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**“A RAY OF HOPE FOR LIBERATION”: BLACKS IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA
EXTENSION SERVICE, 1915-1970**

Volume I

By

Carmen Veneita Harris

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ABSTRACT

“A RAY OF HOPE FOR LIBERATION”: BLACKS IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA EXTENSION SERVICE, 1915-1970

By

Carmen Veneita Harris

This project is a study of the South Carolina Negro Extension Service (SCNES), a racially segregated unit of the South Carolina Extension Service (SCES), from 1915 to 1970. Using correspondence, and state and federal reports and publications, it constructs the history of the SCNES within white-dominated SCES and Federal Extension Service. It documents the impact of white administration on black extension agents' professional lives. Finally, it treats the interaction between black extension agents and their black clients to document the economic and social impact of the agents' work.

This project is a case study of the impact of Jim Crow on one of the southern public institutions for blacks. Racially segregated extension work came into existence from political compromises made in Congress and bureaucratic compromises between the United States Department of Agriculture and southern extension service officials. Black extension services experienced the same substandard funding and stunted institutional development as other for-black public service institutions. However, white control of the black service was never absolute or uncontested. Black civil rights groups and individual blacks living outside the South protested the mistreatment of black extension workers, which sometimes forced white state and federal extension officials to modify policies.

The SCNES offered college-educated blacks the opportunity to remain in and serve their state. Until the onset of the civil rights revolution, agents had a large amount

of daily autonomy. Although they suffered the typical vagaries of being a black worker in the South—lower salaries than whites, heavier workloads, frequent lack of respect from whites, and rank discrimination that limited their professional advancement—the agents were dedicated servants to their black clients. As government workers and public professionals, black agents held high status in their communities. The visible success of their programs inspired many rural blacks.

Although whites expected that extension work among blacks would produce a mollified peasantry, black extension work turned out to be a subversive force that undermined white supremacy and contributed to the demise of the Jim Crow South. The results of the agents' labors were both concrete and abstract. The concrete results for their clients included increased incomes from diversified farming, better clothing, more nutritious meals, improved homes and furnishings, reduced disease rates, better personal hygiene, increased pursuit of educational and economic opportunities, improved schools and surroundings, hot lunches, community recreation buildings, the construction of county and state camps for black youth, development of grass-roots leadership, and increased political participation.

The abstract results were for black South Carolinians more important. They experienced a transformation of the mind regarding their place in society. It introduced the "idea of progress," and a sense of entitlement to rural folk who, for generations, had been discouraged. Planning and leadership opportunities gave them intellectual and organizational skills—and self-confidence—to challenge second-class citizenship. Blacks' belief that they *deserved* equality was essential for the development of a *mass* psychology that led to challenges against southern white supremacy.

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DEDICATION

For my family . . . here and in the hereafter.

And

For my husband Steve Lowe, and for my daughters Bonnie and Mattie Harris-Lowe:
Thank you for always loving me, and for thinking I was wonderful even without a Ph.D.
My girls were one reason I didn't finish sooner but I regret none of the time I devoted to
them. No sacrifice is too great for you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank all the masters who have brought me to this point: my grandmother the late Ethel Mae Foster who used her third grade education to teach me how to write my alphabet when I was three and instill in me a love for education; the public school teachers for having high expectations of me; the faculty of the Clemson University history department for retraining an accounting major as a historian. Special thanks to Dr. Alan Schaffer and Dr. Theda Perdue who recruited me into the history program when my stumbles as an undergraduate made graduate school seem more of a dream than a possibility. Thanks also to Dr. Schaffer for his nurturing that did so much for my confidence.

Words cannot express the depth of my appreciation to Dr. Darlene Clark Hine for continuing to serve as my adviser as family life pushed my completion date well past my expectations and for serving as a model of scholarly excellence and womanist empowerment. I am humbled to have had her as my adviser. Thanks to the others at MSU who have given me support including Dean Patrick McConeghy and the members of my defense committee: Dr. Harry Reed, Dr. David Bailey, Dr. Anne Meyering, and Dr. Curtis Stokes. The History Department support staff was as important as my graduate colleagues and professors. Thanks Nancy, Mary, Peggy, Dale, Janet, and especially, Linda Werbish, and Theresa Marquez. I could not have finished my project without the archivists who gave assistance at Clemson University—especially Dennis Taylor, Jim Cross and Mike Kohl; South Carolina State University, and the National Archives. To Marshanda Smith, thanks for helping me make it through summer 2002, and for bringing the “sistas” to my defense! To Debbi and Viv for being my “sisters” for all these years.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I: INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION.....	1
--------------------------	----------

CHAPTER ONE: “GOD NEVER INTENDED THE NEGRO TO BE ANYTHING BUT THE SERVANT OF THE WHITE MAN”: TO BE NEGRO IN SOUTH

CAROLINA, 1910-1921	12
A Political Nadir for South Carolina Blacks.....	12
Black Society and Quality of Life	18
Health, Labor, and Immigration.....	21
Black Education in the Early Twentieth Century	24
The Great Migration and a Shifting Balance of Demographic Power	31
“A New [South Carolina] Negro”	33

PART II: EMERGENCE, 1915- 1930

CHAPTER TWO: “A SOCIAL BLUNDER OF THE WORST KIND”: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROFESSION

CHAPTER TWO: “A SOCIAL BLUNDER OF THE WORST KIND”: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROFESSION	35
White Politics in the World War I Era.....	36
Smith-Lever, the “Race Question,” and Progressivism.....	40
The Coming of Age of Black Interest Group Politics.....	45
South Carolina: A Case Study in the Racial Limits of Progressivism.....	50
South Carolina Extension Work before Smith-Lever	55
Clemson Agricultural College and Black Extension Work	72
Controlling Black Extension Work.....	88
“All the Women Were White”: Blacks and Home Demonstration Work	93
Conclusion	117

CHAPTER THREE: “. . . [T]HE OUTLOOK SEEMS VERY ENCOURAGING AND BRIGHT”: TO BE A BLACK EXTENSION AGENT IN SOUTH

CAROLINA.....	123
Early Black Agents: Personal Reputation vs. Personal Preparation	124
A Shadow Administration: The Decreasing Importance of South Carolina State College	126
Solidifying South Carolina State College’s Prestige in Extension Work	142
“Reliable” Men: The Racial Protocol of Black Extension Work, Part I.....	146
“Sensible Women”: The Racial Protocol of Black Extension Work, Part II.....	170
“Marking Race”: Professional Titles in the Black Extension Service.....	172
Financing the Black Extension Service	174
Professional Pay: In Black and White	183

Professional Insecurity.....	195
Conclusion	199

CHAPTER FOUR: “AN INFLUENCE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION”: RESULTS OF EARLY EXTENSION WORK IN SOUTH CAROLINA	201
In Black and White: Competing Visions of Black Extension Work	202
The Economics of Black Labor	209
Educating for Servility?: White Expectations of Black Extension Work.....	229
Education for Autonomy?: Black Expectations of Extension Work	238
Building People: The Work of Black Home Demonstration Agents.....	242
Broadening Horizons: The Life of the Agents and Their Clients.....	248
Building Community: Overcoming Apathy.....	252
Keeping the Interest of the People	260
Becoming Race Leaders: Extension Workers and Traditional Black Leadership Groups	263
The Impact of Black Extension Work	266
The Development of Local Leadership.....	270
Competing Allegiances: Negotiating the Divide between White and Black Expectations.....	273
Conclusion	276

<i>Part III: MATURATION, 1931-1949</i>

CHAPTER FIVE: “A NEW ERA IS APPROACHING”: EXTENSION WORK IN THE MIDDLE YEARS, (1931-1949)	280
From an Expedient to a Profession: The Maturation of the Black Extension Service.....	281
Training for a Profession	285
The Rosenwald School in South Carolina	290
Putting a Price on Extension Work: Black Extension Work and the Great Depression.....	293
Rescuing Black Extension Work: The Role of National Interest Groups and Individuals.....	306
White Southern Resistance to Pressure Groups.....	312
Seeking a Meaningful Role: The Conference of Presidents of Negro Land-Grant Colleges.....	318
A Hostile Bureaucracy: The Federal Extension Service and the NLGC Presidents	325
The 1940s: A Turning Point for Black Extension Work	337
A New Return to Normalcy? Setbacks in the Post-War Years.....	349
Resisting the Expansion of Institutional Racism: Segregated Camping and 4-H.....	352
Toward a New Type of Leadership	362
Conclusion	365

CHAPTER SIX: A STABILIZING INFLUENCE AND A CONTENTED PEOPLE: THE LIVES OF THE AGENTS AND THEIR CLIENTS IN THE MIDDLE YEARS.....	368
A Rare and Fragile Breed: Black Public Professionals in South Carolina	369
Learning the Ropes: Professionalizing Black Extension Workers	388
“Municipal Buildings . . . Were Not Open to Us”: Professionals without Offices.....	395
Standing Up for the Race: Extension Agents Combat Racial Discrimination.....	397
The “Possibilities of . . . my People”: Home Demonstration Agents in the Community	410
A New Era of Freedom: World War II and the Transformation of Rural South Carolina.....	416
Becoming Political: Rural South Carolina Blacks in the Middle Years.....	420
Black Life and Extension Work in the Middle Years.....	432
“Eager to Serve”: Local Leaders in the Middle Years.....	447
Achieving Success: The Activities of Black Rural Women	452
The “Better Farm Living” Campaign	454
Improving Everyday Life: Health and Happiness among Afro-South Carolinians.....	466
Educating for the Future: Home Demonstration Agents and Black Women.....	475
The Economic and Social Impact of Black Extension Work	479
Conclusion	481

<i>PART IV: THE TRANSFORMATION OF AN INSTITUTION, 1950-1970</i>
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CHAPTER SEVEN: “THE CRUSHING OF INITIATIVE AND PERSONALITY”: THE DEMISE OF BLACK EXTENSION WORK, 1950-1964.....	487
Challenging 4-H Segregation in the <i>Brown</i> Era	488
Segregation as Federal Policy.....	496
The “Color Blind” Philosophy of the Extension Service.....	499
Extension Work and the Early Civil Rights Struggles in South Carolina	505
Resistance and Accommodation: South Carolina and Civil Rights in the 1950s.....	511
The Politics of Black Extension Work.....	515
An Unknown Connection: <i>Brown v. Board</i> of Education and the Black Extension Service.....	518
The “Integration” of the South Carolina Extension Service.....	522
Reactionaries or Prophets? Black Agents’ Response to Massive Resistance.....	526
Black Extension Workers And The Rising Civil Rights Struggle.....	537
A Community in Conflict?: Black Public Professionals and Black Client-Activists	539
A Model for Modern Living: The South Carolina Demonstration House.....	543
Working with the People: Developing the Family and Community Politic	546
Transforming the Mind: The Intellectual Impact of Black Extension Work.....	549
From the Farm to the Court House: The <i>Briggs</i> Case and Extension Clients	552
Extension Work and the Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue.....	558

Disintegration before Integration	571
The Civil Rights Act of 1964: A Losing Battle?.....	573
CHAPTER EIGHT: “AN EMPTY DREAM”?: INTEGRATION AND ITS LEGACY, 1964-1970	576
“A Revolution in Extension Work”: The Civil Rights Act of 1964.....	578
The U. S. Commission on Civil Rights’ Equal Opportunities in Farm Programs	579
No More Excuses: Desegregating the Extension Service	584
Getting “on the Ball”: The Southern Response to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.....	585
The Impact of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on the South Carolina Extension Service	586
The Integration Experience	592
A New Agent for a New Time	594
Backlash and Resistance	597
Taking on the South Carolina Extension Service: The Role of Outside Groups.....	599
Segregation within Integration.....	600
Maintaining White Dominance: The Rating System and the Question of Merit	603
Bureaucracies in Conflict: The Department of Justice and the U. S. D. A.	608
Fighting for Equity in Agriculture: The Role of Grassroots Activism	610
The Removal of “The Mask”: The Penn Center Statement on Black Extension Work.....	615
“Not an Integration Agency”: Justifying Discrimination.....	625
Integrating the Communities.....	627
“Sticking Our Necks Out”: Federal Support of Reactionary Policies.....	632
Defending Themselves: Black Agents Assert Their Rights.....	634
Change Only by “Mutual Consent”: The Federal Audit of the Extension Program	638
Return to the Past?: The Civil Rights and the Extension Service in the Nixon Years... ..	642
Preserving the Service at all Costs: Promoting “Unintentional” Segregation	645
South Carolina Integration Stories: Successes at the Local Level	647
A Difficult Adjustment: Creating an Equitable Extension Service.....	652
Challenging White Privilege: The Elloree Community Rises Again.....	658
“Decades of Neglect”: The Howze Study of Black Extension Work	667
Seeing New Possibilities: Rural Black Folk Envision a New Age	669
The Death of Old Dreams and the Birth of New Ones	671
A Transformed People: The Meaning of Black Extension Work	676
CONCLUSION.....	678

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Table 4: Employees of the South Carolina Extension
Service, 1930-1949..... 684

APPENDIX B: Table 5: Employees of the South Carolina Extension
Service, 1950 to 1969 687

APPENDIX C: Agents of the South Carolina Negro Extension Service..... 689

BIBLIOGRAPHY 694

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Black Jeanes Teacher Employed in South Carolina by Sex, 1909-1921	97
Table 2: Negro Agricultural and Home Extension Agents in the Southern States and in South Carolina.....	102
Table 3: Employees of the South Carolina Extension Service, 1920-1929	117

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Collection Locations

STICUL	Strom Thurmond Institute, Clemson University Libraries, Clemson, South Carolina.
SCSUHC	South Carolina State University Historical Collection, Miller F. Whittaker Library, Orangeburg, South Carolina.
NAII	National Archives II at College Park Maryland.
SCL	South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina.

Citation abbreviations

National Archives

Entry 17 A, RG 16, NAII	General Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1906-1975, RG 16, {Correspondence for 1906-1913}, National Archives II at College Park Maryland.
Entry 17 B, RG 16, NAII	General Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1906-1975, RG 16, {Correspondence for 1914-1916}, National Archives II at College Park Maryland.
Entry 17 C, RG 16, NAII	General Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1906-1975, RG 16, {Correspondence for 1917-1919}, National Archives II at College Park Maryland.
Entry 17 D, RG 16, NAII	General Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1906-1975, RG 16, {Correspondence for 1920-1922}, National Archives II at College Park Maryland.
Entry 17 E, RG 16, NAII	General Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1906-1975, RG 16, {Correspondence for 1923-1925}, National Archives II at College Park Maryland.
Entry 17 F, RG 16, NAII	General Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1906-1975, RG 16, {Correspondence for 1926-1928}, National Archives II at College Park Maryland.
Entry 17 G, , RG 16, NAII	General Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1906-1975, RG 16, {Correspondence for 1929-1931}, National Archives II at College Park Maryland.

Entry 17 H, RG 16, NAI	General Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1906-1975, RG 16, {Correspondence for 1932-1934}, National Archives II at College Park Maryland.
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Entry 17 L, RG 16, NAI	General Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1906-1975, RG 16, {Correspondence for 1941}, National Archives II at College Park Maryland.
Entry 17 M, RG 16, NAI	General Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1906-1975, RG 16, {Correspondence for 1942-1944}, National Archives II at College Park Maryland.
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Entry 17 Q, RG 16, NAI	General Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1906-1975, RG 16, {Correspondence for 1954-1956}, National Archives II at College Park Maryland.
Entry 17 R, RG 16, NAI	General Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1906-1975, RG 16, {Correspondence for 1957-1960}, National Archives II at College Park Maryland.

