved to be too burdensome for the schools and most of them had all but abandoned their industrial training programs. The work done by students was inefficient and most schools realized a net loss on their working farms. Not until some schools secured other methods of funding did they return to keeping a partly industrial curriculum.<sup>37</sup>

Interest in educating African American citizens in trades and industry arose as early as the eighteenth century by free African American leaders and white abolitionists. In the 1830s, a concrete plan for such a program was implemented by an assemblage of free African American scholars and white social reformers. When the First Annual Convention of the Free People of Color convened in Philadelphia in 1831, a proposal was drafted that recommended the establishment of a trade technical school in New Haven, Connecticut. This “Manual Labor College” was to teach industrial skills such as carpentry and construction as well as classical disciplines such as math and science to free African Americans. Although the reaction of the white residents of New Haven stymied the establishment of the school there, the project was nonetheless pursued in several locations between 1830 and 1860.<sup>38</sup>

The persistence of the program’s proponents demonstrates that two leanings were beginning to take shape among activists for minority rights. First, Americans of all races were beginning to recognize the need to construct some sort of educational foundation for African Americans in the United States. The presence of a significant minority in the population was not an ephemeral trend. Additionally, African Americans demonstrated their receptiveness to the notion that formal education would include at least some measure of industrial education. This approach to education would find widespread support when the drive to educate African Americans in the South gained considerable momentum in the late nineteenth century.

An analysis of the southern education movement in general and specifically northern philanthropists’ interest in it must necessarily consider the economical

context out of which the desire to train African Americans arose. Despite four years of Civil War and decades of sectional tensions preceding it, the character of the United States remained much the same as it had been prior to the national crisis: the North maintained its industrial character and was heavily dependent on the agrarian South's resources and commodities for production. What did change were the manpower shortages and financial constraints that directly resulted from emancipation. An exodus of African American workers from their former plantations created an acute labor shortage in the South. Fully one-third of African American laborers left their positions as agricultural laborers in favor of other pursuits. Additionally, planters were forced to begin paying workers that they were able to retain, an expense that greatly increased overhead costs and caused the prices of their commodities to rise. In light of these adjustments, however, planters did remarkably little to alter the system of plantation agriculture in the South. Massive agricultural operations continued to produce virtually all of the South's exportable commodities. The "overseer" was renamed "manager" but his chief responsibility to maintain tight control over the poor, landless mostly African American laborers remained the same. Out of this title restructuring was spawned the system of sharecropping wherein laborers were leased a plot of land to farm in return for a hefty percentage of their annual agricultural yield. The dependence of African American workers on the white owners for most goods and services continued. Because the South sent its goods to other parts of the country, the change in agricultural production, especially of staple crops such as cotton, had rippling consequences that affected other sectors of the economy and guaranteed that individuals who would have shunned sectional

cooperation prior to the Civil War wholly changed their mindset. As a result, the production of commodities became the focus of extensive analysis and intervention.<sup>39</sup>

After the Civil War, the United States was what James D. Anderson called an “emergent urban-industrial nation.” While there were still peculiar sectional variations, each part had a distinct and important role in the new economy. Northerners had economic interests in the health of the southern economy and vice versa. Northern businessmen did stand to make personal financial gains through sectional cooperation, their concerns were on a broader scale because the fate of the nation as a whole was contingent on its fostering both agricultural and industrial sectors. The two segments were mutually dependent. One could not prosper without the success of the other. Accordingly, a new class of northern businessmen made specific efforts to control the society of the South, particularly African American socialization, through educational philanthropy. In his book *Education as Cultural Imperialism*, Martin Carnoy, wrote of northern philanthropy, “Unfortunately for blacks, Northern capitalists were more interested in exploiting Southern resources than in promoting black liberation...[They] were interested in Southern economic development – achieved by the training of a large skilled labor force – in which progressive industrialists from both the North and South could participate.”<sup>40</sup> In this regard, northern philanthropists used their financial resources to create a business climate that was conducive to a healthy and prosperous economy. These philanthropists had a vested interest in the maintenance of social stability in the South. The social hierarchy that kept African Americans poor, illiterate and disfranchised had been the prescribed social order for hundreds of years by the late

nineteenth century. A disruption to the dynamics of that system was dangerous not only to the ruling class in the South but to southern production as well. Great social upheaval, then, had the potential for significant political and economic consequences. Several possible complications threatened to derail the health of the national economy and the interests of the ruling elite. Investment in the education of African Americans by northern philanthropists, therefore, was not necessarily unconditional altruism. Instead, it was insurance, however tenuous, against a disruption of the greatly skewed balance of power in the United States.<sup>41</sup>

But if northern business interests provided financial justifications to maintain southern agriculture as it had existed prior to the Civil War, it was the intransigent views of the southern aristocracy that were largely responsible for the widespread implementation of industrial training in the postbellum South. Planters maintained that former slaves necessarily had to be politically disfranchised. In places throughout the South where African Americans comprised a significant minority and in some cases a majority of the population, political enfranchisement would have amounted, for the ruling class, to political suicide. “Any education will be used by the Negro politically,” wrote Paul Barringer, chairman of the University of Virginia faculty, “for politics, once successful is now an instinctive form of warfare.”<sup>42</sup> Further, white southerners generally believed, like many of their northern counterparts, that African Americans were mentally inferior and best suited to perform agricultural labor that was physically demanding and required no skilled training. Planters in the South believed that schooling even a segment of the African

American population would foment agitation about their second-class status and ruin their value as manual laborers.<sup>43</sup>

Amid a flood of governmental and private intervention in African American schooling during Reconstruction, planters made known their support for industrial rather than classical curricula. Industrial education, elite white southerners reasoned, served two purposes. First, it was an instrument of socialization and control because African Americans would be instructed of the fixed racial hierarchy and come to understand that political disfranchisement was for their own good. Further, industrial education would teach skills necessary for African Americans to do the physical labor of the South, a fact that would make them more productive workers and a benefit rather than an encumbrance for southern society.<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps the most notable southern advocate for industrial education of African Americans was J.L.M. Curry. As a former Confederate and proslavery congressman, Curry championed reconciliation over hostility between North and South and became an architect of a plan to educate slaves that held great potential to bridge any gaps between southern planters and northern businessmen. Curry, like many of the northern industrialists, recognized that the North and the South were dependent on one another for their livelihoods. “The North and South are mutually dependent for helpful offices,” he claimed, “and for the most effective working out of their grand destiny.” He envisioned the emergence of a new industrial South and saw the preservation of the status quo (minus slavery) as the best way to achieve prosperity toward that end.<sup>45</sup>

Curry firmly believed that the sectional differences plaguing the nation during and after the Civil War needed to be abandoned in favor of achieving Anglo-Saxon national supremacy. He solicited support for his ideology, citing “the need of undivided Caucasian energies for working to a wise solution to the great problems which Providence has devolved upon them.” The largest of those problems, a “devastating disease” according to Curry, was “the presence of such a multitude of Negroes.” He warned white Americans that “if the Negroes remain as co-occupants of the land and co-citizens of the States, and we do not lift them up, they will drag us down to industrial bankruptcy, social degradation, and political corruption.”<sup>46</sup> Thus, Curry pressed for industrial education for African Americans on both social and economic grounds. First, he wanted African Americans to be trained so that they had no other option but to accept their position as laborers in the southern economy. In addition to elementary instruction and industrial training, then, part and parcel of Curry’s plan for the “New South” was education that taught African Americans social values such as public docility and political nonparticipation. Moreover, Curry was interested in creating friendly bank accounts in which the capital necessary for the continued agricultural and industrial development of the South could be deposited. What Curry envisioned was a social order that he and many of his contemporaries would come to regard as the best insurance for national prosperity: with hordes of trained, socially obedient masses, all Anglo-Saxon Americans would be able to reap the immense benefit of the South.<sup>47</sup>

Although one might be tempted to brand the educational architects of the nineteenth century as racists, the role of racism in the evolving education of African

Americans, when considering the compulsion of those who would craft an educational system, appears to be an ancillary factor. Clearly some degree of racism was nearly ubiquitous among white Americans after the Civil War. Even some northern missionaries, the most selfless of educational reformers, harbored beliefs in the innate mental inferiority of African Americans. Other white Americans were much more adamant in their insistence that there existed a natural human hierarchy. It is difficult to argue, therefore, that racism alone accounted for the character of the African American educational system engineered during the nineteenth century.

Instead, the belief that united those who exerted the most control over the educational endeavors for African Americans in the South – the northern philanthropist and the southern planter – was political and economical expediency. These groups yearned for an economy with minimal social disruption, a goal that would be most easily accomplished through the industrial education. That sort of instruction, they reasoned, was in the best interest of the economic development of the United States. Racism was a result, not necessarily a cause, of this ethos. The prescribed arrangement of United States society, one that educated African Americans industrially rather than classically, produced products that were discriminatory: social subordination; political disfranchisement; financial dependence. But these results did not exist solely to maintain racial dominance per se. Instead, they were part of a larger scheme in which the ideas and financial success of prosperous Americans would dictate the future direction of the United States.

As noted, the idea for industrial education did not arise at the time in which institutions were being founded for the education of African Americans. Industrial

education was not a specific response to the problem of educating African Americans. It was not a foreign concept to educational reformers in the nineteenth century. Indeed, the development of industrial education for African Americans during Reconstruction was merely a seed that would sprout and be fueled by larger movements, such as the arts and crafts movement, that continued to exert pressure and influence well into the twentieth century.

