itical participation. Revels explained to his constituency that accommodat- white Southerners "got colored mechanics in the United States Navy Yard the first time." With compromise and accommodation, Bruce negotiated ances that brought black people jobs in post offices, customs offices, and edmen's Bureau offices across the South. Black representatives in Washington) cut deals that brought black cadets to West Point and the Naval Academy. neuvering through Washington's corridors of power, black politicians under-)d that their constituents were vulnerable and their own positions fragile. ey sought issues on which they could negotiate with white allies without ling away too many black political gains. The balancing act demanded con- ıt attention and vigilance.

Some black congressmen refused to compromise or negotiate. "In my state, :e emancipation there have been over five hundred loyal men shot down by disloyal men there, and not one of those men who took part in committing se outrages has ever been brought to justice," said Congressman Jefferson g of Georgia. "Those disloyal people still hate this Government, [and] when ıl men dare to carry the 'stars and stripes' through our streets, they are ıed out of employment." But outspoken black congressmen like Long found it ł to push their agenda. Too few in number and too new to politics, they ggled to represent their constituents' concerns. Sometimes simply being :d was all they could hope for. For example, Long voted against the Amnesty knowing this would further isolate him in a Congress bent on reconciliation. .ard Cain, a representative from South Carolina, also voted no. "I want to see ange in this country," said Cain, a northern-born minister whose calling had :n him South to fight for black justice. "Instead of colored people being ays penniless, I want to see them coming in with their mule teams and ox ıs, with their corn and potatoes to exchange for silks and satins. I want to children coming to enjoy life as it ought to be enjoyed." Cain doubted that stating political rights to Confederates would help realize this vision. Several r black congressmen also voted no on amnesty. Even red-inked letters from Ku Klux Klan warning of "doom sealed in blood" could not deter these men speaking out—knowing their arguments fell on deaf ears.

Young black congressmen sought counsel from seasoned political activists Douglass. The esteemed black leader befriended them, often hosting them s home. Yet even Douglass misread the political realities of Reconstruction. ıe 1872 presidential race, he supported Republican President Ulysses S. ıt's bid for reelection. When Grant suggested annexing the Dominican ıblic as a haven for African Americans, Douglass believed in Grant's good- But others did not. Douglass's abolitionist friend Senator Charles Sumner, chaired the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, suspected that annexa- was a scheme to enrich white land speculators. Even when Grant refused clude black representatives at a White House dinner discussion on annex- ., Douglass continued to support him. With support from the black voters ılass helped deliver, Grant won reelection—but neither annexation of the inican Republic nor a federal appointment for Douglass materialized. Black le now had another reminder that their vote wielded little influence unless could enlist support from powerful white allies.

TABLE 11.2 The Black Men Who Went to Congress in 1870

Most African American congressmen were young, ambitious, and outspoken. All represented the South, though some were born in the North. Some brought prestigious educational credentials; others brought a wisdom born of life experience. Here is a look at the first seven black men who were elected to Congress. Most went on to fruitful careers following their terms in Congress.

NAME/ STATE/AGE IN 1870	BACK- GROUND	PRIOR EXPERIENCE	SERVICE IN CONGRESS	POST- CONGRESS EXPERIENCE
Blanche K. Bruce (1841–1898) Mississippi 29 years old	Born slave in Virginia to master and slave woman.	Studied at Oberlin College; Mississippi tax assessor, superintendent of education, alderman, sheriff.	Senate, 1875–1881. Supported seating of P. B. S. Pinchback, Mississippi River flood control and port development, citizenship for Chinese and Native Americans, dissolving all-black regiments.	1881–1893: Register of the Treasury and DC Recorder of Deeds; trustee of Howard University.
Richard H. Cain (1825–1887) South Carolina 45 years old	Born free in western Virginia, to black mother, Cherokee father.	Studied at Wilberforce College; delegate to SC state constitutional convention; served in SC state senate.	House of Representatives 1873–1874; 1877–1879. Opposed Amnesty Act; supported woman suffrage, education, and land.	1878: Encouraged South Carolinians to support Liberia exodus.
Robert DeLarge (1842–1874) South Carolina 28 years old	Born free in Virginia.	SC constitutional convention (1868) and state legislature.	House of Representatives, 1871–1873. Removed from office 2 months before his term expired because a white opponent won the contested election. Supported Amnesty Act, black land ownership.	Magistrate in Charleston.
Robert Brown Elliott (1842–1884) South Carolina 28 years old	Born in South Carolina to free black parents.	Passed SC bar in 1867; editor of black Republican newspaper, the *South Carolina Leader;*	House of Representatives, 1871–1875. Supported suppression of Ku Klux Klan,	Lawyer in New Orleans, Louisiana.

(*continued*)

TABLE 11.2 (*Continued*)

NAME/ STATE/AGE IN 1870	BACK-GROUND	PRIOR EXPERIENCE	SERVICE IN CONGRESS	POST-CONGRESS EXPERIENCE
		SC constitutional convention; assistant adjutant-general of SC.	protection of black vote.	
Jefferson Long (1836–1900) Georgia 34 years old	Born a slave in Georgia to slave mother and white father.	Tailor.	House of Representatives, 1871–1873. Supported Ku Klux Klan Acts, opposed amnesty for ex-Confederates.	Tailoring business suffered because of his continued organizing for the Republican Party.
John Roy Lynch (1847–1939) Mississippi 23 years old	Louisiana slave freed when Union army seized Natchez, 1863.	Elected justice of the peace; Mississippi legislature speaker of the house.	House of Representatives, 1872–1876. Supported civil rights legislation.	Delegate to four national Republican conventions; appointed by President Benjamin Harrison to be auditor of the U.S. Treasury for the Navy Department.
Pinckney Benton Stewart Pinchback (1837–1921) Louisiana 33 years old	Born free to Georgia planter and an emancipated slave.	Louisiana state senator; lieutenant governor; acting governor.	Senate: elected in 1872, but never allowed to assume office. Advocated education, women's suffrage.	U.S. Customs inspector; cotton planter; owner of a Mississippi riverboat company; admitted to Louisiana bar in 1886; helped found Southern Normal School.

Local Politics in the South

"When we opened the school a party of armed men came to my house, seized me, carried me out and threw me in Thompson's Creek after they had belabored me with the muzzles of their revolvers . . . [saying] they 'did not want . . . any damned nigger school in that town and were not going to have it,'" Texas state senator George Ruby recalled in testimony about obstacles facing southern black politicians at the state and local levels. These politicians often had to craft political strategies and alliances simply to ensure constituents' safety, and in the South black politicians had few white allies. Nor did Radical Republicans intercede on their behalf. Even the presence of federal troops could threats such as those Ruby endured merely for opening a school.

Ruby quickly learned the Texas political terrain. Born in New educated in New England, he had lived for a while in Haiti but return United States to work for the Freedmen's Bureau. Assigned to build s Texas, he also represented Galveston County at the 1868 Texas cons convention, where he gained enough visibility to be elected to the Stat One of only two black state senators in Texas, Ruby had a constituen of black voters and the minority of white politicians who sought fede tance for rebuilding the state's infrastructure, refurbishing the Galve and establishing an educational system benefiting poor Texans of all

Like Revels and other black leaders at the national level, Ruby use mise and negotiation. He supported white Texans as well as black for positions, and he tolerated the new state laws segregating public trav and even Republican political events. In return, he hoped to gain white s laws that would restrain the Klan, give citizenship and the franchise Americans, and promote schools and other services for freed people hoped to limit Black Codes, those state or local laws restricting African A employment choices, land ownership, mobility, and other opportunities.

Ruby's strategy reflected his understanding of southern political re the postwar era, southern politics took one of three forms: the politic (the vast majority of white Southerners), the political right, and the ra The political middle, or "moderates," included entrepreneurs, professic farmers who had concluded even before the war that the South n modernize—to diversify its economy, develop technology and industry, federal subsidies for geological surveys, railroads, factories, and ports. white Southerners were not much interested in economic advance African Americans, but they envisioned black laborers as part of the n working in factories as well as in fields. They welcomed alliances with b ers who could help persuade black communities to meet moderate whit goals. As long as leaders like Ruby stayed "in their place" and were defe white people, white moderates supported black education and voting ri

South Carolina planter Wade Hampton exemplified white m Hampton believed black and white southern leaders should unite in r the South. "Does not that glorious southern sun above us shine alike f us?" he asked. But Hampton and other moderates made no overture social integration, viewing class and racial divisions as natural for soc

Black leaders like Ruby knew white moderates could help blac obtain access to education and jobs in agriculture or factories. Mart was another who advocated black–white alliances. Filling in as editor Carolina's *Missionary Record*, he developed a blueprint for black–whit ation. He felt certain that "the black man and the white man m together . . . [to] bring about the redemption of the state and prosperity piness for the whole people." "The black men of this state are depe the whites, just as the whites are dependent on them," he wrote in 18 he advised black Southerners to relinquish "hatred and resentment" "polite, pleasant, agreeable, ever ready and obliging." Persuaded by H argument that "when all our troubles and trials are over, [black a

Faced with Randolph's threat of civil disobedience, Truman ... civil rights concessions, but his support of a pro-civil rights platform at the Democratic National Convention in the summer of 1948 split his own party. Southern Democrats led by South Carolina's Strom Thurmond walked out to form the States' Rights Party, or "Dixiecrats." Ironically, this split gave Truman a freer hand on civil rights issues, as he now had no need to appease the Dixiecrats. Ten days later, he strengthened his black support by issuing Executive Orders 9980 and 9981 banning racial discrimination in federal employment and in the armed forces. As Randolph had in 1941 called off the March on Washington after gaining concessions from Roosevelt, he also agreed to call off threatened civil disobedience after gaining them from Truman. The first presidential candidate to campaign in Harlem, Truman kept up his attacks on Wallace supporters by charging that the Progressive Party was dominated by communists and communist sympathizers.