Entry 17 S, RG 16, NAI	General Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1906-1975, RG 16, {Correspondence for 1961-1962}, National Archives II at College Park Maryland.
Entry 17 T, RG 16, NAI	General Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1906-1975, RG 16, {Correspondence for 1963-1965}, National Archives II at College Park Maryland.
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Entry 17 W, RG 16, NAI	General Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1906-1975, RG 16, {Correspondence for 1969-1970}, National Archives II at College Park Maryland.
Entry 3, RG 33, NAI.	Records of the Federal Extension Service, Entry 3, General Correspondence of the Extension Service and Its Predecessors, June 1907-June 1943, Record Group 33; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
Entry 3-A, RG 33, NAI.	Records of the Federal Extension Service, Entry 3-A, General Correspondence, 1945-1949, Record Group 33; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
Entry 5, RG 33, NAI.	Records of the Federal Extension Service, Entry 5, General Correspondence, July 1943-June 1946, Record Group 33; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
Entry 1002, RG 33, NAI.	Records of the Federal Extension Service, Entry 1002, General Correspondence, 1947-1970. Record Group 33; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Clemson University

Series 33	Cooperative Extension Service Field Operations, 1909-1985, Strom Thurmond Institute, Clemson University Libraries, Clemson, South Carolina.
Series 32	Cooperative Extension Service: Administration, 1918-1987 Thurmond Institute, Clemson University Libraries, Clemson, South Carolina.

Series 65 Agricultural Business Office: Personnel Records, 1920-1963, Strom Thurmond Institute, Clemson University Libraries, Clemson, South Carolina.

South Carolina State University

Folder 91 “Extension Work Matters, 1926-1932,” South Carolina State University Historical Collections. Miller F. Whittaker Library, Orangeburg, South Carolina.

Folder 92 “Extension Work Matters B-W-1929-1933; Itinerant Extension Workers; Demonstration Workers General 1933-1934; H. E. Daniels, J. P. Burgess, M. E. Pugues, W. W. Wilkins, M. B. Paul,” South Carolina State University Historical Collections. Miller F. Whittaker Library, Orangeburg, South Carolina.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a historical "biography" of the black extension service in South Carolina from its origins in the early 1900s, through its absorption into South Carolina's white extension service by 1970.¹ The South Carolina Negro Extension Service was a racially segregated sector of the state's public bureaucracy. It owes its genesis, in part to national political shifts caused by the Great Migration. It was also the result of the desire of the political appointees of the second Democrat elected president since 1856 to maintain his hold on office. This service personnel consisted of black men and women who served the state's rural black population—only landowners initially—to ameliorate the hardships of rural life. Later as these agents began to work with black sharecroppers and tenants whites expected them that their efforts would stabilize the rural population so that white landlords would have a reliable labor supply.

The dissertation is written from three different but integrally related perspectives. First, it is an institutional history. To understand what the black extension service in South Carolina was and how it operated, it must be placed in the context of the twentieth century formalization of extension work. Extension work had many nineteenth century antecedents both in white and black colleges. Those separate histories intersect first when the General Education Board began to financially support a variety of groups—academic,

¹The term "extension service" consisted both agricultural extension work and home demonstration work. Agricultural extension work was performed by men who taught farmers improved methods of crop production, animal husbandry, and marketable agriculture. Home demonstration work was performed by women who instructed farm women in home gardening and canning, home beautification, and the arts of the household economy. When the term, "extension service," is used in this dissertation, it refers to the administrative leadership of the program that was dominated by white men. Gender is marked by references to agriculture or home demonstration.

community, and even state governments—that took the gospel of scientific farming and domestic science to rural environs. These programs began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, at a time Rayford Logan called "the nadir of race relations." At that historical moment, blacks in southern states found themselves increasingly isolated in a society where segregation was becoming legally sanctioned. For example, six years before *Plessy v. Ferguson* was enacted, the 1890 Morrill Act permitted the equal division of funds for land-grant colleges between black and white institutions in states that had established segregated colleges.

These histories fully merge when the Smith-Lever Act was passed in 1914. Extension work was firmly established within the state land-grant college system. Smith-Lever would reveal what *Plessy* did not really mean "separate but equal." Land-grant colleges in states without segregation received far more funding from the 1890 act than those southern colleges that had to share it with black colleges. Southerners did not want to see that reality repeated with Smith-Lever funding. Southern white land-grant colleges gained full control of Smith-Lever funds but only after a fierce contest between those who favored an autonomous and equally-funded system of black extension work and those who opposed it.

White dominance of extension work at the state level was complemented by the growth of a racially segregated federal government bureaucracy in the early twentieth century. The Federal Extension Service was one sector of that bureaucracy. The central mission of the Federal Extension Service became the solidification of its relationship with the white land-grant colleges that managed extension work in every state. Officials' long

tenures of employment contributed to a conservative cast in policy-making decisions.

"Familial" relationships developed between the federal and state extension service officials who developed warm personal and collegial relationships. On occasion employees moved from the state to the federal bureaucracy or vice versa. Federal bureaucrats had a vested interest in the success of white state extension services and consciously nurtured interagency dependence. Black extension services were excluded from this developing relationship because black extension officials in the southern states had no decision-making roles as black extension work was subordinated to white extension work.

The institutional history also points out how politics and bureaucracy intersect to have an impact on public policy. The inner workings of the federal extension service, as revealed in correspondence offers an intimate look at the willingness of politicians to cede control over issues of public interest to "experts" rather than become actively involved in controversial matters.

Second, this dissertation is a state-level study—a case study—of the impact of state politics, state and federal extension policy on the institutional development of what was known as the South Carolina Negro Extension Service. It was one of the segregated black extension services that existed in the South during the years this dissertation covers. While lesser known and less studied than the black services of Alabama and Virginia, the institutional history of the South Carolina black extension service is important because demonstrates several important points. Before Smith-Lever was enacted, there were concerns among some southerners about the emergence of autonomous black extension

work. It shows that, in the absence of someone like Booker T. Washington who could assuage them, whites tended to identify programs that offered blacks opportunities to improve themselves financially with subversion. Local politics and demagoguery often determined what could be done for blacks. Whites were hostile to any black who engaged in non-menial labor and held their greatest animosity for blacks who worked under the aegis of the government.

Third, this dissertation is social history of blacks in South Carolina. The interaction of black agents with black clients demonstrates that segregation and the institutional racism was only one facet of black extension agents' experience. The positive results of black agents' work with black clients, the agents and clients mutual reinforcement of their self-worth in a society that considered them worthless, is the core of the significance of the service. It represents an integral chapter of the history of black South Carolinians' rise from servility to independence.

The dissertation is organized into four parts. In part I, "Introduction," I provide an overview of the entire dissertation. In Chapter 1, I reconstruct early twentieth century race relations in South Carolina to document the vital role of race in black life during the years when Smith-Lever was enacted. I demonstrate that after the legal decision in *Plessy*, that the trend in South Carolina was toward separate and unequal public spaces and institutions.

Part II, "Emergence, 1915-1930" consists of chapters 2 through 4. Chapter 2 is an institutional study of the development of the federal extension program. Most studies have emphasized the congressional debates and compromises that created Smith-Lever. I

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document the important role that black Americans and civil rights interest groups played in securing a modicum of protection for black agricultural interests in Smith-Lever. I also discuss the debate over black extension work in South Carolina as part of the larger conversation regarding the role of blacks in the service. The development of extension work in South Carolina offers a case study of federal will to enforce the compromise that gave white southern colleges control of extension funds.

In chapter 3, I discuss the institutional development of extension work in South Carolina and the role of South Carolina State College, the segregated land-grant college for blacks, played in the black extension program's administration. I discuss the development of the agents as public professionals. Employees in the extension service were typically expected to have some post-secondary education, unless they had demonstrated exceptional competence in other ways. Black agents were no exception. By 1925, all the black agricultural extension agents in South Carolina were alumni of Hampton, Tuskegee Institute, or South Carolina State College.² Agents in both agricultural and home demonstration work were required to have relevant training in agriculture or domestic science, respectively. The extension service offered a few college-educated blacks the opportunity to work professionally in their state.

The history of professionalism in the United States is one that suggests that professionals enjoy a level of security in their employment that is not typically enjoyed by wage workers because of the expertise they bring to their employment. However, this project shows that black extension workers had no security. Black agents had professional

²W. W. Long, Annual Report for 1925, Series 33, Box 5, Folder 186, STICUL.

training, yet segregation and white supremacy made their employment insecure. As a result, some black public professionals accepted the restrictions of white supremacy. Others developed dual identities, one for their white employers, another for the black clients.

In chapter 4, I examine the relationship between black agents and their clients. I emphasize the complexities of this aspect of their jobs. Whites expected that black extension workers would produce a satisfied peasant-class that was willing to work for white overlords for improved daily subsistence. Blacks continued to seek the financial independence and personal autonomy that would follow it that their slave ancestors had after the Civil War. The chapter demonstrates that the agents more often met blacks' expectations than those of whites. Further, I demonstrate that black extension agents were both a part of the black leadership class and were intimately connected to the general black community.

The three approaches laid out in part II continue to be addressed in parts III and IV. Part III of the dissertation, "Maturation, 1931-1949" includes chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 discusses events at the federal level. This chapter combines some aspects of chapters 2 and 3. I discuss the increasing collaboration between federal and state extension officials to establish extension policies that were clearly prejudicial to blacks' interests. The rank discrimination of these policies was certainly discouraging. I also demonstrate that federal and state extension policies that perpetuated the inequality in black extension work was questioned both by individual blacks and by interest groups operating outside the South. These policies were also questioned by a variety of interest

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groups that were interested in racial equality and better treatment of black farmers in the South.

Chapter 6 demonstrates that South Carolina's black extension agents remained committed to improving their job performance through professional development, as required by their employers, and the pursuit of post-baccalaureate degrees despite non-existent opportunities for advancement. The 1930s and 1940s were also a period of staff expansion for black extension workers. Political pressure on federal and state extension officials and the Great Depression and World War II crises made rural blacks a more important component of the American economy. More agents were hired and in periods of extreme crisis, blacks were employed in every county of the state. Although external pressures were great, however, the state's white extension officials remained firmly in control of extension work.

Like chapter 4, chapter 6 discusses the impact of the agents on their clients' lives. Agents helped their clients improve their lives materially. More importantly, black South Carolinians developed self-confidence not only through their material success but also through the leadership skills they acquired through various extension programs. I show that segregation made class and educational lines less significant among blacks than they were among whites. In the absence of class antagonism, black agents encouraged their clients to have high aspirations. Black clients gave support to their agents that demonstrated the high regard they held for the agents.

Part IIV, "The Transformation of an Institution, 1950-1970," covers the extension service during the years that are commonly thought of as the civil rights years. I have

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woven all three approaches outlined in part II into each chapter as the interplay between the institutional, professional, and social histories is essential for understanding the transition of the service. In these chapters I discuss the collaboration between white federal and state extension officials on policies for the black extension service. The chapters demonstrate that even during the civil rights era, both federal and state extension officials continued to enforce racially regressive policies, tried to subvert the intent of civil rights rulings, and to perpetuate segregation in extensions work.

Chapter 7 covers the period before the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The limited commitment of the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations to civil rights, gave the extension service time to develop strategies of dissemblance to forestall meaningful integration. White extension officials in South Carolina embarked on their own form of "integration" in the 1950s. Black extension workers would be placed under direct supervision of white workers in the counties. Black agents resisted this policy and sought to maintain the separate identity of the black extension service. Their fight represents a paradox. The fight to maintain a segregated service is at variance with the thrust of most blacks for full integration of public institutions in the 1950s.

However, the agents may have been more prescient than others. They recognized that the type of integration that had been proposed did not offer them expanded opportunities, but limited ones. They also recognized the new system as an assault on their professional abilities. While we may find the push for segregation antithetical to the general historical transcript of blacks in the civil rights era, we must recognize that in its objective—the pursuit of equal dignity for black people, the agents actions fit well with

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the rest of the black community. I also show how the community-building activities of the black extension service paid dividends in the 1950s. Rural blacks used the leadership skills they had acquired in extension programs to organize for equality.

In chapter 8, I discuss the impact of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on the black extension program. White South Carolinians used the act as a means of subordinating black extension workers. Indeed, they planned to allow the black extension service to wither on the vine through attrition and retirements, rather than engage in meaningful integration. South Carolina's white extension officials also applied a system of ranking to black extension workers that had been created for white extension workers and used it to legitimate the continued discrimination of black workers. Real integration did not occur for nearly two years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed. For the first time since the 1910s political appointees demonstrated a willingness to use the power they had to enforce equity for black extension programs. The act gave black extension workers some protection and thus added meaning to their professional status for the first time in the history of black extension work. While the law could not prevent black agents from being fired, it guaranteed them due-process rights. In this period, black agents' frustrations with the racial policies of the extension service received full expression. They wanted completely equal employment opportunities and protested racial discrimination.

The agents' clients, already actively protesting extension policies, became increasingly active in the 1960s. They made clear demands on the government for equal treatment for themselves and for the agents. Whites continued to resist full integration. However, by the late 1960s they had to relent and integration began. The integration that

occurred was not meaningful in the sense that it never brought about any measure of equality opportunity. Rather, it accomplished what decades overtly racist extension policies did not—the disappearance of an identifiably black extension service.

With such a morose ending, it may seem strange to pick such a positive title for this work. However, like the work of black extension workers, this history of their work has dual meanings. The title of this work represents what the black extension service ultimately meant to the history of blacks in South Carolina. It provided rural blacks' opportunities for increased personal autonomy and provided black agents professional employment opportunities. The chapter titles are intentionally paradoxical. The epigrams demonstrate that black and white visions of extension work varied and the meaning is more often rooted in perspective than an objective reality. It is my hope that the titles will permit consideration of the agency that often existed within segregation.

This work is not the first dissertation on black extension work, as the first one was completed twenty-five years ago. Three in which black extension work is the primary focus have been written since. However, I have avoided these recent additions to the literature so that my reading of primary sources is uncluttered by others' conclusions. Over the years, individual agents and others had written laudatory narratives covering various aspects of the story. These have not been consulted for similar reasons. This dissertation is different. I conceptualize the history of the black extension service not only as an important aspect of the history of African Americans, but of the nation, and of the South during the age of Jim Crow. It is the first dissertation to fully detail the federal

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complicity in the development of racially discriminatory policies that negatively affected blacks.

This project is based on extensive archival research in collections at the National Archives, Clemson University, and South Carolina State University. Although black and white land-grant college archives are the obvious location for sources on this subject, the latter two collections have only recently been organized. Much of my research at Clemson was done as the collection was being developed. I only scratched the surface of South Carolina State College's collections which were in early stages of organization in 1998. By searching in all these locations, I have been able to develop the most complete picture of extension policy toward blacks—from the primary source record—to date.

CHAPTER ONE

“GOD NEVER INTENDED THE NEGRO TO BE ANYTHING BUT THE SERVANT OF THE WHITE MAN”: TO BE BLACK IN SOUTH CAROLINA, 1910-1921

[W]e believe that the free negro well understands his environment and is content to work out in patience his own fortunes.