CHAPTER 4  
THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT, IMMIGRATION, AND SCHOOLING  
IN THE UNITED STATES

The push to educate children in trades in the late nineteenth century was an outgrowth of much broader developments in the United States and the world. Although the plan to educate former slaves and their descendents in the South had a distinctly racial bias, the ideology that led to calls for widespread implementation of industrial education was a product of two cultural and social developments. First, questions were being raised about the value of craftsmanship in society. These questions were given thorough consideration in the arts and crafts movement of the late nineteenth century. Also, educational reformers were beginning to mull over how best to accommodate hordes of immigrant children who were rapidly coming of age in the increasingly-industrial United States. While all of these ideas were fermenting among businessmen, policymakers and intelligentsia, social changes created a context in which industrial education was given high regard as a solution to problems that were making themselves readily apparent.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the industrial nations of the world had undergone substantial changes in the nature of the production of goods. Factories streamlined manufacturing processes to save costs and meet the demands of the rapidly-increasing population. The artisan, he who had been an expert craftsman in an ancient trade, was a dying breed. Objects of utility, such as chairs and silverware, lost their refinement as industry shelled them out by the tens of thousands. Aside from compromising the aesthetic value of the originally hand-crafted articles, the

factory process also threatened to eliminate the techniques that were used to make them. Recognizing the danger posed by allowing ancient methods to fall by the wayside, the arts and crafts movement began in the late nineteenth century to resurrect the decorative arts. Led by the Oxford-educated Englishman William Morris, a group of artisans turned to the techniques of ancient craftsmen as a source of inspiration. "For architecture, long decaying," claimed Morris, lamenting the loss of traditional craftsmanship, "died out, as a popular art at least, just as the knowledge of medieval art was born...so that the civilized world of the nineteenth century has no styles of its own amidst its wide knowledge of the styles of other centuries."<sup>48</sup> Morris began to attract a large following both in England and the United States who, by the end of the nineteenth century, were practicing and preaching the integration of ornamental beauty in the accessories of daily life. Even though the factory process inevitably engulfed the industrialized nations in the nineteenth century, partisans of the arts and crafts movement were nonetheless successful in reviving folk art and demonstrating the need for objects to retain aesthetic as well as functional value.<sup>49</sup>

The educational reform that swept across the United States in the latter half of the nineteenth century must have no doubt considered the value inherent in craftsmanship brought to light by the arts and crafts movement. Compulsory schooling in the late nineteenth century became the preferred method of maintaining social order and promoting assimilation in light of the influx of immigration to the United States. There was a strong push within this educational reform to widen the classical curriculum. Many felt that novel programs of study were in order to supplement a system of schooling that was poised to accept a deluge of new

enrollment from nontraditional students. The education that had worked well for the children of the elite, a small percentage of the citizenry, was not practically applicable for the school-aged population at large. Some suggested that instruction in the arts was critical to the development of a child because it both tapped rich resources within a child's mind and created a visually-minded consumer and producer of goods. This bend towards incorporating the arts within the public school curriculum led many business-minded reformers to propose that vocational training naturally followed from art education. The incorporation of visual and practical elements in public education could accomplish a twofold objective: students would learn valuable life lessons and simultaneously assume a preparatory role in the industrial development of the United States.<sup>50</sup>

The progressive educational reformers that materialized in the nineteenth century took into account humanistic and socio-economic considerations. Their improvements centered not only on the holistic development of the child, but on his emergence in a capitalist society that focused its energies on industrial production and expansion. Thus, a strong contingent of reformers was able to channel the support for integrating material arts in the public school curriculum towards vocational training. Known as vocationalists, this group viewed children as the future engine of the industrial-capitalist machine and proposed vocally that children be trained in technical skills that would be useful for employment in industry. The vocationalists were widely supported. Businessmen liked the notion that their future employees would have an education that allowed them to communicate well and solve problems, but they were also happy that their employees would not require training at great

length before assuming a position on the assembly line. Surprisingly, unions supported vocational education but with the stipulation that it must be accompanied by a general education including history, economics and the principles of trade unionism. Even Gustav Stickley, the most-well-known American associated with the arts and crafts movement, was in favor of a public education that included vocational training. There were detractors, especially among adherents of William Morris's doctrines, who thought that vocational training was too far removed from the conception of the ideal craftsman. Despite these relatively muffled objections, the vocationalists were nonetheless successful in garnering wide support for their beliefs from some of the most influential people and organizations involved in educational reform.<sup>51</sup>

In the 1880s and 1890s, most of the high schools in the United States that were centered on training for industrial vocation were private. By the first decade of the twentieth century, however, the push for industrial education was all the rage. Noting the prevalence of opinion about industrial education, one state superintendent of education claimed that "we are besieged with public documents, monographs, magazine articles, [and] reports of investigations too numerous to mention."<sup>52</sup> By 1907, industry-minded educational reformers had managed to found the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education and supported the publication of *Manual Training Magazine*. Still another justification that vocationalists used to promote their agenda was that industrial education could be used as a method of retention among dropout-prone lower classes. In the early twentieth century, only about half of the children who attended public school went beyond eighth grade.

Opinions as to why this phenomenon occurred generated the theory that most children were not interested in a classical education. Thus, any instruction had to be both engaging and relevant to their lives. Since most children – upwards of ninety percent – were destined to become industrial workers anyway, the reformers reasoned, it seemed obvious that their education should be geared towards that end. Assumptions about lower-class complacency and inferiority by the more affluent scholars and businessmen fueled this drive even further. “Among people whose powers are fundamentally manual,” claimed two social workers in 1911, “whose prospects lie chiefly in the direction of those powers, educational service must necessarily be turned into channels of industrial training.”<sup>53</sup>

It was proposed, therefore, that industrial training begin as early as possible. After receiving an elementary education, some students started job training as early as fifth grade. Teachers in elementary schools were directed to sort students according to their potential for handling a strictly-academic track in high school. Supporters of this tactic proposed that early categorization would prevent individual apathy and ensure regular, extended school attendance until children reached young adulthood. But this was the Achilles Heel of the industrial training movement in the twentieth century. Because subjective criteria were being used to determine the fate of children who were hardly out of diapers, critics of industrial education decried its strategy. They pointed out the absurdity of choosing a career path for a child so young. Recommendations, like that of educational reformer and industrial education critic Charles Eliot, were made that “the classification of pupils, according to their so-called probable destinations, should be postponed to the latest possible time of life.”<sup>54</sup> This

selection process was deemed undemocratic by critics (to which vocationalists responded that training all students for a station in life they would not achieve flouted American ideals). Though the industrial education movement widely fell out of favor with educational reformers by 1917, it did serve to confirm the belief among the American public that it was acceptable – conscientious even – to encourage differentiation of schools and curricula for the nation’s diverse children.

The intention and evolution of industrial education can be easily misconstrued when taken out of context. For the modern historian, a twenty-first century consideration of historical information is a prism through which interpretations can easily be skewed. Thus, industrial education must be considered as a product of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Two trends were particularly integral to the formation of the framework in which industrial education emerged. First, education in the nineteenth century was still mostly a privilege of the elite. Progressive reformers worked to change that reality, but their era was not too far removed from the days when secondary schooling was rare. While educational experiences varied widely among individuals, protracted formal learning was foreign to much of the population. Printed and bound material was relatively expensive, shabby, and difficult to produce. Most families kept the obligatory family Bible, but their bookshelves were mostly devoid of other such printed material. Additionally, the United States in the nineteenth century still maintained a much more rural character than in the future. Undoubtedly industrialization was sweeping the United States. Still, a significant proportion of Americans made a living from the land. And while education surely augmented an agricultural lifestyle, it was not necessary for

the nineteenth century yeoman. Few farmers saw the necessity of more than a basic traditional education. Though they might need to know arithmetic to conduct business transactions, Shakespeare's sonnets were of little value to them. Moreover, factory and trade work, a livelihood gaining acceptance by much of the population, likewise required little formal education. There was not a widespread acknowledgment, therefore, of the value of an education that did not train individuals in practical matters. A classical education was, by definition, one that taught students to think on an abstract level through the use of letters, but more importantly it was a means with which the elite passed down their status to their offspring. The bulk of Americans knew they did not belong in such a group and would have felt out of place in a classical educational setting. On the contrary, there was a sense of nostalgia and pride among most Americans that accompanied working with one's hands, a notion substantiated by the arts and crafts and industrial education movements and the industrial education departments at institutions of higher learning that preceded them. While it might be a foreign concept in the twenty-first century, industrial education made sense during its heyday. Because emancipation and emerging questions about African American education occurred during this time, they necessarily drew influence from these prevailing attitudes. As proposals for African American education successively turned into plans then institutions, the pedagogical ideologies that embraced industrial education continued to gather speed – and criticism – well into the twentieth century.