The 1948 presidential campaign was thus a decisive confrontation between the moderate approach to civil rights reform favored by Truman and his black supporters, and the far-reaching changes sought by Robeson, Du Bois, and Wallace. Most black voters opted for Truman, as he was more likely to win the election and so to deliver on his promises. Black votes in key northern states gave the president a razor-thin victory over Dewey. Wallace attracted just 2 percent of the vote, slightly less than Thurmond received.

26

In the aftermath of Wallace's overwhelming defeat, the ideological boundaries of African American politics—and American politics in general—narrowed. The exceptional conditions of the Depression and World War II had encouraged an upsurge in black militancy and political experimentation that could not survive the Cold War. The internationalism and Pan-Africanism of Robeson and Du Bois were increasingly obscured by their communist associations, which made them targets of anticommunist zealots and government prosecutors. By the end of the 1940s, eleven prominent Communists, including New York City's only black councilman, Benjamin J. Davis, had been convicted of violating the Smith Act, which outlawed Communist Party membership. The Civil Rights Congress, led by veteran Communist William Patterson, also came under attack. Du Bois himself was prosecuted in 1950 but was ultimately acquitted of the charges brought against him.

While noncommunist activists such as Randolph and Rustin were not persecuted in comparable ways, they did not thrive in the Cold War political climate. Disbanding the League for Nonviolent Civil Disobedience, Randolph concentrated on ending discrimination in the labor movement, while Rustin became increasingly active in pacifist protests against nuclear arms.

Era of NAACP Dominance

As urban black voters began to affect state and local elections as well as presidential contests, significant civil rights reforms were achieved in some areas. In addition to electing liberal white politicians who favored civil rights, black voters elected two African Americans to Congress—New York's Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., and Chicago's William L. Dawson. By the end of the decade, both Americans. The NAACP increased its effectiveness by forging ties with liberal politicians, labor unions, and Jewish organizations in an alliance formalized in 1950 with the creation of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.

Though the NAACP failed to achieve antilynching legislation, its litigation produced some highly visible victories. In 1946, the Supreme Court accepted Marshall's arguments that Irene Morgan's arrest for refusing to accept segregated seating on an interstate bus was unconstitutional (the same issue for which Pauli Murray had been arrested earlier in the decade). The *Morgan* v. *Commonwealth of Virginia* (1946) ruling did not prevent Rustin and others, however, from being arrested the next year during bus rides testing enforcement of the decision in the South. Next, Marshall supported leftist activist Heman Sweatt's challenge to racial barriers at the University of Texas Law School and Ada Lois Sipuel's similar challenge at the University of Oklahoma Law School. *Sweatt* v. *Painter* (1947) and *Sipuel* v. *Oklahoma State Board of Regents* (1948) forced states to make equal educational facilities available to black professional students. Marshall also supported a lawsuit against racial covenants that excluded black home buyers and owners from many neighborhoods. *Shelley* v. *Kraemer* (1948), outlawing court enforcement of these covenants, was a major victory in this area.

Marshall's Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDEF) not only undermined the legal foundations of the separate-but-equal doctrine but also provided a substitute for mass protest. With growing support from white liberals and foundations, Marshall matched the legal resources of his segregationist opponents. He tapped the expertise of Howard scholars such as Charles Houston, Hastie, and Spottswood Robinson and worked closely with legal experts from liberal and Jewish groups. By 1948, his talented staff included graduates of Howard Law School: Robert Lee Carter, a veteran who was his chief aide; Oliver Hill, Marshall's classmate; and Constance Baker Motley, the first woman attorney on the NAACP staff. Although Murray was not on the staff, the Marshall team moved closer to the position she framed at Howard: a direct attack against the separate-but-equal doctrine of *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*.

TABLE 16.2 Supreme Court Cases, 1944–1950

***Smith* v. *Allwright* (1944)** In a Texas case, the Supreme Court declares that "white primary" laws violate the Fifteenth Amendment.

***Morgan* v. *Commonwealth of Virginia* (1946)** The Supreme Court bans segregation on interstate buses, but the ruling has little immediate effect on southern practices.

***Sipuel* v. *Oklahoma State Board of Regents* (1948)** The Supreme Court decides in an Oklahoma case that states must admit qualified African Americans to previously all-white graduate schools when no comparable black institution is available.

***Shelley* v. *Kraemer* (1948)** The Supreme Court rules that racially restrictive housing covenants are unenforceable.

***Sweatt* v. *Painter* (1950)** The Supreme Court rules that states must make equal educational facilities available to black professional students.

TABLE 11.1 THE FEDERAL POWER STRUGGLE 1865–1877

Black newspapers recognized that often white Americans' interest in Reconstruction involved a power struggle among the three branches of government rather than the best interests of black people or the South. African American concerns frequently faded into the background. Below are some of the battles that took place during the Reconstruction years.

DATE	CONGRESS	PRESIDENCY	SUPREME COURT
1865	Establishes Freedmen's Bureau.	Andrew Johnson grants "amnesty and pardon" to most Confederates, restoring confiscated land, and exiling thousands of black farmers from their land.	
1866	Passes Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery in all states and territories; ratified by 27 states. Expands Freedmen's Bureau authority and over Johnson's veto empowers it to try civil cases for freedmen. Over Johnson's veto, passes three Civil Rights Acts, including one that vacates the 1857 *Dred Scott* decision and grants citizenship to black Americans. Passes Fourteenth Amendment, guaranteeing citizenship and requiring Confederate states' approval; ratified in 1868.	Johnson vetoes a two-year extension for Freedmen's Bureau. Johnson vetoes Civil Rights Acts.	In *Ex Parte Milligan*, rules that neither the president nor Congress has legal power to allow other agencies to try civilian cases, except in theater of war.
1867		Enforces provisions of Civil Rights Acts.	In *Cummings* v. *Missouri*, rules that government may not require voters to take oaths of past loyalty.
1868	Passes Tenure of Office Act, forbidding the president to remove Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. Impeaches Johnson; conviction fails by one vote.	Removes military officers from duty, including Secretary of War Edwin Stanton.	Agrees to hear a southern state's case regarding the constitutionality of Recon struction Acts. Outlaws Maryland's race-based apprentice system.
1869	Passes Fifteenth Amendment guaranteeing suffrage, requiring Confederate states to ratify; ratified in 1870.		Upholds congres sional authority to shape Reconstruction. In *Texas* v. *White*, rules that Confederate officials had never left Union, since secession was illegal.
1870–71	Passes Ku Klux Klan Acts. Moderate Republicans refuse to seat black Louisiana Senator P. B. S. Pinchback.		
1872	Passes Amnesty Act Dismantles Freedmen's Bureau.		
1873			In the *Slaughterhouse Cases*, rules that only the rights of federal citizenship are protected under the Fourteenth Amendment; other rights at state discretion.
1875	Passes Civil Rights Act guaranteeing freedmen access to public accommodations.		
1877	Compromise installs Rutherford B. Hayes as president; federal troops withdrawn from South.		

The question of whether women had as much right to vote as freedmen found few sympathizers, even among Radical Republicans. Most reformers adopted a "black men first" strategy. By opposing the Fourteenth and later the Fifteenth Amendments, Stanton found herself linked to antiblack forces. The issue split the women's movement. Remaining true to her abolitionist principles that black male suffrage was more important than women's suffrage, Lucy Stone founded the interracial American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA). She was soon joined by Harriet Purvis, who became its first black president in 1876. Other reformers sought to promote the cause of women *and* African Americans equally. "If colored men get their rights, and not colored women theirs, colored men will be masters over the women. . . . I am glad to see that men are getting their rights, but I want women to get theirs," said Sojourner Truth in an 1867 speech. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and Mary Ann Shadd Cary agreed. They joined Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869. Cary, who shared Anthony's interest in divorce reform and support for women entrepreneurs, drafted a woman-suffrage statement to the House of Representatives and led a group of women who attempted to register to vote in the District of Columbia elections in 1869.