—William Gilmore Simms, *The History of South Carolina*, revised and adapted for use in the schools by Mary C. Simms Oliphant, (Columbia: The State Company Printers, 1917), p. 64

The Negro is not a race to rule, but to follow. . . . God left us here in the South to serve.

—Richard Carroll, *The State* (Columbia, SC) 24 April 1905

To understand the institutional development of extension work with blacks in South Carolina—its ideology and practice—it is crucial to understand the political, social, and economic forces that established the parameters of black life in South Carolina during the second decade of the twentieth century. For it is how whites circumscribed black life and how Afro-South Carolinians responded to whites’ restrictions that shaped what it meant to be black in South Carolina.

A Political Nadir for South Carolina Blacks

It may sound cliché to assert that while much had changed in black life in South Carolina by 1910, little had changed in black life in South Carolina by 1910. However, this was indeed the case. Various histories of Afro-South Carolinians have documented the racial progress that occurred after the Civil War and the political disfranchisement, social exclusion, and economic exploitation that followed. Other histories covering the first decades of the twentieth century also point out the persistence of economic and social subordination of blacks for most of this period.¹ A quotation by a future governor

¹For example, Joel Williamson, *After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina during Reconstruction, 1861-1877* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975); Thomas Holt, *Black Over White: Negro Political Leadership in South Carolina during Reconstruction* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977); George Brown

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of the state made in 1906 makes clear what, probably, was the attitude of the white general public: "God never intended the Negro to be anything but the servant of the white man."²

In the second decade of the twentieth century, white Carolinians completed their political disfranchisement of Afro-South Carolinians. Whites also worked to fix, in law, Afro-South Carolinians' social subordination in public spaces. In the economic sphere, little had changed since slavery for most Afro-South Carolinians. While freedom had brought personal liberty—to a degree—it had led also to a grinding poverty as whites who felt entitled to the benefits of black labor used a variety of mechanisms to exploit it. As a result of their poverty, Afro-South Carolinians were subject to diseases that sapped both body and mind. Mortality was high; communities were fragile. This was a circular situation in which poverty bred social ills that bred more poverty. All the while, whites saw what was going on in the black community and concluded that it was a function of the degeneracy of the black race, which legitimated whites' policies of subordination.

In innumerable ways the second decade of the twentieth century marked a true nadir for South Carolina blacks. In early 1915 the General Assembly passed laws that excluded blacks from emerging economic opportunities as well as social and political life. In February 1915 they passed a law requiring racial segregation in cotton mills. Although the act required separate but equal working accommodations, it legislated segregation to such a minute degree that it was certainly more practical, economically, to

Tindall, *South Carolina Negroes, 1877-1900* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1952), Idus A. Newby, *Black Carolinians: A History of Blacks in South Carolina from 1895 to 1968*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973).

²Coleman Livingston Blease, quoted in Daniel W. Hollis, "Samuel Chiles Mitchell, Social Reformer in Blease's South Carolina," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 70 no. 1 (January 1969): 31.

exclude blacks from all but the most menial jobs in the industry. Violations were treated with severity to prevent a collapse of the color line.³ The General Assembly also empowered cities to enact ordinances of segregation within their jurisdictions.⁴ This act was the latest that divided public space between blacks and whites and confirmed customary segregation. Segregated seating on railroads had been established in 1898, and on steamboats and ferries in 1904. Dining facilities at train stations were segregated in 1906. Columbia and Charleston segregated seating on their streetcars in 1903 and 1912 respectively. White teachers could no longer teach in black schools nor could white nurses attend black patients. Socialization between the races was restricted as well. Black and white militia troops could not fraternize according to a law of 1905; and an ordinance in Greenville prohibited interracial neighborhoods or the provision of services for one race in a block reserved for the other. A bill to outlaw interracial sexual contact in brothels failed to pass the Senate.⁵ Such a bill would have hindered white men's unfettered access to black women. With lynching to restrict black men's access to white women, Senators perhaps failed to see the necessity of such a bill. The model for the

³South Carolina General Assembly, "AN ACT to Compel a Separation of the Races Laboring in Textile Manufactories," (16 February 1915), *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina: Passed at the Regular Session of 1915* (Columbia: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1915-1916), 79-80. The following year this act was amended to make violation of the law a misdemeanor. See South Carolina General Assembly, "AN ACT to Amend an Act Entitled, 'AN ACT to Compel a Separation of the Races Laboring in Textile Manufactories,' Appearing as Act No. 69 of the Acts of 1915, Approved the Sixteenth Day of February, A. D. 1915 by Adding a Section thereto, Making the Violation of Same a Misdemeanor," (17 February 1916), *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina: Passed at the Regular Session of 1916* (Columbia: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1916), 704-06; Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 135.

⁴South Carolina General Assembly, "AN ACT to Authorize and Empower All Incorporated Towns and Cities in This State to Adopt Ordinances for the Segregation of the Races," *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina: Passed at the Regular Session of 1915* (11 March 1915), 180.

⁵Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 47-8.

state's white primary was established when the General Assembly enacted a law that established how political "clubs" in cities of at least 40,000 would run their primaries. This law obviously was aimed at restricting black suffrage in Charleston where fifty-six percent of the population, according to the 1910 census, was black.⁶ Perhaps despite the disfranchisement measures of the 1895 constitution, a sufficient number of blacks voted in Charleston to make a political difference.

South Carolina blacks lacked strong voices to protest these actions. Some blacks supported segregation and political disfranchisement. Others embraced the white view so completely that they also supported lynching. It was not only white power but also conservative black leadership that consigned the state's black majority in the state to second-class citizenship. These conservative leaders usually derived some benefit from their associations with whites. Idus A. Newby attributes the conservatism of those who constituted the black leadership class to several factors. Those who were teachers in public and private institutions served at the pleasure of white administrators and therefore expressions of equalitarian racial opinions could have real-world economic consequences for them. Religious leaders continued to draw upon the "otherworldly" aspect of slave religion and "exercised a conservative or escapist influence." Businessmen and other professionals also lacked autonomy from the white community and could be coerced as well. These members of the emerging black middle class would be unlikely to risk their status. Finally, Newby argues, those men who were most likely not to tolerate the

⁶South Carolina General Assembly, "AN ACT to Regulate the Holding of All Primary Elections and the Organization of Clubs in Cities Containing Forty Thousand Inhabitants or More," *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina: Passed at the Regular Session of 1915* (16 February 1915), 81-6.

indignities South Carolina whites heaped upon their fellow black citizens—the Grimké brothers for example—were likely to migrate.⁷

Among the leaders who remained were Thomas Miller, a former Congressman, state senator, and the first president of the only state-established college for blacks, The Colored, Normal, Industrial, Agricultural and Mechanical College of South Carolina.⁸ Miller espoused a philosophy similar to that of Booker T. Washington. In 1902 Miller made his own “Atlanta Compromise” speech at the Inter-State and West Indian Exposition in Charleston. Like Washington, Miller believed that it would take incremental improvement for Afro-South Carolinians to overcome their deficiencies and to prepare them to enjoy greater benefits in society. Miller explicitly eschewed social equality and encouraged black South Carolinians to place their faith in white South Carolinians as Washington had encouraged southern blacks to cast their lot with southern whites. Prefiguring the rhetoric of late twentieth century black neo-conservatives, Miller asserted that blacks, not whites, were the major stumbling block to their own success.

It is in our power, absolutely in our power, to down the bars across every avenue, It is within our power to right every wrong, but it cannot be done by croaking and fault-finding and whining and pining. It cannot be done by resolves in meetings or by making bitter speeches, or by sitting supinely helpless, looking for help from without, for all of the aid that can be used for our protection and happiness is at our doors, and the aid of our advancement must come from within our beings.⁹

Miller put his philosophy into action when he led a petition drive that succeeded in expelling white teachers from black schools in Charleston and replacing them with black

⁷Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 108.

⁸Although this was the official name of the college until 1954 (Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 260), it will be referred to as “South Carolina State College” or “State College” in this dissertation. Contemporary sources refer often use these references for the college and also use “State Colored College.”

⁹Thomas Miller quoted in Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 109-11.

teachers. He continued some political activity after promising U. S. Senator Ben Tillman that he would leave politics to become president of the state's black college in 1896. In 1910 Miller opposed the governor's campaign of Coleman Livingston Blease who, after his inauguration in 1911 replaced Miller as college president.¹⁰

Far more conservative than Miller was Richard Carroll, a favorite son with white South Carolinians, with whom he was more popular than he was with black Carolinians. Although most of the information on Carroll here is drawn from the first decade of the century, he was active as late as the late 1930s and as popular as ever with white leadership. The white press described Carroll as a "fine looking mulatto [who] . . . [h]as the nerve to tell the colored people of their faults as related to whites, and has shown on occasion both the nerve and tact to tell the whites of their duty toward the negro, . . . "¹¹ He believed that whites' behavior—good or ill—was a response to black behavior. "We get back from the Anglo-Saxon what we give to him," Carroll stated.¹² Newby points out that Carroll shared many of white South Carolinians views about "his people." He believed that the post-emancipation generation was inferior to their slave parents. Carroll asserted that secular amusements—drinking, gambling and illicit sexual encounters, especially with whites—were the root cause of race riots and of moral degeneration.

Like Washington and Miller, Carroll argued that southern whites were blacks' best friends. Also like Washington and Miller, Carroll encouraged blacks to forego "political and social equality of the races and any form of activism which would alienate

¹⁰George Tindall, *South Carolina Negroes*, 229; James F. Potts, *The History of South Carolina State College, 1896-1978* (Columbia: R. L. Bryan Co., 1978), 15-6; Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 260.

¹¹Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 170, citing *The State* (Columbia, SC), 26 February 1907, 9.

¹²Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 176, citing *The State*, 25 January 1907.

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whites.” While he lamented the lack of protection for respectable blacks, he saw making appeals to whites as well as staying out of trouble as a solution to racial affronts. In one of his signature speeches, “An Appeal to the Strong for the Weak,” Carroll asked for better conditions for black laborers and sharecroppers. In his other signature speech, “The Vision of the Sunny South,” he tried to convince blacks to essentially “cast down their buckets where they” were. “The South furnishes a greater opportunity for development and elevation of the negro than any other section of the country, If there is any land that ‘flows with milk and honey’ to the colored man, it is the Southern land No white man of the South, to my knowledge, has refused to help an industrious, law abiding negro that showed a disposition to do for himself.”¹³

Black Society and Quality of Life

If Carroll’s remarks were true, then we must conclude that there were few “industrious, law abiding negroes [who] showed a disposition to do for themselves” in South Carolina. Putting aside sarcasm, we must face the reality that quality of life statistics point out that to be black in South Carolina in the second decade of the twentieth century meant that one’s existence was bleak. According to Newby, South Carolina blacks “had higher death rates and shorter life expectancy than white South Carolinians; were more susceptible to communicable, epidemic, and parasitic diseases, and . . . received much less medical treatment. Poor health combined with inferior diets and unsanitary living conditions to sap their resources and energies and ease the task of white supremacists.”¹⁴ A 1920 vital statistics report from the U. S. Public Health Service

¹³Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 176-9.

¹⁴Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 114.

reported that Afro-South Carolinians suffered high death rates from pneumonia and influenza, tuberculosis, heart and kidney disease, dysentery, malaria, childbirth complications, typhoid, whooping cough, syphilis, pellagra and—according to a 1918 report by the South Carolina State Board of Health—even homicide. Among the comparable rates for blacks and whites Newby provides are a death rate for blacks with syphilis 285 percent higher than that of whites, with tuberculosis 165 percent higher, and with pellagra 37 percent higher. Even diseases that did not kill could be destructive. Hookworm infestation was rife. According to studies done between 1910 and 1914, it led to weight loss and lethargy, and increased susceptibility to other diseases.¹⁵

Conditions were further exacerbated by the dearth of black health care professionals. There were no facilities to train black physicians, dentists, or pharmacists in the state. By 1912 the membership of the Palmetto Medical Association, which was organized by black professionals in these fields, numbered sixty. They were denied association with white medical professionals in the state and access to hospitals except those that blacks established themselves. There was a nurses' training program at McClennan's Hospital in Charleston, founded by 1880 Howard University Graduate Dr. Alonzo McClennan, but it graduated only 45 nurses in its first ten years of operation, 1897-1907. In Columbia, Dr. Mathilda Evans' Taylor Lane Hospital also trained Nurses.¹⁶

¹⁵Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 118, 120.

¹⁶Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 116; Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 469. For a discussion of McClennan, his hospital, opportunities for professional training of black nurses in the state, see, Darlene Clark Hine, *Black women in White: Racial Conflict and Cooperation in the Nursing Profession* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 15, 50, 53, 54, 56-58, 60.

What is important in these statistics, as Newby points out—and numerous other historians have pointed out—is that the poor physical health of southern blacks manifested itself in ways that whites perceived in the most disparaging terms. Illness produced lethargy. Malnutrition and some physical conditions caused by it, we now know, can lead to underdeveloped mental capacity.¹⁷ Whites concluded that blacks were simply lazy and indifferent to their surroundings as well as ignorant. These, whites believed, were genetic characteristics of the race. These assumptions led most of them to regard efforts to improve black life and health as financially improvident. Indeed, whites may have viewed health statistics as the fulfillment of a Social Darwinist struggle in which the fittest survived. Such was the mentality of the age. Some in white academia expected that blacks would become extinct. T. T. Waterman, a California State College at Fresno ethnologist suggested that blacks were the result of polygenesis—as one of several separate lines of human evolution. He argued that blacks had once populated the world but disappeared from more desirable areas as new breeds displaced them. Waterman expected blacks “to disappear in time from off the face of the earth.” Charles E. Woodruff predicted the race’s demise in the United States because blacks could not adapt to the changes necessitated by the climate. Robert Bennett Bean argued that whenever people

¹⁷Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 118, 120. See for a discussion of the relationship between diet and black personality traits see Todd Savitt, *Medicine and Slavery: The Diseases and Health Care of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia* (Urbana : University of Illinois Press, 1978) and Todd Savitt and James Harvey Young, eds., *Disease and Distinctiveness in the American South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988); Leslie Howard Owens, *This Species of Property: Slave Life and Culture in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Kenneth F. Kiple, *Another Dimension to the Black Diaspora: Diet, Disease, and Racism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981). Chapter 6 of Savitt and Young, is Savitt’s work with black populations. The other chapters focus more generally on southern health but contain discussion of black health as well.

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relocated to an environment that was alien to the one in which they evolved, “they have almost invariably disappeared.”¹⁸

Health, Labor, and Immigration

In federal censuses of South Carolina from 1890 to 1910 there was a steady increase in the overall percentage of whites in the state’s population. State Commissioner of Agriculture E. J. Watson’s annual report attributes this trend to the natural increase of the white population which “is on the whole noticeably greater than that of the negro.” Watson also notes that black emigration also contributed to the difference.¹⁹ Watson and other white South Carolinians were not alarmed about these statistics because their greatest desire was to overtake the black majority. Indeed, Newby suggests that white health officials seemed interested in treating illnesses that affected the white population and impeded immigration. He quotes one South Carolina health official:

We must get rid of malaria in South Carolina if we are going to have white immigrants, . . . As soon as the public conscience is awakened, malaria will be banished from many portions of the State, and many counties of the State which are now given over to negroes and negro tenants will be occupied by white people, and the fertile soil of these counties properly utilized.²⁰

In 1906 South Carolina and other southern states had attempted to attract European immigrants to work as tenant farmers and solve the race problem by eliminating the specter of

¹⁸Idus A. Newby, *Jim Crow’s Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900-1930* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), 26-7, 30-1. The quotation from Waterman is from “The Subdivisions of the Human Race and their Distribution,” *American Anthropologist*, XXVI (October 1924); the quotation from Bean is from his book *The Races of Man, Differentiation and Dispersal of Man* (New York: n. p., 1932).

