CHAPTER 1

Panorama

MOST AMERICANS have little direct contact with private black colleges, have not visited one, and are not sure what they should expect if they did. This first chapter sketches for the newcomer how these colleges appear today and outlines key forces and trends that shaped them during the past thirty years. For these institutions, however, early history is as important as recent history. In some ways more so. Prior to the 1950s and 1960s, black Americans lived a very different history of civil rights and educational opportunity than did white Americans. The difference is far greater than that portrayed in most U.S. history survey courses that are taught in secondary schools and colleges. Without appreciation of that difference, one cannot understand what an accomplishment of determination and faith the success of many of these black colleges represents today, nor can one properly judge the potential of these colleges for further service to the nation. This chapter ends with an introduction to that separate history. During the 1950s and 1960s, three changes in law altered fundamentally the role of black Americans and of private black colleges in American society. The first, noted in the Preface, was the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education,* which directed that public elementary and secondary schools be racially integrated, and which laid the legal foundation for later court rulings directing integration of public colleges and universities in the South. The second major change was passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the third was the Higher Education Act of 1965. Prior to the 1950s, black public and private colleges were, with rare exceptions, the only colleges accessible to black Americans. Black students prepared for a relatively narrow range of professional careers, principally teaching and the ministry. By the 1970s, however, black students were enrolling in historically black and also in predominantly white colleges, with a far wider range of careers open to them than before. Owing to the federal student aid and direct institutional subsidy under the Higher Education Act, private black colleges suddenly found themselves supported by significant government money, and, also for the first time, confronted with aggressive national competition for able students and faculty.

In 1950, prior to the *Brown* decision, about 90 percent of black American college and university enrollment was in historically black colleges, public and private. By 1970 there were approximately 357,000 black American undergraduates, the majority in institutions where few if any

Blacks had enrolled previously. One hundred seventy thousand or 48 percent were in historically black colleges. Fifty-six thousand of these undergraduates were enrolled in private black colleges. During the next thirty years, the number of African American students choosing predominantly white institutions grew rapidly. Meanwhile, the number attending historically black colleges leveled off until the 1980s and then, with a sharp increase in women's enrollment, rose again to record levels in the 1990s.[1]

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, several foundation-supported assessments of the status and prospects of historically black colleges ranged in tone from near funereal to cautiously optimistic. Daniel C. Thompson, professor of sociology at Dillard University, a private black institution, wrote in 1973 that "Private black colleges are challenged to institute revolutionary reorganization or face progressive disorganization. Most of these colleges, which have performed so nobly in the past, are now threatened by extinction (progressive disorganization) unless they seriously examine themselves, find the constant support needed, and bravely make the program and structural changes necessary in order to be truly relevant."[2]

Vivian W. Henderson, president of Clark College, another private black college in Atlanta, wrote that "The historic Negro college will have the responsibility for educating a diminishing but significant proportion of black youth enrolled in higher education. . . . Negro colleges will be slow in attracting white students not because of the policy or lack of quality but because institutionalized and entrenched racism is a barrier to the movement of white youth."[3]

William J. Trent, Jr., executive director of the United Negro College Fund from 1944 to 1964, cautioned against belief in any simple projection: "People generally discuss Negro colleges as if they were all alike, with a common fate. This is nonsense. Negro colleges are located along a spectrum of quality ranging from excellent to poor, just as are other institutions. Further, what will happen to these Negro colleges will cover a broad spectrum of possibilities."[4]

Although Trent was correct in warning about the dangers of easy generalization, a broad description of this collegiate landscape is possible. Today's forty-five four-year historically black private colleges can be divided into three groups according to enrollment size. Ranked in thirds, by size, the largest of the colleges enroll between approximately fifteen hundred and six thousand students. These colleges offer a strong variety of well-taught liberal arts and precareer subjects, generally pay higher faculty and staff salaries compared with the smaller black colleges, and often send a significant number of graduates on to major graduate schools. In many respects, they are competitive with white liberal arts colleges of similar size. About half of the largest-enrollment private black

colleges are also in the largest Southern cities: Atlanta, New Orleans, Washington, D.C., and Miami.

The majority of these colleges and universities do not concentrate on graduate studies, although several offer a few post-baccalaureate specialties. For example, Clark Atlanta University has a long history of Ph.D. work. Howard University, Washington, D.C., is a research university with a full spectrum of professional programs. Xavier University of Louisiana provides the only graduate pharmacy program in New Orleans. Hampton University and Tuskegee University recently launched doctoral programs in science, Tuskegee University trains doctors of veterinary medicine, and Virginia Union University offers doctoral study in theology. Several universities and colleges offer master's-level studies.[5]

The middle third of these colleges enrolls between eight hundred and fifteen hundred students. These colleges are more likely to be found in middle-sized Southern cities such as Tuscaloosa, Orangeburg, Nashville, and Augusta. Although they have enjoyed some of the same successes as the larger colleges, they have sometimes had to struggle harder to maintain enrollment growth and quality.

The smallest colleges in the final group enroll two hundred to eight hundred students. They more frequently welcome students not well prepared for college by their prior schooling. These often are first-generation college students and students from rural Southern homes. During the past three decades, some of these very small colleges languished for years at a time under indifferent leadership and a few narrowly escaped closing down. However, some of the same colleges at different times have enjoyed excellent leadership and showed a remarkable capacity for rapid improvement.[6]

The four-year accredited private black colleges are listed here, in the three different enrollment groupings based on 1995 enrollment statistics. If their past is a guide, several colleges in each of these groups will grow or shrink significantly, and so move into a different category. Perhaps because many of these colleges are relatively small, with few financial reserves, the volatility within this group is greater than one might encounter, for example, among the Associated Colleges of the Midwest, or the Ivy League:

I. Largest fifteen historically black private colleges

Benedict College, Columbia, South Carolina

Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona Beach, Florida

Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia

II. Fifteen next-largest colleges

Claflin College, Orangeburg, South Carolina

Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee

Florida Memorial College, Miami, Florida

I. (*continued*)   II. (*continued*)

Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana

Hampton University, Hampton, Virginia

Howard University, Washington, District of Columbia

Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia

Morris Brown College, Atlanta, Georgia

Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama

Saint Augustine's College, Raleigh, North Carolina

Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina

Spelman College, Atlanta, Georgia

Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, Alabama

Virginia Union University, Richmond, Virginia

Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans, Louisiana

Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, North Carolina

LeMoyne-Owen College, Memphis, Tennessee

Miles College, Birmingham, Alabama

Morris College, Sumter, South Carolina

Paine College, Augusta, Georgia

Paul Quinn College, Dallas, Texas

Philander Smith College, Little Rock, Arkansas

Rust College, Holly Springs, Mississippi

Stillman College, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, Mississippi

Voorhees College, Denmark, South Carolina

Wilberforce University, Wilberforce, Ohio

III. Fifteen smallest-enrollment colleges

Arkansas Baptist College, Little Rock, Arkansas
Allen University, Columbia, South Carolina
Bennett College, Greensboro, North Carolina
Barber-Scotia College, Concord, North Carolina
Edward Waters College, Jacksonville, Florida
Huston-Tillotson College, Austin, Texas
Jarvis Christian College, Hawkins, Texas
Knoxville College, Knoxville, Tennessee
Lane College, Jackson, Tennessee
Livingstone College, Salisbury, North Carolina
Saint Paul's College, Lawrenceville, Virginia
Southwestern Christian College, Terrell, Texas
Talladega College, Talladega, Alabama
Texas College, Tyler, Texas
Wiley College, Marshall, Texas

Close inspection of the list reveals that even within the three enrollment groups there is much variety of purpose and clientele. Tougaloo College and Talladega College, for example, are not high-enrollment institutions, but have produced a significant number of graduates who subsequently earned doctoral and professional degrees. Although a majority of the largest-enrollment colleges draw more than half their students from out of state, three of them—Bethune-Cookman, Dillard, and Shaw—enroll more than 60 percent of their students from in-state.

NURTURING ENVIRONMENTS

Except for the different racial mix, a first-time visitor to one of these colleges will find much that looks familiar. Approximately 95 percent of the students and more than half the faculty and staff are African American.[7] As with colleges throughout the nation, most black colleges began with two- or three-story brick buildings with white wooden trim, often reminiscent of early New England colleges. But all are not the same. Dillard University in New Orleans mixes colonial and plantation-style buildings in an orderly, spacious campus plan. Urban colleges such as Morehouse and Xavier include both the early low-rise buildings and later urban high-rise design, reflecting a need to accommodate on limited city sites a larger enrollment than the founders anticipated. Tougaloo College, built on a former slave plantation, samples the architecture of several periods: the president's office is in the original plantation owner's house, next door to a large 1960s rough-concrete library, and a block from a utilitarian 1990s humanities building.

Like American colleges generally, many historically black colleges expanded in the 1960s, aided by low-cost federal construction loans. Their campuses contain occasional familiar-looking glass-and-steel box buildings—dormitories and classrooms—which looked modern and functional when they were built, but have since developed maintenance problems and may no longer meet modern building codes. Finally, as with most colleges today, the major new buildings on historically black college campuses have been designed with more attention to attractiveness and comfort—as well as to utility—than generally was true twenty or thirty years ago.

