
SCOTT BAKER
Wake Forest University

Background/Context: Although the dominant narrative of the civil rights movement marginalizes the role of black educators, revisionist scholars have shown that a significant number of black teachers encouraged student protest and activism. There has, however, been little analysis of the work of black teachers inside segregated schools in the South.

Purpose/Objective: This study examines the courses that Southern African American teachers taught, the pedagogies they practiced, and the extracurricular programs they organized. Using Charleston’s Burke Industrial School as a lens to illuminate pedagogies of protest that were practiced by activist educators in the South, this study explores how leading black educators created spaces within segregated schools where they bred dissatisfaction with white supremacy.

Research Design: This historical analysis draws upon archival sources, school board minutes, school newspapers and yearbooks, oral testimony, and autobiographies.

Conclusions/Recommendations: In Charleston, as elsewhere in the South, activist African American teachers made crucial contributions to the civil rights movement. Fusing an activist version of the African American uplift philosophy with John Dewey’s democratic conception of progressive education, exemplary teachers created academic and extracurricular programs that encouraged student protest. Beginning in the 1940s and continuing through the 1960s, students acted on lessons taught in classes and extracurricular clubs, organizing and leading strikes, boycotts, and demonstrations. The pedagogies that leading African American educators practiced, the aspirations they nurtured, and the student activism they encouraged helped make the civil rights movement possible.

During the middle decades of the twentieth century, African American academics, attorneys, and activists painted an enduring portrait of black
teachers as pathetic figures. Fisk University sociologist Charles S. Johnson argued that most black teachers were “weary” practitioners (1941, 104). Walter White, the executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), complained that educators were “weaker-kneed brethren” who were inclined to “chiseling and pussy-footing” (Janken 2003, 264). After Brown, attorney Constance Baker Motley contends, the NAACP did not get any grassroots support for litigation because black educators were “major foe[s] of school desegregation” (1998, 111). By the 1960s, black teachers had become objects of scorn. Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) activist Stokley Carmichael condemned black educators as traitors who sold out the race for “security and status” (Carmichael and Hamilton 1967, 14).

This portrait has shaped a narrative of the civil rights movement that marginalizes the contributions of activist African American educators and prevents them from effectively speaking to the educational challenges of our time. African American educators are absent from popular and prize-winning accounts as well as some school textbooks (Garrow 1986; Lawson 1997; Sitkoff 2008; Epstein 1994).

There were certainly many “Nervous Nellies” and “Uncle Toms” among the 75,000 African Americans who taught in the segregated schools by 1954, but a growing body of revisionist scholarship shows that a significant number of black teachers encouraged student protest and activism. At the heart of this historiography is African American agency, the story of the ways blacks contested white supremacy and transformed institutions that were designed to constrain into avenues of collective advancement. In this portrait, teachers are not so much victims as tenacious institution builders who rallied African American communities behind the improvement of schools that became an institutional base for the movement. In Georgia, activist teachers, not attorneys, “initiated challenges that led to the Civil Rights Movement” (Chirhart 2005, 5). Unlike the leaders of national protest organizations, local activists in Alabama and Mississippi remember that exemplary teachers were advocates who taught students to “analyze things,” instilling in young people the belief that change “was up to us” (Manis 1999, 29–30; Henry 2000, 44). Insisting that students achieve, racially and politically conscious educators in the Carolinas proffered a vision of equality that inspired student protest (Chafe 1981; Cecelski 1994; R. S. Baker 2006; Williams 1995; Drago 1990). Beginning in the 1940s and continuing through the 1960s, activist teachers across the South were “crucial to the cause” through the encouragement and support they provided to students who boycotted schools, registered voters, and organized direct action demonstrations (Ramsey

This study examines how a generation of activist educators made these challenges possible. Revisionist scholars have shown that exemplary black teachers played significant roles in the long history of the civil rights movement, but surprisingly little attention has been devoted to what African American teachers “actually did” inside schools (Chirhart 2005, 3). “What is needed,” Butchart (2002) argues, is “research that identifies the sorts of schools, the kinds of curricular emphases, [and] the forms of pedagogies . . . that appear to have been most likely to nurture the forms of thinking and acting . . . that resulted in civil rights activism.” Looking inside Charleston’s Burke Industrial School, I examine the pedagogies of protest that leading educators practiced in the kind of overcrowded and inadequately funded secondary school that most Southern black students attended during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Drawing on the theoretical insights of Scott (1990) and Kelley (1996), I define pedagogy broadly to refer not simply to formal courses or methods, but also to the “hidden curriculum”—the extracurricular activities that African American educators crafted in unmonitored spaces within segregated schools. Using archival sources, school board minutes, school newspapers and yearbooks, and oral testimony, I examine how activist educators found, in the interstices of this segregated institution, openings where they heightened racial and political consciousness and nurtured leadership and organizational skills. As I focus on Burke, I present evidence from autobiographies, oral histories, and secondary sources to show that these pedagogies of protest, school activities that contested and challenged white supremacy, were practiced by activist educators in African American schools in the South.

I do not claim that the teachers profiled here are representative, any more than Thurgood Marshall is representative of all African American attorneys, or Martin Luther King is representative of all black ministers. Not all African American educators taught equality. What I do contend is that we cannot fully understand how the civil rights movement began, gathered strength, and accomplished what it did without coming to terms with the ways in which leading educators promoted student activism. African American teachers remain understudied, and in documenting these contributions, I hope to stimulate more research on the specific historical and educational contexts that encouraged as well as discouraged African American educational activism.

While the dominant narrative of the civil rights movement consigns black teachers to passive roles in the movement, I argue that progressive African American educators were at the heart of the long struggle for
civil rights. Drawing on the democratic ideals embedded in Dewey’s progressive educational philosophy, a generation of college-educated teachers at Burke and other black schools created academic and extracurricular programs that encouraged student protest. In the years after 1945, African American high school students in the Carolinas, Virginia, Kansas, Missouri, Texas, Louisiana, and Washington, D.C. acted upon lessons woven through courses and clubs and staged a series of school boycotts that revived the NAACP’s legal campaign, which stalled during World War II. As massive resistance paralyzed the NAACP in the years after 1954, activist African American educators prepared students who organized and led “one of the greatest uprisings of oppressed people in the twentieth century” (Woodward 1966, 170). During the early 1960s, as in the 1940s, student activism pushed the movement forward, providing significant support for direct action demonstrations that combined with pressure from the NAACP, the courts, and the Justice Department to eliminate Jim Crow and end the exclusion of African Americans from educational institutions, public facilities, and public accommodations. In Charleston, as elsewhere in the South, activist African American teachers made indispensable contributions to these struggles. The pedagogies they practiced, the aspirations they nurtured, and the activism they encouraged helped make the movement possible. Without them, I argue, the civil rights movement would not have accomplished what it did.