But soon Cary and other black women were put off by Stanton's and Anthony's impulsive rhetoric about "black [male] beasts" gaining the ballot before white women. In 1871, Cary broke away, establishing the Colored

Afro-American Press Association, members included Fortune of the *New York Age* and Robert Sengstacke Abbott, whose weekly Chicago *Defender* soon reached a circulation of 250,000. Black churches also fortified racial pride by placing ads in *Crisis* for "the Negro doll," designed by Nashville's National Negro Doll Company. Dominated by "plain American Negroes," black churches spent little time debating the merits of various black strategies. Members were loyal to the Republican Party and to Booker T. Washington, and they raised spirits with Bible study and song.

The Progressive spirit also gave rise to college fraternities and sororities. Alpha Phi Alpha, the nation's first black fraternity, began at Cornell University in 1906 when Robert Ogle and seven other black students, refused entry to the library, formed a study group. In 1911, Kappa Alpha Psi followed at Indiana University. Within the next few years, fraternities Omega Psi Phi and Phi Beta Sigma and sororities Alpha Kappa Alpha and Delta Sigma Theta were founded at Howard University. As they fanned out across the country, black alumni used these connections to cement business partnerships and social networks.

TABLE 13.1 Black Organizations for Progress, 1895–1915

During the Progressive era, many black organizations defined new directions for the future of African Americans. Overcoming the isolation of slavery that had made for slow social and economic progress, black Americans created united communities. Ten of the more influential organizations are listed below.

ORGANIZATION	FOUNDING	PUBLICATION	AUDIENCES	TARGETED STRATEGY
National Association of Colored Women (NACW)	1895: Ida Wells Barnett; Mary Church Terrell; Fannie Barrier Williams; Rosetta Douglass Sprague.	*The Woman's Era*	Local black women's clubs	Establish kindergartens, childcare centers, and women's educational facilities, to "lift as we climb."
American Negro Academy	1897: Alexander Crummel; W. E. B. Du Bois; Paul Laurence Dunbar.		African American intellectuals	Promote study, conferences, and publications of African Americans' scholarly work.
Negro Business League	1900: Booker T. Washington.	*Negro Business League Herald*	African American entrepreneurs	Personal contact from Washington or his agents to encourage networking.
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)	1909: W. E. B. Du Bois, William Monroe Trotter, John Hope; white Progressives Jane Addams, Joel Spingarn, Mary White Ovington.	*Crisis*	Northern and Midwestern urban black middle class; white liberals	Challenge segregation in franchise and public services through court cases and appeals to public conscience.
Negro National Press Association	1909: T. Thomas Fortune; William S. Pittman; Robert S. Abbott; Robert L. Vann.		Black journalists around the world	Circulate accurate information among black newspapers.
National Urban League	1910: Victoria Earle Matthews; Lugenia Burns Hope.	*Opportunity*	Working-class people in northern and southern cities	Support black public and private efforts for economic justice.
Negro Historical Society of Research	1911: Arthur Schomburg; W. E. B. Du Bois; Alain Locke; Carter G. Woodson.		Black intellectuals around the world	Collect and disseminate information to raise black solidarity and self-esteem.
Akim Trading Company	1911: Chief Alfred Sam.	*African Pioneer*	"The best Negro farmers and mechanics"	Procure land in West Africa and establish reciprocal trade with black Americans.
Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA)	1914: Jamaican Marcus Garvey.	*The Negro World*	Urban and rural poor in the United States, South America, the Caribbean, and Africa	Create a separate international black economy, creating "a universal confraternity."
Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH)	1915: Carter G. Woodson.	*Journal of Negro History*	Black and white academics	Encourage and publish historical research.

Churches and schools aimed to instill pride in black youngsters. In segregated schools, for example, black teachers celebrated revolutionaries like Crispus Attucks and Toussaint L'Ouverture. By the 1920s, students would sing "Lift Every Voice and Sing," an inspiring anthem, composed by James Weldon and J. Rosamond Johnson, that honored black Americans' struggles and triumphs. Thousands of black youths developed black consciousness at segregated Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations (YMCA and YWCA), which served as much-needed recreation centers.

1865	In March, Congress charters the Freedmen's Bureau and the Freedmen's Savings and Trust Bank. In December, the Thirteenth Amendment, ratified by twenty-seven states, abolishes slavery throughout the United States.
1866	Over President Andrew Johnson's veto, Congress passes the Civil Rights Act granting citizenship and civil rights to African Americans. In Pulaski, Tennessee, the secretive Ku Klux Klan is formed.
1868	Congress carries out impeachment proceedings against President Andrew Johnson. Johnson is acquitted in May, when the Senate fails, by one vote, to reach the two-thirds vote necessary for conviction. The Fourteenth Amendment is ratified, guaranteeing citizenship to African Americans and requiring southern states to approve it before gaining readmission to the Union.
1869	Congress proposes the Fifteenth Amendment to protect "the right of citizens of the United States to vote." Mary Ann Shadd Cary tries to register to vote in Washington, DC, and petitions Congress when officials deny her. Over the issue of black civil and voting rights, the women's rights movement splits into two rival organizations.
1870	The Fifteenth Amendment is ratified. Seven southern legislators become the first black men elected to the United States Congress. Congress passes the Ku Klux Klan Act to protect voting rights, also known as the Enforcement Act, making it a federal offense to interfere with franchise rights guaranteed by the Fifteenth Amendment.
1871	The District of Columbia is granted self-rule. After holding a series of hearings on Ku Klux Klan violence, Congress enacts a second Ku Klux Klan Act.
1872	At the National Colored Men's Labor Convention in Washington, DC, Frederick Douglass and Mary Ann Shadd Cary champion manual laborers' rights. The Freedmen's Bureau is dismantled. Black leaders endorse the reelection of Republican presidential candidate Ulysses S. Grant for president, pleased that he advocates annexing the Dominican Republic, with its majority black population.
1873	Beginning in September, the Panic of 1873 plunges the United States into economic depression. In the *Slaughterhouse Cases*, Supreme Court narrows the scope of the Fourteenth Amendment.
1874	The Freedmen's Savings and Trust Bank fails. The Virginia legislature reorganizes election districts to dilute the black vote.
1875	Congress passes the Civil Rights Act, guaranteeing black Americans access to public accommodations.
1876	Harriet Purvis is elected the first black president of the American Woman Suffrage Association.

(Continued)

1877	A compromise between Congress and the Republican Party over the disputed presidential election results in complete withdrawal of federal troops from the South. The Republican Party establishes a separate Black and Tan Party, segregating black Americans from the mainstream Republican Party. A nationwide railroad workers' strike in July elevates Peter Clark, the first known African American socialist, to leadership.
1878	The Liberia Exodus Joint Stock Company sends the ship *Azor* to Africa.
1879	The Kansas Exodus Joint Stock Company sends emigrants west to Kansas.

highlighted the risks run by southern black men who dared to claim seats at the political table. He described Jackson County, Florida, in 1869 as being in "such a state of lawlessness that my life was in danger at all times."

Fortune was prepared to fight back. He was remembered by friends as a "dead shot, and he *would* shoot." Despite threats, he never relinquished his political commitment. Over the next ten years, he served as city marshal, Republican national convention delegate, county commissioner, clerk of the city market, and state congressman.

Fortune's testimony before Congress reveals the realities of the postwar South. White Southerners complained bitterly about what they called "black rule" as African Americans took positions as sheriffs, justices of the peace, county clerks, and school superintendents. Even so, only a few dozen black Americans occupied positions of real authority. Few actually ran for office, and many black voters, intimidated by threats or actual violence in the open southern polls, where a vote was public knowledge, supported white politicians.

With the South's return to the Union after the Civil War, race relations in that embattled region took center stage. For the first dozen years after the war—a period that became known as Reconstruction—the federal government sent troops and agents to restore order and aid slaves' transition to freedom. Federal and private agencies opened schools, distributed food and medicine, and intervened in legal disputes between freed people and their white neighbors. In what many Northerners considered a new national era, the federal government aimed to heal the war-torn South and make it more like the North, physically, economically, socially, and politically. While repairing fields, roads, and homes was foremost, many Northerners hoped the South would soon have new railroads, factories, banks, and wage laborers as well.

Reconstruction extended to the national level, as black men were elected to Congress and Republican presidents appointed African Americans to positions of authority. During this era, black leaders made access to the polls their highest priority, believing African Americans could vote into office leaders who supported their goals, such as farm ownership and jobs that would allow them to be independent of white landowners. They also wanted education for their children, as literacy would, in turn, provide opportunities for entrepreneurship and political power that would lift people out of poverty.