Richard P. Dober is senior consultant for a planning group that advises trustees and architects about campus design and college building projects in the United States and abroad. Over the past forty years, he has visited private black colleges many times, assessing their physical plant for The Ford Foundation in the 1960s, and reviewing building and renovation proposals for the Bush and Hewlett Foundations in the 1980s and 1990s. He finds the quality of planning and construction in recent years

at private black colleges comparable to that on college campuses elsewhere. The campus for Spelman College, an elite private black college for women, is not the same as the campus for Bryn Mawr College, an elite, predominantly white women's college. Spelman has not enjoyed significant outside financial support for as long as Bryn Mawr. But Dober thinks their planning standards are comparable today in ways that were not true in the 1960s and 1970s. Here are his impressions:

> These private black colleges, often located in small and middle sized communities, are visible cultural centers, sources of jobs, and symbols of pride. Often to get to them, you cross the tracks, pass through modest if not impoverished neighborhoods, and enter the campus, surprised and experiencing a more pleasant place.
>
> At some institutions, the older edifices were splendid examples of enterprise and skill. Designed by the locals, built with bricks manufactured on the site and with lumber planed there, crafted and erected by the faculty, staff and students—their scale, detailing and simplicity were architecturally attractive. How sad, then, to see nearby the government regulated and funded, minimal contemporary structures that seemingly ignored the aesthetic lessons evident in the historic buildings.
>
> Equally evident were the contrasting landscapes; the newer areas bleak, the older parts of the campus visually comforting in their tree cover, lawns and shrubbery.
>
> Worst of all, in memory, now and then, here and there, was the physical decay in the older and better architecture; the neglect explained away by financial difficulties which forced the campus administrators to give higher priority to people and programs than to physical spaces.[8]

Unfortunately, the financial difficulties are not just administrative excuses. Private black colleges live on lean budgets—some extremely lean. Average tuition received per student in these colleges in 1996 was $6,347, or 62 percent of the amount received per student by all four-year private colleges. Yet private black colleges maintain approximately the same ratio of students to faculty as do most U.S. four-year private colleges (15 to 1 versus 15.6 to 1). Not surprisingly, faculty are paid less.[9] Among United Negro College Fund (UNCF) colleges, the average salary of a full professor was $48,145 in 1996–97 or 28 percent less than the average for full professors at other comprehensive four-year private institutions. The gap for instructors was 14 percent.[10] In 1996, private black colleges spent about 7 percent less per student on educational and general expenses than did all four-year private colleges and universities. As with private colleges throughout the nation, the percentage of faculty at private black colleges with doctoral or professional degrees increased significantly in

the past twenty years: from 41 percent of all faculty in 1977 to 62 percent in 1997.

Many black college graduates, particularly from residential colleges, have said that their undergraduate years provided an important transition from family dependence to adult self-direction, and that their personal development in college was as important to them as their academic experience. More often than one might ordinarily expect, the authors in their conversations with alumni and with faculty at private black colleges encountered the word "nurturing," or personal anecdotes amounting to the same thing. A published example is in the autobiography of Andrew Young, former mayor of Atlanta and U.S. ambassador to the United Nations:

> In retrospect I realize my years at Howard were important to my personal development. I was mature enough upon graduation to regret the lackadaisical attitude I had toward my studies when I started college, but it was college that helped me mature. By the time I graduated from Howard, I had learned to embrace the strengths of the black middle class. I learned to interact in formal social settings, refined my manners and conversation skills, and began to carry myself with self-assurance. Howard picked up where Mrs. Bowen and Gilbert Academy left off. It was the same philosophy—academic achievement and exemplary behavior. I had not fully mastered either concept, but I had grown to appreciate the wisdom of having those abilities in one's repertoire.
>
> Had I failed to come to terms with my identity as a middle-class black person, I would never have accomplished very much in the civil rights movement or won elective office.[11]

William H. Gray III, president and chief executive officer of the United Negro College Fund, made a similar observation:

> I don't know how we measure the contribution of truly dedicated hard-working teachers. But I do know that when we ask how the graduates of historically black colleges and universities are so often able to compete with the graduates of the most prestigious universities in the nation, it always seems to come back to the faculty role models. . . . It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of faculty in the success of these colleges and their graduates.[12]

What can we say about these colleges and the major challenges their leaders faced in recent years? Put too simply, the 1970s were a particularly tough time to lead a private black college. The decade included continued social unrest, many demands for administrative reform, sharply increased competition for excellent students, and increasingly strong pressure to change what was taught and how. For most colleges, the 1980s

and 1990s were less difficult, although certainly not easy. In these years, an improved national economy gave virtually all private colleges a chance to demonstrate their resiliency. Many private black colleges, like colleges elsewhere, used this time to assess and change their educational strategies: giving increased attention to writing skills and computer literacy, reducing reliance on lecturing, and adjusting course content to accommodate increased student interest in international affairs and in new career opportunities.

THE PAST THIRTY YEARS

During the 1970s, most experienced college presidents reported that the authority of their office was constantly being challenged—by students, by faculty, and sometimes by alumni. One effect of the Vietnam War and the Watergate years was that strong individual authority acquired a tarnished name. The Spelman College board of trustees appointed its first faculty trustee in 1970.[13] A few other private black colleges adopted a similar change, as did many predominantly white colleges. Student demonstrators occupied administrative offices to protest official college positions on everything from rules of student conduct to U.S. foreign policy. Decisions such as choosing a new president—once solely the province of private trustee discussions—were now initiated by broadly based search committees.[14] There is no question that in most colleges, the 1970s produced a fundamental change in the limits of individual presidential authority.

At the same time, the oil shortage of the mid-1970s triggered double-digit cost inflation, the most rapid within memory. Operating budgets were tight. With the general enrollment of eighteen- to twenty-four-year-old black freshmen experiencing a moderate downward trend in the private black colleges, many of their presidents faced the uncomfortable choice of experimenting with tuition increases, stretching operating budgets even further, or spending from endowment principal (if there was an endowment).[15]

An important new source of revenue did emerge in these years, but it proved to be a mixed blessing. Under the Higher Education Act of 1965, the federal government provided grants to students to attend college anywhere in the United States if they demonstrated financial need, were admissible, and maintained satisfactory academic records. Title III of that act also provided direct institutional subsidy to historically black public and private colleges. During the 1990s, according to one estimate, those federal funds together amounted to almost half of an average private black college's annual budget, either through direct payments, or

from student tuition and fees financed with federal and state aid.[16] The "mixed blessing" part was that this same availability of student aid money helped northern and western predominantly white colleges to seek greater variety among their students, and thus stimulated an unprecedented recruitment competition for the best-prepared black high school graduates. During the same period, the flagship white public universities in the South also opened their doors much wider to black students. Any black college president who took the long view was unlikely to complain, since the new competition meant that for the first time, able black high school graduates enjoyed something like the same national range of college choice that had been reserved for Whites only a few years earlier.

But the effects of the new competition on many black colleges were severe. This was particularly true for colleges with strong academic reputations—those which were attractive recruitment targets—but which lacked either extra scholarship money or the recruitment organization to meet quickly the new challenge. For example, at Fisk University, enrollment dropped from 1,610 in 1974 to 1,149 in 1978 and to 694 in 1983. The average freshman SAT verbal scholastic aptitude score decreased from V412 in 1968 to approximately V340 in 1976, a signal that reading comprehension and independent study skills among entering freshmen were weaker than they had been. Fisk achieved partial recovery in the 1980s, at least as measured by the percentage of entering freshmen that ranked in the top fifth of their high school graduating class. Twenty-seven percent of Fisk freshmen in 1976 had been in the top fifth of their high school graduating class; by 1982, the percentage had risen to 44 percent.[17] Carrell P. Horton, former professor of psychology and dean of academic affairs at Fisk describes her observations of those years in Chapter 12.

The new government funds permitted all colleges to enroll more of the poor and needy. But they also permitted predominantly white colleges and universities to recruit black students so aggressively that the scholastic leading edge of black public and private colleges was temporarily blunted. Of all the changes of the 1970s, this probably provided the greatest challenge to the leadership of private black colleges.

Leaders of private black colleges during the 1980s seemed generally to have more control of their fate than in the prior decade. There were fewer new external challenges. However, there was continuing need to respond to the challenges that had flooded in during the 1970s. As noted earlier, part of the leadership energy would go toward adapting and improving educational programs. Presidents also stepped up their search for operating and capital funds. Many colleges raised tuition more rapidly than they had previously done, and some launched larger and more comprehensive capital fund drives. In colleges such as Spelman,

Clark, and Xavier, where great change took place, fundraising consultants from well-known national firms were retained and became regular visitors at their trustee meetings. In these colleges, admission staffs grew; fundraising staffs were enlarged and reorganized both to seek private capital funds, and to learn to deal with the federal agencies responsible for student aid, building construction loans, and Title III institutional subsidy. Despite a great deal of work, however, the tangible gains—such as improved operating budgets, or larger enrollments—seemed only slightly to outnumber the losses. A clearer answer to the fundamental issues of the 1970s would not emerge for a few more years.

Perhaps it is too soon to say what the results are for the college presidents of the 1990s. Certainly colleges everywhere continued to benefit from a national economy that featured extremely low inflation, full employment, and, for colleges fortunate enough to have an endowment portfolio, a sharply rising stock market. During the decade, several historically black private and public colleges reported informally that they were once again beginning to attract the kinds of students who had been so successfully recruited by the most selective northern and western colleges in the previous two decades. Respected national magazines and newspapers, including *Newsweek,* the *New York Times,* the *Washington Post,* and the *Wall Street Journal,* for the first time published feature stories about individual students who, faced with excellent college choices of all kinds, chose to enroll at private black colleges.[18] But the struggle for survival is not over. Faculty salaries and student financial aid budgets still must rise significantly to be competitive with those of predominantly white colleges and universities. Teaching loads in most historically black private colleges remain heavy enough so that little time and energy remain for such things as reorganization of curriculum or large-scale implementation of new teaching techniques. These things could be said of most of the colleges in the nation, except perhaps the most prosperous ones. However, the private black colleges—even in the best of times—make up a collegiate network that is low on reserve assets. So much energy is required to meet the challenges of earlier years and to keep current programs respectable that, in most instances, the colleges' reserve strengths are limited.