¹⁹E. J. Watson, *Eighth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture, Commerce and Industries of the State of South Carolina: 1911* (Columbia: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1912), 93.

²⁰Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 117, citing South Carolina State Board of Health, *Forty-first Annual Report, 1920*, 24.

black numerical dominance. The states drew up plans that called for labor contracts similar to indentures. Immigrants would work for a specified period of time in exchange for passage to America. The plan failed for two reasons. Congress outlawed the practice in 1907 arguing that such contracts would undermine the wage and living standards of American labor. More importantly, white Europeans would not tolerate the treatment meted out to southern blacks—especially since they could become landowners elsewhere in the United States.²¹ South Carolina's white leadership attempted to enact a new immigration plan in 1911. It failed as well because it involved the cooperation of the railroads, whose influence in state politics was suspect. The plan also lacked unqualified white support. Some white landowners were fearful that they would be required to provide better accommodations for white tenants than they did for blacks and that they would have to be fairer in financial dealings. They also doubted whether the immigrants would be satisfied to work for someone else indefinitely.²²

As the percentage of whites in the general population increased, the percentage of Negro-operated farms²³ remained constant at 55 percent between 1900 and 1910. At the

²¹Francis Butler Simkins, *Pitchfork Ben Tillman* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1935), 461-2; David Duncan Wallace, *South Carolina: A Short History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1951), 652. Immigration schemes had a history of failure dating to Reconstruction. Attempts had been made in 1866, in 1869 when Blease's own home county, Newberry, established an immigration society and again in the 1880s. For a brief discussion of these early schemes and the difficulties white southerners encountered in securing and employing European immigrant labor see William Cohen, *At Freedom's Edge: Black Mobility and the Southern White Quest for Racial Control, 1861-1915* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 38-41 and Glennon Graham, "From Slavery to Serfdom: Rural Black Agriculturalists in South Carolina, 1865-1900" (Ph. D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1982), 54, 110-13.

²²Ronald D. Burnside, "The Governorship of Coleman Livingston Blease of South Carolina" (Ph. D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1963), 237.

²³"Negro" farms include other non-white farmers: Chinese, Japanese, and Native Americans. These groups represented less than one percent of the state's population and were included with blacks in some statistical analyses.

same time, the number of black farmers increased by 11,295. Between 1910 and 1920 the number of black farmers increased 12,333. By 1920, blacks represented 59.6 percent of the southern farm population. The number of black farmers rose in the counties where agriculture remained profitable, while white populations increased in mill counties. This margin of black predominance in farming might have been even greater had 147,000 blacks not left the state between 1900 and 1920.²⁴ These statistics signify whites' ambivalence about the presence of blacks. Their continued necessity in agriculture is explainable by labor laws that encouraged white dominance in better-paying mill work while keeping blacks bound to the land. Indeed, Commissioner Watson notes that laws to encourage white immigration were unpopular and labor-enticement laws were enforced only against those attempting to attract black workers.²⁵

For the overwhelming majority of white South Carolinians—the children and grandchildren of the Civil War generation—it was immaterial what blacks thought they wanted or needed; those who knew better would make those decisions for them. Whites believed that what blacks needed was to remain tied to the land in ways that left white supremacy unshaken. For this reason some whites opposed black land ownership. While Commissioner Watson did not indicate that there was a danger in the overwhelming black presence in the rural districts, Governor Coleman Livingston Blease did. In his 1913 message to the General Assembly, Blease warned that blacks were acquiring land and that this was “a menace” which could “now easily be averted; if left unchecked, [it] would

²⁴Watson, *Eighth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture*, 37; Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 193; Jessie Carney Smith, and Carnell Peterson Horton, eds., *Historical Statistics of Black America* (Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1995), volume I: “Table 155: Number/Percent: Trends in Number of Black Farmers by State, 1900-1910 and 1910-1920;” “Table 179: Population: Southern Farm Population, by Divisions and States, 1920, 1930, 1935,” pp. 124, 144.

²⁵Watson, *Eighth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture*, 96, 98.

have dire consequences.” He offered no solution to the problem, stating that he would likely be accused of stirring up race prejudice if he offered any.²⁶ There seemed little possibility that there was a time menace since black tenancy rates were nearly eighty percent in 1920. Idus Newby finds that “Upward economic mobility seems to have been rare. The number of sharecroppers who became farm owners was apparently infinitesimal.”²⁷

Lack of land ownership contributed to another constant of black life in South Carolina was poverty. “In black Carolina, . . .” writes Newby, “poverty was endured, not overcome, . . . ”²⁸ The laws mandating segregation in the textile industry required strict segregation of work spaces and social spaces for blacks and whites who performed the same jobs in the mills. The only exceptions were when blacks’ presence was needed to do some menial job in white areas. As a result 50,922 whites worked in textile mills in 1910 while only 3,757 blacks did. There were obvious wage disparities as a result.²⁹

Black Education in the Early Twentieth Century

Perhaps no lives were more full of poverty than those of sharecroppers and tenants in the South for whom economic horizons were extremely limited. For most Afro-South Carolinians, to be black meant being a “sharecropping or tenant farmer, agricultural [or] other unskilled labor[er], or a domestic [servant] . . . Too much of what they did was dirty, disagreeable, and backbreaking, it was draining work spiritually and it was exhaust-

²⁶South Carolina General Assembly, Senate, *Journal of the Senate, Regular Session beginning 14 January 1913* (Columbia: Gonzales and Bryan, 1912), 43. Hereafter all references to Senate Journal the will be cited as *Journal of the Senate* with session year.

²⁷Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 124-7.

²⁸Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 122.

²⁹Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 135.

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ing physically. Whites considered them shiftless and lazy, . . .”³⁰ Therefore, most whites were opposed to providing educational opportunities which would allow blacks to elevate themselves. The words of Governor Blease on this account exemplify the most crass expression of that attitude. He opposed educating blacks believing it to be against “God’s Law” and ultimately futile.³¹ He vetoed appropriations for South Carolina State College that came before him and spent much of his time advocating the school’s closing.³² Only when he was informed that the elimination of the black college would require Clemson to open its doors to blacks or lose federal Morrill funding did Blease conclude that the elimination of South Carolina State College was not “necessary at [that] time.” On one occasion he supported Wilkinson’s request for annual appropriation of \$15,000 by asserting that “This institution has made wonderful improvement since it has been freed from cheap Negro politics and is now doing some good for the colored youths. And this request is not unreasonable.”³³

³⁰Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 122-3.

³¹Burnside, “The Governorship of Coleman Livingston Blease,” 154. Blease also had a strong distaste for the policies of Benedict College in Columbia, where white, northern missionaries taught and socialized with black students. Blease saw these practices as promoting equality and warned that “if these conditions continue you will have more lynchings, and more stigmas upon the fair name of our State.” *Journal of the Senate, Regular Session beginning 13 January 1914*, 623-4. For a more extensive reading of the controversy between Blease and parties representing Benedict on the close personal interaction between the white faculty members and black students, see *ibid.* 823-32, 1078-9. Oddly, two years later, Blease addressed blacks at Allen University in Columbia. At that time, he told students to “hitch [their] wagons to a star. They [speaking of his detractors and others he claimed were blacks’ real enemies] can’t hold you back no matter what I or any other man may say.” *The State*, 5 October 1916, 5.

³²South Carolina General Assembly, *Journal of the House, Regular Session beginning 9 January 1912* (Columbia: Gonzales and Bryan, 1912), 1244; *Journal of the House, Regular Session beginning 13 January 1914*, 1424. Hereafter all references to the House journal will be cited as *Journal of the House* with session year.

³³Burnside, “The Governorship of Coleman Livingston Blease,” 231; “Report of the Secretary of State to the General Assembly of South Carolina, Part II,” *Reports and Resolutions of the General Assembly of South Carolina*, 1 (1913): 799 (Columbia: Gonzales and Bryan, 1913). Hereafter all references to the *Reports and Resolutions of the General Assembly of South Carolina* will be cited as *Reports and Resolutions* with session year.

Blease's hostility is representative of the southern whites' attitudes toward public funding for black education. In the first chapter of his study of black education to 1935, historian James Anderson documents white animosity toward black education in the years after the civil war when southern blacks began to form their own schools and to agitate for public education. Anderson argues that whites gave in to some form of black education—and firmly supported the industrial model—when they realized that blacks would continue to struggle for universal education. He also suggests that the possibility of northern intervention in southern affairs also encouraged whites to concede some education for blacks.³⁴

Whites who accepted some form of black education as necessary readily embraced the Hampton-Tuskegee model. They believed that vocational and agricultural training was more appropriate for the black laboring class than classical education. This essentialist argument associated race with educational attainment and racial theorists accepted the notion that blacks could not internalize whites' educational standards. White South Carolinian William P. Calhoun averred that "Education expands whatever kind of mind the individual being educated has, but you cannot by cultivating the mind of the ass make a horse out of him; nor can the negro be made a white man by cultivating his brain, since they [*sic*] are what God made them and will remain so. . . . The higher culture of 'coloured universities' . . . merely spoils a ploughhand or housemaid."³⁵ Racist arguments such as these received academic support beginning in 1910 from scholars who began

³⁴James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), chapter 1, see especially, page 31.

³⁵Quoted in Newby, *Jim Crow's Defense*, 175-7. See also Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, chapters 2 and 3 for a discussion of the late nineteenth century triumph of a subservient model of black education espoused at Hampton and Tuskegee, over a liberal arts model.

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using tests that supposedly measured intelligence. George Oscar Ferguson of the University of Virginia and Carl C. Brigham of Princeton were leaders in a science of testing that “proved” blacks inferior.³⁶ From this “empirical evidence,” it was not a far step for some to conclude “that agriculture offered ‘the best field’” for blacks. Historian Hubert Howe Bancroft declared that black laborers are of value only when the labor is “agricultural and upon a large scale” with work “performed in gangs under they eye of an overseer. ‘In plantation life alone,’ . . . could the Negro find happiness.”³⁷ Such arguments probably promoted whites belief that blacks needed to be kept on the land for their own good. Law and tradition both were powerful forces that promoted black “peasantry” as Carter Woodson referred to it. The result, as Newby points out, is that black tenants had minimal leverage when dealing with landlords—the more the landlord furnished to the tenant, the less power they had. Some landlords paid legal fines of blacks and held them virtually in servitude on farms. Francis Butler Simkins declares that the “. . . frank purpose is to perpetuate a division of local society into two distinct castes—the white, or dominant ruling class and the negro, or subject class.”³⁸

While there was a broad consensus that blacks should engage solely in agricultural pursuits, there were some who believed that yeoman farming among blacks was both possible and desirable. Educational institutions and practical experiments became vehicles for promoting independent black farming. In 1900 the white trustees of the Penn School on St. Helena Island transformed the school from a grade school to a normal,

³⁶Newby, *Jim Crow's Defense*, 40-2.

³⁷Quoted in Newby, *Jim Crow's Defense*, 121.

³⁸Francis B. Simkins, “Race Legislation in South Carolina since 1865,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* XX (1921): 177.

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industrial, and agricultural school dedicated to teaching “outmoded handicrafts and elementary techniques of small-scale farming.” The members of its board of trustees included well-meaning northern whites such as George Foster Peabody. Hollis B. Frissell of Hampton Institute chaired the board. They decided that this program would be more beneficial to blacks and would “offer to boys and girls a chance to learn those things which shall enable them to *raise* a living and become useful citizens.” They would be taught the “industries needed in an agricultural community,” and the importance of religion in everyday life. However, the students “would not be taught scientific agriculture and mechanized farming or the technical, mechanical, or vocational skills the artisan needs in a modern economy.”³⁹

Booker T. Washington’s influence was also felt nearby. With financing from the philanthropist W. P. Clyde, Washington established an agricultural colony for blacks on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. An avid sportsman, Clyde owned roughly half the island that he used as a hunting preserve. In 1904, Clyde asked Washington for his advice on creating a model settlement on a portion of his lands that could be used as an example of what Tuskegee graduates could do. Clyde gave Washington 1,000 acres for the experiment. The land was divided into small farms of about thirty acres each. A frame house, outhouse, and well were built on each tract. Families occupying these farms were to pay Clyde \$520 over a seven- to ten-year period to purchase the farms. Washington provided classroom teachers and an agricultural agent, S. T. Powell, from the ranks of his Tuskegee graduates. Powell’s official title was “colony agent.” Clyde provided salaries for the teachers and the agent as well as money for a farmer’s conference. The experiment ended

³⁹Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 104-5.

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in 1914 but as Wayman Johnson suggests in his history of black agriculture in South Carolina, it left a lasting legacy of black property owners.⁴⁰

As the Hampton-Tuskegee model gained hegemony, black entrepreneurs and self-promoters like Carroll and R. W. Westberry, and philanthropic whites established black schools and colleges, farmers' institutes, and laymen's schools that provided agricultural domestic science training. In his study of the development of the black extension service, Earl W. Crosby states that the programs begun by Tuskegee Institute spawned "satellite" schools throughout the South. Voorhees College in Denmark, which was founded by Tuskegee graduate Elizabeth Wright, imitated Tuskegee's programs.⁴¹ Nine of the eleven "colleges" for South Carolina blacks were associated with white missionary groups that also saw the value of conservative approaches to black education. They controlled the institutions through their religious fundamentalism and academic "practicality."⁴² Many of these schools had agricultural teachers who carried on demonstrations such as those given at farmers' institutes held at Tuskegee.

The State Agricultural College for blacks, just four years old in 1900, also applied a vocational agricultural approach. Speaking at a black county fair in Bamberg in 1897, then-college president Thomas Miller stated that, among other skills:

⁴⁰Earl William Crosby, "Building the County Home: The Black County Agent System, 1906-1940" (Ph. D. dissertation, Miami University of Ohio, 1977), 24; Martin A. Menafee, "A School Treasurer's Story" in *Tuskegee & Its People: Their Ideals and Achievements*, edited by Booker T. Washington (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1905; repr., New York: Negro University Press, 1969), 158-61; Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 103-4; Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 214-217; Wayman Johnson, "History, Growth and Transition of 4-H Among Negroes in South Carolina," (typescript, n. d.), 10-12, Reference and Serials Center, Miller F. Whittaker Library, South Carolina State University, Orangeburg, S. C.

⁴¹Crosby, "Building the County Home," 24.

⁴²Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 103-4.