GROUNDWORK: INSTITUTION BUILDING IN AFRICAN AMERICAN SCHOOLS, 1940–1945

Burke Industrial School was the kind of inadequately funded and overcrowded African American secondary school that most Southern black students attended during the middle decades of the twentieth century. The history of these institutions illustrates how Southern officials sought to use education to reproduce white supremacy and how, over time, leading educators made black schools avenues of collective advancement. Built on a dumping ground in 1910, Burke was designed to school African Americans in subordination. The school’s curriculum, like courses of study in other African American high schools established in the early twentieth century, was based on the Hampton Tuskegee model of industrial education and emphasized practical training through courses in cooking and laundry for girls, and painting and bricklaying for boys. After black teachers were appointed to Burke’s faculty in 1920, secondary grades were added. In 1925, African Americans pressed officials to upgrade the curriculum, but Charleston school superintendent A. B.
Rhett believed that “the education the Negro needed most was industrial” (City board minutes, March 4, 1925). During his long tenure as superintendent between 1911 and 1946, Rhett remained a staunch opponent of the academic training of African Americans. Like his colleagues in other Southern cities, Rhett believed that blacks should be prepared for “Negro jobs” (Anderson 1988). In 1938, Rhett secured federal funds to establish new vocational courses at Burke “to supply cooks, maids, and delivery boys” (City board minutes, December 7, 1938).

The collapse of youth labor markets and New Deal education programs fueled unprecedented increases in African American high school enrollment, highlighting the limitations of inadequately funded and overcrowded school facilities. Drawing students from the city and the rural South Carolina low country, Burke, like other African American high schools, became increasingly overcrowded as enrollment more than doubled in the decade after 1935 (Du Bois 1970, 78; Caliver 1950, 114). Officials in Charleston wanted Burke to train healthy and productive workers, but they worried that permanent improvements to Burke’s physical plant would produce what one trustee called “unlimited Negro enrollment.” Hoping to deter enrollment, officials systematically underfunded the school, and Burke became increasingly overcrowded. Cobbling portable classrooms and temporary structures together, officials created a facility that one observer called a “pitiful apology for its supposed purpose” (Charleston News and Courier, July 15, 1945). In the years after 1945, hundreds of students were accommodated in portable classrooms that blacks derided as “doghouses” (City board minutes, September 3, 1947, and October 5, 1949; Simms 1995). For much of the twentieth century, per-pupil spending on white students in the city’s three high schools was well above per-pupil spending at Burke. Student-teacher ratios were consistently higher, and overcrowding remained a serious problem (Public Schools of Charleston 1949). “The intent of whites,” recalls Lonnie Hamilton, who attended Burke in the 1940s, “was to keep you from getting knowledge and power” (interview with author, July 12, 1990).

This intention, a generation of revisionist scholarship has shown, was never fully realized. Educational authorities in Charleston controlled the outer reality of schooling at Burke, but they were never able to define its inner spirit. Burke remained underfunded and overcrowded, but increasing enrollment at Burke led the school board to hire a new generation of college-educated teachers who created opportunities for advancement in a school that was designed to limit. The initiatives of these educators are part of a long tradition of African American autonomy in situations that were ostensibly controlled by whites. Enslaved African Americans transmitted hidden “educational practices”
across generations (Gundaker 2007). Just as slaves carved out human space in a system that sought to deny their humanity, African Americans during the age of segregation found ways to “Jump Jim Crow” and create space within institutions (Dailey, Gilmore, and Simon 2000; Kelley 1996). At Burke and other black schools, creative African American educators found spaces where they contested white supremacy. In claiming these spaces, blacks “sought more than autonomy,” Lewis argues. “They sought a means of empowerment” (1991, 23).

African American educators were able to carve out these spaces because officials exercised little direct supervision over what occurred inside Burke and other black schools. The minutes of the Charleston School Board show, and teachers recall, that superintendent Rhett rarely visited Burke (City board minutes, 1935–1957; V. Duvall, interview with author, September 4, 1990). After completing field work in Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida, Myrdal (1944) wrote that as “as far as their teaching is concerned,” black teachers are “more independent than appears. The white superintendent and the white school board ordinarily care little about what goes on in the Negro school” (880, 882; also J. Davis 1938). Oral testimony, autobiographies, and case studies show that black teachers had considerable autonomy. In Jacksonville, Florida, Madge Scott recalls that “the superintendent only came around every five or six months” (Foster 1997, 38). Dorothy Robinson, who taught in East Texas, writes, “I was rather a free agent and did about what I wanted to do” (1987, 33). Convinced that inadequate funding and overcrowding would limit what educators could accomplish, authorities in Halifax County, Virginia, left teaching “in the hands of Colored men and women” (W. Edwards, Royster, and Bates 1979, 89). Dunbar High School in Washington “thrived in almost total isolation from white officials” who “took little interest in what was going on at the school” (Sowell 1974, 15–16). In many communities, white authorities left the supervision of black schools to African American principals, and as Rogers’s study of North Carolina shows, “the most striking thing revealed by the men who were formerly principals of all-black high schools was the degree of autonomy they were allowed” (1975, 51).

During the middle decades of the twentieth century, African American educators seized upon this lack of monitoring to lay the groundwork for a generation of institutional development in black schools. As enrollment at Burke rose from 377 in 1935 to 1500 a decade later, Burke principal William H. Grayson recruited a generation of college-educated teachers who claimed parts of Burke as black space and strengthened the curriculum. A graduate of Fisk University, Grayson completed coursework at Columbia’s Teachers College before being appointed principal of Burke
in 1939. Grayson “believed in educating the entire child,” recalls Eugene
Hunt, who taught English at Burke between 1941 and 1972. “He had to
be a skillful administrator,” Hunt notes, “because there wasn’t much symp-
athy or support for the idea of giving black students the opportunity to
get a full education. The prevailing attitude was that black students had
no need for intellectual development” (Charleston News and Courier,
February 8, 1989). During World War II, Grayson skillfully used labor
shortages to increase the number of teachers who taught academic
rather than vocational subjects. When the board was unable to fill paint-
ing and carpentry positions in the school’s vocational department in
1943 and 1944, Grayson hired college-educated faculty members. In
1937, only 12 of the school’s 31 teachers had bachelor’s degrees, but by
1941, the faculty had grown to 41, and one had a master’s degree and 37
had bachelor’s degrees (Burke Spotlight 1937; Burke yearbook 1941). By
1948, Burke’s faculty had grown to 60 and included graduates of Atlanta,
Chicago, Fisk, Julliard, Howard, the University of Pennsylvania, and
Teachers College, Columbia University (High School Application