Chronology

1880	In *Stauder* v. *West Virginia*, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that excluding black people from jury duty is unconstitutional.
1881	T. Washington becomes head of Tuskegee (Alabama) Normal and Industrial Institute. A new Tennessee law requiring separate railroad cars for black people and white people becomes a model for other states' Jim Crow laws.
1882	Congress passes the Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited new immigration from China.
1883	George Washington Williams publishes *The History of the Negro Race in America from 1619–1880*, one of the first histories of black Americans. Declaring that Congress lacks authority over public accommodations, the Supreme Court reverses the Civil Rights Act of 1875. Congress passes the Pendleton Act, which replaced some political patronage positions in the civil service with a merit system.
1884–1885	At an international conference in Berlin, Belgium, England, France, Germany, and Italy agree to partition Africa.
1886	The Colored Farmers' Alliance is established, allying with the white National Farmers' Alliance. In Chicago's Haymarket Square, black Americans join a workers' rally. Knights of Labor leader Terence Powderly shares a Richmond, Virginia, speakers' platform with black New York labor leader Frank Ferrell.
1887	Edward Blyden publishes *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race*, a call to African Americans to revere their African heritage. John Alexander graduates from West Point Military Academy and joins the Ninth Cavalry in Nebraska. Congress passes the Dawes Act, which redefines some communal Indian tribal lands as individual family homesteads.
1889	Black women's rights advocate Ida B. Wells becomes part-owner of the *Memphis Free Speech and Headlight*. William Bush is elected to Washington's first state legislature. When Congress opens Oklahoma to settlement, 10,000 black Southerners stake homestead claims.
1892	Anna Julia Cooper publishes *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South*. The lynching of Thomas Moss in Memphis, Tennessee, sparks antilynching campaigns among black Americans. Colored Farmers' Alliance representatives help found the Populist Party.
1893	George Washington Carver's paintings are displayed at the Chicago Columbian Exposition.

(Continued)

1894	Zeke Miller is appointed deputy marshal in Oklahoma Indian Territory.
1895	Frederick Douglass's death marks a transition to new black leaders. At the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia, Booker T. Washington delivers his Atlanta Compromise speech, outlining his social and economic program.

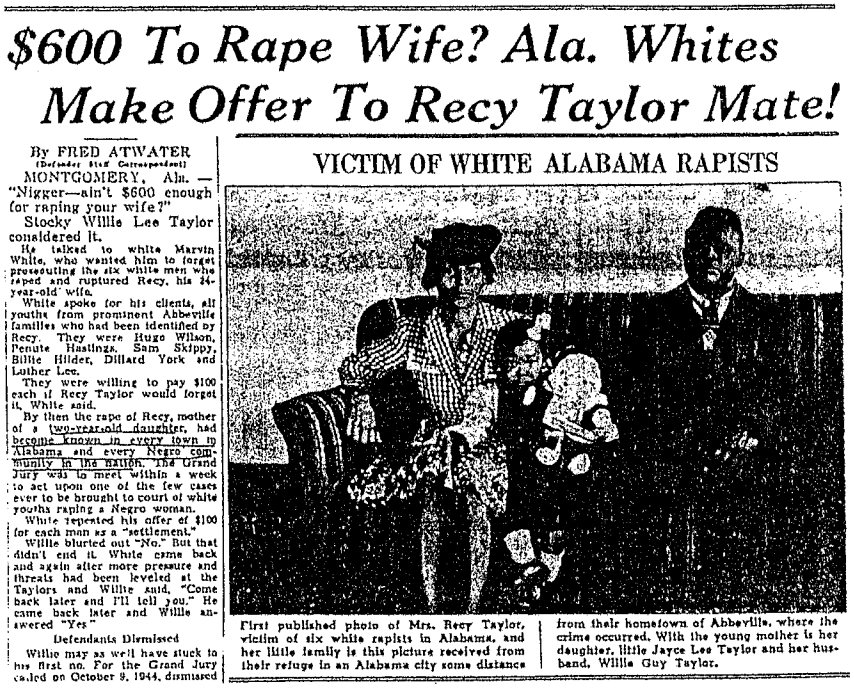
educational programs might foster not only intellectual growth but also social responsibility. Years later, he wrote, "I have often wondered if there was a white institution . . . whose students would have welcomed . . . companions of another race in the cordial way that these black students at Hampton welcomed the red ones. How often I have wanted to say to white students that they lift themselves up in proportion as they help to lift others." Throughout his career, Washington frequently evoked images of lifting and climbing, of improving one's own life while helping others to succeed.

Washington expanded Armstrong's educational formula into a broad philosophy of black self-sufficiency that inspired many African Americans in their own rise from slavery. By 1881, with Armstrong's help, Washington became head of Tuskegee Agricultural and Mechanical Institute, an Alabama school modeled after Hampton.

Washington used his own life story as an example of how the powerless could rise. His combination of perseverance, skill, and luck made his climb from poverty to power as remarkable as that of contemporary white industrialists like Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller. Such stories taught a simple but profound lesson: Acquiring a valued skill and working hard could bring economic success. This lesson made practical sense to many black Americans.

In the harsh decades after the Civil War, Booker T. Washington was an exception. Most black Southerners did not advance in just one generation after slavery. Only about one in three African Americans had access to schooling, and only one in a thousand attended college. During the years Washington attended Hampton and established Tuskegee, millions of black Southerners had no homes and suffered from hunger, illness, and humiliation. In 1877, the federal government officially ended military control of the South and thus the era of Reconstruction. The South came back under the control of former slave owners who continued to envision black people only as their servants. Most black Southerners eked out an existence by farming someone else's land. During these years, most white Southerners sought to reinstate an economic system much like slavery—with laws and violence to back it up. In trying to build a "New South" of industry and factories, white and black Americans found it difficult to break away from the old farming economy.

Meanwhile, as white intellectuals developed pseudoscientific theories that white people were superior to dark-skinned peoples, African Americans



$600 To Rape Wife? Ala. Whites Make Offer To Recy Taylor Mate!

By FRED ATWATER
(Defender Staff Correspondent)

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — "Nigger—ain't $600 enough for raping your wife?"

Stocky Willie Lee Taylor considered it.

He talked to white Marvin White, who wanted him to forget prosecuting the six white men who raped and ruptured Recy, his 24-year-old wife.

White spoke for his clients, all youths from prominent Abbeville families who had been identified by Recy. They were Hugo Wilson, Penute Hastings, Sam Skippy, Billie Hilder, Dillard York and Luther Lee.

They were willing to pay $100 each if Recy Taylor would forget it, White said.

By then the rape of Recy, mother of a two-year-old daughter, had become known in every town in Alabama and every Negro community in the nation. The Grand Jury was to meet within a week to act upon one of the few cases ever to be brought to court of white youths raping a Negro woman.

White repeated his offer of $100 for each man as a "settlement."

Willie blurted out "No." But that didn't end it. White came back and again after more pressure and threats had been leveled at the Taylors and Willie said, "Come back later and I'll tell you." He came back later and Willie answered "Yes."

Defendants Dismissed

Willie may as well have stuck to his first no. For the Grand Jury called on October 9, 1944, dismissed

VICTIM OF WHITE ALABAMA RAPISTS

First published photo of Mrs. Recy Taylor, victim of six white rapists in Alabama, and her little family is this picture received from their refuge in an Alabama city some distance from their hometown of Abbeville, where the crime occurred. With the young mother is her daughter, little Joyce Lee Taylor and her husband, Willie Guy Taylor.

Recy Taylor, Willie Guy Taylor, and their child, Joyce Lee Taylor.

Pointing to the most recent example, Gordon argued that "every southern newspaper played up the rape of the unnamed wife of a white soldier in Florida" but failed to report the crime against Recy Taylor. Worse, he fumed, Southern editors stood silent as the alleged black rapists of a white woman "were burned to death in Florida's electric chair," while Taylor's assailants weren't even questioned. "The whole country must be aroused to action," Gordon thundered, "against this and other similar outrages against Negro womanhood."[54]

In New York City black activists, embroiled in their own grassroots struggles against segregation, police brutality, and housing discrimination, read Gordon's article and were outraged.[55] They heeded his call to arms by flocking to Harlem's Hotel Theresa on November 25 for a mass meeting. Called by the New York branch of the SCHW, and the SNYC's parent organization, the National Negro Congress, the meeting hoped to draw attention to the double standard of justice in the South and "find ways and means of centering nationwide attention on Mrs. Taylor's case and forcing

legal action" in order to "lay a basis for ending this sout degrading Negro womanhood."[56] Their allies in Alabam cial assistance.