Many long-term observers of these colleges say that the most noticeable occurrence of the past fifty years is that private black colleges are, among themselves, much less alike than they were in the 1950s.[19] Several colleges, favored by location, leadership, and good fortune, have grown in size, attractiveness, and financial strength. Others, with different locations and circumstances, and with less adaptability, by comparison still appear to be struggling. However, fifty years ago it would have been foolhardy to predict that even a few private black colleges would become sufficiently successful at attracting and managing endowment funds so

that, on an endowment-dollars-per-student basis, they now are comparable to well known universities elsewhere. Table 1.1 shows that among 344 private institutions surveyed, three private black colleges made it to the middle of such a ranked list, and one appears near the end. These four are Spelman College, Hampton University, Howard University, and Bethune-Cookman College.

We think it is reasonable to expect that several other private black colleges within the next decade will, in such matters as endowment, faculty qualifications, and student career achievement, measure increasingly well compared with many other nationally respected colleges and universities. To do this, they will need to continue to define a clear vision of purpose. In different ways throughout the book, this emphasis of the authors is repeated and becomes almost a refrain: if their leaders can maintain vision and focus, the private black colleges will remain significant and also will carry forward a distinctive history that is important to the institutional diversity of American higher education and to the texture of American society.

The next seven chapters turn to history: the history of black higher education, and the unusual difficulties that were so important to its development. For some readers, this may be more history than seems necessary. For most, however, these chapters will add to a better understanding of both the present status of private black colleges and their role in all U.S. higher education. Richard Kluger, author of a history of the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education,* explains at

TABLE 1.1

Private Institutions Ranked by Endowment Assets per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Student in FY 1999 (Selected Colleges)

National Rank	Private Black Colleges and Universities	Other Private Colleges and Universities	Endowment Assets ($) per FTE Student
1		The Rockefeller University	7,197,143
2		Princeton University	1,007,978
111	Spelman College		96,648
113		Carnegie Mellon University	94,885
144		Barnard College	68,203
171		Tulane University	53,415
216		New York University	36,537
219	Hampton University		35,435
228	Howard University		31,206
324	Bethune-Cookman College		10,416

Source: Cambridge Associates, Inc., *1999 NACVBO Endowment Study* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2000), Exhibit 5.

the beginning of his book why this close examination of background is important.

> From the start, the United States aspired to far more than its own survival. And from the start, its people have assigned to themselves a nobler destiny, justified by a higher moral standing, than impartial scrutiny might confirm . . . .
>
> Of the ideals that animated the American nation at its beginning, none was more radiant or honored than the inherent equality of mankind. There was dignity in all human flesh, Americans proclaimed, and all must have its chance to strive and to excel. All men were to be protected alike from the threat of rapacious neighbors and from the prying of coercive state. If it is a sin to aspire to conduct of a higher order than one may at the moment be capable of, then Americans surely sinned in professing that all men are created equal—and then acting otherwise.[20]

As an example, the Declaration of Independence in 1776 said clearly and simply: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." However, fifteen years later the U.S. Constitution and its Bill of Rights permitted continuance of the institution of slavery for almost a full century. Many states during that time passed laws making it illegal to teach Blacks to read and write. In 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court said that Dred Scott, a slave, was property, not a citizen, and without standing to sue in federal court.

Soon after the Civil War, three amendments to the Constitution promised equal rights to black Americans. The Thirteenth Amendment (1865) abolished slavery everywhere in the United States. The Fourteenth Amendment (1868) provided that "No state shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law; nor deny to any person . . . the equal protection of the laws." The Fifteenth Amendment (1870) stated that the right of citizens to vote "shall not be denied or abridged . . . on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." But during the ensuing decades, Blacks who attempted fully to exercise these rights encountered denial, hostility, and little help from the courts.

The emergence of nationally competitive, distinctive black colleges seems impressive under any circumstances. It is doubly so when one observes the large discrepancy between promise and reality—in human rights and in educational opportunity—that existed for black Americans during most of the nation's history.

CHAPTER 2

Major Historical Factors Influencing Black Higher Education

SLAVERY AND RACISM

THE RELATIONSHIPS that evolved between black and white Americans over the two and a half centuries from 1619 to 1865 have influenced every aspect of the life of black Americans, education being no exception. The first Africans who arrived in the English colonies were sold as indentured servants in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. Many Europeans would arrive in the New World in much the same way, but what happened to them thereafter would prove quite different. Unlike those of their European counterparts, agreements with Africans for a period of service routinely became lifetime indentures and those obligations were then extended to their children. In 1671, there were approximately two thousand African servants in Virginia, all with indentures that covered their lifetimes and those of their offspring. They and their children were slaves. By the end of the seventeenth century, there were approximately twenty-eight thousand Africans in twelve of the thirteen colonies, all in the same condition of servitude. Each colony except Georgia—whose governor owned slaves in a neighboring colony—recognized slavery as legal. Georgia legalized slavery in 1749. This process of enslavement was reflected in various laws enacted in the British colonies. Virginia, for example, passed legislation in the 1660s requiring "that all children born in this country shall be held bond or free according to the condition of the mother" and that "baptism doth not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or freedom . . . [so that owners] may more carefully endeavor the propagation of Christianity by permitting children, though slaves . . . to be admitted to that sacrament."[1] A Maryland law provided that the children of European women married to Africans would be slaves as their fathers were and that the women would also be slaves as long as their husbands remained alive.[2] By the beginning of the 1670s, a firm link between African background and slave status had been established in the minds of European colonists. In the next century, laws in southern states would classify slaves as chattel—personal property—and make it illegal to teach slaves to read or write.

At the start of the American Revolution, more than half a million African slaves resided in the colonies, concentrated mainly in large agricultural units in the coastal lowlands and piedmont of the area stretching from Virginia to Georgia. The concept of the "rights of man," heralded by the Revolution in the Declaration of Resolves of the First Continental Congress in 1765 and then in the Declaration of Independence, had little if any effect on these people held in bondage. Some northern states, where slaves were few, abolished the institution soon after the Revolution, but elsewhere the number of slaves only increased and the oppressive nature of the slave system continued to grow. Under pressure from southern states, the new nation in its Constitution recognized slavery as legal, failing to perceive that it would spawn a series of political crises that would end in a cataclysmic civil war. Along this troubled course, in 1820 and again in 1850, southerners and non-southerners negotiated compromises that sought to draw boundaries limiting new territories into which slavery could spread, and to establish a procedure that allowed white Americans living in a territory to decide whether slavery could exist there. The fragile nature of these compromises was reflected in the case of *Dred Scott v. Sanford.* Scott, a slave, claimed his freedom because his master took him from Missouri, a slave state, to the free state of Illinois and the free territory of Wisconsin, and back to Missouri. In 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court denied Scott's claim that he had become free when taken into free territory and had lived north of the boundary line for slavery established in 1820. But the Court went much further. It stated that as a Black, Scott was not even a citizen and so could not sue in federal court; that slaves were property, and could be taken into any territory by their owners. The effect was to heighten the developing bitterness between those who supported the expansion of slavery and abolitionists who opposed slavery on moral grounds or because of the threat it posed to free labor. Only three years later, a state of civil war existed between eleven secessionist southern states and the rest of the Union.

The development of a system of chattel slavery seems incongruous in a country whose government was based on the political ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. That many of the individuals who developed this political system were also slave owners created fundamental logical and moral conflicts that remain difficult to resolve. To reconcile the simultaneous acceptance of chattel slavery and a belief in "liberty, equality, and the pursuit of happiness"[3] required the founders to view the people retained in bondage as inferior to those who held them and therefore neither entitled to be judged by the same morality nor to enjoy the same societal benefits. The deep-seated nature of such a rationalization helps explain why some periods of American history that are praised for advancing the concept of democracy were also times when the oppressiveness of slavery and discrimination against

Blacks actually increased. Laws were passed in Alabama, Virginia, and other southern states during the period of Jacksonian democracy (1829–41) that made it illegal to teach Blacks to read or write. Large numbers of black Americans were lynched during the Populist period (1892–96). Jim Crow reached its fullest development during the Progressive era (1890–1917). Each democratic upsurge in the country made it more difficult to justify the existence of slavery and so more important to establish the rationalization that black Americans were undeserving of the considerations to which other Americans were entitled.

Even in 1865 as the Civil War was drawing to its end, many white Americans of all classes, northern as well as southern, believed that the long enslavement of Blacks was evidence that they were intellectually inferior beings on whom any serious investment in education would be wasted. As that famed French visitor to the United States, Alexis de Tocqueville, observed in *Democracy in America,* "the prejudice of race appears to be stronger in states that have abolished slavery than in those where it still exists; and nowhere is it so intolerant as in the states where servitude has never been known."[4] Despite the existence of strong anti-slavery feelings in the northern states, racist attitudes continued to run deep in the region, as shown by the violent New York City Draft Riots of 1863, when opposition to the draft resulted in the death of about a dozen Blacks, and by the destruction of black-owned property and the restrictions placed on black voting rights in some Union states during the Civil War.

RACISM AFTER SLAVERY

The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution ending slavery, passed by Congress on January 31, 1865, in the wake of the Union victory in the Civil War, produced little or no immediate change in the attitudes of most white southerners. Embittered by defeat, they sought to restore as closely as possible in the South the political and social patterns that had existed before the war. In late 1865, "Black Codes"—laws quite similar to pre-war Slave Codes—were passed in each state of the former Confederacy. The next year, former Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens, six former cabinet members, and four ex-generals of the Confederacy were elected to seats in Congress. Black Americans were barred from voting in the elections. Steps were taken in several states to establish public schools with provisions that excluded black Americans or minimized their access to education.

The reaction of the Republican majority in Congress to the appearance among them of former Confederate officials was immediate. They refused to seat the elected southerners and took control of the recon-

struction of the occupied South out of the hands of Andrew Johnson, the former governor of Tennessee and states-rights Democrat, who had succeeded the assassinated Abraham Lincoln as president. The Fourteenth Amendment was then passed by Congress and ratification made a mandatory step for southern states seeking readmission to the Union. The amendment defined citizenship, extended it to black Americans, prohibited states from denying the privileges and immunities of citizenship to any citizen, and guaranteed due process to all citizens. It also provided for the reduction of state representation in the U.S. House of Representatives in proportion to any limitations placed on the rights of black Americans to vote in that state.