The rising educational attainment of Burke’s faculty illustrates broader
regional trends. As sharp increases in enrollment forced school boards to
hire more and more teachers, resources provided by the National Youth
Administration (NYA), the G.I. Bill, and the NAACP’s salary equalization
campaign helped growing numbers of black teachers finance a college
education. During the 1940s, African American educators in the South
“exploited the opportunities for professional training to a greater degree
than whites” (Pierce 1955, 199). Between 1930 and 1950, the percentage
of black teachers in ten southern states who held bachelor’s degrees rose
from 12 percent to 72 percent (Pierce 1955, 199–201). Especially in
urban high schools, there were many well-educated and highly compe-
tent African American teachers who were important role models for stu-
dents (Sowell 1974; L. G. Davis 1996; Turner 2001; Jones 1981; A. L.

During the 1940s, a cadre of college-educated teachers at Burke, Leroy
Anderson, Frederick Cook, Viola Duvall, Marjorie Howard, Eugene
Hunt, and Henry Hutchinson strengthened the curriculum and oriented
the school toward the liberal arts and college preparation. Academic
training gave teachers a sense of the kind of preparation students
needed, and teachers modeled their courses at Burke after ones they had
taken in college. “We knew what the requirements for college were,”
recalls Duvall, who earned her master’s degree at Howard University.
“We wanted to make sure that our young people could meet them”
(interview with author, September 4, 1990). Countering the school
board’s persistent opposition to the teaching of liberal arts subjects, African American teachers remained tireless advocates of a richer and more rigorous academic curriculum. Rhett continued to promote vocational courses, but most students took three academic courses and one vocational course as they pursued a diploma that required four years of English, and two years of math, science, history, and electives. By the middle of the 1940s, 85 percent of the teachers at Burke taught academic subjects—English, math, science, and history. In 1944, Burke’s curriculum received an “A” rating from the Southern Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges. Two years later, one observer noted that Burke, “which had rather inferior standards[,] has pushed into the senior high school area and is beginning to do excellent work” (Brownlee 1946, 137).

Decades of scholarship demonstrate that Southern African American educators outmaneuvered the proponents of vocational education and institutionalized a primarily academic curriculum in scores of black high schools. Myrdal (1944) argued that “in spite all the talk about it [industrial training],” Southern educational authorities were unwilling to pay for expensive industrial buildings and equipment, and “Negro education has mostly remained academic” (899; also Schrieke 1936; Dollard 1937; Warner, Havighurst, and Loeb 1944, 130). Recent studies confirm these findings. By the 1930s, the lack of African American interest in vocational education led the architects of the Rosenwald Fund, which partially funded the construction of Southern black schools, to alter its building plans, replacing the “industrial room” with a “community room” (Hoffschwelle 2006, 154). In Little Rock, Arkansas, Northern philanthropists and local officials appropriated over $400,000 to construct Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School, which was intended to prepare students for menial jobs. However, teachers educated at one of the four African American colleges in the Little Rock area encouraged students to enroll in academic courses, and “few students majored in the industrial curriculum” (Anderson 1988, 211). As teachers “spent their summers taking classes at northern universities and earned advanced degrees” Dunbar developed “a reputation as a top notch school” (Lanier 2009, 35, 37; also Jones 1981). Teachers at the Caswell County Training School in North Carolina refused “to let it become a vocational training school,” and students were required to take courses in English, science, social studies, music, and math (Walker 1996, 36, 115–16). In Virginia and other Southern states, educational authorities refused to authorize more advanced classes, especially when they were not taught in white schools, but the lack of supervision left openings. At Norcom High School in Portsmouth, Virginia, trigonometry was not part of the official curriculum. Some teachers, however, just “slipped it in,” recalls John W.
Brown, who attended the school. “I remember that distinctly because I liked math” (“Behind the Veil” 1995, interview with B. Murphy, July 31, 1995, 3).

As much as Southern educators and Northern philanthropists sought to vocationalize African American education, more than half a century of research demonstrates that the curriculum in scores of Southern African American high schools was primarily academic (Anderson 1988; Cecelski 1994; V. G. Morris and C. L. Morris 2002; Tilford-Weathers 1982; Foster 1997; Bond 1972; Sowell 1974; A. L. Edwards 1998; L. G. Davis 1996; W. Edwards, Royster, and Bates 1979; Palmer 1991; Walker 2000; List of approved accredited high schools, n.d.). Because of the advocacy of African American educators and limited tracking in many Southern black schools before Brown, students studied the egalitarian ideas embedded in the liberal arts during a time when the number of African Americans who completed high school rose sharply (City board minutes, January 27, 1957; R. S. Baker 2006; Walker 1996, 155–56; Sowell 1974). The 150 students who graduated from Burke in 1945 were part of a cohort of African American graduates that was twice as large as the one that preceded it (Parvenue, May 1945; Caliver 1950, 116). Myrdal (1944) argued that “the long-range effect of the rising level of education in the Negro people goes in the direction of nourishing and strengthening the Negro protest” (881).

DEWEY, DEMOCRACY, AND AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATORS IN THE SOUTH

The African American activism that defines the long history of the civil rights movement was also a product of Dewey’s democratic vision of progressive education. At Burke and other African American schools, leading educators earned degrees during a time when progressive educational ideas were especially influential. Recent critics assert that as progressive ideas were put into practice in schools, they blocked African American access to “cultural literacy” and “prepared [black] children to fit into society as it then was” (Ravitch 2000, 377; also Hirsch 1999; Angus and Mirel 1999, 40). Based on assumptions rather than evidence, these assertions are not accurate descriptions of what was actually taught in Southern black schools, where a majority of African Americans were educated during the middle decades of the twentieth century. (These critiques do not provide a single piece of primary source evidence from Southern black schools.) As much as Southern administrative progressives sought to limit African Americans, revisionist scholars have shown how African American educators used Dewey’s democratic ideas to
liberate (Cremin 1988; Drago 1990; Fairclough 2001; R. S. Baker 2006).