More than one hundred people, representing middle- like the YWCA, the NAACP, and the National Council of as well as leftist labor unions like the CIO and the Negr Committee, came to the emergency meeting.[57] Audley M black nationalist who had a long history of defending bla sexual violence, came as the Harlem representative of th Workers Order.[58] Prominent black Communists like Ber and James W. Ford, as well as leftist and Communist-affi tions like the International Labor Defense, filed into the l seats. Reporters from the leftist *Daily Worker;* the New Yc the progressive West Coast paper the *California Eagle;* a ton Powell, Jr.'s, weekly, *The People's Voice,* clustered aroun cils and notepads at the ready. Alabama SNYC delegates information about the Recy Taylor case.

The assembly of such an eclectic group of activists yie results. After being briefed on the "Abbeville Affair," part to partner with the Alabama branches of the SNYC and form the Committee for Equal Justice for Mrs. Recy Tayl delegates who would immediately travel to Abbeville to crime and report their findings at the Sixth All-Southern Congress conference, to be held in Atlanta the following w planned to create a "Negro-rights, Negro-white unity cam out the South."[59] When the call for donations came, act their pockets and contributed close to one hundred dollar to use the money to flood the South with flyers decrying on black women and promised a publicity campaign aimed governor of Alabama, Chauncey Sparks.[60] As one newspape "The phrase 'protection of Southern womanhood' had life injected into it."[61]

Almost immediately letters and postcards trickled i Sparks's office. Known as the "Bourbon from Barbour," Ch won the governorship in 1942 by promising to "padlock sury" and keep the federal government's nose out of Alaban Though he eventually started spending money on school programs, and hospitals, he was no Franklin Roosevelt lib

Chronology

1992	An all-white jury acquits police officers involved in the beating of motorist Rodney King, sparking a three-day uprising in Los Angeles that results in more than fifty deaths. With overwhelming support from black voters, Bill Clinton is elected president. Illinois Democrat Carol Moseley Braun becomes the first African American woman elected to the U.S. Senate. Spike Lee's epic motion picture biography *Malcolm X* opens nationwide.
1993	In *Shaw* v. *Reno* the Supreme Court rules against a North Carolina redistricting plan that resulted in majority black congressional districts. Toni Morrison, author of *Beloved* and other acclaimed novels, wins the Nobel Prize for literature.
1994	The white supremacist Byron de la Beckwith receives life sentence for the 1963 murder of NAACP official Medgar Evers. Nelson Mandela becomes South Africa's first black president.
1995	Not guilty verdict in O. J. Simpson trial exposes continuing black–white divisions. The Million Man March, initiated by Louis Farrakhan, is held in Washington, DC.
1996	President Clinton signs a major welfare reform act calling for work requirements and time limits for recipients of government assistance.
1997	Clinton establishes Commission on Race Relations, chaired by the historian John Hope Franklin. The Haitian immigrant Abner Louima is tortured by a Brooklyn police officer, who is subsequently convicted of assault. Lee P. Brown is elected the first African American mayor of Houston.
1998	James Byrd, Jr., a black resident of Jasper, Texas, is dragged to death behind a pickup truck driven by white men.
2000	In a disputed election ultimately decided by a 5–4 Supreme Court decision, Republican George W. Bush prevails, though more than 90 percent of black voters supported Democrat Al Gore.
2001	Former military Chief of Staff Colin Powell is confirmed as secretary of state, and former Stanford provost Condoleezza Rice becomes President Bush's national security advisor.
2003	Supreme Court rulings in two Michigan affirmative action cases confirm racial diversity as a goal but invalidate point systems as the means.
2004	Illinois Democrat Barak Obama wins election to the U.S. Senate.

were few African American television reporters. She became Nashville black anchor, hosted a morning talk show in Baltimore, and then in th 1980s attracted a national audience as host of a Chicago talk show. Sh many awards, including multiple Emmys, and became the youngest ever selected as Broadcaster of the Year by the International Rad Television Society.

Reading Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* provided inspirati Winfrey's career choices. A victim of childhood sexual abuse, she ide with Celie's struggle to overcome oppression. She wept after finishi book. "Oh, my God, this is my story!" she recalled. "Somebody knows felt." She auditioned for a part in the film based on Walker's book, d lacking experience as a professional actor. Her vivid portrayal of Sophi her an Academy Award nomination for best performance in a supp role. Winfrey also decided to gain control over her television show by lishing her own company, Harpo Productions. As executive producer "Oprah Winfrey Show," she soon became an enormously wealthy and ential figure in the entertainment industry. She expanded her auc through involvement in serious films and television dramas. After g acclaim in *The Color Purple*, she accepted a challenging role in a film v of Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1986) and then produced and starre television miniseries, "The Women of Brewster Place" (1989), bas Gloria Naylor's novel. She would later produce and star in the featu *Beloved* (1998), based on Toni Morrison's prize-winning novel, and produce a Broadway musical version of *The Color Purple*, which o in 2005.

But even these accomplishments did not begin to suggest the ext Winfrey's influence. Although she usually avoided partisan involvemen political parties or candidates, viewers of her show learned to expect er enment about social issues as well as entertainment. Known to mi simply as Oprah, she set herself apart from other talk show hosts by m beyond banter about weight loss and fashions to deeper discussions major social problems, including racial conflict and child abuse. Whe rights advocates staged marches into Georgia's all-white Forsythe Cou the 1980s, Winfrey took her show there to interview residents as well a testers. Her moving congressional testimony on behalf of the National Protection Act of 1993 led some to call it "the Oprah bill." Her readin risk her own money and reputation on controversial African American such as *Beloved* won her wide respect, as did her willingness to devote tion of her wealth to philanthropic causes. Her influence expanded even as a result of the phenomenally successful Oprah's Book Club, a feature television program that transformed her literary selections into imme best sellers.

Winfrey's two television shows discussing the Los Angeles riot refl her long-standing desire to use her exceptional success as an entertaine producer to achieve broader goals. She conceded that a television pro could not solve racial problems but insisted that conversation was a crucia toward social healing: "People who had never talked to each other for

Chronology

1961	Black students continue the freedom ride campaign. The voting rights advocate Herbert Lee is killed by a white state legislator who is later absolved. The Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) implements desegregation in transportation facilities. Hundreds are arrested in the Albany Movement's desegregation campaign in Georgia.
1962	The Albany Movement's protest campaign subsides. James Meredith desegregates the University of Mississippi.
1963	King writes "Letter from Birmingham Jail" during decisive civil rights campaign. President John F. Kennedy proposes civil rights legislation to desegregate public accommodations. NAACP leader Medgar Evers is murdered outside his home in Jackson, Mississippi. At the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, King delivers "I Have a Dream" speech. Dynamite blast set by segregationists kills four black girls at 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham.
1964	The Mississippi Freedom Summer Project seeks to register black voters. Three civil rights workers murdered at start of Mississippi "Freedom Summer" Project seeking to register black voters. President Lyndon B. Johnson signs Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party fails to displace the all-white regular delegation at the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City. Martin Luther King, Jr., receives the Nobel Peace Prize.
1965	Malcolm X is killed while speaking in Harlem. Police attack voting rights protesters attempting to march from Selma to Montgomery. President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Police arrest in Watts section of Los Angeles ignites four days of rioting.
1966	Civil rights leaders continue James Meredith's March Against Fear. SNCC chair Stokely Carmichael ignites controversy with his call for "Black Power."

bats. Ignoring warnings of violence, Birmingham police were conveniently absent. In light of the attacks, Farmer decided to call off the ride. Then he got a phone call from Nash.

> *"Would you have any objections to members of the Nashville Student Movement, which is SNCC, going in and taking up the Ride where CORE left off?" she asked.*
>
> *"You realize it may be suicide," Farmer warned.*
>
> *"We fully realize that," replied Nash, unfazed. "Let me send in fresh nonviolent troops to carry the Ride on. Let me bring in Nashville students to pick up the baton and run with it."*

Though she had only recently been a student at Fisk, Nash was a movement veteran. A participant in James Lawson's workshops on nonviolence, she had been instrumental in the sit-ins that desegregated Nashville lunch counters. Earlier in 1961, she had joined an antisegregation "jail-in" in Rock Hill, serving a thirty-day jail sentence to make the point that nonviolent demonstrators should not accept bail money and thereby become dependent on the financial and legal assistance of others. Returning to Nashville, she dropped out of Fisk to devote herself full-time to the movement, working for both SNCC and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). "I'll be doing this for the rest of my life," she told a *Jet* magazine reporter.

After gaining Farmer's reluctant assent, Nash informed Birmingham minister and civil rights leader Fred Shuttlesworth that students would be arriving to continue CORE's campaign. She quickly mobilized support in Nashville, securing financial backing from black ministers in the local SCLC affiliate and recruiting student volunteers. Ten young people stepped forward. "Several made out wills," she recalled. "A few more gave me sealed letters to be mailed if they were killed. Some told me frankly that they were afraid, but they knew this was something that they must do, because freedom was worth it."