Both Republicans and Democrats recognized that for the first time in the existence of the United States, the number of members of the House of Representatives allocated to each southern state would be based in part on the total number of black Americans counted in the upcoming 1870 census rather than on the three-fifths-of-all-slaves rule, as previously mandated by the Constitution.[5] As a result, southern members of the House of Representatives would increase in number and northern Republicans feared they might lose control of the federal government. If black Americans were prohibited from voting, Republicans would certainly lose their majorities in southern state legislatures and would see fewer members of their party elected to both houses of Congress. This specter of a southern-based Democratic Party stronger in Congress in 1872 than it had been in 1860 led to the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870. It provided that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not to be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." That it would take almost another century before the federal government was willing to act on this amendment indicates how limited the national commitment actually was for these equal rights for black Americans.

Black Americans were politically active in the South during Congressional Reconstruction. There were 241 black Americans among the 976 delegates who took part in ten conventions held in 1867 to draw up new state constitutions prior to rejoining the Union.[6] In South Carolina, black Americans were a majority of the convention members. Overall they constituted 25 percent of all representatives. They were also a significant presence in state legislatures. Two were elected to the U.S. Senate and fourteen served nineteen terms in the House of Representatives between 1870 and 1877. Southern Whites generally expressed their opposition to these changed relations in a variety of ways.

Over several decades, violence or the threat of violence intermingled with political maneuvering as white Americans labored to reassert their pre-war dominance over black Americans and the political dominance of the Democratic Party in the South. Acts of violence by the Ku Klux Klan,

Regulators, Jayhawkers, Rifle Clubs of South Carolina, and other organized groups were directed against freedmen, white Republicans, or anyone viewed as supportive of Blacks. A report of a Congressional Investigating Committee found the Ku Klux Klan, the most active of these white supremacy groups, involved in violence that resulted in the deaths of 373 freedmen between 1866 and 1868. The report also provided detailed information on nine counties in South Carolina where over a six-month period in 1871, the Klan murdered thirty-five, beat up 262, and destroyed the property of 101 Blacks. Testimony before the committee indicated that extortion, intimidation, and terror were common throughout the southern states in those years.

Passage of the Amnesty Act of 1872 further strengthened the South in its opposition to civil rights for black Americans and to the influence of the Republican Party. The ban on former Confederate officials being involved in politics was ended and their return to the voting rolls gave a boost to the Democratic Party. At the same time, the demise of the Freedmen's Bureau—a federal agency created to assist black Americans in their transition from slavery to freedom—left the masses of impoverished former slaves without the advocacy or crucial services the bureau had provided. In its absence, freedmen, who often worked as tenant farmers on land owned by white Americans, were more easily intimidated into a withdrawal from politics by the threat of losing their homes, livelihood, and lives. Recognizing that the political situation was favorable to their interests, white Americans sought successfully to oust Republicans from state legislatures and to secure the removal of the remaining federal troops in southern states.

The presidential election of 1876 provided exactly the opportunity southerners sought. All but three southern states had already returned to Democratic Party ranks: Republican majorities remaining only in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina. In the election, neither Republican candidate Rutherford B. Hayes of Ohio, nor the Democratic candidate Samuel Tilden secured a majority of the electoral votes. In the three Republican-controlled southern states, both parties claimed victory. A federal commission with a Republican majority was set up by Congress to determine the winning party. In 1877, it awarded all twenty disputed votes to Hayes. The Democrats accepted the commission's decision in return for Republican agreement to remove all federal troops from the South. This Compromise of 1877 brought the twelve years of Reconstruction to an end. A generation of white southerners, the losers in a war, had successfully restored the status quo ante through political action and private terror.

Not surprisingly, the success of the Democratic Party increased the terror and intimidation. Between 1886 and 1916, 2,605 Blacks were lynched in the southern states—an average of one person every four days

over a period of three decades.[7] Systematic disenfranchisement resulted in a precipitous decline in black elected officials in Congress—from sixteen in the seven-year period ending in 1877 to seven in the thirty-three-year period between 1877 and 1910. After 1877, southern states and municipalities accelerated enactment of legislation to separate all aspects of civic life by race. Historian C. Vann Woodward provides an excellent sense of the spirit of the times in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow.* "Up to the year 1898," he wrote,

> South Carolina had resisted the Jim Crow car movement which had rapidly swept the western states of the South completely by this time. In that year . . . the Charleston News and Courier, the oldest newspaper in the South and a consistent spokesman for conservatism, fired a final broadside against extremists on behalf of the conservative creed of race policy. "As we have got on fairly well for a third of a century . . . without such a policy," wrote the editor, "we can probably get on as well hereafter without it. . . . If we must have Jim Crow cars on the railroads, there should be Jim Crow cars on the street railways. Also on all passenger boats. . . . If there are to be Jim Crow cars, moreover, there should be Jim Crow waiting saloons at all stations, and Jim Crow eating houses. . . . There should be Jim Crow sections of the jury box, and a separate Jim Crow dock and witness stand in every court—and a Jim Crow Bible for colored witnesses to kiss. It would be advisable also to have a Jim Crow section in county auditors' and treasurers' offices for the accommodation of colored tax payers. . . . There should be a Jim Crow department for making returns and paying for the privileges and blessings of citizenship. . . ." In resorting to the tactics of reductio ad absurdum the editor doubtless believed that he had dealt the Jim Crow principle a telling blow with his heavy irony. . . . But . . . apart from . . . the Jim Crow witness stand, all the improbable applications of the principle suggested by the editor in derision had been put into practice—down to and including the Jim Crow Bible.[8]

Emboldened by the unwillingness of the federal government to support the freedmen and by the absence of large-scale objections from northerners, southern lawmakers took other major steps toward their goal. They began to put in place the legal underpinnings for "white supremacy," relying on ostensibly nonracial categories, from which they nonetheless managed to exempt white Americans from legislation that might negatively affect them. A classic example was legislation regarding suffrage that passed in a number of southern states beginning in the late 1890s. These laws established poll taxes, property requirements, or literacy tests as the basis for the right to vote, which might have prevented the poor and illiterate—black and white—from voting. However, "grandfather clauses" exempted those whose fathers or grandfathers had been

eligible to vote before January 1, 1867. Naturally no black Americans in any southern state was able to meet that requirement. States then held that poor, illiterate, propertyless white Americans were not being exempted due to race but to a historical tradition of voting eligibility. Once the disenfranchisement of black Americans had been achieved, nothing but action by the U.S. Congress or the federal courts could have prevented the passage of any laws thought necessary to maintain racial segregation.

But northern interest in the plight of the freedmen waned at the very time that such steps to maintain segregation were being taken. For some Americans, the new survival-of-the-fittest theories of Social Darwinists served as justification enough for the developing racial caste system and for the growth of monopolistic business practices at home and policies of imperialist expansion in Latin America and Asia. By the end of the nineteenth century, few white voices rose in opposition to violations of the civil rights of black Americans. Tradition, local ordinances, and state laws had undone the political and social advances of the Reconstruction era.

Appeals to the courts brought no relief. In fact, a series of Supreme Court decisions between 1873 and 1896 undermined the actions taken by Congress between 1865 and 1875 to protect the rights of black citizens. Provisions of the Civil Rights Enforcement Act of 1870 were declared unconstitutional; state governments were generally supported when in conflict with the federal government over equal-protection-of-the-law issues; and discrimination against individuals in public places was sanctioned, even when committed by businesses that served the public at large. In two 1880 decisions, the Supreme Court provided what amounted to a "how-to-do-it" course in discriminating against black Americans without running afoul of the federal judiciary. In a West Virginia case, the Court declared that a state law excluding black Americans from serving on juries was a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. However in a Virginia case, heard in the same session, it held that systematic exclusion of black Americans from service on juries was not a violation, as long as it was not actually embedded in law.[9] In such cases, proof would then be required that black Americans had been excluded solely because of race and relief would have to be sought in those very same state courts that practiced the exclusion.

In 1890, Louisiana passed legislation requiring that railroads provide separate cars for Blacks and Whites and that passengers be required to use the coaches provided for their racial group. Black Americans, feeling that there was a chance to overturn the new law, made plans to test it. On June 7, 1892, Homer Plessy boarded an East Louisiana Railway train and took a seat in a car designated for Whites. Asked to move, he refused to do so.[10] The conductor sought police assistance. Plessy was arrested and

charges were brought against him in a local New Orleans court presided over by Judge John H. Ferguson. Plessy promptly challenged the 1890 law in federal court, charging that it violated his Thirteenth Amendment rights and the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection guarantee. R. L. Desdunes, the publisher of the *Daily Crusader,* a black-owned New Orleans newspaper, expressed support for Plessy, reflecting the sense of optimism many Louisiana Blacks felt about the outcome of the case:

> We venture nothing by saying that there are signs which indicate that the country is growing weary and disgusted over this race legislation, and our legislators would do well to place themselves in harmony with the new dispensation which means to establish in America National citizenship and a "peace of the United States."
>
> We think it can be logically shown that common carriers are compelled to accommodate travelers whatever may be their color, and that a law which is intended to deny travel under any circumstances is clearly unconstitutional and intolerable.[11]

It was not until 1896 that the Supreme Court heard the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson.* The decision, written by Justice Henry Billings Brown, made it obvious how misplaced the *Daily Crusader*'s optimism regarding the readiness of the federal government to protect the rights of black citizens had been. It upheld the state law requiring separation by race on railroads operating in Louisiana, provided equal facilities were offered for each racial group. Regarding the Fourteenth Amendment, Brown wrote:

> We cannot say that a law which authorizes or even requires the separation of the two races in public conveyances is unreasonable, or more obnoxious to the Fourteenth Amendment than the acts of Congress requiring separate schools for colored children in the District of Columbia, the constitutionality of which does not seem to have been questioned, or the corresponding acts of state legislatures.
>
> We consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it.[12]

A single dissenting (and prophetic) opinion in *Plessy v. Ferguson* came from Justice John Marshall Harlan, who had owned slaves in his native Kentucky but firmly supported the Union. He believed that the intent of the framers of the Constitution and common sense should be the basis of all legislation:

> Everyone knows that the statute in question had its origin in the purpose, not so much to exclude white persons from railroad cars occupied by Blacks, as to exclude colored people from coaches occupied by or assigned to white

persons. . . . The thing to accomplish was, under the guise of giving equal accommodation for Whites and Blacks, to compel the latter to keep to themselves while traveling in railroad passenger coaches. No one would be so wanting in candor as to assert the contrary. . . .