There were, of course, different kinds of progressive education, and clear differences between the administrative progressives who supported a differentiated curriculum and life adjustment, and radical democrats like Dewey (Westbrook 1991, 189, 502–7; Ryan 1995, 349). In the years between the world wars, Dewey remained an important voice in debates about progressive education and a critic of progressives he deeply disagreed with (Cremin 1961, 234; Westbrook 1991). As he distinguished his views from those progressives who sought to use schools to reproduce inequality, Dewey affirmed his support for democratic progressive education as an instrument of social and political reform, arguing that “schools should strive to educate with social change in view by producing individuals equipped with desires and abilities to assist in transforming it” (Boydston, Baysinger, and Sidorsky 2008, 262; also Westbrook 1991; Cremin 1988). During the late 1930s and early 1940s, as progressive education achieved “its high water mark,” a generation of African American educators could “hardly avoid” coming into contact with the possibilities of Dewey’s democratic progressive philosophy (Cremin 1961, 324; Fairclough 2001, 36; Walker 2009). Adept at manipulating educational ideas to achieve their own ends, leading African American educators found in Dewey’s ideas tools and techniques that contributed to the reconstruction of Southern society.

The education of Burke teachers illustrates how progressive democratic ideas influenced African American schooling in the South. Many of the teachers who taught at Burke in the years after the 1940s—Leroy Anderson, Eugene Hunt, J. Michael Graves, and Lois Simms—first encountered progressive educational ideas as high school students at Charleston’s Avery Normal Institute. Founded by the American Missionary Association in 1866, Avery was one of the dozens of Southern African American private, parochial, and laboratory schools that were connected to missionary societies, churches, and colleges (Brownlee 1946; Irvine and Foster 1996; Brown 1995; Palmer 1991). Influenced by coursework at Teachers College and Fisk, principals Frank A. DeCosta and L. Howard Bennett established programs that were designed to produce “united group effort and fuller participation in the full stream of American life” (R. S. Baker 2006, 65; also National Negro Digest 1940). Students at Avery, Drago (1990) notes, “imbibed in the progressive attitudes of their teachers” (230). Social studies teacher Julia Brogdon was an avowed Deweyite. In 1944, she required students in her Problems of Democracy class to apply for admission to the segregated College of Charleston as a homework assignment (Scipio to Registrar, May 15, 1944). Brogdon earned her master’s degree from Atlanta University in
1940, where she studied with W. E. B. Du Bois and Horace Mann Bond. Brogdon believed that schools could change society if students were “taught how to cope with economic, political, social, and educational problems intelligently” (interview with E. Drago, November 13, 1987).

These progressive ideas were widely taught during a time when growing numbers of African American teachers at Burke and other African American schools in the South completed bachelor’s, master’s, and summer study programs at leading universities (Pierce 1955; Lanier 2009; Walker 2009; A. L. Edwards 1998). Higher salaries, G. I. Bill benefits, and out-of-state scholarships that 12 Southern states funded in an attempt to preserve segregation in higher education provided resources that teachers used to finance more advanced study. Especially in leading universities, but in other institutions as well, a generation of African American educators learned how to put the radical possibilities of Dewey’s philosophy into practice.

By 1949, more than a third of the teachers at Burke had completed coursework and earned degrees at Atlanta, Teachers College, or Howard. Atlanta’s program required prospective teachers to complete courses on the methods and materials of progressive classroom procedure (Atlanta University catalogues and bulletins, 1934–1942, 23). Hundreds of African Americans studied at Teachers College during the middle decades of the twentieth century, including many Burke teachers. Courses such as Mabel Carney’s The Education of Negroes in the United States, and summer institutes on race relations provided students with opportunities to develop a progressive critique of white supremacy (Weiler 2005, 2620). Lois Simms and Viola Duval were among the Burke teachers who earned master’s degrees at Howard. Graduate students were required to write a master’s thesis, and complete research in the Journal of Negro Education (Simms 1995, 26–27). Articles in the Journal, which was widely read, urged teachers to use progressive educational methods to challenge white supremacy (Kluger 1977, 169). “Teachers must be courageous enough to arouse social unrest,” one educator wrote. “We must be intelligent enough to help our children to become socially wise” (W. A. Robinson 1936, 400). Education professor Doxey Wilkerson (1937) argued that teachers should prepare students to “think critically” about “the problem of race conflict” and “[arm] them with the ‘equipment’ which conflict demands” (73–74). Drawing on the John Dewey Society Yearbook, Teachers for Democracy (1940), Myrtle Phillips urged African American teachers to create “a desirable democratic society” (Phillips 1940, 484–85). By the 1940s, “virtually all” college-trained black educators were familiar with Dewey’s ideas (Fairclough 2000, 84; Moseley 1966).

Dewey’s democratic vision was popular among leading black educators
because it supported a more activist interpretation of the African American uplift philosophy. Capitalizing on the ascendancy of liberal reform politics and the popularity of progressive education, African American educators made schooling and democracy inseparable. In carefully crafted mission statements, black teachers echoed Dewey’s contention that the fundamental goal of schooling was “to prepare students for democratic living” (Fairclough 2000, 84). “We are guiding our students in critical thinking.” Grayson wrote in unmistakably progressive terms in 1942. “We are trying, as teachers in a minority group, to make our children proud of the contributions to America and the world by their race, and at the same time conscious of themselves as Americans” (Burke yearbook 1942). By the 1940s, these sentiments were widely shared by African American educators who completed college and graduate courses during the heyday of the progressive movement. J. Andrew Simmons, who earned a master’s degree from Teachers College and served as principal of Booker T. Washington High School in Columbia, South Carolina, wrote, “we believe that education in America should be education for the democratic way of life; that pedagogically, integration describes teaching procedures which relate varieties of subject matter to problem solving situations” (Browne 1944, 62–63). In Newport News, Virginia, teachers at Huntington High School proclaimed their “unshakeable belief in democracy. We take this position not only because we are Americans, but particularly because we are Negroes. This democratic ideal will hasten the day when all the people of the nation will enjoy the full blessings of democracy” (Browne 1944, 64). During World War II, the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes sponsored a project in 16 Southern African American high schools “to promote experiments in progressive education” and make schools “agencies for producing young citizens capable of leadership and community action” (W. A. Robinson 1944, 533, 542). As Walker (2009) argues, African American professional and educational networks facilitated the dissemination of ideas about “ensuring full democratic participation” and “overturning a system of oppression” (12–13).