The Nashville contingent left for Birmingham on May 17, the seventh anniversary of the *Brown* decision, but as they arrived, Birmingham's notoriously racist police chief, Theophilus Eugene "Bull" Connor, ordered the new freedom riders taken to the Birmingham jail. The following night, he released them at the Alabama state border. They walked in the dark to a black farmer's home, where they telephoned Nash. She immediately sent a car to return them to Birmingham, even as news reports claimed they were back at their campuses. "The police chief wasn't going to get off that easily," Nash explained.

Within days, more freedom riders gathered at Shuttlesworth's home in Birmingham. Injecting new energy into the southern struggle, they boarded buses, undeterred by the mob assault in Birmingham. They encountered more violence when they arrived in Montgomery. Martin Luther King, Jr., who had declined Nash's request to join the freedom ride campaign, responded to the Montgomery violence by addressing an evening rally at a local black church. White rioters laid siege to the packed church, keeping occupants inside until U.S. marshals and the Alabama National Guard were called in to restore order.

Thus, within a week of Nash's decision to continue the freedom ride, student activists had prodded Farmer and King toward greater militancy and forced state and federal officials to intervene on their behalf. Segregationist violence had only made student protesters more determined. The youthful freedom riders were, in Nash's words, "dead serious. We're ready to give our lives."

Chronology

1966	Huey Newton and Bobby Seale found the Black Panther Party.
1967	Martin Luther King, Jr., publicly condemns the Vietnam War. In *Loving* v. *Virginia*, Supreme Court outlaws state laws banning interracial marriage. Extensive racial violence erupts in Newark, Detroit, and dozens of other American cities. The FBI secretly initiates a counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO) against black militants. Thurgood Marshall becomes the first African American Supreme Court Justice.
1968	Tet Offensive in Vietnam strengthens antiwar sentiment. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders reports that the nation is "moving toward two societies—one black, one white—separate but unequal." King is assassinated in Memphis.
1969	Republican Richard Nixon becomes president and Spiro Agnew vice president after calling for "law and order" during campaign.
1970	Police kill two black student protesters at Mississippi's Jackson State College.
1971	The Supreme Court overturns boxer Muhammad Ali's 1967 conviction for draft evasion. An inmate uprising at New York's Attica prison ends after police storm facility.
1972	New York Representative Shirley Chisholm opens her campaign for president. The National Black Political Convention is held in Gary, Indiana.
1973	African Americans are elected mayors of Los Angeles, Detroit, and Atlanta.
1974	President Richard Nixon resigns following the Watergate scandal. White residents of South Boston resist desegregation with violence.
1976	With black support, former Georgia governor Jimmy Carter is elected president.
1977	Televised miniseries "Roots" achieves record ratings. Andrew J. Young becomes United Nations ambassador.
1978	In *University of California Regents* v. *Bakke*, the Supreme Court rules against quotas for minority medical school applicants.

and black residents. He left Cambridge before early morning fires engulfed a black elementary school and several businesses. The next day Spiro T. Agnew, Maryland's recently elected Republican governor, arrived to inspect the damage. Announcing that state officials would "immediately arrest any person inciting to riot," Agnew said of Brown, "I hope they pick him up soon, put him away, and throw away the key." The governor refused to meet with local black leaders unless they first agreed to shun "lawlessness" and deno and other black power advocates.

Despite lack of evidence that Brown was responsible for the violence, Maryland officials charged him with arson and arrest Brown remained defiant. "We are on the eve of a Black revoluti dicted from jail. Brown was released on bond, but in September arrested for carrying a weapon across state lines while under Although again released on bond, he was prohibited from traveling they do to me is not going to stop the revolution," Brown insisted.

The Cambridge violence was neither the most deadly nc destructive racial outbreak of the "long, hot summer" of 1967, but i new era in American politics by focusing national attention on Agnew and the opposing forces they represented. Expressing t volatile racial emotions in their inflammatory rhetoric, the two me rose from obscurity to national prominence and came to symbolize t divide between "black power" militants and white "law and order"

Some supporters of Agnew and Brown considered them mode than extremists. Agnew had been elected governor with conside and liberal support. Brown had been expected to draw less publ than had the more flamboyant Carmichael during his tumultuous ye chair. In more peaceful times, Brown and Agnew might have avoi versy, but both were soon caught up in the turbulent racial climate 1960s. By threatening armed rebellion against the nation's establish order, Brown expressed the anger felt by many African Americans. I speeches inadvertently strengthened white support for police sup black militancy. While Congress considered antiriot legislation ("H. Rap Brown law" by some reporters), FBI director J. Edgar H demned not only Brown and Carmichael but also King as "voci brands." Agnew's acerbic criticisms of black militants soon made hi figure in national Republican circles, and the following year he ur became the party's vice presidential candidate.

During the years following the summer of 1967, American societ divided over racial issues. The interracial coalition that had made p passage of major civil rights legislation in the mid-1960s splintered, disputes over the Vietnam War and over policies developed to impl rights reforms—especially busing to achieve school desegregation a tive action efforts intended to reverse historical patterns of racial exc assassination of King and the white backlash against black milit major setbacks to those seeking civil rights reforms through nonvi interracial cooperation. But the black power movement faltered as v external repression and internal divisions. Although black power milita aged racial pride and expressed resentment of long-standing racial racial unity and power proved elusive. As black militant groups st survive during the 1970s, black scholars, writers, and artists gave su black power rhetoric through their perceptive depictions of Africar life and history. The revolutionary objectives sought by Brown and power advocates were not achieved, but a new generation of bla

CHAPTER 5

The New Politics of the Great Depression

The Scottsboro Boys

"The next time you want by, just tell me you want by and I let you by," Haywood Patterson remembered telling the young white hobo who stepped on his hand as both clung to the side of a freight train on March 25, 1931. Nineteen years old at the time, Patterson was himself a hobo. He had joined thousands of other people riding the rails in search of work as the Great Depression tightened its grip on Americans. This day, he was traveling across northern Alabama on his way to Memphis. Patterson had encountered hardship even before the stock market crash of 1929 that sent the economy reeling. His parents, Janie and Claude Patterson, had worked as sharecroppers on a Georgia farm. Like many other black farmers, the couple struggled to pay off the debts that tied them to their white landlord. When his father found work in Chattanooga and moved the family there, young Patterson felt compelled to leave school after the third grade to help support his younger siblings. Venturing throughout the South and as far north as Ohio looking for employment, he found only temporary, low-paying jobs. Through hard experience, Patterson learned that he had to stand up for himself. But he could hardly have anticipated how much his life would change as a result of his brief confrontation with a white teenager.

"Nigger, I don't ask you when I want by," the teen shouted. "What you doing on this train anyway?"

"Look, I just tell you, the next time you want by, you just tell me you want by and I let you by."

"Nigger bastard, this is a white man's train. You better get off. All you black bastards better get off!"

"You white sonsofbitches, we got as much right here as you," Patterson yelled back.

Chronology

1929	The stock market crashes, signaling the beginning of the Great Depression.
1931	After eight of nine black youths accused of rape in Alabama are sentenced to death, Communists launch "Free the Scottsboro Boys" campaign.
1932	In *Powell* v. *Alabama*, the Supreme Court rules that the Scottsboro defendants must be retried because Alabama officials violated the Fourteenth Amendment by denying them adequate legal counsel.
1933	Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt becomes president and immediately launches the New Deal. Robert Weaver, named race relations advisor in the Interior Department's Housing Division, is the Roosevelt administration's first African American appointee. W. E. B. Du Bois and other black leaders gather in Amenia, NY, to discuss the NAACP's future direction.
1934	Du Bois is forced from editorship of the NAACP's *The Crisis*.
1935	Mary McLeod Bethune founds the National Council of Negro Women and receives the Spingarn Medal from the NAACP. Du Bois publishes *Black Reconstruction in America*. In *Norris* v. *Alabama*, the Supreme Court again overturns the conviction of a Scottsboro defendant.
1936	The National Negro Congress is formed, with A. Philip Randolph as president. Bethune becomes director of the Division of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration (NYA) and organizes the Federal Council on Negro Affairs, better known as the Black Cabinet. With black support, Roosevelt wins presidential election by a landslide.
1937	Alabama officials agree to drop charges against four of the Scottsboro defendants, but others remained imprisoned. Randolph's Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters gains union recognition. Joe Louis becomes world heavyweight champion.
1938	In *Missouri ex rel. Gaines* v. *Canada*, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that states must provide equal, even if separate, educational facilities for African Americans.
1939	Marian Anderson sings to a large audience at the Lincoln Memorial after being denied the opportunity to perform at Daughters of the American Revolution's Constitution Hall. Jazz singer Billie Holiday popularizes the antilynching song "Strange Fruit."
1940	The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund is established under the leadership of Thurgood Marshall. Richard Wright publishes *Native Son*. President Franklin Roosevelt announces that African Americans will have equal opportunities in the military but rejects calls for desegregation of Armed Forces.