In my opinion, the judgment this day rendered will, in time, prove to be quite as pernicious as the decision made by this tribunal in the Dred Scott case. . . . It seems that we have yet, in some of the States, a dominant race—a superior class of citizens, which assumes to regulate the enjoyment of civil rights, common to all citizens, upon the basis of race.[13]

Although *Plessy v. Ferguson* dealt with public transportation, both proponents and opponents recognized its implications for education. So bleak did the post-decision climate seem that some black Americans saw in the "separate but equal" clause a dim ray of hope. *Plessy,* they believed, might at least put an end to efforts in several state legislatures to end all state appropriations for black education. Black public schools would then have the funds needed for their continued existence. But even this prospect—that some bit of moral good might flow from an immoral ruling—was not to materialize.

Plessy's implications for private higher education became clear as a result of a ruling in the 1908 case of *Berea College v. Commonwealth of Kentucky.* In 1904, the state of Kentucky had passed a law requiring segregation in all state schools, both public and private. Berea, a small private institution in eastern Kentucky that had admitted both Blacks and Whites since its founding in 1859, challenged the constitutionality of a law (obviously aimed solely at the school, as there were no other unsegregated educational institutions in the state). For the hearing before the state Supreme Court, Kentucky provided an openly racist brief, suggesting that "if the progress, advancement and civilization of the twentieth century is to go forward, then it must be left not only to the unadulterated blood of the Anglo-Saxon-Caucasian race, but to the highest types and geniuses of that race." Seven of the sitting Justices in the *Berea* case had participated in *Plessy,* six of them concurring with Justice Brown's decision.[14] Thus the decision not to overturn the Kentucky Supreme Court's ruling was not surprising; nevertheless, it broke new ground by permitting states to outlaw voluntary as well as obligatory contact between the races. Yet another step was taken in the creation of a full-fledged racial caste system.

Such Court decisions as *Berea v. Kentucky* provided the go-ahead for state and municipal lawmakers to separate the races without considering *Plessy*'s call for equal facilities. In the private sector, businesses discriminated against black Americans in employment, charged higher premiums for insurance, and often refused to provide mortgages on black-owned property. Most unions refused to admit black American members.

During President Woodrow Wilson's administration, segregation in the federal workplace became the rule in Washington. The president even turned down a modest proposal by northern liberals to establish a federal commission to study the race problem, apparently assuming that the matter did not warrant study.

In the early years of the twentieth century, "separate" had increasingly come to mean "unequal," especially in the realm of public education. Few would deny that the allocation of educational resources is a sensitive measure of the priorities of those in control of the purse strings. The distribution of financial resources under the dual system of schools required in all the southern states provides insight into the relative value state governments and the educational bureaucracy placed on educating black and white Americans.

As a region, the South spent less on public education than did other areas of the country. State funds were distributed to counties based on the total number of students they were educating. But the counties were then free to distribute those funds to schools or school districts as they saw fit. Table 2.1 shows the growing inequality in per-student expenditures for black and white teachers' salaries (the major annual expense for

TABLE 2.1
Ratio between Per Capita Expenditures for Teachers' Salaries by Race
(in Dollars)

Year	Black Student	North Carolina White Student	Alabama White Student	Lowndes County, Alabama White Student
1875–76	1.00	1.03	0.89	na
1880–81	1.00	0.94	1.04	na
1885–86	1.00	1.08	1.17	na
1890–91	1.00	1.14	1.23	na
1895–96	1.00	1.05	na	na
1900–01	1.00	1.38	na	na
1905–06	1.00	1.91	na	na
1910–11	1.00	2.44	5.83	29.39
1915–16	1.00	2.89	5.69	30.08
1920–21	1.00	2.70	5.35	33.22
1925–26	1.00	2.67	4.85	29.50
1930–31	1.00	2.30	4.09	25.26

Source: Horace Mann Bond, *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1934), pp. 153–59.

Notes: na indicates that data are not available.

TABLE 2.2
Southeast Region Teachers' Salaries, 1916 (in Dollars)

County Group: Percentage of Blacks in Population	Aggregate White Teachers' Salaries	Aggregate Black Teachers' Salaries	Per Capita White	Per Capita Black
< 10	7,755,817	315,579	7.96	7.23
10–25	9,633,674	1,196,788	9.55	5.55
25–50	12,573,666	2,265,945	11.11	3.19
50–75	4,574,366	1,167,796	12.53	1.77
75	888,749	359,800	22.22	1.78

Source: Thomas Jesse Jones, *Negro Education: A Study of the Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of Education, 1917).

schools) in selected years from 1875 to 1930. It tallies the amounts spent on white students for every dollar spent on black students in North Carolina, Alabama, and Lowndes County, Alabama. Table 2.2 provides data on the aggregate salaries of white and black teachers based on the percentage of Blacks in the population of the county.

Three trends are clearly reflected in the tables. First, salaries for teachers of white students rose precipitously compared with those for teachers of black students. Second, the higher the percentage of black Americans in a county, the greater the difference in per capita spending. And third, per capita spending for teachers' salaries directly reflects patterns of increasing disenfranchisement, segregation, and discrimination in political and social life between the end of Reconstruction and World War I.

CONDITION OF THE FREEDMEN

In 1790, when the first national census was taken, there were more than 758,000 Americans of African descent in the United States, many of them foreign born. In the 1860 census, the black population was found to have increased by a factor of 5.9 to 4,442,000—few of them foreign born—while the white population had increased by a factor of 8.4. The number of black Americans who became citizens as a result of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments—92 percent of whom had spent their entire lives as slaves—had declined as a percentage of the total population by 5 percent.

The South would remain the home of over 90 percent of the black population until the 1880s and over 50 percent would still be living in

that region midway through the twentieth century. One-third of the population of the South would be black American throughout the nineteenth century. Census data show that more than three-quarters of black Americans—currently the country's most urban ethnic group—lived in rural areas in 1900, already a decline from Reconstruction (see Table 2.3). Literacy—estimated at 5 percent—existed almost solely among free Blacks in the northern states, and occasional individuals who either were taught by Whites or attended a rare pre-war clandestine school operated in the South by a black teacher. By the late 1860s, large numbers of Blacks were economically destitute and often worse off physically than before the war. The vast majority had worked on white-owned plantations that produced staple agricultural crops of cotton, tobacco, or rice. As slaves, they had not profited from their labor. They were unable to accumulate private property or to benefit from the wealth they had helped produce.

Freed in 1865, they were without resources to purchase land on which to use their agricultural skills for their own benefit. There was much talk about grants to freedmen of "forty acres and a mule" with which they could establish economic self-sufficiency. The more militant abolitionists and supporters of civil rights backed the idea of the federal government distributing among former slaves land that had been abandoned by or confiscated from the military and civilian leaders of the Confederacy. But no such general policy was ever put into effect, even though the federal government owned considerable land in the South. In the few instances where the confiscated lands of Confederate military or political officials had been distributed to black Americans, the lands were eventually returned to their pre-1865 owners.

The overwhelming majority of nineteenth-century black Americans had neither personal experience living as free persons nor living relatives who had such experience. They had been taught "on the job" to perform the limited tasks assigned them by those who held them in bondage. Lack of experience in managing their own affairs left them vulnerable when dealing with aggressive or unscrupulous Whites, large numbers of whom were hostile toward any organized activity on the part of Blacks, including school attendance. This hostility extended to any missionaries or teachers who worked with Blacks. Those Blacks who endured the condescension of well-meaning Whites were hardly better off than those who faced outright hostility.

The limited demographic information available about freedmen after the Civil War provides crucial insight into the effects of slavery on the personalities and attitudes of those held in bondage, but it cannot fully explain the overwhelming interest shown in education among large numbers of black people of all ages. Contemporary sources often cannot help explain this interest because those in closest contact with Blacks—other

TABLE 2.3

Blacks in U.S. Population 1800–1950

Census Year	Number of Blacks (000)	Percentage of Total U.S. Population	Percentage of Blacks Living in South	Percentage of School-Age Blacks Enrolled	Percentage of Black Rural Population	Percentage of U.S. Rural Population	Percentage of Blacks in Southern Population
1800	1,002	19	91.6	na	na	na	35.0
1820	1,772	18	92.7	na	na	na	37.2
1840	2,874	17	91.9	na	na	na	38.0
1860	4,442	14	92.2	1.9	na	na	36.8
1880	6,581	13	90.4	33.8	na	na	36.0
1900	8,834	12	89.6	31.1	77.4	60.3	32.3
1920	10,438	11	85.3	53.5	66.1	48.7	27.1
1940	12,866	10	76.9	68.4	52.1	43.3	23.8
1950	15,042	10	67.9	74.8	38.3	na	21.8

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1960), pp. 9–11; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Negro Population in the United States 1790–1915* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1968), pp. 44–47; Thomas Snyder, *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1993), pp. 11–12.

Note: na indicates that data are not available.