## CHAPTER 5

## CASE STUDY – SAMUEL C. ARMSTRONG AND HAMPTON INSTITUTE

The founding of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute was a landmark in the pursuit to craft an educational system for former slaves. It was a prototype for normal and industrial education and its relative success allowed proponents of its philosophy to broadly tout and emulate the system of manual schooling throughout the United States. Hampton's founding launched its philosophy remarkably early in the drive to pursue industrial education for the masses. In fact, the Hampton model of education was so compelling that it would eventually become the preferred method for "civilizing" the Native Americans of the West. By 1878, Hampton was educating both African Americans and Native Americans. Decades elapsed after Hampton was founded before industrial education fell out of favor with the educational community and the public. As educational ideologies were being devised, Hampton arose as tangible evidence to which supporters of African American normal and industrial training could point as corroboration that their philosophy was proper and good. Others would eventually use Hampton as an example of why industrial training was detrimental to African Americans and the United States as a whole. Thus, Hampton was somewhat of a litmus test that allowed educational reformers to gauge the merit of specific educational philosophies. But Hampton's founding was hardly intended to be divisive; its creators had planned to create an educational method that promoted unity among political opposites and proffered common ground upon which the prosperous individuals who held power in the United States could continue their work of bringing affluence to growing nation.<sup>55</sup>

Divergent views over the scope of postwar African American education generated pedagogical schemes during Reconstruction that differed sharply from the Freedmen's Bureau-benevolent society method that had produced common and Sunday schools. Recognizing that African Americans would have to be educated for productive integration into society, many reformers pondered exactly how best to train them for a society that retained strong vestiges, both legal and extralegal, of its racist upbringing. Was it proper to integrate into African American education a classical curriculum such as Algebra and Latin? Or was it more appropriate for them to stick solely to mastering the particulars of fieldwork and janitorial skills? Further, tensions emerged between African Americans and whites over the merits of having African American teachers instructing students of their own race. A common perception in the African American community was that whites were willing to settle for lower teacher and student standards.<sup>56</sup>

What resulted from discourse about the nature of African American education was an intricate array of schools' curricula and faculty. Some taught solely industrial education while others presented a mixture of job training and classical education. Some staffed whites and African Americans whereas others hired only the latter. All methods, regardless of their structure, had their vocal proponents and detractors. Aside from northern missionaries, several noteworthy people emerged as the craftsmen of a new African American educational system in the South prior to the end of the Civil War. Chief among these names was Samuel Chapman Armstrong, a former Union general of missionary upbringing who was selected in 1868 to head a burgeoning school for African Americans in Hampton, Virginia.<sup>57</sup>

Armstrong, the son of missionary parents, was born on the Hawaiian Islands in January 1839. His character and zeal for missionary work strongly resembled that of his father. Armstrong stayed on the Hawaiian Islands living and working at his parents' missionary station, Wailuku, until he was twenty-one years old. It was on these islands that he practiced living a Christian life while affording spiritual and physical wellness to those less fortunate than he. This passion for hard work had an immense bearing on his work at Hampton later in his life. Armstrong attended Williams College, a school that was designed to teach "practical" Christianity to the working-class. On August 9, 1862, one day after graduating from Williams, Armstrong went to New York City and petitioned for an army commission. He entered the Union army as a captain and after a somewhat eventful stint as captain in the 125<sup>th</sup> New York Volunteers, Armstrong was awarded the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the 9<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Troops (USCT), a unit made up of former Maryland slaves. Armstrong contracted malaria in 1864 and he was sent to a military hospital at Hampton to recuperate. While at the hospital, Armstrong learned that he had been promoted to colonel of the 8<sup>th</sup> USCT.<sup>58</sup>

His work as commander of African American troops was inspired by his missionary upbringing. He wrote, "I feel a little of the 'departing missionary's' spirit...Here's to the heathen, rather, here's to the Negro!!"<sup>59</sup> In March 1865, Armstrong was brevetted brigadier-general, a rank that served as a nickname, "the General," for the remainder of his life. After the war, Armstrong became an agent of the Freedmen's Bureau in its Ninth District of Virginia, which included the Lower and Middle peninsulas of Virginia. By 1867, scarcely two years into Reconstruction,

the AMA outlined plans to create a school for African Americans in Hampton. Samuel Chapman Armstrong, with his vast experience as Freedmen's Bureau agent, soldier and missionary seemed the perfect figure to take the reins.<sup>60</sup>

While Armstrong's passion for missionary work set him apart from much of the American public, his beliefs about racial hierarchy were shared by much of the white populace, North and South, in the nineteenth century. The Anglo-Saxon race, according to Armstrong and his contemporaries, was mentally, physically, and morally superior to other races. Armstrong's racial perceptions were no doubt the result of socialization that began in Hawaii with his missionary parents, who kept a high wall around their home in Hawaii specifically to prevent their children from being corrupted by the gestures of the native islanders. In fact, they even taught native children in their mission that they were inferior to whites. Accordingly, Armstrong believed in the innate inferiority of Hawaiians and non-Anglo-Saxons in general. His opinion of Mexicans, for instance, was even worse than that of Hawaiians, noting Mexican women to be "dirty," and "nasty looking."<sup>61</sup>

But it was Armstrong's characterization of African Americans that had the largest bearing on the pedagogy he helped to devise at Hampton. African Americans' primary shortcoming, he reasoned, was a deficiency of character. This debased capacity bred in African Americans "improvidence, low ideas of morality, and a general lack of directive energy, judgment and foresight." He thought an apt depiction to be that "Negroes are a 'low down' shiftless class...lazy...living from hand to mouth...grossly immoral."<sup>62</sup> Armstrong did, however, hold out hope for the salvation of the African American race. According to his racial hierarchy, their odds

for redemption were quite good since the African American race was not the most degraded of the races. He noted that “[African American] children are abundant. The pickaninies do not seem destined to die young. They are a numerous, frisky, healthy class of unfailing humore [*sic*] and appetite, as unlike anything can be to the sore-spotted Hawaiian child whose race is doomed.”<sup>63</sup> In Armstrong’s estimation, education was the medium of choice capable of lifting African Americans from their debased position to one where they could coexist peacefully, if only subserviently, with the Anglo-Saxon race.

As the first superintendent of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, Armstrong made it a model school for other educational ventures. The pedagogy developed by Armstrong sought to avoid confrontation between former slaves who wanted to challenge the power of the planter regime by assuming much of the responsibility of guaranteeing a quality education for African Americans and their brethren and southern conservatives who feared the political and social potential of an educated African American electorate. Thus, when Armstrong was invited to head Hampton Institute, he oversaw implementation of a program that would assuage the apprehensions of both groups. The curriculum of Hampton was to use white educators – a concession to planters – to train the most capable of former slaves in the methods of teaching so that they would educate the African American citizenry of the South.<sup>64</sup>

The core tenet of Hampton’s ideology was the expectation that students would use the knowledge gained at Hampton to become teachers. After all, Armstrong had established Hampton as a normal school, a term that meant that it produced educators.

In fact, one requirement for admission to Hampton was that a student “remain through the whole course and become a teacher.”<sup>65</sup> Its fundamental mission was the training of common school teachers for the South’s African American educational system. Armstrong maintained that “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 life-long service in their behalf.”<sup>66</sup> A Hampton Institute pupil attended a three-year program at the school but was not conferred a bachelor’s degree. Students usually arrived at Hampton with an elementary-level skills and left with the equivalent of a tenth grade education. Students were then expected to return to their localities and assume a teaching position in which they instructed fellow African Americans in basic elements of traditional education (such as reading and arithmetic) and, more importantly, in skills necessary to efficiently perform manual labor. In that regard, Armstrong and the members of the American Missionary Association, with whom he launched the Hampton idea, quite literally saw their charge as the education of an entire race. This curriculum was in keeping with the rising sentiment among many white and African American educational reformers that normal, industrial and agricultural training was the most appropriate way to foster racial accord, stabilize the political sphere and nurture a prosperous southern and national economy.<sup>67</sup>

The curriculum of Hampton Institute was designed around the premise that manual labor instilled in students a strong work ethic, practical knowledge and Christian morals. A typical day at Hampton in its early years saw students spending the morning engaged in labor on the school farm, in the kitchens and laundry rooms or engaged in other miscellaneous tasks central to its operation. Armstrong reasoned

that this kind of labor, in addition to building character, would allow students to empathize with those they would eventually teach. Students spent afternoons in class and evenings studying. They were encouraged to spend the interim between school years working in their home communities. The distinguishing feature of Hampton's strict regimen that accounted for most of the drop-outs was its rigid set of disciplinary rules that regulated every minute of the students' existence there. Students woke at 5:15 A.M., went to bed at 9:30 P.M., had daily inspections of their sleeping quarters, wore uniforms and marched to class, meals and work details. This juxtaposition of manual labor, book knowledge and strict order, Armstrong reasoned, primed students to assume leadership roles in their communities once their term at Hampton had been completed.<sup>68</sup>

This educational philosophy was emulated throughout the South, most notably, perhaps, by Armstrong's prize pupil and chief protégé, Booker T. Washington. In 1881, Alabama state commissioners wrote to Armstrong and urged him to recommend a principle for a school strikingly similar to Hampton that was to be built at Tuskegee. Armstrong quickly recommended Washington. Washington, like Armstrong, believed that normal and industrial training was the best way to prevent social upheaval in the South. In light of strong racial tensions, he advocated African American political and social disfranchisement, a philosophy that alienated much of the African American community and gave his detractors fuel for the firestorm of opposition they would eventually unleash on him. In regard to African American suffrage, Washington claimed:

I believe it is the duty of the Negro – as the greater part of the race is already doing – to deport himself modestly in regard to political

claims, depending upon the slow but sure influences that proceed from the possession of property, intelligence, and high character for the full recognition of his political rights.<sup>69</sup>

At Tuskegee Institute, Washington duplicated the system of education Armstrong had employed at Hampton, claiming in a letter of support to Armstrong that “I have tried to show that Tuskegee is a result of Hampton.” Students at Tuskegee were instructed according to a curriculum that emphasized industrial training. Like Hampton’s graduates, those of Tuskegee were expected to become teachers after their graduation. Washington’s success at Tuskegee was due in no small part to the support of northern philanthropists. Because Washington was an embodiment of their educational philosophy, the philanthropists worked diligently to project Washington’s image onto the national stage in the hopes that his success would become a model for others to emulate. Around the turn of the century, Tuskegee’s trustees were successful both in soliciting a 25,000-acre land grant from the federal and state governments and in securing a \$600,000 endowment from Andrew Carnegie. Thus, Hampton Institute became an archetype in southern African American education through the success of its offshoot, Tuskegee. The achievements of Tuskegee were also those of Hampton. While schools that were founded in the wake of Armstrong’s success would eventually differ significantly from the Hampton model, the core of its doctrine – manual training – continued to wield influence well into the twentieth century.<sup>70</sup>