While a public voice initially proved dangerous, black women's coming to voice ironically fostered the emergence of a new challenge. The new public safe space provided by black women's success allowed longstanding differences among black women structured along axes of sexuality, social class, nationality, religion, and region to emerge. At this point, whether African American women can fashion a singular "voice" about the black *woman's* position remains less an issue than how black women's voices collectively construct, affirm, and maintain a dynamic black *women's* self-defined standpoint. Given the increasingly troublesome political context affecting black women as a group (Massey and Denton 1993; Squires 1994), such solidarity is essential. Thus, ensuring group unity while recognizing the tremendous heterogeneity that operates within the boundaries of the term "black women" comprises one fundamental challenge now confronting African American women.

Current debates about whether black women's standpoint should be named "womanism" or "black feminism" reflect this basic challenge of accommodating diversity among black women. In her acclaimed volume of essays, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, Alice Walker (1983) introduced four meanings of the term "womanist." According to Walker's first definition, a "womanist" was "a black feminist or feminist of color" (xi). Thus, on some basic level, Walker herself uses the two terms as being virtually interchangeable. Like Walker, many African American women see little difference between the two since both support a common agenda of black women's self-definition and self-determination. As Barbara Omolade points out, "black feminism is sometimes referred to as womanism because both are concerned with struggles against sexism and racism by black women who are themselves part of the black community's efforts to achieve equity and liberty" (Omolade 1994, xx).

But despite similar beliefs expressed by African American women who define themselves as black feminists, as womanists, as both, or, in some cases, as neither, increasing attention seems devoted to delineating the differences, if any between groups naming themselves as "womanists" or "black feminists." The *name* given to black women's collective standpoint seems to matter, but why?

In this paper, I explore some of the theoretical implications of using the terms "womanism" and "black feminism" to name a black women's standpoint. My purpose is not to classify either the works of black women or African American women themselves into one category or the other. Rather, I aim to examine how the effort to categorize obscures more basic challenges that confront African American women as a group.

Womanism

Alice Walker's multiple definitions of the term "womanism" in *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, shed light on the issue of why many African American women prefer the term womanism to black feminism. Walker offers two contradictory meanings of "womanism." On the one hand, Walker clearly sees womanism as rooted in black women's concrete history in racial and gender oppression. Taking the term from the Southern black folk expression of mothers to female children "you acting womanish," Walker suggests that black women's concrete history fosters a womanist worldview accessible primarily and perhaps exclusively to black women. "Womanish" girls acted in outrageous, courageous, and willful ways, attributes that freed them from the conventions long limiting white women. Womanish girls wanted to know more and in greater depth than what was considered good for them. They were responsible, in charge, and serious.

Despite her disclaimer that womanists are "traditionally universalist," a philosophy invoked by her metaphor of the garden where room exists for all flowers to bloom equally and differently, Walker simultaneously implies that black women are somehow superior to white women because of this black folk tradition. Defining womanish as the opposite of the "frivolous, irresponsible, not serious" girlish, Walker constructs black women's experiences in opposition to those of white women. This meaning of womanism sees it as being different from and superior to feminism, a difference allegedly stemming from black and white women's different histories with American racism. Walker's much cited phrase, "Womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender" (1983, xii) clearly seems designed to set up this type of comparison—black women are "womanist" while white women remain merely "feminist."

This usage sits squarely in black nationalist traditions premised on the belief that blacks and whites cannot function as equals while inhabiting the same territory or participating in the same social institutions (Pinkney 1976; Van Deburg 1992). Since black nationalist philosophy posits that white people as a group have a vested interest in continuing a system of white supremacy, it typically sees little use for black integration or assimilation into a system predicated on black subjugation. Black nationalist approaches also support a black moral superiority over whites because of black suffering.

Walker's use of the term womanism promises black women who both operate within these black nationalist assumptions and who simultaneously see the need to address "feminist" issues within African American communities partial reconciliation of these two seemingly incompatible philosophies. Womanism offers a distance from the "enemy," in this case, whites generally and white women in particular, yet still raises the issue of gender. Due to its endorsement of racial separatism, this interpretation of womanism offers a vocabulary for addressing gender issues within African American communities without challenging the racially segregated terrain that characterizes American social institutions.

This use of womanism sidesteps an issue central to many white feminists, namely, finding ways to foster interracial cooperation among women. African American women embracing black nationalist philosophies typically express little interest in working with white women—in fact, white women are defined as part of the problem. Moreover, womanism appears to provide an avenue to

foster stronger relationships between black women and black men, another very important issue for African American women regardless of political perspective. Again, Walker's definition provides guidance where she notes that womanists are "committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male *and* female" (xi). Many black women view feminism as a movement that at best, is exclusively for women and, at worst, dedicated to attacking or eliminating men. Sherley Williams takes this view when she notes that in contrast to feminism, "womanist inquiry ... assumes that it can talk both effectively and productively about men" (1990, 70). Womanism seemingly supplies a way for black women to address gender oppression without attacking black men.

Walker also presents a visionary meaning for womanism. As part of her second definition, Walker has a black girl pose the question "Mama, why are we brown, pink, and yellow, and our cousins are white, beige, and black?" (xi). The response of "the colored race is just like a flower garden, with every color flower represented," both criticizes colorism within African American communities and broadens the notion of humanity to make all people people of color. Reading this passage as a metaphor, womanism thus furnishes a vision where the women and men of different colors coexist like flowers in a garden yet retain their cultural distinctiveness and integrity.

This meaning of womanism seems rooted in another major political tradition within African American politics, namely, a pluralist version of black empowerment (Van Deburg 1992). Pluralism views society as being composed of various ethnic and interest groups, all of whom compete for goods and services. Equity lies in providing equal opportunities, rights, and respect to all groups. By retaining black cultural distinctiveness and integrity, pluralism offers a modified version of racial integration premised not on individual assimilation but on *group* integration. Clearly rejecting what they perceive as being the limited vision of feminism projected by North American white women, many black women theorists have been attracted to this joining of pluralism and racial integration in this interpretation of Walker's "womanism." For example, black feminist theologian Katie Geneva Cannon's (1988) work *Black Womanist Ethics* invokes this sense of the visionary content of womanism. As an ethical system, womanism is always in the making—it is not a closed fixed system of ideas but one that continually evolves through its rejection of all forms of oppression and commitment to social justice.

Walker's definition thus manages to invoke three important yet contradictory philosophies that frame black social and political thought, namely, black nationalism via her claims of black women's moral and epistemological superiority via suffering under racial and gender oppression, pluralism via the cultural integrity provided by the metaphor of the garden, and integration/assimilation via her claims that black women are "traditionally universalist" (Van Deburg 1992). Just as black nationalism and racial integration coexist in uneasy partnership, with pluralism occupying the contested terrain between the two, Walker's

definitions of womanism demonstrate comparable contradictions. By both grounding womanism in the concrete experiences of African American women and generalizing about the potential for realizing a humanist vision of community via the experiences of African American women, Walker depicts the potential for oppressed people to possess a moral vision and standpoint on society that grows from their situation of oppression. This standpoint also emerges as an incipient foundation for a more humanistic, just society. Overall, these uses of Walker's term "womanism" creates conceptual space that reflects bona fide philosophical differences that exist among African American women.[1]

One particularly significant feature of black women's use of womanism concerns the part of Walker's definition that remains neglected. A more troublesome line for those self-defining as womanist precedes the often cited passage, "committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male *and* female" (xi). Just before Walker offers the admonition that womanists, by definition, are committed to wholeness, she states that a womanist is also "a woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually" (xi). The relative silence of womanists on this dimension of womanism speaks to black women's continued ambivalence in dealing with the links between race, gender and sexuality, in this case, the "taboo" sexuality of lesbianism. In her essay "The Truth That Never Hurts: Black Lesbians in Fiction in the 1980s," black feminist critic Barbara Smith (1990) points out that African American women have yet to come to terms with homophobia in African American communities. Smith applauds the growth of black women's fiction in the 1980s, but also observes that within black feminist intellectual production, black lesbians continue to be ignored. Despite the fact that some of the most prominent and powerful black women thinkers claimed by both womanists and black feminists were and are lesbians, this precept often remains unacknowledged in the work of African American writers. In the same way that many people read the Bible, carefully selecting the parts that agree with their worldview and rejecting the rest, selective readings of Walker's womanism produce comparable results.

Another significant feature of black women's multiple uses of womanism concerns the potential for a slippage between the real and the ideal. To me, there is a distinction between describing black women's historical responses to racial and gender oppression as being womanist, and using womanism as a visionary term delineating an ethical or ideal vision of humanity for all people. Identifying the liberatory *potential* within black women's communities that emerges from concrete, historical experiences remains quite different from claiming that black women have already *arrived* at this ideal, "womanist" endpoint. Refusing to distinguish carefully between these two meanings of womanism thus collapses the historically real and the future ideal into one privileged position for African American women in the present. Taking this position is reminiscent of the response of some black women to the admittedly narrow feminist agenda forwarded by white women in the early 1970s. Those

black women proclaimed that they were already "liberated" while in actuality, this was far from the truth.