UNMONITORED SPACES: EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMS

These ideals and goals supported extracurricular programs that heightened racial consciousness, developed political awareness, and nurtured leadership skills. During the 1940s, the pedagogies that activist teachers practiced became increasingly oppositional as educators created, in unmonitored school spaces, school newspapers, student councils, Negro history programs, debate and drama clubs, and voter registration
projects. These programs were extremely popular in black schools in the South, "potent parts of life at Burke," a student wrote in the school newspaper, the Parvenue, one of the many new programs established during the 1940s (Parvenue 1942). In Little Rock, 94 percent of the students who graduated from Dunbar High school in 1944 reported participating in extracurricular programs (Jones 1981, 36–37). At Caswell County Training School, clubs were a vital “part of school life” that involved 80 percent of the students (Walker 1996, 102–3).

Programs in Negro history celebrated African American achievement in ways that bred discontent with white supremacy. Created by African American historian Carter Woodson in 1926, Negro History Week replaced racist notions of African American inferiority with lessons on African American achievement. In an indication of how officials continued to control the outer reality of schooling, the Charleston School Board refused to authorize an official course in Negro history, but educators at Burke found ways around this policy. In 1939, Grayson recruited H. E. Jenkins, a graduate of Columbia University’s School of Library Science, and Jenkins organized and expanded the school library. “Books by and about Negroes,” the Parvenue reported, “are the most popular” (May 1946). These texts brought students into contact with egalitarian ideas and led one student, Leon Cash, to write, “nappy hair and dark complexion, doesn’t alter nature’s claim, but perfection and ambition, dwell in white and black just the same” (Parvenue, May 1941). Exposing students to events and ideas that were not contained in state-approved textbooks, programs organized by Burke history teacher Frederic Cook explored “the Negro’s journey up from slavery to freedom.” This activity included student presentations on African Americans in history, art, music, sports, and religion, and ended with the singing of the Negro national anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing” (Parvenue, May 1946). In another Negro History program, 100 student leaders were selected to read and discuss the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. As one student wrote, “these documents show that all races have fought and struggled for the precious prize of liberty and equality. The Negro is still struggling, but he is nearer his goal.” The program ended with students reciting the freedom pledge: “in order to have freedom, we have to fight for it” (Parvenue, January 1948).

By the middle of the 1940s, these lessons were taught not just during Negro History Week but throughout the school year. In schools throughout the region, African American educators nurtured the pride and aspirations that were at the heart of the civil rights movement. Geraldine Davidson, who attended Fargo Agricultural School in Arkansas during the 1940s, remembers that “you never graduated from black history until
you left the school” (“Behind the Veil,” interview with P. Ortiz, 1995). John Stokes recalls that his teachers at Moton High School in Virginia found ways of weaving the achievement of African Americans into every course (Turner 2001). Students in Thelma Shelby’s English class in Coahoma County, Mississippi, prepared oral reports on Richard Wright’s *Native Son* and talked “inside and outside the classroom about the struggle for human dignity” (Henry 2000, 41–42). In New Bern, North Carolina, history teacher Arlestus Attmore completed research and collected materials that informed lessons on Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, and other black leaders (“Behind the Veil,” interview with C. Stewart, n.d., 20). “Black identity was thrust upon us,” recalls Angela Davis, who attended school in Birmingham, Alabama (1988, 91). Anne Moody’s homeroom teacher, Mrs. Rice, provided “a whole new pool of knowledge about Negroes” and the NAACP’s efforts to “gain basic rights” (Moody 1968, 127–28). At Dudley High School in Greensboro, English teacher Nell Coley used literature and poetry to engage students in discussions of “the inalienable rights of all human beings” (interview with W. Chafe, October 15, 1974). Powdemaker (1939) argued that “knowledge of Negro achievement increases the student’s self respect. More than this, it enhances his own expectations. As his expectations enlarge, so do his demands” (321).

As teachers heightened racial consciousness, they created programs that explicitly taught students to vote. Lessons on the structure of government and the courts were designed to induct schoolchildren into American political culture. In 1940, Grayson and math teacher Marjorie Howard established a student council, United Burke. Each homeroom represented a state and elected a representative to a student council or congress, which in turn elected a president and vice president. “We were training students for citizenship in the United States,” math teacher Marjorie Howard recalls (interview with author, January 15, 1991; also see Burke yearbook 1941). After federal judge J. Waites Waring struck down South Carolina’s white primary in *Elmore v. Rice*, social science teacher Leroy Anderson had students study the *Elmore* decision and write the judge as a homework assignment (E. Wright to Waring, December 1948). Student council leaders brought a voting machine to the school and, working with teachers, used it to “familiarize students with voting, how it is done, and accustom them to [registration] procedures” (*Parvenue* 1952). Anderson’s colleague, Henry Hutchinson, worked with students on door-to-door campaigns to make “elders mindful of using the ballot” (*Parvenue*, June 1953). By 1952, 7500 African Americans were registered to vote in Charleston, almost twice as many as in 1948.

Citizenship education was a vital part of the curriculum in many
African American schools and contributed to significant increases in African American voter registration, which rose from 3 percent in 1940 to 20 percent by 1952 (Lawson 1997, 81). During the 1930s, the Black American Teachers Association “urgently recommend[ed] the teaching of the value of the ballot in all schools for Negroes” (The Bulletin 1934, 9–14; 1935, 58). Acting on this recommendation, one African American principal in Georgia required students to say the Pledge of Allegiance, and then repeat an oath: “I promise God and my teacher that when I am twenty-one I will register to vote” (W. A. Robinson 1936, 338). Activist African American teachers in Nashville “thought it was their responsibility to educate boys and girls politically as well as academically” (Ramsey 2008, 88). In Virginia, teachers were the “backbone” of the Virginia Voter’s League. At Hayden High School, Leola R. Vann went beyond lessons in the civics text. She urged students to “carry the message home to their parents” and followed up by meeting with parents in their homes (Dennis 2004, 89). In Topeka, Kansas, Mamie Williams, a Teachers College graduate, organized “the whole school like a state, with a constitution, by-laws, officers, and a legislative council. There were campaign speeches and elections, rousing inauguration ceremonies, and regular legislative reports posted on the bulletin board in every classroom” (Kluger 1977, 378). At Greensboro’s Dudley High School, physics teacher Vance Chavis encouraged “students to get their parents to vote. We wrote letters and I got students to address them right there in my classroom” (interview with W. Chafe, May 20, 1973). Madge Scott, who taught in Florida, recalls, “teachers did quite a few things not sanctioned by the school board. When people think about black teachers, they don’t see them as subversive, but these teachers were” (Foster 1997, 38).