Although Armstrong was successful in implementing his vision of African American education, he nonetheless chased false hope throughout his tenure as superintendent. Armstrong insisted in the early years of Hampton’s existence that industrial training was self-sustaining. It was not. While students were able to

produce enough through their labor to cover room and board expenses, other costs that would normally have been covered by tuition, such as salaries and maintenance, were too much for student labor to satisfy. Since most Hampton students paid little or no tuition, Hampton's everyday expenses would have quickly plunged the school deep in the red had Armstrong not been able to secure outside funding. Toward that end, Armstrong worked with abandon. In 1872, Armstrong began publication of the *Southern Workman*, a periodical extolling the virtues of Hampton's program that was specifically designed to solicit support and funding from philanthropists. A school chorus, "The Hampton Singers," embarked on singing tours throughout major cities in the Northeast. Often with Armstrong in tow, this group and their concerts were able to supplement solidly Hampton's income. Throughout the first decade of Hampton's existence, donors to Hampton Institute were generally middle class individuals who could afford modest gifts and made few or no stipulations as to how the money was to be spent. In the 1880s, however, this source of revenue began to dry up. The original donors, many of whom had formerly worked for the benefit of African Americans during the Civil War and Reconstruction, began dying. Armstrong was therefore compelled to court philanthropists such as Collis P. Huntington, a railroad magnate, who could donate in the five figure range. These donors, however, attached demands to their contributions and specified how the money had to be spent. While Armstrong very often agreed with the aims of these philanthropists, the programs they induced had a crippling consequence: Hampton Institute, after Armstrong's death in 1893, was ill-equipped to accommodate the

changes in African American education that arose from continued debate and criticism of the Hampton model of education.<sup>71</sup>

As early as the first decade of the twentieth century, Hampton's administrators were well-aware that the industrial curriculum that they had touted for so long had developed significant ideological cracks. Not long after, Hampton, Tuskegee, and institutions that followed that pedagogy were forced to abandon industrial education in favor of other methods of instruction. But the legacy of Hampton Institute was profound. It was the first school of its kind. Established in 1868, it predated even the end of Freedmen's Bureau and benevolent society involvement in African American education. Moreover, it prompted the founding of countless industrially-g geared common and secondary schools throughout the South. And it proved that industrial education as a concept, however racially oppressive, did enjoy some measure of success. Alternatively, the Hampton model of education created a groundswell of opposition to its practices. After Hampton's founding, its instructional techniques would become among the most contested topics of the day. Perhaps the most enduring legacy is the debate prompted by Hampton's pedagogy. Conversations about educational reform were increasingly considering the responsibility of a democratic society to its citizens, a discussion that would have profound implications many decades beyond Hampton's humble founding in 1868.

## CHAPTER 6

## OPPOSITION TO THE HAMPTON MODEL OF EDUCATION

Perhaps the largest obstacle for the Hampton model of education was the acute criticism it received from the African American intelligentsia and other educational reformers. While it enjoyed wide support among northern philanthropists, normal and industrial training was the target of strong opposition by various groups on ideological grounds. The camps that emerged around the turn of the twentieth century were represented by two of the leading African American reformers of the day. Booker T. Washington became the favorite son of northern philanthropists who advocated the duplication of the Hampton model because he was a shining example of the success that normal and industrial training could achieve. Chief among the critics of the Hampton model, on the other hand, was W.E.B. Du Bois, a Harvard-educated intellectual who was instrumental in waging a campaign to discredit strict industrial education.

The rhetoric between the two camps over the proper methodology for African American education eventually became quite heated. Beneath this confrontational façade, however, Washington and Du Bois shared fundamental beliefs about the future of the race. Both men saw value in a method whereby a vanguard of African American leaders would use the skills they acquired at institutions of higher learning to uplift the race. In a remembrance of his work at Tuskegee, Washington claimed that “the more we traveled through the county districts, the more we saw that our efforts were reaching, to only a partial degree, the actual needs of the people whom we wanted to lift up through the medium of the students whom we should educate

and send out as leaders.”<sup>72</sup> Du Bois termed this group the “Talented Tenth” and promoted a system of education that focused on their cultivation. Recognizing the complexity of the problem of African American education in the United States, Du Bois made clear his desire for a few individuals to help the entire race:

The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races.<sup>73</sup>

Still, Du Bois did not eschew entirely industrial education for the masses. “Negro industrial training in the United States has accomplishments of which it has a right to be proud,” he claimed. Aside from furnishing African Americans with useful employment skills, Du Bois also noted that industrial training had facilitated the transition from slavery to freedom, brought state and local support to the idea of African American schooling, and created new working relationships and friendships between the races. Du Bois warned, however, that the legacy of industrial education was dubious, insisting that “[industrial education] has not solved its problem.”<sup>74</sup> This perceived flaw in the Hampton-Tuskegee model of education would cause Du Bois and his supporters to increasingly question its merit as the United States moved into the twentieth century.

The ideological differences between the men rested in what the result of the training of African American leadership would be able to accomplish. Washington envisioned numerous normal and industrial schools that would turn out leaders who advocated the Hampton model. His articulated goal at Tuskegee was to give students

such an education as would fit a large proportion of them to be teachers, and at the same time cause them to return to the plantation

districts and show the people there how to put new energy and new ideas into farming, as well as into the intellectual and moral and religious life of the people.<sup>75</sup>

Du Bois, on the other hand, saw his “Talented Tenth” attending colleges that adhered to a classical curriculum which would allow them to become critics of southern society. He claimed that “it is the duty of black men to judge the South discriminatingly” and that “to praise the ill the South is now perpetrating is just as wrong as to condemn the good.”<sup>76</sup> Washington and Du Bois both recognized the invaluable role of education but were divided by one fundamental ideological difference: Washington believed that African American enfranchisement would be best achieved gradually through actions that were conciliatory to the white majority (tactics that his opponents called “accommodationist”) whereas Du Bois urged a more aggressive, immediate push for social integration through critical analysis of the status quo.

Although Washington and Du Bois were themselves emblems of the differences between their educational ideologies, the two men were in fact supported by numerous individuals who were just as adamant that their beliefs were the best way to tackle the problem of African American education. As noted, Washington enjoyed wide support from philanthropists who had viable interests in the health of the southern economy. Many of these philanthropists were either directly employed by southern schools that were modeled after Hampton and Tuskegee or sat on their board of trustees. Du Bois, on the other hand, mustered the support of a cadre of African American intellectuals and newspaper editors, such as William M. Trotter of the *Boston Guardian*. While Du Bois and his allies were never able to match the

funding that the Washington-supporting philanthropists assembled, they were able to keep the debate alive and gather extensive support by matching the rhetoric of their opposition word for word.<sup>77</sup>

The objective of the struggle between Washington and Du Bois was to convince young African Americans who were going to pursue higher education that their interests could best be served by attending a school that espoused a certain pedagogical scheme. In that regard, both camps employed several tactics to win over prospective adherents. Washington used philanthropists' funds to launch newspapers in Boston that supported the Hampton-Tuskegee idea and served to counterbalance publications that were critical of his methods. This group also organized a conference in New York City in 1904 to address specifically and to find some solution to the growing controversy between the supporters and opponents of industrial education. Financed by Andrew Carnegie, an ally of the Hampton-Tuskegee idea, the conference was attended by Du Bois but failed to materialize any agreement between the two sides. In fact, Du Bois was even offered a position on the faculty of Tuskegee, a clear attempt to win over his sentiments, but he refused. Du Bois's camp, on the other hand, largely used the written word to win over the African American intelligentsia and other intellectuals. Supported by numerous newspapers, detractors of Washington often lodged complaints and excoriations against the Hampton-Tuskegee idea and, on a few occasions, personal attacks against Washington himself.<sup>78</sup>

Perhaps most damaging to supporters of industrial education was the 1903 publication of Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* in which one chapter specifically attacked Washington and others suggested that his methods were destructive to the

African American race. “Mr. Washington’s programme practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro races,” claimed Du Bois in *Souls*. He continued, “[Washington] counsels a silent submission to civic inferiority such as is bound to sap the manhood out of any race in the long run.”<sup>79</sup> Increasingly after that book’s publication, there was no love lost between the two men. Du Bois’s stinging criticisms serve well to demonstrate the fervor with which each side promoted their own agenda and that, in the long run, the pen proved mightier than the dollar in helping to win over public sentiment against industrial education.

By 1905, adherents to the Hampton-Tuskegee idea were clearly losing ground. This was hastened in no small part by the creation of the Niagara Movement which worked toward political enfranchisement and civil rights for African Americans. The aims of this coalition directly countered the appeasing actions of Washington and his supporters. Further, industrial education began to be perceived as passé by the very leaders of African American schools whose support Washington was trying to solicit. The African American intelligentsia abandoned the notion that industrial education was the most appropriate way to bring prosperity to African Americans in the South. Only a handful of new schools were modeled exactly after Hampton and Tuskegee. Instead, the vast majority of schools being created in the South implemented instructional techniques that incorporated more of a classical curriculum. Of the nine African American colleges founded in whole or part by the AMA during reconstruction, only two – Hampton and Tuskegee – retained their strict normal and industrial curriculum by the turn of the century.<sup>80</sup>

Achieving civil rights and dismantling racial subordination in the South, typified by Jim Crow laws, continued to be a priority of the African American community. The 1910 formation of the NAACP, an outgrowth of the Niagara Movement, revealed that few African Americans in the South still supported accomplishing real enfranchisement through conservative means. Even though philanthropists continued to pump money and resources into propagating the Hampton-Tuskegee model, the lack of support among the very people whom it was intended to benefit was slowly suffocating this type of education.<sup>81</sup>

By the turn of the twentieth century, near the zenith for the formation of African American schools, everyone involved in African American education was aware of the Washington-Du Bois debate. Aside from shedding light on an increasingly complex education issue, the contest profoundly influenced the character of the schools that were founded during that era. Though Washington and Du Bois exemplified the sides of the debate, the educational ideologies of educators in reality stretched much more along the length of the political spectrum. Some reformers were even more politically polarized than Du Bois in asserting that industrial education had no place in African American education. The significance of the time at which the Washington-Du Bois debate occurred was that certain events transpired concurrently and schools that were founded at that time represented a culmination of influences. The rapid industrialization of the United States in the twentieth century induced a shift in the thinking by African Americans about their potential. Moreover, civil rights movements that occurred in the twentieth century – specifically the Niagara Movement and the formation of the NAACP – gave new value to learning that the

racial subordination had previously rendered useless. Finally, influential African Americans were becoming successful scholars, as demonstrated by the publication of Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*, and these role models gave African American youth new positions to which they could aspire. The Washington-Du Bois debate, occurring amid these social developments, enhanced the image and usefulness of a classical education. Nonetheless, there remained throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, no concrete plan for educating African Americans. In light of suggestions coming from all sides of the debate, then, educators who chose to start new schools had wide leverage to experiment with different curricula that combined several ideologies until they found one that was to their liking.