We teach your sons and daughters how to care for and milk the cows, how to make gilt-edged butter, how to make cheese, what kind of fertilizer each crop needs, the natural strength and productive qualities of various soils, and last to make a compost heap and how to take care of it. We teach them how to make a wagon, plow and hoe, how to shoe a horse and nurse him when sick. . . . that their only aspiration should be to dwell [in South Carolina] together [with white Carolinians] and make this common inheritance a better country than when they first possessed it. We teach [the] children that they must live in this country in union, love, and prosperity; we teach them that they owe their best service to South Carolina and the sacrifice of their entire life to the good of the two races and the glory of God.⁴³

Under the leadership of Miller's successor, Robert Shaw Wilkinson, the South Carolina State College continued to follow this conservative path. This commitment to white supremacy is somewhat ironic given that both men received quality educations in northern institutions. Miller graduated from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania in 1872, and studied law at the University of South Carolina. Wilkinson attended West Point in 1884-85 and graduated from Oberlin in 1891. Wilkinson was a professor of physics at State College when he was tapped to become South Carolina State College's next president.⁴⁴ Like Booker T. Washington, Wilkinson opted for a classical education for his own child. Wilkinson's son, who became a medical doctor, graduated either from the high school or licentiate program of the college. By 1924—the year State College began offering baccalaureate degrees—R. S. Wilkinson, Jr. was senior pre-med student and Phi Beta Kappa at Dartmouth. He went on to earn a medical degree from Harvard and to

⁴³Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 260-6. Newby cites *The State*, 29 November 1897 as the source for the speech. The words in brackets are Newby's.

⁴⁴John F. Potts, Sr., *A History of the Palmetto Education Association* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1978), 37; Potts, *The History of South Carolina State College*, 43; Asa H. Gordon, *Sketches of Negro Life and History in South Carolina* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey, Company 1929, 2nd ed., Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 110; Albert Nelson Marquis, ed., *Who's Who in America: A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Living Men and Women of the United States* (Chicago: The A. N. Marquis Company, 1928), 15 (1928-29): 2224.

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practice medicine in New York.⁴⁵ But at the college over which his father presided there was 1 teacher for every 74 students in the academic section, 1 for every 12 in agriculture, and 1 for every 14 in industrial courses.⁴⁶ The low teacher to student ratio in the more labor-intensive disciplines suggests that far more teachers were hired for agriculture and the trades than for academics. The distribution of faculty also affirms the school's conservative cast. The training these institutions provided fit well with the white South's view of that theirs was an agrarian society built on servile black labor.

The Great Migration and a Shifting Balance of Demographic Power

By the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, white South Carolinians rising black emigration threatened to undermine southern whites' agrarian world. Cotton prices were higher than they had been in recent memory and there was a great need for black labor so that whites could reap its benefits. The 1919 report of the agriculture commissioner contained a special section on black farmers that noted the economic success of those who remained in the South. Blacks were becoming prosperous, "making more money than [they] ever did in the North, . . . saving it and buying [their] own home[s] and making [them] attractive." Whites' desire to rid the state of blacks had evaporated since 1911. Rather than admitting their own rank materialism, whites began to argue that their concern over black emigration was rooted in altruistic motives. Preventing black migration was to be done out of concern for blacks rather and for their own good.

⁴⁵Colored Normal Industrial, Agricultural and Mechanical College of South Carolina, *Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Colored Normal Industrial, Agricultural and Mechanical College* (Columbia: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers,) 28 (1924): 10; Benjamin E. Mays, *Born to Rebel: An Autobiography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 88. Hereafter, the annual reports from the college will be referred to as *CNIAMC* with the volume and year.

⁴⁶Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 263.

I have never been one that wished to keep the negro in the South if he wished to go, but I do not think we *should let him go* [my emphasis] without warning him of the false lights on the shores, of the dangers he may run into when he leaves the people by whom he is understood. He is not hated in the South. He is tolerated and indulged.⁴⁷

This account by Commissioner of Agriculture Bonneau Harris, paints 1919 as the most tranquil in race relations South Carolina had ever seen. Harris asserted that there had been *no* [my emphasis] migrations of blacks to the North in 1919 and that the migration trend flowed in the opposite direction. He claimed that “intelligent white people of the South have really grieved over the treatment of the Southern negro in the great centers of population in the North and West.” He further claimed that there had been no lynchings in South Carolina in 1919 and that when they did occur, they were mainly for crimes against women. The “Red Summer” race riots, he declared, had “appalled the Southern darkey.”⁴⁸ In contrast, the commissioner suggests harmonious race relations in South Carolina.

The view of relations in the state presented by Harris are at odds with what Newby presents as the reality of black life in the state in that year. The goals of the war to “make the world safe for democracy” made no impact on white attitudes regarding black subordination. Racial violence did occur at least twice, once in Charleston and once in Bamberg, in 1919. Harris insisted that the “melee . . . was participated in by sailors and

⁴⁷Bonneau Harris, *Year Book and Sixteenth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture, Commerce and Industries of the State of South Carolina, 1919* (Columbia: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1920), 290.

⁴⁸Harris, *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture*, 289.

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negroes, and not by the [white?] citizens of Charleston, according to common report.” In 1921 there were five lynchings in the state—the highest in one year since 1912.⁴⁹

A “New [South Carolina] Negro?”

But by 1919 some black leaders had begun to abandon their conservatism. A group met in Columbia, where they criticized the disfranchisement of qualified black voters and encouraged them to continue to try and register and to be politically active. They supported the abandonment of monolithic allegiance to the Republican Party as a way to break the stranglehold of white supremacy in the state. They demanded that blacks be appointed to serve on school boards and complained that the idea of separate but equal in public accommodations was a façade rather than a reality.⁵⁰

As a result of all these factors, to be black in South Carolina between 1910 and 1921 meant remaining one of a rural, millennialist people in an increasingly industrial and secular world. As black extension agents positioned themselves within this world, they did so initially as ambassadors for better rural living. They represented the interests of the dominant conservative, white order that wanted a more productive workforce. Indeed, their continued professional employment depended on raising the level of satisfaction among the black peasantry with rural life. But their role was a transitional one. As black farmers produced more crops for home use as well as cash crops for market, they also improved their economic situation. As their economic situation improved, black farmers’ attitudes about themselves improved. As South Carolina blacks sent their sons to fight and die for freedom, they began to feel more entitled to its benefits

⁴⁹Harris, *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture*, 289; Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 192-3.

⁵⁰Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 190-1.

for themselves and their children. Indeed, they began to embrace the idea that government should respond to their interests as it did to those of other interest groups. Black extension agents' activities were, in some portion, responsible for this change. Like the dominant whites, black farmers believed that the black extension agents represented their interests—which the agents also did. Indeed, the agents' ability to negotiate the chasm between the expectations of whites and those of blacks in such a way that both sides perceived the black extension service as serving their respective interests was the key to their professional survival. As a whole, the agents represent a conservative force. The material changes that they made in Afro-South Carolinian's lives were obvious and significant. However, the intellectual changes the agents brought about among black rural dwellers were imperceptible—certainly to whites—and possibly to the agents and their clients as well. Although they were unrecognized, it was these changes that paved the way for revolution

CHAPTER TWO

“A SOCIAL BLUNDER OF THE WORST KIND”: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROFESSION

[C]ooperative agricultural extension work shall consist of the giving of instruction and practical demonstrations in agriculture and home economics to persons not attending or resident in [land-grant] colleges in the several communities, and imparting to such persons information on said subjects.
—*The Smith-Lever Act of 1914, Section 2.*

I will never appoint any colored man to office in the South because that would be a social blunder of the worst kind.
—Woodrow Wilson

This chapter chronicles the process which culminated in the Smith-Lever Act that created the Federal Extension Service and demonstrates the important role that the racial segregation in the South played in that debate. Some northern white congressmen wanted specific provisions for black extension work, similar to what had been done in the Morrill Act of 1890. Southern white congressmen argued vociferously against such a division. The resulting compromise not only created the extension service but set the stage for the development of black extension work for the next half century. In this chapter, the development of the South Carolina Negro Extension Service, provides a case study of how that compromise created yet another separate and unequal public institution.

The Progressive spirit of the 1910s and the language of the Smith-Lever Act dictated that the “persons” served by cooperative extension include blacks. By 1920, there were 225 black agricultural agents and 70 black home economics extension agents working with black clients in various southern states. In some instances these agents’ appointments had white support, in other instances they did not. In those instances where white support was lacking black agents’ appointments were indeed “social blunders,” but

more importantly they were political blunders. The struggles in South Carolina over extension work from the early 1900s until 1930 provide an excellent case study of the latter situation. It demonstrates that the fear of committing one of these blunders was so great white South Carolinians considered depriving whites to maintain white supremacy.

White Politics in the World War I Era

The South Carolina black extension service developed against a backdrop of national politics in which some Republicans attempted to re-establish the party's mantle as saviors of the black race that had been tarnished by the Taft administration's neglect of its black constituents and by Theodore Roosevelt's "lily-white" political campaign of 1912.¹ The "black and tan" Republicans probably also sought to capitalize on the increasing black vote in the North resulting from the Great Migration. The federal extension service came into existence only four years after the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). That organization would use its campaign for equity in the extension service to establish its legitimacy as a vehicle for black political activism. These years were also volatile ones in South Carolina state politics. The racial demagoguery of the state's politicians, the racism of their supporters, and their economic oppression meant that a black in South Carolina was not included in the optimistic world—including extension programs—which Progressives envisioned.

¹I use the term "lily-white" in association with Roosevelt because at the historical moment that this account begins, he represents that political style. Joel Williamson has pointed out that the term has a historical association with that began in the nineteenth century and continued into the twentieth. See Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 227, 344-5, 349, 352, 357, 362-3. See especially 362-3 in which Williamson discusses Roosevelt's use of the lily-white strategy which Taft adopted after his re-nomination for the presidency.

Historians of southern progressivism have noted the nexus of racism and reform—even among the most enlightened white southerners. There is a general acceptance of C. Vann Woodward's profile of the southern progressive movement and its boosters as presented in *Origins of the New South*. Southern progressivism, Woodward suggests, was almost wholly an "indigenous growth." Unlike Populism, it was urban and middle class with business and professional rather than rural farm leadership. It was sectional, opposed to what southerners viewed as their exploitation by northeastern business interests.² The title of Woodward's chapter clearly suggests that southern progressivism was "for whites only." Woodward notes the paradox of white supremacy and progressivism (and refers to professors of both faiths as "demagogues"), but he does not fully discuss the spectrum of black exclusion. Rather he points out that racial exclusion in the South had its counterpart outside the South with the mixture of progressivism and imperialism. Other historians, too, note that the bias against blacks was merely a part of a broader bias against the under classes.³ For example, Dewey Grantham is critical of the failure to recognize the positive motivations among white southern progressives. However, other comments he makes about the goals of southern progressivism suggest the importance of race. Grantham argues that southern progressives "looked toward the creation of a clearly defined community that would accommodate a society differentiated by race and class but one that also possessed unity, cohesion, and stability. The search for traditional community may explain the reformers' obsession with the

²C. Vann Woodward, *The Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 371, 373. Dewey W. Grantham gives a historiographical review of the composition of the progressive class in "The Contours of Southern Progressivism," *American Historical Review* 86 (December 1981): 1042.

³Woodward, *The Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*, 373.

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virtues of rural life and with means of improving it.”⁴ One cannot help but see the similarity between the community described by Grantham and that of the antebellum South where intra-class struggle among whites was often muted by racial unity.

Among those who have written about the Progressive era, Louis Harlan best emphasizes race as an essential element of southern progressivism. He convincingly argues that “[s]outhern progressivism could not avoid or evade the white supremacy issue.”⁵ By examining the responses of white northern philanthropists on the Southern Education Board, Harlan shows how, over time, the philanthropists acquiesced to southern white progressives’ racial prejudices. In some cases the philanthropists embraced racial prejudices to an extent that they prevented activism by more racially liberal northerners and avoided public support of black institutions.⁶ It was not a far stretch for the northerners—many of whom harbored prejudices of their own regarding the under classes of their own regions.

While southern whites remained committed to the idea that blacks must remain dependent upon whites and controlled by them, the issue of blacks’ ownership of property was dead. Southern progressives—like many other Americans—found themselves in a position of decreasing prestige as the national economy changed and new classes of people rose to positions of prominence and power. Most sought to recover their earlier status and in order to gain access in the new economy and politics of the age, they needed domestic stability. To achieve that they needed no competing interest groups that

⁴Grantham, “The Contours of Southern Progressivism,” 1044.

⁵Louis Harlan, “The Southern Education Board and the Race Issue in Public Education,” *Journal of Southern History* XXIII, no. 2 (May 1957): 189.

⁶Harlan, “The Southern Education Board and the Race Issue in Public Education,” 192-7.

those who had power could use to divide and conquer—and thus thwart their quest for a place in the new national order.⁷

Despite its “for whites only” moniker, whites were not alone in feeling the progressive impulse. Black Americans had a progressive movement that paralleled that of whites. However, their program in the South had little influence on white progressives’ attitudes regarding blacks. What was true regionally was also true in South Carolina. Historian Walter Edgar suggests that “when it came to such issues as government reform, white progressives ignored black Carolinians because they were of no consequence politically.”⁸ Not having to take blacks’ sentiment into consideration on political issues meant that rather than broadening African Americans’ chances to reap the benefits of an improved society, black progressivism had an ameliorative effect—making life better within the constrictions of Jim Crow. Any improvements made in the lives of blacks by progressive programs could not upset the racial hierarchy of the South. With southern whites’ power to determine southern blacks’ level of participation in progressive programs generally unchecked, whites’ continued economic and social domination of southern blacks was assured. Some white Americans—particularly those who were politicians—were willing to bend to the racial ideology of southern whites even when they did not share southerners’ derogatory racial ideas. The debate over Smith-Lever is a clear example of this assertion.

⁷This is my general conclusion of the age. Two books were of influence in my conclusions: Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1977-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), particularly chapters 1-4, and C. Vann Woodward’s *Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel*, repr. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

⁸Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 469. For a general discussion of the black progressive experience see Jack Temple Kirby, *Darkness at the Dawn: Race and Reform in the Progressive South* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1972), chapter VIII, “Progressivism in Black;” and Paul D. Casdorph, *Republicans, Negroes, and Progressives in South, 1912-1915* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1981).

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Smith-Lever, the “Race Question,” and Progressivism

The passage of the Smith-Lever Act in May 1914 is but one example of the manner in which race channeled the Progressive impulse. While both northern and southern progressivism were focused, in part, on social control, northern progressives' programs for immigrants were focused on assimilating them into the mainstream. The objective of southern white progressivism as it related to the aliens in their midst—blacks—was at best to improve their living conditions to create a satisfied subordinate class that would benefit whites. At worst, southern white progressives sought to totally ignore southern blacks when to give attention to their plight endangered reforms that benefitted whites. By establishing a program designed to give the non-college-attending public the benefit of post-secondary scientific research on farming, Smith-Lever reflected the best of the progressive impulse. But the debate over Smith-Lever also revealed the worst of progressivism. It ranged widely from the history of civilization, to pseudo-anthropological discussions of racial difference, to the duties of a diverse democracy to all its citizens, and localism versus federal control of federally distributed funds. Central to this broad array of subjects was the question of who was entitled to receive the benefits the nation bestowed.