Blacks, former slave owners, and their agents—either had limited skills in maintaining records or had strong cultural biases about Blacks that hardly made for accurate reportage. Those who opposed education for Blacks—with its promise of freedom and equality—reflected with astonishing unanimity the view that freedmen were dangerous to society unless controlled as free citizens in much the same fashion as when they had been slaves. The general view dominating the southern press was that Blacks not only should remain in a slave-like state but were congenitally incapable of handling a better status. George Fitzhugh, a Virginia lawyer who regularly wrote articles for the *De Bow's Review,* proved quite typical when in 1866 he assured his readers that "immemorial usage, law, custom and divine injunction, nay human nature itself, have subordinated inferior races to superior races. Never did the black man come in contact with the white man, that he did not become his subordinate, if not his slave."[15] This unflattering view would be widely echoed over the following century in the press and reflected in state and federal policies nationwide. The scholarly community, North as well as South, proved no exception. Typical among pre–World War II American historians was the following passage on black Americans in the widely used 1937 to 1950 editions of Samuel Eliot Morison's and Henry Steele Commager's text, *The Growth of the American Republic.* Discussing the period from 1820 to 1850 they wrote:

> As for Sambo, whose wrongs moved the abolitionists to wrath and tears, there is some reason to believe that he suffered less than any other class in the South from its "peculiar institution." The majority of slaves were adequately fed, well cared for, and apparently happy. . . . Although brought to America by force, the incurably optimistic negro soon became attached to the country, and devoted to his "white folks."[16]

There was less unanimity among those who supported serious efforts to provide educational opportunities for black Americans. Some supporters viewed education as inextricably connected to freedom and were simply committed to the application of the principles of the Declaration of Independence to all U.S. citizens. Others pushed education and rights for black Americans as a useful strategy to help maintain political control in the South. Still others believed that freed black Americans should be educated, but only in limited ways, to prepare them for the kind of menial jobs they were believed capable of performing and for an acceptance of their subordinate place in society.

Recognizing the cultural biases in contemporary reports on freedmen in the post war years improves our ability to make use of them, but a great deal more remains to be done. Important assistance in understanding the states of mind of those just released from the slave system has come

from sophisticated sociological and psychological probes by social scientists into how the populations of total institutions behave, feel about themselves, and respond to the expectations those in control have of them.[17] In *Total Institutions,* Samuel E. Wallace provides a reasonable definition of such a place:

> All institutions in society—the church, family, courts of law or care-giving centers—have some power over the individual. . . . When any type of social institution—religious, educational, legal or medical—begins to exercise total control over its population, that institution begins to display certain characteristics: communication between insiders and outsiders is rigidly controlled or prohibited altogether; those inside the institution are frequently referred to as inmates—subjects whose every movement is controlled by the institution's staff; an entirely separate social world comes into existence within the institution, which defines the inmate's social status, his relationship to all others, his very identity as a person.
>
> In part total institutions are created because we feel some individuals in our society need to be given, forcibly if necessary, a new identity.[18]

American slavery was obviously such an institution. Information gained from studies of twentieth-century total institutions provides a background for probing the actions of slaves in the previous century. A review of descriptions of slave behavior, examined with the insights provided by studies of inmates in twentieth-century prisons, concentration camps, asylums, and military organizations, supports some assumptions about the feelings and attitudes of slaves that were not part of the thinking of either a Fitzhugh or such historians as Morison and Commager.

For a host of reasons the slave system, like other total institutions, was never fully successful in molding the personalities of its "inmates" to the degree desired by those in authority. This could have been due to the inefficiencies found in all human organizations or to the tendency of those having absolute authority to believe that the doctrines they formulate (in this case, of white supremacy) actually do define reality. Deferential behavior is often mistaken for an internalization of assigned institutional roles. The existence of subversive subculture structures within total institutions that support values and expectations different from those of the authorities, although feared, are often not recognized. Rather than one personality type of stereotypical, submissive "Sambo," slavery unsurprisingly produced a rich variety of personality types. Only with this in mind can the remarkably enterprising spirit of many freedmen be explained. In truth the range of attitudes of the freedmen ran the gamut from the view that the end of slavery was a license to avoid work to that of parents who surprised contemporary white observers by establishing schools at almost untold sacrifices to themselves so that their children

might attend. And thousands of all ages, as soon as they were free, sought education with considerable passion.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INSTABILITY IN THE SOUTH

Many historians, from John Elliott Cairnes writing in 1862 to Allan Nevins in 1947 and James McPherson in 1988 consider slavery to be the underlying cause of the Civil War.[19] The war's immediate cause was the success of the Republicans—the party opposed to the expansion of slavery into new territories—in the presidential election of 1860. Slavery had dominated southern life for decades, formed much of the wealth of its ruling class, and provided the labor for cotton, one of the country's major exports. The institution tended to corrupt both slaves and slave owners. It threatened the economic position of poor Whites in the South and the possibility of its spread threatened the economic position of poor Whites in the North. Only at the radical fringe—among relatively small numbers of Abolitionists—was there serious concern for the rights of those held as slaves.[20] Even President Abraham Lincoln was initially willing to support a constitutional amendment permitting the continuation of slavery in the states where it already existed. It is probable that southerners understood better than northerners that the emancipation of slaves was primarily an action taken for military reasons and that the Union lacked the resolve to enforce the provisions of the constitutional amendments conferring citizenship on former slaves and guaranteeing equal protection under the law.

In 1865, the South's economy was as unstable as its politics. More than 358,000 southerners (2 percent of the population and 32 percent of the armed forces) had been killed or wounded during the Civil War.[21] The region's overall financial loss from the war years has been estimated at more than two billion dollars.[22] In addition, the Fourteenth Amendment invalidated the Confederate debt so that individuals could not be paid for services rendered or loans made to them. In any case, Confederate money was worthless. Many homes and other structures were destroyed. The railroads were in ruins. Almost the entire black population was poverty stricken. Prior to 1865, much of the region's wealth had been in land and slaves. The Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment freed the slaves without compensation to their owners.

In 1861, over five million bales of cotton—the South's major crop—was produced and sold at thirteen cents a pound. In 1866, the production of fewer than two million bales had briefly pushed the price up to forty-three cents, but as production increased the price steadily declined, reaching thirteen cents again in 1876. But the situation of a large land-

owner planting cotton was not the same in 1876 as fifteen years earlier. Labor was now provided by sharecroppers or farm laborers who either received a share of the cotton or an agreed-upon amount for their labor. Even given the minimal sums paid out, the cost of producing cotton had risen without the use of slave labor, and cotton prices would only continue to decline, reaching under nine cents per pound in 1901.[23]

The appearence of political stability in the South by the end of the nineteenth century was achieved at great cost to the region as a whole and particularly to black Americans. In denying them their new constitutional rights, the country engaged in a profound waste of human talent and created a host of problems that sapped the strength of the southern region for decades and laid the foundation for further destabilization. Disenfranchisement decreased the percentage of black Americans registered to vote from 66.9 percent of those of voting age in 1867 to 5.7 percent in 1892. The conformity that came to be required on all matters related to race placed severe restrictions on the free expression of opinion in politics, education, and any other areas of life that affected both Blacks and Whites. For all practical purposes, there was no two-party system in the "solid [Democratic] South."

As historians have noted then and since, Whites in their organized and systematic oppression of Blacks brought out the worst in themselves. The appearance of stability was not the same as racial peace. There were, for instance, a staggering 491 lynchings of southern Blacks between 1896 and 1900 alone. The South (and other regions of the country) experienced major race riots: Statesboro, Georgia, and Springfield, Ohio, in 1904; Atlanta, Georgia, and Brownsville, Texas, in 1906. Each riot followed a similar pattern. Whites, angered by reports or rumors of criminal activity by Blacks, lynched the real or alleged perpetrators, also beat and killed other Blacks in the area and destroyed property owned by Blacks. This pattern repeated itself in another upsurge of anti-black violence following World War I apparently intended to make clear that the Allied victory in the war "to make the world safe for democracy" did not include the world in which they lived in the United States. Race riots in Longview, Texas; Chicago; Knoxville, Tennessee; Omaha, Nebraska; and Elaine, Arkansas, in 1919; in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921; and in Detroit, Michigan, in 1925 rocked the country. Lynchings, although not as numerous as in the late 1890s, increased in number in the 1910s and Congress failed on several occasions to pass legislation making lynching a federal crime.

Several new organizations opposed to racial segregation and discrimination were established. The Niagara Movement, predecessor to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), was organized in 1905. At its first annual meeting, it adopted a resolution demanding full citizenship rights for black Americans. The introduction

to the resolution, written by W.E.B. Du Bois, reflected a new aggressiveness that would only build over the next several decades:

> In the past year the work of the Negro hater has flourished in the land. Step by step the defenders of rights of American citizens have retreated. The work of stealing the black man's ballot has progressed and the fifty and more representatives of stolen votes still sit in the nation's capital. . . . Never before in the modern age has a great and civilized folk threatened to adopt so cowardly a creed in treatment of its fellow-citizens, born and bred on its soil. Stripped of verbose subterfuge and in its naked nastiness, the new American creed says: fear to let black men even try to rise lest they become the equals of Whites. . . . The blasphemy of such a course is only matched by its cowardice.

The NAACP's initial program included a crusade against lynching, as well as efforts to secure greater police protection for southern Blacks and to gain improved educational and job opportunities for Blacks nationwide. In establishing branches in northern and southern cities and in directly challenging segregationists, it would be recognized as the leading civil rights organization. It would also experience far greater opposition than did the National Urban League, established in 1911, whose activities in large cities focused mainly on improving job opportunities for Blacks. Urban League organizers, like those of the NAACP, included both Blacks and Whites.

In 1911, Marcus Garvey also founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in Jamaica. In 1917, he moved it to New York City, to which numbers of southern Blacks had been drawn by job opportunities during World War I. The UNIA, drawing its following mainly from southern and Caribbean migrants to urban areas, developed into the first black mass movement in the United States. Like the leadership of the NAACP and the National Urban League, Garvey urged Blacks to organize their own businesses but also to unite as a "nation," and to consider establishing independent states in Africa.