## CHAPTER 7

TWO CASE STUDIES – SMALLWOOD MEMORIAL INSTITUTE AND  
GLOUCESTER AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL

The Hampton-Tuskegee model of African American education continued to exert influence over the educational system in the South for many decades after its conception. Even as notions about the superiority of strict normal industrial training fell out of favor with educational reformers, these very principles were being measured as curricula were being developed. Secondary schools for African Americans were being started by the hundreds throughout the South while debates over pedagogy were raging in academic circles. The superintendents and boards of trustees at these blooming new institutions, therefore, had much to consider. Theirs was no easy task. The rhetoric spewing from all sides of the educational table was contradictory at the least. Choosing theories, models and ideologies from which to draw blueprints when creating a curriculum for an African American school was a difficult chore.

Complicating matters even further, the educational theories of the day were not necessarily static, a fact aptly demonstrated by W.E.B. Du Bois's shift from an initial embrace of industrial education to his outright rejection of it after 1900. Yet another consideration for school administrators was how to generate revenue for the maintenance of the school. The big donors were both difficult to secure and fond of attaching stipulations to their checks. As a result of these and other intricate contemplations, African American schools that were created in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century exhibited two distinct characteristics: individual schools

differed in scope and character from one another and the curricula of these schools were quite often an elaborate network of syllabi and agendas since the demands of the students, philanthropists and intellectuals were such that one simple style of education was not enough to suit the interests of all of them. But the curricula of African American schools were much more than an either-or choice, as the following cases illustrate.

#### JOHN J. SMALLWOOD AND SMALLWOOD MEMORIAL INSTITUTE

John Smallwood began the Temperance Industrial and Collegiate Institute (later renamed Smallwood Memorial Institute) at Claremont, Virginia, in Surry County in October 1892. The story of Smallwood Institute illustrates the complexity of African American education after emancipation. Smallwood Institute's curriculum coupled industrial education with a rigorous collegiate preparatory department, thus joining the two different methods of African American education around the turn of the century. Indeed, schools like Smallwood Institute arguably forged a unique model of education by integrating distinct combinations of both academic and industrial training.

Much of what is known about Smallwood Institute is conjecture; the school's records are lost. But piecing together limited records as well as filings that appear in deed books, court cases, and Smallwood's student file at Hampton University allows for some measure of factual certainty in the character of the man and the school. Except for anecdotes from scant personal accounts, much of John Smallwood's life remains shrouded in mystery. He was born a slave on a cotton plantation in Rich

Square, North Carolina in September 1863 and was separated from his parents prior to his emancipation. According to Smallwood, he was a grandson of Nat Turner. He attended Hampton Institute for one year, but lacking familial and financial support, he was forced to return to work as a farmhand until he gained the means to attend classes at Shaw University for two years. He was also educated at Wesleyan Academy in Wilbraham, Massachusetts, and may have attended Trinity College in England. He received his PhD and was ordained a minister in the late 1880s. When he returned to the United States from a trip to Europe in the early 1890s, Smallwood “toiled day and night” to raise the money, a hefty \$7,500, necessary to begin a school for African American children. In this regard, Smallwood was a living example of the Hampton model that saw a southern society where learned African Americans would take charge of educating others of their own race.<sup>82</sup>

The earliest name of Smallwood Institute – The Temperance Industrial and Collegiate Institute – describes a curriculum that clearly integrated vocational and classical courses. The school’s mission, as stated in the *Temperance Industrial and Collegiate Institute Circular of Information*, was to “give its students a thorough mental, moral, industrial and religious training.”<sup>83</sup> According to the school’s 1906 – 1907 catalogue, the school maintained, as its name implies, two departments: industrial and collegiate. Definitive proof of whether or not the faculty, board of trustees or underwriters chose to emphasize industrial over classical education, or vice versa, is difficult due to the school’s lost records. Land acquisition records and inventories, however, demonstrate that industrial education, particularly agricultural training, did not take a back seat. Indeed, the first capital expenditure – Smallwood’s

\$7,500 – was for the purpose of buying the school farm. Treasurer Emmet Ellis explained in his “History of the Institute” that “the institution has a good farm fronting the James River, upon which is cultivated corn, potatoes and vegetables.” Even Smallwood himself, aside from his duties “teaching moral and mental science... [spent] much of his time upon the farm.”<sup>84</sup> An inventory of school property taken after Smallwood’s death lists livestock, farm implements, and crops of peanuts and potatoes. Thus, Smallwood Institute did emulate the Hampton-Tuskegee model in no small degree by its strict reliance not only on agricultural training, but on industrial education as well. In fact, a respectable part of Smallwood Institute’s curriculum focused on training for industrial trades. Young ladies at the school were taught “plain sewing and fancy needlework, cooking, laundrying [*sic*], house cleaning, etc.” Young men learned “farming [and] shoemaking” among other vocations. According to Ellis, the school existed “to teach the Negro self-reliance, race pride and a practical trade, to establish... various industries, house cleaning and scientific cooking, general laundry work upon a business scale.”<sup>85</sup> In November 1903, Smallwood Institute was preparing to reopen a mattress factory on the grounds and the administration hoped “to rebuild the saw mill [on the property] that was destroyed by fire.” As with other industrial training schools around the turn of the century, students were encouraged to pay for their expenses by doing work at the school. The saw mill, Ellis asserted, “would give our young men and our boys an opportunity to work – which would enable them to pay their own way.”<sup>86</sup>

But if Smallwood Institute’s curriculum followed familiar models of industrial education, it diverged from the Hampton model in two distinct ways. First, it was not

expressly a normal school – that is, its sole purpose was not to produce teachers for the African American community at large. Many of its graduates likely did assume positions in local common schools given the lack of professional opportunities for African Americans in the early twentieth century. But a record of graduates' occupations clearly indicates that Smallwood Institute produced much more than teachers. Ellis noted in 1903 that from the school's founding in 1892 up until that time,

fifty-nine [graduates] have bought farms, seven have become ministers of the Gospel, four blacksmiths, twelve school teachers, one a lawyer, two doctors and three carpenters, eight school teachers and hotel waiters, two temperance lecturers, [and] seventeen tradesmen of various kinds...<sup>87</sup>

The notable absence of *Normal* in Smallwood Institute's name demonstrates that the administrators and faculty at the school chose not to emphasize their teacher education program even if they did offer coursework specifically designed for that career.

Another instance of Smallwood Institute's departure from the Hampton-Tuskegee model was its robust collegiate curriculum. That this school offered four years of college coursework ostensibly indicates that Dr. Smallwood and his colleagues who determined the curriculum at the school were incorporating instructional theories different from the strict normal industrial program of study employed at Hampton Institute. Students in the collegiate department were required to take classes that included such titles as English Literature, Natural Philosophy, and Political Economy, courses that were clearly intended to prepare a student for an academic career or further collegiate work after graduation. These offerings were far

from the pedagogy of the proponents of industrial education. The inspiration for such a shift likely came from the vocal opponents to the Hampton model. Again, a definitive claim as to how closely Smallwood Institute's curriculum was aligned with the thinking of Du Bois and other Hampton Institute critics is difficult. One can only surmise that the near-ubiquity with which instructional techniques were debated in the educational circle in the late nineteenth century must have had some lasting influence on the decisions made by Dr. Smallwood and his colleagues at Smallwood Institute.<sup>88</sup>

As with virtually all other African American school principals around 1900, Dr. Smallwood was no stranger to fundraising. He lectured in the north and west in an effort to solicit money and secure patronage for the school. And like other traveling superintendents, Smallwood managed to gain the support of distant donors. Perhaps the most well known was John Milton Hay who had served in the administrations of Lincoln, McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. Hay held the posts of Ambassador to Great Britain and Secretary of State. Numerous other donors, including Henry Cook of Lennox Massachusetts, Emmett Ellis of Surry County, Virginia, Emily Howland, Catherine Peterson and Marcus Smallwood (probably Dr. Smallwood's brother) are all on record as having given money to the school. Ascertaining precisely what influence these and other donors had on the nature of Smallwood's educational program is complicated. Nonetheless, Smallwood must have been keenly aware, having traveled the country, of the acute differences of opinion between philanthropists who sought, for whatever reason, to integrate African Americans into society through industrial training schools and the increasingly vocal

African American intelligentsia who sought to scrap that pedagogy in favor of an education that would allow them to aspire to the highest positions in society. Smallwood Institute, like the vast majority of other African American schools, was always in debt. In 1911, the year after Dr. Smallwood's death, the school owed \$7,650 on infrastructure improvements alone, not to mention the substantial mortgage on the property. If Smallwood Institute's donors leaned one way or the other on ideology, there was no choice, faced with significant debt, but to oblige their wishes.<sup>89</sup>