The act, sponsored by South Carolina Congressman Asbury F. Lever and Georgia Senator Hoke Smith, survived attempts by Senators Wesley Jones of Washington state and Albert Cummins of Iowa to amend the bill to have the fund divided so that black land-grant colleges in southern states would receive a share of funds directly as they received funds from the Morrill Act of 1890 and from some supplemental acts for

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funding land-grant colleges.⁹ The direct distribution of funds to the black colleges would have permitted the employment of blacks as extension agents—a prospect southern Senators vigorously opposed. The arguments against such a division followed racial lines of reasoning: white agents provided black farmers with extension services, black colleges could not successfully carry out extension programs, blacks did not have confidence in members of their race as leaders, separation of funds would lead to dissimilar (perhaps unequal) instruction in extension methods, and most importantly, if the federal government gave funds directly to black schools rather than going through white state officials the entire program might fall victim to racial conflict.¹⁰

The transcript of the debate shows how bizarre governing was at times. Wesley Jones, whose remarks about Japanese immigrants were clearly racist, championed a division of funds between white and black schools because blacks were citizens. He argued that opportunities should be made available to blacks to develop their own institutions and to encourage them to believe that opportunities were available to those who prepared themselves. Southerners, led by James K. Vardaman of Mississippi and Hoke Smith of Georgia, spewed their usual racial venom regarding black incompetence, their inability to absorb scientific ideas, and the general degeneracy of the race. Even

⁹U. S. Congress (Senate), *Hearings, Report and Debate: Smith-Lever Act of 1914* (Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Agricultural Extension Service, 1959), 3063, 3146. This publication is a reproduction of pages from the *Congressional Record*. See also “An Act to apply a portion of the proceeds of the public lands to the more complete endowment and support of the colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts established under the provisions of an act of Congress approved July second, eighteen hundred sixty-two,” *The Statutes at Large of the United States of America from December 1889 to March 1891*, 26, sec X, 417 (1891). The struggle over the Jones amendment is included below in the context of the difficulty of establishing black extension work.

¹⁰Crosby, “Building the County Home,” 56-8. See also, Russell Lord, *The Agrarian Revival: A Study of Agricultural Extension* (New York: American Association for Adult Education, 1939), 92-4; Joel Schor, “The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service to 1983: A Profile, An American Quest for Service and Equity” (Unpublished Manuscript, 1983), 34-5.

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when confronted with evidence of black success and of a preference by blacks for teachers and professionals of their own race, southerners refused to accept it—a somewhat ironic twist given the separate equality doctrine. They made a special claim to local authority in the administration of government funds because they understood the “race question” far better than those who did not live among blacks and had no first-hand knowledge of black character. Many non-southern colleagues who argued that local sentiment should prevail and who personally opposed a stronger federal government supported them. One of the most ironic arguments the southern faction put forth was that a segregated system of disbursement led to a lack of economy in program administration.¹¹ They shared the view of black civil rights plaintiffs of the 1950s. However, while the latter group’s solution to the problem of government waste was inclusion, that of the former group was exclusion—particularly to exclude blacks from opportunities for federal employment under the act.

Such arguments had been raised from the beginning of extension work in the South. Seaman Knapp, often called the founder of demonstration work (but more properly the founder of white demonstration work), did not favor using black agents. Indeed, Knapp had been averse to using blacks even as agricultural laborers. Removing blacks from the southern agricultural scene, he believed, would improve agriculture and increase land values. However, like whites who had devised other schemes to eradicate the southern Negro, Knapp knew this was impossible. But if blacks were to be involved in demonstration work, he believed they should be used as cooperators who farmed under white demonstrators’ guidance. He also believed that since black agents could only

¹¹*Hearings, Report and Debate: Smith-Lever Act of 1914*, 2906, 3145, 3191, 3194-3195. (Jones anti-Japanese sentiment appears on pages 3194-3195).

work with black clients, precious funds would be needlessly wasted if they were employed. Knapp insisted that he instructed white agents to enlist black farmers in demonstrations and that many of the white agents did carry on demonstrations with blacks of their own volition. He also believed that black work should progress at a slow rate and that the sentiments of local whites should determine when or if a black agent would be employed in an area.¹²

Despite Knapp's misgivings regarding the use of black extension agents, he had participated in the early development of black extension work. Knapp's benefactors at the General Education Board put him in touch with Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee Institute. One of Tuskegee's professors, George Bridgeforth, was touring the Alabama countryside in the "Jesup wagon" (so christened because it was funded by Morris K. Jesup—one of the wealthy northern philanthropic set that was interested in southern education and especially in Tuskegee). Bridgeforth took the college farm to the people though perhaps at not as sophisticated a level as Knapp's early efforts in Texas.¹³ At the encouragement of Frederick Gates, John D. Rockefeller's assistant who often represented the General Education Board, Knapp contacted Booker T. Washington in 1905 and asked him "to recommend a Tuskegee graduate who is 'well posted in agriculture, knows how to mix with men, is a good practical farmer, and can make a good talk on agriculture'."

Knapp selected Thomas Campbell from those Washington recommended and then

¹²Roy V. Scott, *The Reluctant Farmer: The Rise of Agricultural Extension to 1914* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), 232, 234; The General Education Board, *The General Education Board: An Account of its Activities, 1902-1914* (New York: General Education Board, 1915), 54; Crosby, "Building the County Home," 32-33; Crosby, "The Roots of Black Agricultural Extension Work," *Historian* 39 (February 1977), 245. Some blacks strongly criticized Knapp's opinion of black farmers. See especially, "Dr. Knapp Finds Another Scapegoat Place for the Negro," *The Colored American Magazine* 12 (1907): 329-30.

¹³Earl William Crosby, "Building the County Home," 29-30.

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completed an agreement to send Campbell into the field in 1906 under the auspices of the federal government. Soon after Campbell's appointment, Knapp appointed John B. Pierce of Hampton Institute in Virginia as the second black extension agent.

Pierce's work was so successful that, as the debate over Smith-Lever raged on, Wesley Jones used it as an example of what black agents could achieve. By 1911 there were twenty-six black agricultural agents scattered throughout the South. In some areas, Louis Harlan writes, their employment was controversial among local whites. He cites Thomas Campbell, who declared that "there are some sections in the South that the Negro agents doing work under the auspices of the government would be subjected to bodily harm."¹⁴ Despite the dangers by 1914, these agents had, in a small way, ameliorated some of the dire conditions on black farms in the South. Nevertheless, their appointments remained so controversial that the legislation to permanently establish extension work provided no explicit protection for blacks' jobs. The debate made clear that the division of extension appropriations along racial lines would kill the cross-regional support for the bill. Some northern Senators saw no utility in the bill at all, particularly when an early proposal to distribute the funds based on rural population pointed to an obvious southern tilt to the bill and a redistribution of the federal treasury from those states that paid more to those that paid less in taxes. Politicians from states like South Carolina and Mississippi—both of which were predominantly Negro—and in which blacks could lay claim to a great monetary amount of the fund strongly suggested they were willing to quash any

¹⁴Harlan, *Wizard of Tuskegee*, 207-09; Alfred Charles True, *A History of Agricultural Extension Work in the United States, 1785-1923* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1928; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1969), 64; *Hearings, Report and Debate: Smith-Lever Act of 1914*, 3197.

measure that gave money directly to blacks to administer. They seemed confident that their hard-line anti-black rhetoric would carry the day.

The Coming of Age of Black Interest Group Politics

However, probably none of the national politicians assumed that a black interest group—let alone one in its infancy—could obstruct the vision of a “whites only” progressivism. Sixteen years before it successfully led the fight to defeat the appointment of Judge John J. Parker to the U.S. Supreme Court, the NAACP led a fight that contributed to the modification of the Smith-Lever bill just enough to protect black interests. By September 1913, members of the organization were already petitioning the government. The Chicago branch—of which Jane Addams and Julius Rosenwald were two of twelve directors—wrote to Secretary of Agriculture David Houston to protest “the adoption or extension of a segregation policy” for civil servants. During the debates, Senator Jacob Gallinger of New Hampshire read a letter into the record from the NAACP’s main office in New York. Senator John D. Works of California read a brief letter of support from the northern California branch of the NAACP as well.¹⁵

The NAACP pointed out to readers of *The Crisis* that despite the bill’s benign appearance—it made no mention of race—it would be detrimental to the interests of black farmers. By the time NAACP officials became aware of the bill it had already passed in the House. Therefore, they turned their lobbying efforts to the Senate. W. E. B. Du Bois, editor of *The Crisis*, and Chapin Brinsmade, the NAACP’s attorney, not only drafted the language of the amendment Senator Jones introduced, they provided him with

¹⁵Edward Osgood Brown (and eleven others) to Hon. David A. Houston, 12, September 1913, Entry 17 AE, Box 1, Folder: General Correspondence, Negroes, Records of the Secretary of Agriculture, RG 16, NA II; *Hearings, Report and Debate: Smith-Lever Act of 1914*, 3063, 3146.

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data demonstrating that when no specific provision was made for black agricultural colleges in federal land-grant college appropriations, white agricultural colleges were usually the exclusive beneficiaries of the bills. The Hatch Experiment Station Act of 1887 and its supplemental acts in 1906, for example, made no mention of racial division of funds and as a result, all the monies for extension research in most southern states went to white land-grant colleges. Jones pointed out that none of the \$30,000 distributed to colleges in twelve states was given to institutions that blacks attended. Du Bois and Brinsmade also marshaled statistics on black agricultural college attendance and the value of farmland tilled by black farmers documenting the vital role they played in southern agriculture. Dividing the fund, as the Jones amendment would, was warranted in their view.¹⁶

After two days of vigorous debate Senator John Shafroth of Colorado offered an amendment to the bill. The amendment required that the selection of the college(s) that would receive the benefits of Smith-Lever be made jointly by the governor of each state in concert with the Secretary of Agriculture rather than by state legislatures alone as required in the original wording of the bill. In a subsequent vote, the Jones amendment to split the money was defeated and the Senate adopted the Shafroth amendment. Additionally, the Senate adopted an amendment by Gilbert M. Hitchcock of Nebraska stating that there would be no racial discrimination in demonstration work.¹⁷

¹⁶“The Smith-Lever Bill and Other Work of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People,” *The Crisis* v. 7, n. 5 (March 1914): 247-248. This report also notes that the Pennsylvania Abolition Society supported the Jones amendment. Its secretary was a member of the Philadelphia branch of the NAACP.

¹⁷*Hearings, Report and Debate: Smith-Lever Act of 1914*, 3241, 3242; “The Smith-Lever Bill and Other Work of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People,” *The Crisis*, v. 7 no. 5 (March 1914): 248.

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However, neither the Shafroth nor Hitchcock amendments survived resolution of the House and Senate versions of the bill. The original provision that legislatures in states having more than one land-grant college could designate which college(s) would receive the federal disbursement prevailed. This is not surprising given the composition of the resolution committee. Four of the six members of the conference committee were southern Democrats: Senators Hoke Smith, and South Carolina's Ellison "Cotton Ed" Smith and Congressmen Asbury F. Lever along with Congressman Gordon Lee of Georgia. Of the two remaining members Republican Senator James H. Brady of Idaho was a staunch supporter of the southern position and had provided an excellent assertion of localism to accompany the southern emphasis on race during the debates. Congressman Gilbert Nelson Haugen of Iowa was the "one friend" the NAACP had in the conference committee. When called to account for the lack of a hard line by the Senators in conference, Hoke Smith informed his colleagues that "it is my firm conviction that unless the Senate recedes from the amendment we shall have no legislation." House conferees, he reported, insisted that the state legislatures should decide on distribution of funds. Cummins and Jones were irate and led a crusade that resulted in the recall of the bill from the House. Ultimately, Cummins' and Jones' effort to reconsider the bill was defeated. *The Crisis* called it "a triumph in prejudice" that the motion to reconsider had failed and that President Wilson signed the bill into law after he received entreaties from Jane Addams, Moorefield Storey, Oswald Garrison Villard, Joel Spingarn and others who pointed out the legislation's discriminatory effect.¹⁸

¹⁸*Hearings, Report and Debate: Smith-Lever Act of 1914*, 8016-8022; "The Smith-Lever Bill and Other Work of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," *The Crisis*, v. 7, n. 5 (March 1914): 247-8, "The Smith-Lever Bill and Judge Terrell," *The Crisis* v. 7, n. 6 (April 1914): 283-4; Chapin Brinsmade, Attorney-in-charge, "Our Legal Bureau," s.v. "Congress. Smith Lever Bill," *The Crisis* v. 7, n.

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Despite George Brown Tindall's assertion that Smith-Lever "passed without significant opposition,"¹⁹ my reading of this acrimonious debate suggests otherwise. The sense of outrage that Jones and Cummins felt at their colleagues' willingness to surrender the amendment leaps from the record. Otherwise, the debate was gentlemanly enough: acceptance of the Shafroth amendment which *The Crisis* declared was "not as fair as the Jones amendment, but an important point is gained in that the Federal Government is given equal power with the states in deciding which colleges shall administer the fund—suggests a willingness to compromise."²⁰

Southerners fought hard to have their legislatures rather than the federal government designate the college which would administer the fund. While they focused on that minor issue, they ignored other provisions of the bill that weakened local control. For example, section 2 of the act reads in part ". . . this work shall be carried on in such a manner as may be mutually agreed upon by the Secretary of Agriculture and the State agricultural college or colleges receiving the benefits of this Act." Section 6 included the proviso that the Secretary of Agriculture had to approve states' plans of work before extension funds would be released.²¹ Hoke Smith insisted that the Secretary of Agriculture could refuse to accept plans of work if injustice was done to blacks to argue against

6 (April 1914): 291-2; "The Smith Lever Bill," *The Crisis* v. 8, n. 3 (July 1914): 124.

¹⁹George Brown Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 15.

²⁰"The Smith-Lever Bill and Other Work of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," *The Crisis* v. 7, n. 5 (March 1914): 248.

²¹Gladys Baker, *The County Agent* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939), 195; "An Act to provide for cooperative agricultural extension work between the agricultural colleges in the several States receiving the benefits of an Act of Congress approved July second, eighteen hundred and sixty-two, and of Acts supplementary thereto, and the United States Department of Agriculture," (hereafter referred to as the Smith-Lever Act) *The Statutes at Large of the United States of America from March 1913 to March, 1915*, 38, sec X, 373 (1915).

the Jones amendment.²² Only Republican Senator Thomas Sterling of South Dakota sensed the danger. He noted that section 2 “gives [the Secretary of Agriculture] the power to demand as a condition precedent to the right of a State to share in the fund that he . . . be permitted to originate the plans to be followed . . . in . . . farm demonstration and home economics work.” He claimed that the bill would subordinate state power to that of the federal government.

The State . . . will fear the loss of money which otherwise would be spent within the State in the employment of men there, . . . and it will be induced to consent to methods and to the employment of men which under ordinary conditions would not meet the approval of the sober judgement of the people of the State and of the agricultural college and which the farmers themselves would condemn.[¶]. . . in order to get the money the State may be required to consent that the work shall be carried on by men to be designated by the Secretary of Agriculture or some other official in that department and by the department’s present field force, . . .²³

Sterling’s observations were rooted in his disdain for demonstration employees who in his view were not always competent. He saw federal control as a potential pork barrel for “carpet bag” employment where experts would be imported from other states rather than a state’s residents being given employment opportunities. Surprisingly, Hoke Smith defended the provision. He didn’t see withholding funds over who actually did the work as a significant problem. He expected that the state agent would select the agents and noted that there seemed to be a general understanding of that fact as the Senate had voted against changing the language of section 2 to state that extension work would “be carried on in a manner *and by such agents* [my emphasis] as may be mutually agreed upon.”²⁴

²²*Hearings, Report and Debate: Smith-Lever Act of 1914*, 3065-3066.

²³*Hearings, Report and Debate: Smith-Lever Act of 1914*, 3243.

²⁴*Hearings, Report and Debate: Smith-Lever Act of 1914*, 3244.