TEACHING MADE IT INEVITABLE: STUDENT STRIKES AND BOYCOTTS, 1945–1954

In the decade after 1945, African American students acted on these progressive pedagogies of protest and staged a series of school strikes and boycotts across the South that pushed the movement forward. By the end of World War II, rising African American aspirations collided with caste constraints as a wave of student activism made black high schools battlegrounds, sites of significant struggles between whites who sought to maintain their supremacy and blacks who challenged it. Sharp increases in African American high school enrollment, severe overcrowding, and glaring disparities between white and black facilities sparked these strikes, but these challenges also grew out of aspirations that were nurtured by activist educators. In December 1945, Burke students staged
a walkout to protest the “dog houses,” the dilapidated portable classrooms that officials constructed to alleviate severe overcrowding (City board minutes, December 12, 1945). A year later, students in Lumberton, North Carolina, boycotted classes at the “shameful” African American high school (report, Lumberton Negro school strike, October 21, 1946). During the fall of 1947, students in Hearne, Texas, stayed out of class for a month after officials forced teachers to conduct classes in “prison camp” conditions (Student Walkout, n.d.). In 1951, hundreds of African American students staged a dramatic march through downtown St. Louis (St. Louis Argus, September 7, 1951). Between 1945 and 1954, African American high school students organized at least 17 boycotts and strikes in the Carolinas, Virginia, Kansas, Missouri, Louisiana, Texas, and Washington, D.C. In four of the five cases consolidated under Brown, student activism preceded litigation. These strikes and boycotts are significant because they revived the NAACP’s legal campaigns against state-sanctioned segregation that had stalled, and forced educational authorities to dramatically increase funding for black schools (McCauley and Ball 1959; Tushnet 1994).

There is little documentary evidence about the walkout at Burke or the school boycotts that were staged throughout the South in the years after 1945. The best evidence we have about the role of teachers in this wave of Southern student activism comes from several studies of the strike at R. R. Moton High School in Farmville, Virginia (Smith 1965; Kluger 1977; Branch 1988; Turner 2001). This evidence shows that the pedagogies practiced by activist teachers at Moton encouraged student protest. Moton principal Boyd Jones was a Hampton College graduate who earned his M.A. from Cornell. Influenced by Dewey’s contention that schools could democratize society, Jones and his colleagues created a vibrant and progressive educational environment that included Negro history programs, plays, a student council, and a voter registration project. The president of the local NAACP, Reverend L. Francis Griffin, remembers that Jones had “the idea that the high school had to serve as a training ground for democracy. Jones’s school was the most democratic thing that ever happened around here. He taught [students] to think for themselves and criticize, and ask questions” (Smith 1965, 60). Barbara Johns, the Moton junior who organized the boycott, recalls that “Jones’ teaching made it all seem inevitable” (Smith 1965, 32).

English and music teacher Inez Davenport, who was engaged to Principal Jones, encouraged Barbara Johns to organize a student strike. Johns was deeply involved in Moton’s academic and extracurricular programs, as were other strike leaders. She excelled in her classes and participated in the chorus, the drama group, and the student council. In
Davenport’s music class, Johns recalls, “we always ended up talking about the school” (Turner 2001, 196). After Davenport suggested that students “do something about it,” Johns “decided to use the student council” (interview with R. Kluger, May 14, 1971). Student government leaders planned, organized, and carried out the boycott. At an assembly in the spring of 1951, Johns told students “not to accept” conditions at Moton and led more than 450 students out of the school (Pittsburgh Courier, May 5, 1951). As students picketed the school with placards that stated “We’re Tired of Tar Paper Shacks; We Want a New School,” strike leaders used the Moton High School office phone to call NAACP lawyers Oliver Hill and Spottswood Robinson (Smith 1965, 40, 43). When attorneys met with the students and warned them that they were violating the state’s compulsory school attendance laws, the young people shouted that there were “too many of them to fit in the jails” (Branch 1988, 20). In May of 1951, a month after the boycott began, students returned to school, and Principal Jones told Barbara Johns, “keep up the good work. I am behind you 100 percent, but I must not publicly acknowledge this. Continue on” (Smith 1965, 63; also Powell to Kluger 1971).

The wave of student activism that swept through the South in the years after 1954 pushed the NAACP to directly challenge state-sanctioned segregation, and combined with litigation to force Southern authorities to fund a multi-million-dollar construction campaign that improved educational facilities in Charleston, Farmville, Lumberton, Hearne, and other Southern cities and towns (McCue and Ball 1959, 150; R. S. Baker 2006). Thurgood Marshall praised the student strike in Lumberton, calling it “one of the finest things ever pulled” (Marshall to Current, January 20, 1947). While some members of the legal staff worried that the association might not “get many parents willing to make a test of the segregation laws of their community,” Marshall’s colleague Herbert Hill recalls that “when the younger group came along [the student activists at Moton], this all changed” (S. Robinson to Marshall, October 1, 1950; Smith 1965, 44–45). Student activism helped convince the NAACP that courageous “little Joes” in the South were ready to challenge state-sanctioned segregation (Perry to Nance, August 19, 1947). In 1954, the Supreme Court struck down the constitutionality of state-imposed racial segregation.

“WE ENCOURAGED [STUDENTS] TO DO THE KIND OF THING THEY DID,” 1954-1963

*Brown* emboldened African American activists and unleashed a vicious wave of white repression and retaliation. Legal and extralegal attacks on
the NAACP forced the association to defend its right to exist and create what A. D. Morris calls an “organizational and protest vacuum” (1984, 32, 34). Encouraged by teachers, African American students filled this vacuum and played significant roles in “the surge of nonviolent direct action” that swept through the South in the late 1950s (Meier and Rudwick 1976, 364). In the spring of 1956, South Carolina State College student government leaders Fred Moore and Rudolph Pyatt, using skills they had developed as students at Burke, organized and led a boycott of classes, demonstrations on campus, and a selective buying campaign in the town of Orangeburg that targeted businesses owned by white supremacists. Pyatt recalls that the skills he developed in extracurricular activities at Burke and State College—how to organize meetings, write articles, publish a newspaper, and stage events—provided him and Moore with the “capability and logistics to do what we needed to do” (interview with W. Hine, August 25, 1994). In April 1956, 99 percent of the State College faculty signed a resolution declaring their support for the student activists. After Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, Jo Ann Robinson, an English teacher at Alabama State College, worked with two of her students and printed leaflets announcing a bus boycott. They distributed the leaflets “at schools where both students and staff members helped distribute them further and spread the word” (J. A. G. Robinson 1987, 46). In Tallahassee, Florida, two Florida A&M students initiated a bus boycott in 1956 and received significant encouragement from Dean Moses Miles and professors Edward Irons and James H. Hudson (Rabby 1999, 9, 39–40). In 1957, American history teacher Clara Luper worked with more than a dozen of her students at Dunjee High School in Oklahoma City on a carefully planned project (NAACP 1960). Luper (1979) “supervised” sit-ins that desegregated lunch counters and variety stores in Oklahoma City. The activism helped sustain the movement during a time when repression paralyzed the NAACP.