#### WILLIAM PRICE AND GLOUCESTER AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL

The case of Gloucester Agricultural and Industrial School and its principal of thirty-four years serves as another example of shifting ideologies in African American education. But unlike Smallwood Institute, Gloucester A & I and its longest-serving principal, William Price, demonstrate how progressive leanings in education were embraced even by those who had been strict adherents to the Hampton model of normal industrial education. Price was typical of students who attended Hampton Institute in the late nineteenth century. Born in Albemarle County, Virginia, around 1868, he escaped slavery by only a few years and spent his childhood working on the family farm. Having attended Free School No. 16 in Albemarle, one of Virginia's first public schools for African Americans, Price endeavored in 1885 at the age of seventeen to attend Hampton Institute. He stayed at Hampton for five years (two years longer than the normal term) and became

indoctrinated to Hampton's program of normal industrial training. His acquaintance with the American Missionary Association while at Hampton was to allow for his quick ascendancy to an administrative position when he endeavored to teach school at a rural Gloucester County, Virginia school. After graduation, Price assumed a position as a classroom teacher in a public school for African Americans in his native Albemarle. There he preached the merits of the educational beliefs practiced at Hampton, following the expectations of Hampton's administrators and supporters. Price eventually went on to further study at Westfield Academy, a normal school in Massachusetts, and then accepted an instructional position at Tuskegee where he taught grammar and arithmetic to evening school students. After serving as a teacher for the 1895-1896 school year at Tuskegee, Price was offered and accepted a position in Gloucester County, a rural Virginia locale about forty miles from Hampton.<sup>90</sup>

During the first year of Price's tenure at Gloucester A & I and prior to his arrival, the curriculum was heavily modeled after Hampton Institute. The principal, William Weaver, had attended Hampton Institute in the early 1870s. The academic curriculum consisted mainly of elementary reading and arithmetic. The sixth year at the school included lessons on the methods of teaching, a course that prepared many of the school's graduates for study at Hampton. Like at Hampton, students followed a strictly disciplined daily schedule that regulated every aspect of their lives at the school. After rising from bed at 5:15, students spent a specific amount of time each day praying, learning, doing industrial or agricultural work, and studying. Offensive behavior was curtailed by daily inspections of pupils' living quarters and stringent rules forbidding vices. Also, students were encouraged to use their own labor to

cover their expenses. Agricultural or industrial work could earn students as much as four dollars a month, enough to cover nearly the entire expenses one could accrue in a year. Finally, Gloucester A & I, like Hampton, had strong ties to the AMA. The school was saved from financial ruin in 1891 by the AMA which bought the school property and covered the school's outstanding operating costs for more than four decades.<sup>91</sup>

Price was selected by the board of trustees in 1897 to replace Weaver as principal of Gloucester A & I. Slowly but surely, Price moved the school in a direction that eased the school's strict adherence to the principles of Hampton and eventually created a curriculum that retained traces of the philosophies of northern philanthropists and the new progressives who favored classical education. Instead of just serving six grades, Gloucester A & I included instruction in twelve grades by the first decade of the twentieth century. The regimented routine that students followed was relaxed somewhat, although there remained a measure of rigidity in students' schedules. The tuition that students had to pay was scaled according to what grade they attended, with the older students paying more than those in the elementary grades. Despite these procedural changes that occurred after Price became principal, two features of Gloucester A & I under his direction show that the architects of the school's curriculum, as was the case with the bulk of African American secondary schools, were amenable to implementing seemingly-conflicting educational philosophies.<sup>92</sup>

Agricultural training was a cornerstone of Gloucester A & I's curriculum. By 1904, the school had 148 acres under cultivation. One hour of mandatory farm work

for boys each day was supervised by an experienced farmer. As had been the case prior to Price's arrival students could cover some of their expenses by putting in time on the school farm. During the summer months, some students stayed on to get a head start on the subsequent school year's tuition. Two features of the agricultural program at Gloucester A & I resembled that of Tuskegee. First, instruction called for something called "dovetailing" whereby students were taught farming and biology in conjunction with one another. Additionally, a significant part of the agricultural program at the school was community outreach. There were occasional meetings with locals at the school in which students, farmers, and other community members would share advice and new findings. The local white community likewise offered some support to the school despite lingering racial distrust in that county.<sup>93</sup>

Price's strong leanings towards agricultural training belie the fact that he was remarkably progressive in his insistence on maintaining a painstaking academic curriculum at Gloucester A & I. Under Price's direction, students in the high school could opt either for the traditional teacher-training program, much like the traditional normal school curriculum, or for the college preparatory program. In either case, students had to take multiple courses in English, mathematics, science, foreign language, social studies, and education. In English courses, students read classical literature along with that of prominent African Americans of the time. Price's daughter remarked of him, "He was an elitist really. It was his philosophy that he wanted most of those kids to go on to college."<sup>94</sup> Price seemed to know that his desire for an extensive academic curriculum was progressive, if not revolutionary. He kept "Agricultural and Industrial" affixed firmly to the school's name and dared

not add “Collegiate.” Thus, the white neighbors of the county must have had little idea that Gloucester A & I maintained a high-quality academic program. Like Price himself, the school he headed for nearly three decades was humble and unimposing, but beneath that façade a commitment to excellence in education was the bulwark of its existence.<sup>95</sup>

A cursory glance at the chronicles of Smallwood Institute and Gloucester Industrial and Agricultural School reveals two schools that shared numerous similarities. Both were founded in the late nineteenth century in rural southeastern Virginia to specifically serve the educational needs of African American children. Students flocked to these schools from distant localities. Since rooming at these schools was mandatory, they were well-equipped to handle students from places not conducive to commuting (Smallwood Institute hailed students from as far away as Louisville, Kentucky). The most notable principals of the schools likewise illustrate the similarities between them. Both men were living examples of what nearly all educational reformers, despite their ideological loyalties, saw as the best way to augment the social well-being of their race. These men came from nearly destitute beginnings and, through their own volition, acquired a formal education and thereafter dedicated their lives to uplifting their race by founding institutes of learning. Their stories matched both the expectations of Hampton-minded reformers who sought to implant African American educators in every corner of the South through normal training and Du Bois supporters who invested great hope in the ascendancy of the “Talented Tenth.” Finally, both of these men implemented a

curriculum at their respective schools that integrated both industrial and classical training. Students who attended these schools received a relatively well-rounded education and became graduates who were much more versatile than if they had received the alternative – no formal secondary schooling whatever.

But noticeable if subtle differences between the two schools demonstrate that African American schools started around the turn of the century were far from uniform and that these schools were experiments that represented a collection of varying ideologies among educational reformers. William Price was a graduate of Hampton Institute. John Smallwood, though he attended Hampton for a year in his adolescence, was not. Because personal accounts by these men do not exist, only circumstantial evidence of their educational efforts later in their life is available from which to draw conclusions about exactly how that difference between the men might have influenced the schools during their superintendence. Because Hampton's curriculum heavily depended on indoctrination to its normal and industrial principles, one can surmise that Price's insistence that Gloucester A & I retain certain features, such as a strict daily routine for students, was a result of his time spent at Hampton. Moreover, these schools generally went through different channels for funding. Smallwood Institute relied exclusively on the largesse of individual donors from various parts of the country. Conversely, Gloucester A & I was a school that received a substantial part of its budgetary income from the AMA. This benevolent society, which exerted decision-making influence over the school for the final forty-two years of its existence, was closely aligned with the Hampton model of education. Only when the AMA began to revise its interpretation of the proper pedagogy for African

American education did William Price likewise begin to take small steps in that direction. It is understandable, then, given the reluctance of some administrators in the AMA to concede that a classical curriculum could have a place in African American education, why Price chose not to attach “Collegiate” to the title of his school, even though other schools started around that time, such as Smallwood Institute (Temperance Industrial and *Collegiate* Institute) were willing to do so. One final difference between the schools that reveals the ideological differences between Gloucester A & I and Smallwood Institute is the manner in which the student body conducted themselves among the community. As noted, students of Gloucester A & I regularly held meetings that served as community outreach. This educational strategy closely follows the implied curriculum of Hampton Institute that the graduates it produced would work toward strengthening the entire African American race. Price’s frequent social gatherings were dual efforts in that direction: the students themselves were learning educational skills while imparting their knowledge and equally receiving feedback from those in the community who shared their life experiences. Smallwood Institute’s administration seems not to have been so ambitious in soliciting response from the community around them. If outreach was a part of the program, it never played a major role. The school did maintain a generator that supplied energy to the town of Claremont, but this was primarily a way to raise revenue, not a benevolent gesture on the part of the faculty and students. The only available direct reference to the community in which Smallwood Institute was situated comes from a *Circular of Information* around 1904, noting only that “the people at Claremont, generally speaking, are kind and sympathetic. No liquor

saloons, and never a lawsuit between pupils and citizens.”<sup>96</sup> Why Smallwood and his colleagues chose not to emphasize community outreach is difficult to determine, but their action in that direction indicates that their focus was strictly on the effect that the school could have in its students’ lives, not necessarily in the African American community around them.

Smallwood Institute and Gloucester A & I were only two of the hundreds of schools that were formed for African Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As such, they hardly provide a thorough portrayal of all of the peculiarities of individual schools. But they serve well to corroborate certain facts about the nascent system of African American education after the Civil War. Schools like Smallwood and Gloucester, despite widely varying curricula, adhered to certain principles that were almost universally acceptable among the African American educational circle. Industrial education, though the degree of its implementation in schools as well as its educational merit were repeatedly debated, was viewed as an acceptable means of training African American youth for adulthood. Not until World War I, when farming in the United States encountered what can only be termed a mass defection to industry by African Americans, was industrial and agricultural education given a death blow. And while the Hampton model of normal industrial training had been abandoned by that time, the ideology that sustained it continued to strongly influence the curriculum of African American schools in the South.