Although the effectiveness of the UNIA declined in the mid-1920s after Garvey was charged with using the mail to defraud and sentenced to five years in prison, the NAACP and the National Urban League increased their activities in this period. Unsurprisingly, both organizations struggled to keep afloat through the years of the Great Depression. Confronted by a 1913 "cotton depression" and a 1915 cotton crop devastated by boll weevils, the South, which did not benefit from the boom years of the 1920s, was already depressed when the Great Crash occurred in 1929.

The political and financial situation in the southern states and the poverty and deep-seated discrimination that were an ongoing part of life for most black southerners hardly seemed propitious conditions in which

to establish—much less nurture—a new system of education. From this perspective, a decline from a 79 percent illiteracy rate among Blacks in 1870 to 11 percent in 1940 is striking in itself, but the development of approximately one hundred black institutions concerned with higher education, many of them in the private sector, is astonishing.[24]

The Beginnings of Black Higher Education

FOR ALL PRACTICAL purposes, black higher education began in institutions established in the South just after the Civil War. Prior to that, however, a few Blacks had attended traditionally white colleges and a small number of institutions had been established before the war to provide higher education for Blacks.

Higher education in British North America had itself begun in 1636, when the Massachusetts General Court appropriated the monies for the establishment of Harvard College, whose aim it was "to advance learning, and perpetuate it to posterity."[1] Other institutions of higher learning—Yale, William and Mary, Brown, Dartmouth, Columbia, Princeton, Rutgers, and the University of Pennsylvania, each affiliated with one of the several Protestant denominations in the New World—were established before the American Revolution. Several state institutions were founded soon after the Revolution but only one, the University of North Carolina, awarded baccalaureate degrees in the eighteenth century.

The first black students entered American colleges and universities almost two centuries after the founding of Harvard. Although records tell us that a few black Americans like Francis Cardoza (who served as South Carolina's secretary of state and Mississippi's state superintendent of education during the Reconstruction era) attended university in Europe, John Chavis was the first to be involved in American higher education. He studied privately under President John Witherspoon of the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University) in the late eighteenth century. Although never formally enrolled, Chavis was apparently successful in his academic work, for he later operated a school in Virginia that prepared students for college.

The first degrees earned by black Americans were awarded to Edward A. Jones and John Russworm in 1826. Jones, who graduated from Amherst College in Massachusetts, became an Episcopal priest in Sierra Leone, where he helped to found the first college in the region. Russworm graduated from Bowdoin College in Maine, went to Liberia—a settlement established by former American slaves—to be Superintendent of Education and where he served as the governor from 1836 to 1851.

From the graduation of Jones and Russworm to the end of the Civil War—by which time the black American population of the United States

had reached 4.4 million—twenty-eight Blacks (including Jones and Russworm) received baccalaureate degrees. Oberlin College in Ohio, founded in 1833, enrolled women and Blacks in the late 1830s and became outspoken in its admissions policies. Among its distinguished alumni was U.S. Senator Blanche K. Bruce (1875–81), one of a small number of black Americans elected to that body. It is reasonable to assume that other northern Blacks who sought admission to various northern colleges were unsuccessful. In any case, the twenty-eight graduates are all we can account for before 1865.

The first of the small number of pre-war institutions established for the purpose of providing higher education for black Americans was founded around the same time and for the same reason as colleges for white women: both groups were excluded from or had limited access to existing institutions of higher education.[2] The first of the schools established for Blacks was the Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia, founded in 1837, the same year as the Mount Holyoke Female Seminary was founded in Massachusetts for white women. Four other institutions for Blacks were established before the Civil War: Avery College in Allegheny, Pennsylvania (founded in 1849); the Ashmun Institute in Chester County, Pennsylvania (1854); Wilberforce University in Ohio (1855); and an academy for black girls in Washington, D.C. (1851), which became Miner Teacher's College in 1860. Following a pattern common to many other institutions of higher learning at the time, these schools offered preparatory programs, and sometimes primary-school work, for students aspiring to attend college. With the exception of Miner Teacher's College, these institutions were located in areas where considerable anti-slavery feeling existed. Quakers, generally opposed to slavery, were a strong influence in Pennsylvania; northern Ohio also showed strong abolitionist sentiments.

There is no record of any of the black institutions awarding baccalaureate degrees before the end of the Civil War. Ashmun Institute awarded its first bachelors degree in 1865 (and renamed itself Lincoln University the following year); as evidently did Wilberforce University. The absence of information on degrees granted by Avery College and an 1870 description of Avery in a Freedmen's Bureau Report as "excelled by no high school in the country" makes it reasonable to assume that it too awarded no degrees before 1865. The Institute for Colored Youth granted its first degree in 1932, nineteen years after moving to Cheyney, Pennsylvania, and changing its name to Cheyney Training School for Teachers. The first degree from Miner Teacher's College was not issued until 1933.[3]

Although the first colleges for women and for Blacks were established in the same period, there were great differences in the educational backgrounds of the two groups that affected the nature of the institutions

created to serve them. According to the 1860 census, for each one hundred of their group between ages five and nineteen, there were fifty-seven white females and fewer than two Blacks (male and female) enrolled in school.[4] According to the 1890 census, for each one hundred of their group, fifty-seven black males and sixty-five black females over thirteen years old were illiterate. For white females, the comparable number was nine.[5] The absence of statewide systems of public elementary and secondary education in the South and the high level of hostility toward higher education of any sort for black Americans only exacerbated the situation. Thus many white women were far ahead of all but a few Blacks in their level of education before institutions of higher learning were in place for them, and hostility to educating them was far lower. At a time when southern Blacks constituted 94 percent of the black American population, and when 90 percent of them could not read or write, the effort to establish simultaneously elementary schools, secondary schools, and colleges where none had previously existed created a unique situation with a unique set of problems.

FREEDMEN'S SCHOOLS

Progress in elementary and secondary education, without which development of higher education was difficult, proved painfully slow in the South during the post–Civil-War years. The very idea of free public schools for any racial group was opposed by most large landowners in the region. Although white businessmen and white small farmers, as well as the vast majority of Blacks, all supported their establishment, the majority of white southerners of all classes proved unsympathetic or hostile to education of any sort for the former slaves. This opposition expressed itself in ways ranging from legislative inaction on matters involving schools for Blacks to violent attacks on white teachers of black students, the destruction of school buildings, and the harassment of parents whose children attended school. The widespread opposition suggests why the private and not the public sector took the lead in providing black education.

Northern efforts to provide such education in the slave states began as Union forces took control of various parts of the Confederacy. The American Missionary Association and regional and state Freedmen's Aid societies undertook work of this nature in parts of the South occupied by Union troops as early as 1861. General William Tecumseh Sherman is often credited (and perhaps given more credit than he deserves) with planting the idea that set in motion an organized effort to establish schools for Blacks in the South. He publicly called on philanthropic people to assist in addressing the needs of the masses of black Americans flocking to the Union army as it moved from place to place. The numbers

of these refugees—as the freedmen who followed the Union troops were appropriately called—increased to such a degree that they began to interfere with the conduct of the war. "To relieve the government of the burden that may hereafter become insupportable," wrote Sherman, "and to enable the Blacks to support and govern themselves in the abandonment of their disloyal guardians, a suitable system of cultivation and instruction must be combined with one providing for physical wants."[6] The idea of establishing schools had also received a boost from a June 1863 report by the Freedmen Bureau's Inquiry Commission to the Secretary of War that described the difficult conditions under which freedmen lived and the corruption of southern civil officials in their dealings with them. Thanks in part to the report, volunteers in northern cities began providing food and clothing for the refugees in the South, and in 1865, Congress, after two years of heated debate, established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Land, commonly referred to as the Freedmen's Bureau.

The legislation that created the Freedmen's Bureau as a branch of the War Department made no specific mention of education. The terms of the legislation gave the Secretary of War the power to "direct such issues of provisions, clothing, and fuel as he may deem needful for the immediate and temporary shelter and supply of destitute and suffering refugees and their wives and children, under such rules and regulations as he may direct."[7] It also gave the Bureau responsibility for managing southern land that had been abandoned or confiscated as a result of the war.

In March 1865, President Andrew Johnson appointed General Oliver Otis Howard as the Bureau's first commissioner. His annual salary was set at $3,000 and those of assistant commissioners at $2,500, but no appropriation was made for the operation of the Bureau. As a result, all positions except those of the assistant commissioners were filled by personnel borrowed from the army. Provisions for destitute freedmen often came from military supplies. Hampered from the beginning by these financial arrangements, the Bureau suffered a major setback when President Johnson returned all confiscated lands to their pre–Civil-War owners. Some of these properties had been sold or rented to freedmen and the funds generated used to operate the Bureau. This loss of financing essentially destroyed the Bureau's efforts to assist freedmen in establishing a self-sufficient economic base in agriculture, which served to exacerbate the difficulties to follow.