As massive resistance delayed desegregation, educators at Burke and other African American schools prepared student leaders who organized and led sit-ins and direct action demonstrations in the early 1960s. Building on the groundwork laid by Grayson and his colleagues in the early 1940s, teachers and administrators at Burke made the training of student leaders a central goal of the school. Clinton Young, a Teachers College graduate who was appointed principal of Burke in 1955, wrote, “we are constantly emphasizing the quality of leadership. We are constantly searching out in our student body those who have the possibilities of leadership” (Parvenue, December 1956; also Burke Bulldog 1958). Students sang in the school choir, directed by music teacher H. H.
Fleming, that regularly performed at NAACP meetings. Working with faculty advisor and math teacher Marjorie Howard, student journalists used the Parvenue to educate students about their rights as citizens. The “free press” is a “mighty weapon in the hands of the American people,” one student wrote, that could “light the way to freedom by printing the truth” (Parvenue, April 1955). But if the school newspaper was to “print the truth,” students had to be bolder and more assertive and not “be afraid of expressing [them]selves” (Parvenue, April 1952). Teachers and administrators culled from classes and clubs a cadre of student leaders, James Blake, Cornelius Fludd, Harvey Gantt, and Mamie Lou White, who were being prepared “to carry the torch of leadership and serve the school and community” (Burke Bulldog 1958). Reinforcing lessons taught in academic classes, plays and skits provided opportunities for students to demonstrate leadership. Septima Clark, an activist educator who taught at Archer Elementary School in Charleston and was fired for publicly supporting desegregation, argues that “this work in dramatics proved to be good training in later activities not even related to the stage but rather dealing with audiences of one sort or another” (1962, 78).

Extracurricular programs in African American schools prepared students to lead African American communities and deal with national audiences. By the 1950s, Walker (2000) has shown, these programs were “a hallmark of many [African American] schools” (268). As activist teachers’ work “stretched from the classroom into the community,” these activities were linked to a network of African American religious, community, and voluntary organizations (Chirhart 2005, 2). In North Carolina, high schools were “the focal point of the black community. [They] served as the rallying point and meeting place for political and social community affairs” (Rogers 1975, 46). Extracurricular programs in North Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas, Georgia, and elsewhere developed leadership skills through assemblies, plays, oratorical contests, and student government, where students learned how to organize activities and work as part of a team (L. G. Davis 1996; V. G. Morris and C. L. Morris 2002). At Rougemont High in Durham, North Carolina, school activities provided students with an understanding of “what we need to do” (Noblit and Dempsey 1996, 129). In Nashville, teachers used plays to prepare students to overcome “limitations and barriers” (Ramsey 2008, 90). Carlotta Walls, one of the nine students who desegregated Little Rock’s Central High School, remembers that her teachers at Dunbar High School opened “the door to a broader world” (Lanier 2009, 36). Charlene Hunter-Gault, who attended Turner High School in Atlanta and desegregated the University of Georgia in 1961, writes that her teachers supplied “a sense of pride in who we were and where we came from and where we
were going” (1988, xv). Drawing on these lessons, student leaders staged
the second act of a play that began with the strikes and boycotts of the
1940s and 1950s.

During the early 1960s, the pedagogies of protest that had long been
practiced in African American high schools fueled student-led demon-
strations that played a central role in the demise of Jim Crow. Acting on
a vision of equality that animated classes and clubs in African American
schools, students organized sit-ins in over 100 Southern cities and towns
in the spring of 1960. Direct action demonstrations that began in 1960
and continued through 1963 expressed deepening African American
resentment at continued segregation in a way that could not be ignored,
stirred the NAACP, and ended African American exclusion. While all
African American educators did not encourage student protest, enough
did. Activist teachers made indispensable contributions to the Second
Reconstruction of the South.

While much of the literature on the sit-ins focuses on colleges, the
seeds of this activism were planted in high schools, and activist teachers
played significant roles in this phase of the long civil rights movement.
Three of the four North Carolina Agricultural and Technical freshmen
who initiated the sit-ins in Greensboro on February 1, 1960, graduated
from the city’s Dudley High School, where teachers Vance Chavis and
Nell Coley nurtured the aspirations that produced activism. Chavis
taught physics, but he constantly reminded his students not to accept se-
gregation. In her English classes, Coley taught students that “the way you
find things need not happen.” Looking back on her years at Dudley, she
recalls that the sit-ins “did not seem to be that unusual at all because we
had been teaching those kids those things” (interview with W. Chafe, May
28, 1973; October 15, 1974). When Greensboro sit-in leader Joseph
McNeil was asked why he acted, he pointed to the educators in the
Greensboro public schools who taught him “what your rights were as cit-
izens, what you should have, [and] what you don’t have” (Leloudis 1996,
228). As the sit-in movement spread through North Carolina and into
other Southern states, high school students played important roles in
organizing and leading sit-ins (Bartley 1995; Roche 1998; A. D. Morris
1984). In Nashville, teachers “supported the movement in a host of ways”
(Ramsey 2008, 93). Students at Washington Junior High and Pearl High
School “absorbed their teacher’s promotion of equality and democracy”
and put these ideas into practice in sit-ins in downtown Nashville (99). At
Norcom High School in Portsmouth, Virginia, students “staged a socio-
drama” at the school, “acting out the right and wrong ways to handle var-
ious demonstration situations” as they staged sit-ins at a local Rose Variety
At Burke, as elsewhere in the South, the pedagogies of protest that Burke teachers practiced inside and outside the classroom provided crucial inspiration. The students who organized and led the sit-ins acted on the lessons of dignity and equality that had long been emphasized in academic courses and extracurricular programs. Most of the Burkites who participated in the sit-ins were honor students. Many were deeply involved in extracurricular programs that faculty and administrators used to develop leadership and organizing skills. Mamie Lou White was valedictorian; Harvey Gantt, salutatorian and captain of the football team; James Blake, editor of the Parvenue, and Cornelius Fludd, president of the student council (Parvenue, March 1960; May 1960). Teachers “taught us we were first-class citizens” recalls James Blake, who led the movement in Charleston (interview with author, July 17, 1990). In March of 1960, Parvenue editor James Blake urged his peers to “Stand Up and Be Counted.” Drawing on lessons learned in history classes and clubs, he wrote that “throughout the history of America man has been asking for his inalienable rights to live and be respected as a human being. Are you going to be a Harriet Tubman, a Sojourner Truth, or a Cornwallis?” (Parvenue, March 1960). Searching for ways to express what they learned at Burke, student leaders turned to two of the school’s most respected teachers, Eugene Hunt and J. Michael Graves. Like Vance Chavis and Nell Coley, Hunt and Graves urged students to act on lessons proffered in academic classes and extracurricular activities. “What should we do? What would you do? Would you stage a sit-in?” Graves remembers them asking. “I told them that I would probably go and sit down. We encouraged them to do the kind of thing they did” (interview with author, July 16, 1990).