Similarly, Du Bois and his adherents were instrumental in shaping the curricula of these schools. As shown by the programs offered at Smallwood Institute and Gloucester A & I, the rhetoric of both sides of the debate often resulted in

curricula that espoused some measure of both of the differing ideologies. Three decades of trial and error were sufficient to generate trends in African American education, but not enough to configure one concrete plan that was universally accepted or feasibly applicable across-the-board. The United States betrayed its ill-preparedness to handle the societal demands a race of people it had enslaved for hundreds of years and continued to subjugate in the wake of slavery's demise. For all of these reasons, African American educational ventures in the United States after the Civil War, specifically in the South, were largely individual projects. Not that they were under the direction of one person; most of them were conceived and cultivated by a group. Instead, each school had peculiar features that were devised at the whim of individuals who drew influence from different, often conflicting sources. Thus, few schools were exactly the same. Perhaps the largest determinant of a school's nature was the revenue that sustained it, a flow of money that very often had strings attached. A significant contributing factor to the closing of both Smallwood Institute and Gloucester A & I was an inordinate amount of debt that neither school was able to satisfy.

But these considerations notwithstanding, the fact that individuals, whatever their motivation, were instrumental in the creation of schools throughout the United States proves that there was a group of people willing to address a touchy matter. These individuals were listening, learning, debating and, most importantly, acting. Although African American education continued to change with the times throughout the twentieth century, the individuals who made it happen after the Civil War taught an entire race of individuals that action produced results and sweeping problems

under the rug accomplished nothing. In the tumultuous 1960s, long after Smallwood Institute and Gloucester Agricultural and Industrial School had closed their doors, African Americans would draw strength and inspiration from the humble efforts over a half-century before of devoted men like John Smallwood and William Price.

## CONCLUSION

This work is an analysis of the convergence of politics, economy, and cultural power. The conglomeration of these social variables in the nineteenth century created a force so broadly coercive that knowledge allocation, educational policy, and societal trends were but a few products of this union. Accordingly, the system of African American schooling that emerged after the Civil War was a product of its historical and social context. Each individual experiment, from the one-room schoolhouses of the South's most remote counties to the grand institutions that were touted by philanthropists as *the* future of African American education, was, indeed, something larger than its creators ever imagined it could be. These endeavors were a reflection of a racially stratified, industrial and agricultural, patriarchal society coming to terms with trends in national development too large to ignore. Every group adjusted wherever necessary, consolidated power when they could, and forged new relationships with one another to ensure their survival.

The "Negro question" became inescapable when America's four million bondsmen were emancipated. Because relatively few individuals and organizations had made considerable efforts to address the enfranchisement of African Americans prior to their liberation, the people who undertook this charge had much to consider. Slaves earned their freedom in an ambiguous United States society. Progressive, democratic ideals proffered great hope for their growth as individuals and as a race, but old habits were hard to break; the United States, particularly the South, was a stratified society in which the cutting residue of racial oppression was a formidable obstacle to African American enfranchisement. Thus, the engineers of African

American education, people of all races, filled large and diverse shoes: they were nation builders in a literal sense; they were negotiators of conflicting ideologies; they were consensus brokers. Without their use of conciliation and compromise, the system of education for African Americans in the late nineteenth century would have exhibited a starkly different character.

The educational system that these activists created was a political construct. For better or worse, this scheme included some measure of industrial education. Was this a racist method? Perhaps. But racism cannot solely account for its disposition. Racism existed on all sides of the spectrum. Was this an oppressive scheme? Certainly. But these reformers had in mind the fate of a nation – their chief concern was using effective methods to achieve particular goals. One technique in particular, industrial education, was not an archaic or alien concept. The system of education developed for African Americans in the nineteenth century and sustained well into the twentieth was intended to reconcile differing ideologies and teach social values that mitigated the consequences of a society ill-prepared to enfranchise dispossessed millions. Reliance on normal training was insurance that the mollifying technique of industrial education took root and blossomed in a society trying to balance liberal and conservative influences. African American education, therefore, was as much social engineering as it was racial subjugation. And it was not a perfect blueprint. It was challenged and changed. Perhaps it is best characterized by the lack of a singular definition and by decades of trial and error pragmatism.

This study has focused on microcosmic examples to illustrate the larger context of African American education. But these cases do not serve simply to

illuminate the past. The cases of Amelia Howard, John Smallwood, and William Price, among the multitude of other individuals and organizations considered in this study, function just as well in allowing consideration of developments beyond their historical context. As Du Bois noted, “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line.”<sup>97</sup> The issue of race stretched widely across the realms of bureaus, missionaries, and schools. These specific cases provide insight into just how race would continue to influence American society well into the twentieth century and beyond.

The identity of the modern African American is inextricably linked to the societal evolution that occurred as bondsmen successively encountered freedom and, albeit incrementally, integration into the social order from which they had been violently excluded for so long. African Americans were granted new opportunities and they had to modify customs and practices lest they find themselves unable to cope with the capitalist world around them. While the Freedmen’s Bureau and missionaries attempted to alleviate some of the difficulties ex-slaves faced, the new social order was a toilsome existence. The African American church, however, remained a valuable organization that served to provide a sense of community and allowed for the preservation of unique cultural traits that were characteristic of their rich heritage. The modern church abounds with elements of African and African American customs. The extended duration of the church service itself stems from forced restrictions imposed on African Americans under slavery. Fearing insurrection, whites disallowed lengthy meetings of slaves because they had the potential to incite dissent. So the few assemblies that were permitted, religious and

otherwise, were intentionally protracted so as to maximize gathering time. But duration is hardly the extent of what Evelyn Dandy identifies as “Africanisms” in the church service. Dandy notes that many African cultural traditions are exhibited in the traditional church service: the strong emphasis on religion in life, the significance of kinship (and particularly the extended family) in the social structure, the seemingly mystical power of the spoken word, the call-response form of communication, the music that has deep African rhythms and poignant spiritual meanings, even the food that is eaten in the parish hall after the service. The Freedmen’s Bureau and the people that served as its agents, then, produced two outcomes. African Americans were afforded real opportunity to gain a foothold in the altered landscape of American society while simultaneously having nurturing arenas in which their unique cultural heritage could be expressed. “The legacy of the Freedmen’s Bureau,” claimed W.E.B. Du Bois, “is the heavy heritage of this generation.”<sup>98</sup>

In a broader sense, the communities established by African Americans with the assistance of the Freedmen’s Bureau, northern missionaries, and African American educators cultivated people and institutions that served to promote the very identity that was evolving. The Freedmen’s Bureau “helped discover and support such apostles of human development as Edmund Ware, Erastus Cravath, and Samuel Armstrong,” wrote Du Bois. From the communities that were developed during Reconstruction to the remote secondary schools founded by men like John Smallwood and William Price, prominent African American leaders surfaced and assumed chief roles in government and education. The influence wielded by these key leaders, in turn, served to bolster the progress being made by African Americans

toward promoting their general welfare. One measure of this progress, and another result of the patronage of African American schooling, was the enrollment of thousands of African Americans into newly-founded institutions of higher learning. From these schools, in turn, emerged leaders that would challenge mighty Jim Crow in the mid-twentieth century. Although many collegiate, normal, and industrial training schools ultimately foundered, numerous institutions, like Fisk, Howard, and Hampton, remain viable and essential schools in the American community at large. These are institutions with which numerous African Americans are proud to associate. And the communities that sustain them are, in no small measure, products of a history that was written by the hard work of Amelia Howard, John Smallwood, and William Price.<sup>99</sup>

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 NOTES

*Notes for Introduction*

<sup>1</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, "Atlanta University" *From Servitude to Service; Being the Old South Lectures on the History and Work of Southern Institutions for the Education of the Negro* (Boston: Arno Press, 1905), 169.

<sup>2</sup> Eugene F. Provenzo Jr., ed., *Du Bois on Education* (New York: Alta Mira Press, 2002), 172. In a chapter called "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others," Du Bois levies especially harsh criticisms of the kind that painted a negative connotation of his rivals.

*Notes for Chapter 1*

<sup>3</sup> Marshall Rachleff, "David Walker's Southern Agent," *The Journal of Negro History* Vol. 62 No. 1 (Jan. 1977): 101.

<sup>4</sup> Janet Cornelius, "When I Can Read My Title Clear"; *Literacy, Slavery and Religion in the Antebellum South* (Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 6, 32-33.

<sup>5</sup> Janet Cornelius, "'We Slipped and Learned to Read:' Slave Accounts of the Literary Process, 1830-1865," *Phylon* (1960-), Vol. 44, No. 3. (3rd Qtr., 1983), 171-172.

<sup>6</sup> Phillip Hamilton, "Revolutionary Principles and Family Loyalties: Slavery's Transformation in the St. George Tucker Household of Early National Virginia," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 55, No. 4. (Oct., 1998), 547-548.

<sup>7</sup> Cornelius, "When I Can Read My Title Clear" 8-9.

<sup>8</sup> Ira C. Colby, "The Freedmen's Bureau: From Social Welfare to Segregation," *Phylon* (1960-), Vol. 46, No. 3. (3rd Qtr., 1985), 220-222.

<sup>9</sup> Paul S. Peirce., *The Freedmen's Bureau; A Chapter in the History of Reconstruction*, (Iowa City, IA: The University of Iowa City, Iowa, 1904), 12, 75; Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love; Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865 – 1873* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 11-12; James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860 – 1935* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 6-7. See also for original correspondence J.W. Alvord, *Condition of Freedmen* (Washington DC: Howard University Press, 1870).

<sup>10</sup> Peirce, 75; John B. Myers, "The Education of the Alabama Freedmen During Presidential Reconstruction, 1865-1867," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 40, No. 2. (Spring, 1971), 164-165.

<sup>11</sup> Anderson, 27, 81.

<sup>12</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois and Augustus G. Dill, eds., *The common school and the Negro American; report of a social study made by Atlanta University under the patronage of the Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund, with the proceedings of the 16th annual Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems, held at Atlanta University, on Tuesday, May 30th, 1911*, (New York: Arno Press, 1968), 116-117; Anderson, 82-83.

<sup>13</sup> William H. Baldwin, Jr. "The Present Problem of Negro Education in the South" *Proceedings of the Second Capon Springs Conference for Education in the South* (Raleigh, NC: Edwards and Broughton, 1899), 94-107. Quoted in Anderson, 82.