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The act gave southerners the control they wanted and declared that they needed to ensure the programs' benefits to blacks and whites. But it did nothing to prevent racial conflict over disbursement of federal funds as proponents of the original bill had promised. Since state legislatures invariably designated southern white land-grant colleges as the sole beneficiaries of the act, the white state directors of extension believed they had the sole power to decide whether or not black agents would continue to work and whether the black land-grant college in their states would be invited to participate in the program.²⁵ It seemed that perhaps Senator John D. Works of California may have been correct when he declared, "Of course, the colored farmer may receive some benefit from this appropriation. He may look through the fence and see the demonstrations that are made on the farm of the white man. If they do not drive him away: bit I imagine no demonstrations will be made on the land of the colored farmer for his benefit."²⁶ The lack of clarity over ultimate source of authority—the Secretary of Agriculture or the state legislatures—paved the way for a political showdown.

South Carolina: A Case Study in the Racial Limits of Progressivism

The situation in South Carolina provides a case study of the realities of mixing progressivism, a federal bureaucracy intent on increasing its power, and racial demagoguery. As in other states, progressive reform often in South Carolina preceded progressive legislation. The introduction of extension work is a prime example of that phenomenon.

²⁵Crosby, "Building the County Home," 57.

²⁶*Hearings, Report and Debate: Smith-Lever Act of 1914*, 3234.

South Carolina was one of several southern states with the institutional framework for extension work already in place by 1914. The state's land-grant college began cooperating in extension work with the USDA in 1911. The USDA had already established in South Carolina a fledgling force of agricultural agents which its Washington staff directly supervised. In 1911, Clemson College entered a cooperative agreement with the USDA to oversee agricultural extension work in South Carolina. Under this agreement they assumed local supervision of white extension agents although the General Education Board, which sponsored similar projects in other southern states, continued to pay these workers' salaries. Black men were part of this GEB-funded agent force having worked as federal extension agents in South Carolina since 1907 (and possibly as early as 1905 according to some sources), apparently without public criticism.²⁷ Bradford Knapp asked Clemson College's president, Walter M. Riggs, to consider overseeing black work locally as well.²⁸ He assured Riggs that this work was not controversial. The position of the Federal Extension Service, he stated, was not to "appoint negroes to work among negro farmers unless we know that the community in which they are to work will meet with the approval of the white people generally. We believe it would be a bad thing to have a negro working in a section where the white people did not approve of it." He offered Clemson the opportunity to administer this work directly but stated that the federal

²⁷For a discussion of these issues see Carmen V. Harris, "Blacks in Agricultural Extension in South Carolina, 1900-1932" (Master's thesis, Clemson University, 1990), 18-25.

²⁸Bradford Knapp was the son of Seaman Knapp. The elder Knapp's position evolved from Special Agent for the Promotion of Agriculture in the South for the United States Department of Agriculture to Director of Southern Extension Programs. Bradford assumed his father's post when the elder Knapp died in 1911.

service would continue to manage the black program from Washington if Clemson declined supervision.²⁹

In January 1912 Clemson's Board of Trustees voted against assuming supervision of black work because "[w]hile the Board favored this feature of the work, they were not willing that the College should undertake it, because of the necessity of having negroes in our employ. . . ."³⁰ The Clemson position can be understood by examining the recent political activity of its most prominent trustee, U. S. Senator Benjamin R. Tillman. Ever a (white) "race man," Tillman had long fought to remove and exclude blacks from public office. He waged an unsuccessful two-year campaign to prevent Theodore Roosevelt's 1902 nomination of Dr. William D. Crum—a Negro—as the customs collector of the port of Charleston. Tillman had strong views on Crum perhaps for two reasons: first, Crum had been a supporter of Tillman's Republican opponent for a U.S. Senate seat in 1894—the year of Tillman's first election. Second, Tillman had strong views on blacks in federal positions. He defended white actions that forced a black postmistress to resign in Indianola, Mississippi. Roosevelt had closed the post office after the incident. Francis B. Simkins writes of Tillman's views thusly:

Tillman asserted that the appointment of a Negro to even a minor post was "the match which has touched off an electrical line of thought, reaching to the remotest bounds of this country." Such an opening of the door of hope to the colored people closed that door to the white people because "ever so little a trickle of race equality" would mean a return to Reconstruction. Protests by Southern whites were treated "with contumely and contempt" by the President. Venal motives underlay this action. The Republican machine desired to secure the Negro vote in the border states and to control the Southern Republican delegates in the national conventions.

²⁹Bradford Knapp to Walter M. Riggs, 26 December 1911, W. M. Riggs Presidential Records, (hereafter referred to as Riggs Presidential Records) Folder 48, STICUL.

³⁰Walter M. Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 6 January 1912, 3 p. m. Folder 49, Riggs Presidential Records.

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Such conditions accounted for the fact that outraged Southerners “rush to do an unjust and improper thing.”³¹

Such feelings were too strong to offset Crum’s adherence to the values of white supremacy which had earned him respect in Charleston. Simkins reports that when William Wilberforce’s daughter visited him, Crum allowed her to ride alone in his carriage while he walked. Roosevelt had been led to believe the appointment was acceptable to white citizens who vouched for Crum’s character. “[W]hile they protested that negroes ought not to be appointed postmasters, they said there was no objection to appointing them in other places, and specifically mentioned the colored collector of the customs at Savannah as a case in point.”³² Crum’s actual nomination was another matter. Concerns were raised regarding his supervision of white clerks who were “Charleston aristocrats.” Charleston Mayor James A. Smyth and business leaders then enlisted the help of Senator Tillman to prevent the appointment. The Crum appointment inaugurated a six-year fight between Roosevelt and Tillman. Tillman threatened a filibuster if the nomination was heard so Crum was not confirmed in the session that ended March 4, 1903. That should have ended the matter, but the next day Roosevelt put Crum’s name forward through a special recess session of the Senate; Tillman blocked it and prevented a second recess appointment as well. Then Roosevelt appointed Crum to his post by executive action. The appointment began at noon during a “constructive recess” which existed at the moment between the Senate’s special session and the regular session of Congress. For Tillman, the matter then became one of the constitutionality of recess appointments. After the Senate

³¹Simkins, *Pitchfork Ben Tillman*, 415-6.

³²Simkins, *Pitchfork Ben Tillman*, 416.

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Judiciary Committee concluded that recess appointments were unconstitutional, Crum's confirmation was blocked for a fifth time.³³

Through all this controversy, Crum worked at his post. According to Idus Newby, Crum performed his duties ably but he never secured the respect of local whites. As Roosevelt left office, he put Crum's name forth once more. Tillman led a three-day filibuster against his consideration and his Republican sponsors withdrew his name. Before his inauguration president-elect William Howard Taft "let it be known that he would not appoint Negroes to Southern office." Crum resigned effective March 4, 1909 and Taft appointed him ambassador to Liberia where Crum died of malaria in 1912.³⁴

But this was not the end of Tillman's fight. Joel Williamson recounts Tillman's numerous successes in promoting segregation in government offices and in disposing of black federal officeholders during Woodrow Wilson's first administration. Tillman saw to it that the "octoroon" Robert Smalls was ousted as port collector at Beaufort even though the post was to be abolished a few months after Wilson took office. He even saw to it that the deputy collector, a black appointed under civil service law was also displaced. Tillman encouraged Wilson and members of his cabinet to replace black federal officeholders even if that meant abrogating the civil service status of appointments to ensure that whites would get the posts. In 1913, Tillman also succeeded in having Charles M. Galloway, a South Carolinian, appointed to the Civil Service Commission and therefore acquired a certain 1/3 of the votes needed to dismiss civil service employees.

³³Simkins, *Pitchfork Ben Tillman*, 416-8.

³⁴Simkins, *Pitchfork Ben Tillman*, 418; Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 160-1.

Galloway, according to Williamson, was quite adept at whitening the ranks of federal civil service workers.³⁵

South Carolina Extension Work before Smith-Lever

Knapp's program at the USDA needed cooperative agreements to maintain an institutional existence. Clemson College was just entering the field of extension and had not yet become dependent on federal dollars. Therefore the school held a stronger hand. Knapp inserted a clause in the Memorandum of Understanding between the USDA and Clemson sealing a cooperative federal-state arrangement—the first of its kind in the nation—in carrying out all extension projects in the state. The agreement explicitly excluded the college or any joint employee of the college and the USDA (state directors of extension like South Carolina's William W. Long who worked out of Clemson, for example) from participating in black extension work. It was to remain “under the immediate control and supervision of the authorities at Washington.”³⁶

At Riggs' request, Knapp even wrote the state's contentious governor, Coleman Blease, to defuse any possible political fallout that might occur if Riggs announced the agreement for supervision of the white agents. Since it might appear that the college was attempting to circumvent Blease, Knapp pointed out in his letter that the agreement would reduce the state's burden of paying for Clemson's upkeep. Knapp also assured Blease that there was no political motive involved in the agreement.³⁷ Knapp's actions in this matter

³⁵Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 380-4.

³⁶“Memorandum of Understanding,” 26 December 1911 Folder 48, Riggs Presidential Records. This clause was inserted into the completed memorandum reflecting Knapp's promise to “handle the matter separately, with all due regard and in as delicate and as helpful a manner as possible.” Bradford Knapp to Walter M. Riggs, 8 January 1912, Folder 49, Riggs Presidential Records.

³⁷Walter M Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 6 January 1912, 3 p. m. Folder 49, Riggs Presidential Records; South Carolina General Assembly, *Journal of the House, Regular Session beginning 9 January 1912*, 82.

demonstrate the tendency of federal extension officials to take a pragmatic approach to the extension program. The cooperation of the white land-grant colleges—important symbols to the agricultural classes of their importance as an interest group—was essential to gaining access to farmers and to giving the federal extension program legitimacy. Knapp's letter reveals a greater concern for the development of the extension program than for equal access to extension services. This bureaucratic allegiance was typical of the program's personnel.

Between 1911 and 1914, fearing that any association with black employees other than as menial laborers would place the school at risk by Governor Blease and by his legislative supporters, who had threatened to dissolve the institution, Clemson College officials adamantly refused USDA requests that they oversee black extension work. However, as the Smith-Lever debate continued, the status of black agents regionally and in South Carolina both changed. Appointments of black agents escalated. The number of black agents increased over 170 percent from 36 in 1913 to 100 in 1914 with most of the increase coming in the appointment of black women. These appointments—made in states like Virginia, Arkansas, Florida, and North Carolina (all on the perimeter of the former Confederacy)³⁸ were probably politically motivated may have led opponents of white control to believe that the South intended to do justice to its blacks.

Perhaps influenced by this groundswell of appointments, in March 1914, shortly before Smith-Lever passed, William Williams Long, South Carolina Director of Extension, decided that the time had come to become involved in black extension work. In a letter to Bradford Knapp, Long wrote that he thought that “public sentiment” was

³⁸William Mercier, *Extension Work Among Negroes, 1920*, USDA Circular 190 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 7-8.

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favorable enough to do work with blacks. He even suggested that agents be placed in counties with a high rate of black landownership to avoid conflict with white landlords who might “resent negro agents interfering with their tenants.”³⁹ In the early months of 1914 Long played a significant role in administering South Carolina’s black extension work, including meeting with John Pierce—who by then was a black special agent serving as a liaison between federal extension officials and black extension workers in the upper South. Long not only sought out workers for open positions, he also met with local white leadership in some communities to discuss the placement of agents.⁴⁰ Either the earlier prohibition against Long’s having any association with black work was no longer in effect, or he was uncertain of his employment status (probably many extension workers were). Before coming to Clemson, Long had worked for the Knapps in Washington.⁴¹

The optimistic future for black extension work rudely collapsed once Smith-Lever became law in May 1914. The next year, there was a 37 percent drop in the number of agents to 63 in the entire region.⁴² Long’s actions after the bill passed suggest that the NAACP’s fears that some states would fire black agents unless they were explicitly

³⁹W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 28 March 1914, Box 4, Folder: South Carolina 1913-1914, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁴⁰W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 16 March 1914, Box 4, South Carolina 1913-1914, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II. For other illustrations of Long’s involvement with the black program see W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 16 March 1914; W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 6 January 1914, Box 4, Folder: South Carolina 1913-1914, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

Long and state Senator Niels Christensen of Beaufort decided against placing an agent in Christensen’s county because he was an enemy of Governor Blease. Blease excoriated Christensen, accusing his father—a Union officer—of commanding black troops during the Civil War, for his being a trustee of the Penn School and for there being a black in his county who was a member of the school board. David Duncan Wallace, *South Carolina: A Short History, 1520-1948*, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1951, repr. ed., Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1961), 659.

⁴¹Thomas W. Morgan, “The First Fifty Years of Smith-Lever,” 9, n. d., (typescript), Series 32 Cooperative Extension Service. Administration, 1918-1987, Box 80, Folder 11, STICUL.

⁴²Mercier, *Extension Work Among Negroes*, 1920, 7-8.

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protected in the act was reasonable. In a June letter to President Riggs, Long wrote that “ignorant tenants, most of them negroes” farmed half the land in the state. Long noted the favorable reception a speech he made on the necessity of teaching black tenants better farm practices. He claimed that there had never been any effort to reach tenant farmers of any race. White agents had “been deterred from taking up the work with the negro farmer as we feared to do so would injure the work with a certain class of our white people.” He suggested a “radical change in . . . policy,” that white extension agents enroll fifteen black tenants in their counties as demonstrators who would manage their farms under the agents’ instructions. Long’s change of policy meant that the black agents then at work under federal jurisdiction would not be continued by Clemson. It also meant that the independent farmers these black agents served, in all likelihood, would not be served by Smith-Lever employees. President Riggs’ handwritten notes on Long’s letter indicate that Clemson’s Board of Trustees approved of this plan.⁴¹

The black farmers involved as demonstrators would most likely receive \$1 in annual remuneration making them eligible for franking privileges to send in required record information. However, they would not be federally employed extension agents. Their farms were to serve as examples—demonstrations—for other black farmers. Historian Joel Schor calls Smith-Lever an attempt “by southern politicians to secure local control over demonstration work and reduce or eliminate a small, but growing program of black agents.” He points out that Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia, the bill’s other sponsor, declared that Georgia would not do extension work through black colleges “where a board of trustees could control it, and we could not handle it effectively.” He also asserted

⁴¹W. W. Long to Walter M. Riggs, 22 June 1914, Folder 101, Riggs Presidential Records.

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that “no graduate of Tuskegee Institute had ever been sufficiently trained to be a scientific farmer.”⁴² Smith’s remarks revealed a deeply entrenched racist view of black laborers and professionals. In his inaugural address as Georgia’s governor in 1907, Smith not only declared that racial difference was inherited, he suggested that slavery had improved black people and that emancipation had had a retrograde effect on the race. Further, he thought education was wasted on blacks:

Few have been helped by learning from books. All have been helped who have been taught or made to work. . . . The large majority of negroes are incapable of anything but manual labor and many taught from books spurn labor and live in idleness. . . . The negro teacher should be selected less by books than by character examinations. The negro school to be useful needs less books and more work.⁴³

Subsequent events in South Carolina suggest that whites in Smith’s neighboring state shared his views. These events also support Schor’s contention that elimination of the black service was the intent of the state’s white extension officials. Such efforts certainly were in harmony with the utterances of southern Senators during the debates.