Using the organizing and leadership skills developed in extracurricular programs, on April 1, 1960, 24 Burke students staged a sit-in at the local Kress, a variety store with lunch counters, in Charleston and were arrested. Graduating from Burke that spring, sit-in leaders were showered with awards and scholarships by parents, teachers, and alumni in a graduation ceremony that celebrated their activism (Burke High School commencement program, 1960, E. Hunt Papers). Stirred by the student activists’ discipline and determination, skills nurtured in African American schools, black leaders organized a boycott to protest overcrowding in the schools, and NAACP leaders renewed legal campaigns to desegregate schools in South Carolina and other states. By 1960, less than one percent of black students attended desegregated schools in the South. As Klarman (2004) has shown, during the early 1960s, “the pace” of desegregation accelerated largely because of African American student activism (360).

In Charleston; Birmingham; Jackson, Mississippi; and other citadels of
Southern segregation, student activism sustained demonstrations during the summer of 1963 that made continued exclusion incompatible with order. In Birmingham, students formed “the backbone of the movement,” fueling disruptive protests that forced officials to desegregate schools and public accommodations (Forman 1985, 212). After teachers boycotted stores in Jackson, hundreds of students from Brinkley, Lane, and Hill High Schools helped form “the driving force” behind marches and demonstrations that brought concessions in education and other areas (Slater 1987, 86, 238; Moody 1968, 269). In Charleston, James Blake recalls, this phase of the movement was “led by young people” (interview with author, July 17, 1990). Day in, day out, hundreds of students from area high schools marched, picketed, and demonstrated in the streets. Disrupting traffic and commerce, these protests threatened the area’s $25-million a-year tourist trade, raising the costs of continued segregation. By the end of the summer, daily demonstrations in Charleston led to the arrest of 800, who were among the 20,000 arrested in over 100 cities and towns (Bartley 1995, 337).

These demonstrations combined with pressure from the NAACP, courts, and the Justice Department to finally and irrevocably end African American exclusion from schools, colleges, parks, libraries, and public accommodations. When the court ordered officials in Charleston to desegregate the schools in August 1963, a local newspaper editor acknowledged the power of student protests, writing that the school board had decided to accept the ruling “in order to avoid chaos. The events of the past summer demonstrate the practical necessity of the decision” (Charleston News and Courier, August 24, 1963). By the time schools opened in the fall of 1963, Birmingham, Jackson, Charleston, Savannah, and St. Augustine were among the more than 160 Southern districts that desegregated for the first time, three times as many as in 1962, and by far the largest number since the height of massive resistance in 1956 (Southern School News, September 18, 1963). Demonstrations and the threat of continuing disorder also contributed to passage of landmark civil rights legislation. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 authorized the Justice Department to initiate litigation challenging exclusion and discrimination in education, employment, public accommodations, and other areas. “The protests hit at the right time,” Thurgood Marshall recalls. “[We regained] the initiative once the protests and demonstrations achieved their momentum. Yes, I think [the protests] saved it [the movement]. I think it might have died on the vine” (interview with E. Erwin, February 15, 1977). These protests—and the pedagogies that inspired them—provided much of the momentum behind the long civil rights movement.
Note

1. Like other leaders of the student protest movement, sit-in leader Harvey Gantt played an important role in the continuing struggle for civil and political rights. In 1963, Gantt desegregated Clemson College and went on to earn a master's degree from MIT. Following his election as mayor of Charlotte in the 1980s, Gantt ran for the United States Senate in North Carolina but was narrowly defeated by Jesse Helms in 1992 and 1996 (Baker 2006).

References


Atlanta University catalogues and bulletins, 1934–1942. Robert Woodruff Library Archives, Atlanta University Center, Atlanta, GA.


Burke Bulldog. Avery Research Center, Charleston, SC.

Burke Spotlight. 1937. Avery Research Center, Charleston, SC.

Burke yearbook. 1941. Avery Research Center, Charleston, SC.

Burke yearbook. 1942. Avery Research Center, Charleston, SC.


City Board of School Commissioners, Minute Books, 1924–1963. Charleston County School District, Office of Records and Archives, Charleston, SC.


E. Hunt Papers, Box 1. Avery Research Center, Charleston, SC.


High School Application. 1948–1949. S192116. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, SC.


Negro citizens committee, petition. LaGrange, Texas. n.d. NAACP Papers, Box II-B-147. Library of Congress, Washington, DC.


Parvenue. Avery Research Center, Charleston, SC.


Powell, B. J. to R. Kluger. August 9, 1971. Richard Kluger Papers, manuscript group 759, Yale Univ., New Haven, CT.


Sciio, H. to Registrar. May 15, 1944. Correspondence relating to applications by Negroes for entrance into the college, Avery Research Center, Charleston, SC.


Student walkout. Hearne, Texas. n.d. NAACP Papers, Box II-B-147, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.


Wright, E. to Judge Waring. December 1948. J. Watives Waring Papers, Box 110-44, Moorland Spingarn Library, Howard Univ.

SCOTT BAKER is associate professor of education at Wake Forest University. His research explores the history of African American education, school desegregation, and the origins of current accountability systems. His publications include Paradoxes of Desegregation. This study examines the role that activist African American educators played in initiating, supporting, and sustaining the civil rights movement in the South.