<sup>14</sup> Anderson, 81-84.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Dennis, "Schooling along the Color Line: Progressives and the Education of Blacks in the New South," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 67, No. 2. (Spring, 1998), 142-145; Anderson, 81-91.

*Notes for Chapter 2*

<sup>16</sup> The churches founded by Howard's efforts were Cypress Baptist, Mount Moriah A.M.E., Jerusalem Baptist, Mount Nebo Baptist, Lebanon Baptist, and (in Isle of Wight) Emmanuel Baptist. Mount Hope A.M.E., also attributed to the efforts of Howard, was disbanded in the 1960s.

William Paquette, "'Mother' Amelia Howard," in *Readings in Black and White – Lower Tidewater Virginia*, (Portsmouth, VA: Portsmouth Public Library, 1982), 23-26.

<sup>17</sup> House Executive Documents, 40<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, Number 1, p. 651.

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[Notes to pages 20 – 35]

<sup>18</sup> Ledger Book of Captain J.F. Wilcox, found at the Surry County Historical Society, Surry, VA, 35; National Archives Microfilm Publications, *Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Virginia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865 – 1869*, roll 324, frame 379. [hereafter referred to as *Records of the Assistant Commissioner*].

<sup>19</sup> W. Herbert George, “Mt. Moriah A.M.E.” and “Cypress Baptist” in *The Negro Churches in Surry County*, (Smithfield, VA: Modlin Printing Company, n.d.) [pages not numbered]

<sup>20</sup> Handwritten Invoice found at the Surry County Courthouse, Surry, VA, now held by the Surry County Historical Society.

<sup>21</sup> Paquette, 25.

<sup>22</sup> Ledger Book of Captain J.F. Wilcox, 35.

<sup>23</sup> *Maryland Census for 1850, Schedule I – Free Inhabitants in the 9<sup>th</sup> Ward Baltimore City in the County of Baltimore State of Maryland*, held by the Surry County Historical Society, Surry, VA; Paquette, 25.

<sup>24</sup> Ledger Book of Captain J.F. Wilcox, 35; *Records of the Assistant Commissioner*, ACC 32073, Reel 6.

<sup>25</sup> Peirce, 80.

<sup>26</sup> *Records of the Assistant Commissioner*, ACC 32073, Reel 6.

<sup>27</sup> Howard N. Rabinowitz “From Exclusion to Segregation; Southern Race Relations, 1865-1890” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 63, No. 2. (Sep., 1976), 344-349.

<sup>28</sup> *125<sup>th</sup> Church Anniversary, Mt. Nebo Baptist Church, Surry, VA* (Surry, VA: Mt. Nebo Baptist Church, 1992), 3; Paquette, 24.

<sup>29</sup> George, “Mt. Nebo Baptist”; Peirce, 80-81.

<sup>30</sup> *Records of the Assistant Commissioner*, ACC 32073, Reel 6.

#### Notes for Chapter 3

<sup>31</sup> Wayne E. Reilly, ed., *Sarah Jane Foster, Teacher of the Freedmen; A Diary and Letters* (Charlottesville, VA: The University Press of Virginia, 1990), 92.

<sup>32</sup> Jones, 188.

<sup>33</sup> J.M. Stephen Peeps, “Northern Philanthropy and the Emergence of Black Higher Education—Do --Gooders, Compromisers, or Co-Conspirators?” *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 50, No. 3, *The Higher Education of Blacks in a Changing, Pluralistic Society*. (Summer, 1981), 255-257; Jones, 186-191.

<sup>34</sup> Peirce, 70.

<sup>35</sup> Jones 189, 191; Peeps, 257.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Frances Engs, *Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited; Samuel Chapman Armstrong and Hampton Institute, 1839 – 1893*, (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 78; Anderson, 35.

<sup>37</sup> Anderson, 35.

<sup>38</sup> Daniel Perlman, “Organizations of the Free Negro in New York City, 1800-1860” *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 56, No. 3. (Jul., 1971), 192; Anderson, 65-66.

<sup>39</sup> Pete Daniel, “The Metamorphosis of Slavery, 1865-1900,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 66, No. 1. (Jun., 1979), 93; Jonathan M. Wiener, “Class Structure and Economic Development in the American South, 1865-1955” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 84, No. 4. (Oct., 1979), pp. 970-992; Anderson, 21.

<sup>40</sup> Martin Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1974), 273, 286, 292, quoted in Peeps, 267-268.

<sup>41</sup> Dennis, 145-146; Anderson, 88.

<sup>42</sup> Paul B. Barringer, “Negro Education in the South” *Educational Review* 21 (March 1901). Quoted in Anderson, 96.

<sup>43</sup> William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education; Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954* (New York: Teacher College Press, 2001), 22-23, 38-40.

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[Notes to pages 35 – 59]

<sup>44</sup> Donald Spivey, *Schooling for the New Slavery; Black Industrial Education, 1868-1915* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978), 31-33. Lewis W. Jones, "The Agent as a Factor in the Education of Negroes in the South" *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 19, No. 1. (Winter, 1950), 32-34.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 76-78.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-79.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-82.

*Notes for Chapter 4*

<sup>48</sup> Oscar Lovell Triggs, *Chapters in the History of the Arts and Crafts Movement* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 1, 95.

<sup>49</sup> Eileen Boris, *Art and Labor; Ruskin, Morris and the Craftsman Ideal in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 4-12.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>51</sup> Sal Cohen, "The Industrial Education Movement, 1906-17" *American Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 1. (Spring, 1968), 95. See also Mary Ann Smith, *Gustav Stickley, The Craftsman* (New York: Dover Publications, 1983); Boris, 89-91.

<sup>52</sup> Cohen, 96.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

*Notes for Chapter 5*

<sup>55</sup> Caroline B. Andrus, "Education of Indians" in *Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute; Its Evolution and Contribution to Education as a Federal Land-Grant College* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1923), 89-92.

<sup>56</sup> Anderson, 58-72.

<sup>57</sup> Lawrence A. Cremin, ed., *From Service to Servitude; American Education, Its Men and Institutions*, (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), 115 – 152; Engs, 71.

<sup>58</sup> Engs, 14-22, 45-56.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-69.

<sup>61</sup> Spivey, 17-18.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>64</sup> Anderson, 33-34.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>66</sup> Engs, 78.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-81

<sup>68</sup> Donald F. Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877 – 1923*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press: 1995), 91-116; Engs, 106-107.

<sup>69</sup> Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (New York: Dover Publications, 1995), 114.

<sup>70</sup> Booker T. Gardner, "The Educational Contributions of Booker T. Washington" *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 44, No. 4. (Autumn, 1975), 507-510; Engs, 70-72; Anderson. 34.

<sup>71</sup> Peeps, 267-268.

*Notes for Chapter 6*

<sup>72</sup> Washington, 61-62.

<sup>73</sup> Provenzo, 76.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>75</sup> Washington, 61.

<sup>76</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Bantam Books, 1989), 40;

<sup>77</sup> Green, 358-366.

<sup>78</sup> Anderson, 104-106.

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[Notes to pages 69 – 83]

<sup>79</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 36-37.

<sup>80</sup> Louis R. Harlan, "Booker T. Washington and the White Man's Burden" *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 71, No. 2. (Jan., 1966), 445-450.

<sup>81</sup> Elliot M. Rudwick, "The Niagara Movement" *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 42, No. 3. (Jul., 1957), 177-180.

*Notes for Chapter 7*

<sup>82</sup> John J. Smallwood, "Finding His Mother" in an unidentified newspaper, John J. Smallwood student file, Hampton University Archives, Hampton, VA. Eve S. Gregory, *Claremont Manor; A History* (Petersburg, VA: Plummer Printing Company, 1999), 99-100.

<sup>83</sup> "Circular of Information of the Temperance, Industrial and Collegiate Institute" Smallwood student file, Hampton University Archives. There is no date on this publication but it could not have been published earlier than the 1902-1903 school term.

<sup>84</sup> Emmet Ellis, "History of the Institute" in an unidentified newspaper, Smallwood student file, Hampton University Archives.

<sup>85</sup> "Circular of Information" Smallwood student file, Hampton University Archives.

<sup>86</sup> Ellis, "History of the Institute" Smallwood student file, Hampton University Archives.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Raymond Wolters, *Du Bois and His Rivals*, (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 150-155; W.E.B. Du Bois, "Atlanta University" in *From Service to Servitude*, 115 – 153; Du Bois, *The Common School and the Negro American*; "Circular of Information" Smallwood Student file, Hampton University Archives.

<sup>89</sup> Gregory, 100-101.

<sup>90</sup> George F. Bagby, "William G. Price and the Gloucester Agricultural and Industrial School" *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (vol. 108, no. 1, 2000), 46-55; Letter from William G. Price to Hollis Frissell, 20 Feb 1902, William G. Price student file, Hampton University Archives, Hampton, VA.

<sup>91</sup> Gloucester Agricultural and Industrial School, "Circular of General Information" 1902-1903; Gloucester A & I "Catalogue and Annual Report" 1892-1893.

<sup>92</sup> Bagby, 59-64.

<sup>93</sup> William G. Price, "Cappahosic, Va." *American Missionary* (Feb 1907), 41, Bagby, 65-66.

<sup>94</sup> Bagby, 69.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 69-70.

<sup>96</sup> "Circular of Information" Smallwood student file, Hampton University Archives.

*Notes for Conclusion*

<sup>97</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 10.

<sup>98</sup> Evelyn B. Dandy, *Black Communications; Breaking Down the Barriers* (Chicago: African American Images, 1991), 31; W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Freedmen's Bureau" in *The Atlantic Monthly* (vol. 87, iss.521, March 1901), 364.

<sup>99</sup> Du Bois, "The Freedmen's Bureau," 361.

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