Black Feminism

African American women who use the term black feminism also attach varying interpretations to this term. As black feminist theorist and activist Pearl Cleage defines it, feminism is "the belief that women are full human beings capable of participation and leadership in the full range of human activities—intellectual, political, social, sexual, spiritual and economic" (1993, 28). In its broadest sense, feminism constitutes both an ideology and a global political movement that confronts sexism, a social relationship in which males as a group have authority over females as a group.

Globally, a feminist agenda encompasses several major areas. First and foremost, the economic status of women and issues associated with women's global poverty, such as educational opportunities, industrial development, environmental racism, employment policies, prostitution, and inheritance laws concerning property, constitute a fundamental global women's issue. Political rights for women, such as gaining the vote, rights of assembly, traveling in public, officeholding, the rights of political prisoners, and basic human rights violations against women such as rape and torture constitute a second area of concern. A third area of global concern consists of marital and family issues such as marriage and divorce laws, child custody policies, and domestic labor. Women's health and survival issues, such as reproductive rights, pregnancy, sexuality, and AIDS constitute another area of global feminist concern. This broad global feminist agenda finds varying expressions in different regions of the world and among diverse populations.

Using the term "black feminism" positions African American women to examine how the particular constellation of issues affecting black women in the United States are part of issues of women's emancipation struggles globally (Davis 1989; James and Busia 1994). In the context of feminism as a global political movement for women's rights and emancipation, the patterns of feminist knowledge and politics that African American women encounter in the United States represent but a narrow segment refracted through the dichotomous racial politics of white supremacy in the United States. Because the media in the United States portrays feminism as a for-whites-only movement, and because many white women have accepted this view of American apartheid that leads to segregated institutions of all types, including feminist organizations, feminism is often viewed by both black[s] and whites as the cultural property of white women (Caraway 1991).

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Despite their media erasure, many African American women have long struggled against this exclusionary feminism and have long participated in

what appear to be for-whites-only feminist activity. In some cases, some black women have long directly challenged the racism within feminist organizations controlled by white women. Sojourner Truth's often cited phrase "ain't I a woman" typifies this longstanding tradition (Joseph 1990). At other times, even though black women's participation in feminist organizations remains largely invisible, for example, Pauli Murray's lack of recognition as a founding member of NOW, black women participated in feminist organizations in positions of leadership. In still other cases, black women combine allegedly divergent political agendas. For example, Pearl Cleage observes that black feminist politics and black nationalist politics need not be contradictory. She notes, "I don't think you can be a true Black Nationalist, dedicated to the freedom of black people *without* being a feminist, black *people* being made up of both men and *women*, after all, and feminism being nothing more or less than a belief in the political, social and legal equality of women" (1994, 180).

Using the term "black feminism" disrupts the racism inherent in presenting feminism as a for-whites-only ideology and political movement. Inserting the adjective "black" challenges the assumed whiteness of feminism and disrupts the false universal of this term for both white and black women. Since many white women think that black women lack feminist consciousness, the term "black feminist" both highlights the contradictions underlying the assumed whiteness of feminism and serves to remind white women that they comprise neither the only nor the normative "feminists." The term "black feminism" also makes many African American women uncomfortable because it challenges black women to confront their own views on sexism and women's oppression. Because the majority of African American women encounter their own experiences repackaged in racist school curricula and media, even though they may support the very ideas on which feminism rests, large numbers of African American women reject the term "feminism" because of what they perceive as its association with whiteness. Many see feminism as operating exclusively within the terms white and American and perceive its opposite as being black and American. When given these two narrow and false choices, black women routinely choose "race" and let the lesser question of "gender" go. In this situation, those black women who identify with feminism must be recoded as being either non-black or less authentically black. The term "black feminist" also disrupts a longstanding and largely unquestioned reliance on black racial solidarity as a deep tap root in black political philosophies, especially black nationalist and cultural pluralist frameworks (Dyson 1993). Using family rhetoric that views black family, community, race and nation as a series of nested boxes, each gaining meaning from the other, certain rules apply to all levels of this "family" organization. Just as families have internal naturalized hierarchies that give, for example, older siblings authority over younger ones or males over females, groups defining themselves as racial-families invoke similar rules (Collins forthcoming). Within African American communities,

one such rule is that black women will support black men, no matter what, an unwritten family rule that was manipulated quite successfully during the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings. Even if Anita Hill was harassed by Clarence Thomas, many proclaimed in barber shops and beauty parlors, she should have kept her mouth shut and not "aired dirty laundry." Even though Thomas recast the life of his own sister through the framework of an unworthy welfare queen, in deference to rules of racial solidarity, black women should have kept our collective mouths shut. By counseling black women not to remain silent in the face of abuse, whoever does it, black feminism comes into conflict with codes of silence such as these.

Several difficulties accompany the use of the term "black feminism." One involves the problem of balancing the genuine concerns of black women against continual pressures to absorb and recast such interests within white feminist frameworks. For example, ensuring political rights and economic development via collective action to change social institutions remains a strong focal point in the feminism of African American women and women of color. Yet the emphasis on themes such as personal identity, understanding "difference," deconstructing women's multiple selves, and the simplistic model of the political expressed through the slogan the "personal is political," that currently permeate North American white women's feminism in the academy can work to sap black feminism of its critical edge. Efforts of contemporary black women thinkers to explicate a long-standing black women's intellectual tradition bearing the label "black feminism" can attract the attention of white women armed with a different feminist agenda. Issues raised by black women not seen as explicitly "feminist" ones, primarily issues that affect only women, receive much less sanction. In a sense, the constant drumbeat of having to support white women in their efforts to foster an anti-racist feminism that allows black women access to the global network of women's activism diverts black women's energy away from addressing social issues facing African American communities. Because black feminism appears to be so well-received by white women, in the context of dichotomous racial politics of the United States, some black women quite rightfully suspect its motives.

Another challenge facing black feminism concerns the direct conflict between black feminism and selected elements of black religious traditions. For example, the visibility of white lesbians within North American feminism overall comes into direct conflict with many black women's articles of faith that homosexuality is a sin. While individual African American women may be accepting of gays, lesbians and bisexuals as individuals, especially if such individuals are African American, black women as a collectivity have simultaneously distanced themselves from social movements perceived as requiring acceptance of homosexuality. As one young black woman queried, "why do I have to accept lesbianism in order to support black feminism?" The association of feminism with lesbianism remains a problematic one for black women.

Reducing black lesbians to their sexuality, one that chooses women over men, reconfigures black lesbians as enemies of black men. This reduction not only constitutes a serious misreading of black lesbianism—black lesbians have fathers, brothers, and sons of their own and are embedded in a series of relationships as complex as their heterosexual brothers and sisters—it simultaneously diverts attention away from more important issues (Lorde 1984). Who ultimately benefits when the presence of black lesbians in any black social movement leads to its rejection by African Americans?

The theme of lesbianism and its association with feminism in the minds of many African Americans also overlaps with another concern of many African American women, namely their commitment to African American men. Another challenge confronting black feminism concerns its perceived separatism—many African Americans define black feminism as being exclusively for black women only and rejecting black men. In explaining her preference for "womanism," Sherley Anne Williams notes, "one of the most disturbing aspects of current black feminist criticism (is) its separatism—its tendency to see not only a *distinct* black female culture but to see that culture as a separate cultural form having more in common with white female experience than with the facticity of Afro-American life" (1990, 70). This is a valid criticism of black feminism, one that, in my mind, must be addressed if the major ideas of black feminism expect to avoid the danger of becoming increasingly separated from African American women's experiences and interests. But it also speaks to the larger issue of the continuing difficulty of positioning black feminism between black nationalism and North American white feminism. In effect, black feminism must come to terms with a white feminist agenda incapable of seeing its own racism as well as a black nationalist one resistant to grappling with its own sexism (White 1990). Finding a place that accommodates these seemingly contradictory agendas remains elusive (Christian 1989).

Beyond Naming

African American women's efforts to distinguish between womanism and black feminism illustrates how black women's placement in hierarchical power relations fosters different yet related allegiances to a black women's self-defined standpoint. While the surface differences distinguishing African American women who embrace womanism and black feminism appear to be minimal, black women's varying locations in neighborhoods, schools, and labor markets generate comparably diverse views on the strategies black women feel will ultimately lead to black women's self-determination. In a sense, while womanism's affiliation with black nationalism both taps an historic philosophy and a set of social institutions organized around the centrality of racial solidarity for black survival, this position can work to isolate womanism from global women's issues. At the same time, while black feminism's connections to existing women's struggles both domestically and globally fosters a clearer