For the next six years, until it ceased to exist in 1872, the Bureau was the sole federal agency to embrace the cause of freedmen's rights. Some twentieth-century historians have viewed the Freedmen's Bureau as having had little impact because of the weakness of its organizational structure, its lack of funds, and white southern opposition. In the economic and political spheres, there is much to support this view. The same cannot

be said about its influence on education. It was here that the Bureau made its most significant contribution. The January 1970 reports of John W. Alvord, superintendent of schools for the Bureau, provide ample evidence of the Bureau's involvement with volunteer groups to set up or assist in the establishment of 4,207 schools, employing 8,967 teachers, and serving 210,618 pupils "of all kinds [graded schools, high and normal schools, night schools, and Sabbath schools]."[8] As he wrote at the time:

> When our armies entered the South and the facts there were brought to light, two important things appeared: first, a surprising thirst for knowledge among the negroes; second, teachers in large numbers volunteering to instruct them. Hence, as soon as access could be obtained, schools among the colored people were successfully established. Many, indeed scoffed; more doubted; but it is a remarkable fact that the earliest efforts to impart knowledge to these darkened minds found them fully prepared for its reception. . . .
>
> The earliest school in the South for freedmen, or "contrabands," as they were then called, was commenced by the . . . [American Missionary Association] at Fortress Monroe September 17, 1861. During the day it was for children, and at night for adults. . . .
>
> The first determination of the Commission was not to take this great charity from the hands of its voluntary patrons. The people of the North had been pouring our supplies for suffering soldiers, and this general flow of philanthropy was not to subside. It turned naturally to the freedmen. To lift them up by education, was legitimately the work of the people. . . .
>
> The Commissioner, therefore said, . . . "The educational and moral condition of the people will not be forgotten. The utmost facility will be offered to benevolent and religious organizations and State authorities in this maintenance of good schools for refugees and freedmen until a system of free schools can be supported by the reorganized local governments."[9]

Had the Freedmen's Bureau not been established it is unlikely that any federal agency would have worked on behalf of the former slaves, and volunteer educational activity by religious and secular antislavery activists would not have been as effective. It is also highly unlikely that at any time soon after the war, state governments, controlled by white southerners, would have recognized the region's interest in black education and so appropriated sufficient tax funds to educate the former slaves.

DENOMINATIONAL GROUPS AND FREEDMEN'S AID SOCIETIES

Actively working with the Bureau in support of education were private northern freedmen's aid societies and religious missionary groups, including the American Baptist Home Mission Society, the American Missionary Association of the Congregational Church, the Freedmen's Aid

Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and various groups of Quakers and Lutherans, as well as the American Church Institute and Episcopal Board. The African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, and several black Baptist groups also cooperated with the Bureau. Although these groups worked closely with the Freedmen's Bureau, they only occasionally collaborated with each other. As a result, some cities or towns had several Protestant-supported schools of different denominations while hundreds of other towns and rural areas had none. The joint support of three Freedmen's schools in Kentucky by the American Missionary Association and the Western Freedmen's Union Commission proved a rare exception.

The American Missionary Association in particular brought impressive credentials to its efforts to provide education for freedmen. Its existence was due in part to an 1839 incident involving the Spanish ship *Amistad,* which sailed for North America with a cargo of African slaves in violation of an international agreement regarding foreign slave trading, of which both the United States and Spain were signatories. Near Cuba the Africans mutinied, killed the captain and most of the crew, and attempted to force one of the crewmembers to steer the ship back to Africa. Due to his trickery, the ship eventually made landfall in the area of Montauk, Long Island, in New York State, and the mutineers were captured in Long Island Sound and incarcerated in New Haven, Connecticut. Antislavery advocates organized a legal defense for the captives. In 1841, the case reached the U.S. Supreme Court, where former President John Quincy Adams argued on behalf of the Africans. In an opinion written by Justice Joseph Story, with only one justice dissenting, the Court held that the Africans were not slaves but persons kidnapped in violation of international law and so were free to return to Africa. The Africans' supporters, including many Congregationalists who wanted their denomination to take a stronger anti-slavery position, maintained the organization that had been developed to defend the mutineers and, in 1849, incorporated it as the American Missionary Association. This organization became one of the most productive religious groups working to establish black schools and colleges. As late as 1915, it supported thirty institutions serving seven thousand students in eleven southern states.

Historians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries devoted considerable attention to the motives and actions of northern Whites who took part in the Reconstruction process in the South, tending to lump together northern missionaries, teachers, merchants, and politicians as "carpetbaggers." Among many other criticisms, these historians accused the so-called carpetbaggers of pressing Blacks to engage in educational activities beyond their abilities and so worsening relations be-

tween the races.[10] More recently, historians take a very different view of the long-term consequences of such educational activity among freedmen. Despite woefully inadequate facilities, these efforts to provide education had clearly positive results for individual students, their descendants, freedmen as a group, the South, and the country as a whole.

There is no reason to doubt that southern Whites felt oppressed or that some of the so-called carpetbaggers were motivated by greed, political ambition, and anti-southern sentiments. It would be surprising if victors did not sometimes belittle the vanquished. But it is difficult to identify another civil war in which the defeated side suffered less in the aftermath of defeat. Tennessee was readmitted to the Union one year after the war ended; six other states followed two years later. By 1870, all the former Confederate states were back in the Union. No fines, long prison terms, or death sentences were imposed on the Confederacy's political and military leaders and by 1872, amnesty had been granted to all former Confederates. No indemnities were levied on the states that had seceded. Most of the violence that occurred during the postwar period was initiated by the Ku Klux Klan and similar anti-black organizations. Land that had been confiscated and distributed to former slaves during and immediately after the war was returned to its pre–Civil-War owners.

The Union's approach to Reconstruction of clemency and respect for the inalienable rights of peoples in the defeated area may be the policy of preference in any war, especially a civil war in a democracy. The Union was restored and steps were taken toward the reconciliation of North and South, but this progress was carried out at the expense of the constitutionally guaranteed rights of black Americans who, through no fault of their own, had been unable to secure an education or accumulate the material resources vital to their success as citizens.

In this context, it is amazing how consistently contemporary reports reflected a high interest in education among former slaves. A Union officer reported, "The most hopeful sign in the Negro was his anxiety to have his children educated. The two or three hundred boys and girls I used to see around the Bureau schoolhouse—attired with a decency which had strained to the utmost the slender parental purse, ill spared from hard labor necessary to support their families, gleeful and noisy over their luncheons of cold roasted sweet potato—were proofs that the race has a chance in the future. Many a sorely pinched woman, a widow or deserted by her husband, would not let her boy go out to service, 'because,' they said, 'I wanted him to have some schooling'."[11]

School Superintendent Alvord of the Freedmen's Bureau described a conversation overheard in a railroad car in 1865: "One man [most probably white] asked another how things were working in his neighborhood.

'Everything is wrong,' said the second; 'everything is going crazy. The negroes, old and young, little and big, have all gone mad about schools. That fool T. (the county superintendent [of education]) has ruined everything'."[12] Hortense Powdermaker, an anthropologist interested in issues of race, makes the same point when she describes the trust Blacks placed in education as "much like the faith of those Americans who set up the public school system. They looked to education as the great indispensable foundation of democracy."[13]

A few southern Blacks, putting themselves at considerable risk in a hostile society, had even operated illegal schools in Georgia, Louisiana, Tennessee, Virginia, and other states before and during the war. In areas where Union troops gained control, freedmen's education societies sprang up immediately and groups of freedmen petitioned state and local governments to establish schools for their children. Black Americans elected to conventions to write new state constitutions and black members of state legislatures gave high priority to initiating and supporting legislation to establish statewide public school systems.

Education was hardly imposed upon freed black Americans by northern "do-gooders." The evidence suggests rather that freedmen generally viewed education as crucial to their freedom and progress, and vital to their sense of who they were. In making it illegal to teach slaves to read and write, southerners communicated a powerful sense of the value of both and so inadvertently fostered a deep-seated belief that education was related to freedom, higher social status, wealth, and power. This message was certain to stir interest among ambitious freedmen (and poor white Americans) seeking to share in those things society prized. Longtime citizens who could make use of previously developed specialized intellectual and technical skills, important familial connections and friendships, or accumulated wealth passed down from ancestors, were obviously at a clear advantage. To the four million slaves who acquired citizenship as a result of the Civil War, to whom none of these advantages were readily available, education appeared to be the most promising avenue to advancement.

The Freedmen's Bureau invested five million dollars of government funds in freedmen's education. It was a paltry sum given the scale of the need, but was nonetheless a valuable investment. To the Bureau funds were added the contributions of church groups, secular freedmen's associations, and individual donations that established many of the private schools and colleges for Blacks, including a number that exist today. Table 3.1 shows the growing number of black educational institutions established between 1866 and 1870.

Census data on black youth aged five to nineteen show an increase in school enrollment from 1.9 per 100 persons in 1860 to 9.6 in 1870.

TABLE 3.1

Number of Black Educational Institutions in the United States, 1866–1870

Year	Number of Schools	Number of Teachers	Number of Students
1866	740	1,314	90,589
1867	1,839	1,087	111,442
1888	1,831	2,295	104,327
1869	2,118	2,455	114,522
1870	2,677	3,300	149,581

Source: Thomas Jesse Jones, *Negro Education,* p. 289.

Note: Comparable data for the years 1861–1865 are not available.

Equivalent data for all white youths show a decline from 50.6 youths per 100 persons in 1860 to 48.4 in 1870.[14]

Valuable as the efforts of northern teachers and the contributions of the Freedmen's Bureau were, they had a temporary, emergency quality to them and could not be long sustained. By the end of the war, thoughtful observers recognized that neither the federal government nor northern church groups were likely to maintain the level of financial support needed for the long haul. If particularly higher education was to be available to black Americans on a permanent basis, observers assumed that pre-college preparation would have to be supported by public funds from state governments, a point made in the final report of the Freedman's Bureau superintendent of schools:

> This Bureau has only inaugurated a system of instruction, helping its first stages, and which should be continued and perfected. . . . It should not be arrested in mid career; should rather be aided from some source to make its final showing. . . . Nearly a million and a half of [freedmen's] children have never as yet been under any instruction. Educational associations, unaided by Government, will of necessity largely fall off. The states south, as a whole, awake but slowly to the elevation of their lower classes. No one of them is fully prepared with funds, buildings, teachers, and actual organizations to sustain these schools. . . . With sorrow we anticipate, if the reports of superintendents can be relied on, the closing of hundreds of our school buildings, sending thousands of children, who beg for continued instruction, to the streets, or what is far worse, to squalid, degraded homes. . . . The several States will ere long, we hope, come nobly forward in duty to their children.[15]

Private financial support for all black higher education was also viewed as unsustainable. State-supported colleges would also be needed.