A few weeks after Long made his suggestion to use demonstrators rather than agents, Riggs wrote to Robert S. Wilkinson, the president of South Carolina State College, to inform him that rather than supporting a separate extension organization for blacks—which would be an “unfortunate dissipat[ion of] the funds arising under the Lever Bill”—funds could be more efficiently spent by having black demonstrators. Riggs

⁴²Schor, “The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service,” 34-35; Harlan, *Wizard of Tuskegee*, 210.

⁴³“Hoke Smith’s Gubernatorial Address, 1907,” Paul D. Escott and David R. Goldfield, eds. *Major Problems in the History of the American South, Volume II: The New South* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1990), 229.

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promised that this system would be more “useful to the colored farmers of the State, upon whose labor depends a large part of its production.”

Wilkinson perhaps misunderstood Riggs’ use of the term “demonstrator” to mean “agent.” In the Smith-Lever debates extension agents were consistently referred to as “demonstrators.” Wilkinson was probably aware, also, of Long’s work with the black agents as well as Long’s meetings with John B. Pierce to select black agents for various counties. Wilkinson wrote back and requested that Riggs have some of the demonstrators assigned to State College as a “base of operations” where they could make use of the school’s experiment facilities.⁴⁴

In states like South Carolina where the two-party system was non-existent and “politician” was frequently synonymous with “Negrophobe,” it seemed certain that black agents would be excluded from employment. By Jim Crow custom and given the racial demagoguery of some South Carolina politicians who never passed on an opportunity to heap scorn upon Clemson College, neither black agents nor farmers were permitted to visit the agricultural facilities at Clemson. Given that situation, Wilkinson pointed out, as Bradford Knapp had to Riggs in 1911, that black agents would be more effective with black farmers than white agents. Wilkinson expressed the hope to Long and Riggs that black agents would encourage black farmers to visit State College and see what it could offer them since “the colored people are really backward in trying to find out what is

⁴⁴Walter M. Riggs to Robert Shaw Wilkinson, 15 July 1914; Robert S. Wilkinson to W. W. Long, 23 July 1914, Folder 102, Riggs Presidential Records; Wilkinson had used both terms in a paragraph discussing the inauguration of agricultural extension work in his 1915 report to State College’s Board of Trustees. *CNIAMC*, 19 (1915): 11. In a self-study report of Clemson’s extension service written decades later, Associate Director of Extension Thomas Morgan, states that in the early years, county agents were known as “demonstrators.” Thomas W. Morgan, “Self-Study Report for County Agent Work, [c. 1960],” 3, Series 32, Box 80, Folder 6, STICUL.

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really accessible to them.” Wilkinson also stated that “the colored man at the head of the work [most likely J. B. Pierce] is anxious for just this sort of thing.”⁴⁵

Riggs clarified his position in a subsequent letter to Wilkinson. While agreeing that if black agents were employed they should have headquarters at State College, Riggs informed Wilkinson that Director Long would be unwilling to accept black agents “for fear of doing more harm than good.” Riggs thought that if black agents were employed, “demagogues in opposition to our getting the State to make appropriations to meet the Lever Bill” might use that fact to prevent the General Assembly from providing matching funds for extension work. “It will, I am sure, be well to get the State well committed to the policy of making appropriations to meet the Lever Bill before making any radical departure in the method of conducting the work. I rather think that you will agree with me in this view if you will give careful consideration to the present state of politics in South Carolina.”⁴⁶

Indeed, then-governor Coleman Blease was as antipathetic to extension work—and not solely on racial grounds—as he was to black education. Blease viewed extension agents as leeches who sucked the lifeblood of the farmers—their tax dollars. These men and their families, he claimed, “are riding around in palace cars, living on the luxuries of the land.”⁴⁷ If Clemson had accepted black work, thus combining two of Blease’s pet peeves, it would have been tantamount to handing him a stick of political dynamite. According to Long, Blease’s supporters had attacked extension work so severely in

⁴⁵Bradford Knapp to Walter M. Riggs, 26 December 1911, Folder 48; R.S. Wilkinson to W. W. Long, 23 July 1914; R.S. Wilkinson to President W. M. Riggs, 23 July 1914, Folder 49, Riggs Presidential Records.

⁴⁶Walter M. Riggs to Robert S. Wilkinson, 27 July 1914, Folder 49, Riggs Presidential Records.

⁴⁷Burnside, “The Governorship of Coleman Livingston Blease of South Carolina,” 238-9.

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coastal Georgetown county that he had decided to transfer the white agent to Chester county “and just let them do without an agent for a year. I find that this is the best way to silence the opposition. Just tell the people if they don’t want demonstration work we are not going to force it on them. Whenever we take this attitude they always come around and are forever after real good.”⁴⁸

Other elected officials also opposed Clemson’s control of extension work, which heightened the danger of a bad outcome if they accepted supervision of black agents. While the General Assembly readily passed an acceptance of the Smith-Lever Act naming Clemson College as the institution to receive its benefits, other bills relating to extension work stalled because Commissioner of Agriculture E. J. Watson fought bitterly against what he saw as a usurpation of the powers of his office by the new extension programs. Watson began accusing Long and extension agents of disparaging him in the press.⁴⁹

Bi-annual gubernatorial campaigns added volatility to the state’s politics. A populist leader who took advantage of the intersections of race and politics, like Blease, could certainly score political points with his base of support—the mill vote in Blease’s case—as well as tap into the racial prejudice of disgruntled white rural laborers by excoriating Clemson College for participating in black extension work. In colorful language such a candidate likely would have condemned the college for wasting state dollars—no matter how few—on blacks at the expense of the toiling white sons and daughters of the State. The use of racial imagery, an explicit or implied attack on a

⁴⁸W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 26 February 1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁴⁹W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 26 February 1915, Box 7, Folder: South Carolina 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II; Certified Copy of E. J. Watson to E. I. Reardon, 5 October 1915, Folder 126; W. W. Long “To the Board of Trustees,” Clemson Agricultural College, 3 November 1915, Folder 130, Riggs Presidential Records. While the Clemson letters were written after black agricultural extension work was established, they clearly outline the ongoing, perhaps one-sided, feud between Watson and Long.

redistribution of society's resources from the hardworking [white] to the undeserving [black], became a staple of southern politics because it was highly effective.

Blease had used such tactics in 1913 to harass University of South Carolina president Samuel Chiles Mitchell, whom Dewey Grantham identifies as a progressive interested in a wide range of reforms: "public schools, child labor . . . , prohibition, public health, better roads, improved race relations, and public welfare programs." My reading of the secondary literature on Mitchell leads me to conclude that he, like southern progressives of other stripes, was somewhat contradictory in his views. Daniel Hollis suggests that Mitchell did not promote equality for blacks but "did feel very strongly that the Negro was a human being and must be treated as such." Contrary to the increased willingness to accept genetically deterministic assessments of black inferiority, Mitchell viewed blacks' status in sociological terms. True to the conservatism of white attitudes, he felt that political disfranchisement had nothing to do with blacks' current situation. Mitchell viewed the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments as poorly timed because blacks had not acquired the prerequisites for self-government, "habits of thrift, obedience to the law, home making, fidelity, virtue and truth," that it had taken Englishmen a thousand years to acquire. He favored disfranchisement in Mississippi—his native state—because the size of the black population (they were a majority) and their lack of education meant that they were not ready for citizenship. He favored political rights for blacks in Virginia because they were fewer in number and were better educated. He believed that slavery had led to an enforced public orthodoxy on racial matters that persisted even though the institution was gone. He was Eurocentric and an assimilationist. Like Booker T. Washington and many black conservatives today, he believed that white

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standards must be maintained and that anyone who achieves those standards should be given equal recognition.⁵⁰ It is not surprising that Mitchell found himself in trouble with the Negrophobic governor given that Mitchell also spoke to black audiences (giving the 1910 commencement address at Tuskegee, speaking at black churches and colleges in South Carolina, and even having a book on black life read as part of the University's YMCA discussion so that students would take up the black cause).

In 1913, Mitchell had accepted a Peabody Fund grant that gave the university an award provided that the remainder of the grant be used to educate blacks. Based on information he received from David B. Johnson, who probably had hoped to secure part of the grant for the school of which he was president, Winthrop College (the normal college for white women), Blease accused Mitchell of using his influence to deprive Winthrop of \$90,000 in Peabody funds. "If he [Mitchell] would rather take that money to educate blacks than to give it to the white girls of South Carolina, he certainly has no place during my administration in any department of the government, or, particularly, the educational department of the State," Blease declared. The University's Board of Trustees investigated the matter, satisfied itself that Mitchell had done nothing wrong, and refused to accept Blease's resolution that Mitchell be fired—the Board said that Mitchell had only carried out Peabody Fund policy. Mitchell ultimately resigned. Blease's promise to "keep fighting Mitchell 'till he comes out of that college regardless of the circumstances'," (including a promise to slap Mitchell's face) and the offer of the presidency of the Medical College of Virginia brought the matter to conclusion.⁵¹

⁵⁰Hollis, "Samuel Chiles Mitchell," 22-3.

⁵¹Burnside, "The Governorship of Coleman Livingston Blease," 225-9; Hollis, "Samuel Chiles Mitchell," 27-8, 36. The scenario, as painted here, is the way it was presented by Blease and was the

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Given Mitchell's resignation it is likely that Clemson officials felt genuinely threatened by Blease. Part of the mission of his administration had been to dissolve Clemson College. Therefore, Clemson officials took great efforts to insulate themselves from accusations of high-handedness and violation of racial mores. As political campaigns heated up once more in 1914, college officials sought the termination of a high profile Negro. College officials also minimized their public association with the black program.

At the request of Clemson officials, one black agent—R. W. Westberry who worked in Sumter, Richard Manning's home county—was fired in July of 1914.⁵² Manning was a candidate for the governorship in that year and was also a Clemson College trustee. As probable supporters of Manning's candidacy, it is likely that College officials believed that Westberry's termination was necessary to neutralize a political threat. Long and Knapp had discussed replacing Westberry as early as January 1914. If Westberry was aware of that fact, he did not show it. In April, he had given a speech to a farmer's union in Anderson county, one of Blease's upstate enclaves. In that speech Westberry recalled the history of extension work and of the importance of taking advantage of its services.⁵³

grounds for the political battle that erupted. Hollis provides a more complete explanation (including a suggestion that Blease's expulsion from the University in the late 1880's) in pages 32-6. It would seem that the Peabody Fund fell victim to racial progressivism. Louis Harlan notes that as funding of black schools by white philanthropists came under further attack, these bodies refused to fund black education. The Peabody Fund was dissolved. Even then, black schools did not receive a "proportionate share of the principal." Harlan, "The Southern Education Board and the Race Issue in Public Education," 200.

⁵²W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 1 July 1914; Bradford Knapp to W. W. Long, 3 July 1914, Box 4, Folder: South Carolina 1913-1914, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II. This case will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

⁵³Ransom W. Westberry, "Advice to Negro Farmers: Delivered Before Farmers' Union of Anderson County, April, 1914," in Wilson, John R., ed. *Life and Speeches of Ransom W. Westberry* (Atlanta, GA: A. B. Caldwell Publishing Company, 1921), 76-80. References to Wilson's biographical introduction will

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Clemson officials were also aware that the manner in which they distributed extension resources had political consequences. For example, Bradford Knapp believed that extension work being done in mill communities was not in line with the extension service's mission and wanted to discontinue it. Long argued against the decision. After all, the mill workers were Blease's political base: they had helped elect him governor by giving him 57 percent of their vote.⁵⁴ At the same time, Long continued making his visits to the black agents to "reorganize and revitalize" the program.⁵⁵ Providing extension services to blacks by employing black agents while denying whites in mill communities an agent in short, was probably a shortsighted move from the Clemson College perspective.

South Carolina State College president R.S. Wilkinson's own troubles with Blease's appointees to his school's Board of Trustees may explain his not pushing Riggs further on the issue of black agents following Riggs' comments about political conditions. The two may have also shared a relationship—albeit a paternalistic one—in which Wilkinson not only sought Riggs' advice but often deferred to his judgement. In a 1915 letter Wilkinson thanked Riggs for his assistance in having influenced members of the Board of Trustees to adopt new by-laws so that Wilkinson would not have to endure annual reappointment.⁵⁶

list him as the author. References to Westberry's writings and speeches will list him as the author.

⁵⁴Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 473.

⁵⁵W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 6 January 1914; W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 16 March 1914, Box 4, Folder: South Carolina 1913-1914, Entry 3, RG 33, NAII.

⁵⁶R.S. Wilkinson to President W. M. Riggs, 24 May 1915, Folder 117, Riggs Presidential Records.

Blease lost a 1914 run for the United Senate and his hand-picked gubernatorial successor, John G. Richards, lost that year's gubernatorial race to Manning. Blease's defeat provided a brief respite from overt racial politics. After Richard Manning's inauguration he removed seven "Bleasites" from South Carolina State College's board. According to Wilkinson, their removal gave him a "period of immunity from their onslaughts" since "[t]hey were all of the former administration type, but now have been relegated to the class he [Blease] occupies"⁵⁷

But there was no respite for Clemson officials who continued to gird themselves for an institutional defense. Six black agents continued to work in South Carolina through 1914. However, Riggs' resistance to supervising black workers was unequivocal. At the end of the year, Riggs wrote to Bradford Knapp that he expected the federal extension office to continue its supervision of black extension work as the Clemson officials "preferred not to undertake [it]."⁵⁸ W. W. Long began to argue against the use of black agents as well. Long by then was suggesting that the best means of reaching black farmers was through white extension agents who, he asserted, were willing to run these projects "provided there are no negro agents."⁵⁹ But he had problems of his own. As a dual employee of the federal and South Carolina extension services he literally had to serve two masters. His correspondence in January 1915 suggests that he was concerned that remarks he had made may have left him in disfavor with federal extension officials. "You misjudge me if you think that I am out of sorts with the office," Long writes. "I am

⁵⁷R.S. Wilkinson to President W. M. Riggs, 24 May 1915, Folder 117, Riggs Presidential Records.

⁵⁸Walter M. Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 15 December 1914, 4 p. m., Folder 109, Riggs Presidential Records.

⁵⁹W. W. Long to H. E. Savely 13 January 1915, Box 7, Folder: South Carolina 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

intensely interested in my work. It is my very bread of life . . . It may be that at times in my intensity and desire to do things I become too tense.”⁶⁰

Long was clearly of two minds on the black agent issue and blacks’ willingness to invoke federal power put him in a difficult situation. J. E. Dickson applied for a job as a black agent and when he was rejected, he was bold enough to write the federal extension service to complain about Long’s response to his application. Long had to justify his actions to federal officials. In his letter of explanation to J. A. Evans he also recommended the hiring of another black on a trial basis, perhaps to demonstrate his interest in black extension work. As Long explained that he had had to turn down “a great many applications from colored men” because the allotment for black work had been used up, he also recommended the appointment of Samuel Nance, Jr. as black agent in Newberry County at a small salary. The general tone of the letter—in which Long defended himself against complaints by blacks seeking extension positions—was not one of total commitment to their employment. “I wish the policy for this work could be settled definitely,” he wrote. He acknowledged that white agents had not done justice to black farmers but argued “that on account of the political conditions [in the state] if we were to manifest too great an interest in the colored farmer our organization would at once be made a partisan issue. This would be unfortunate.”⁶¹

Long said that he was “willing to do everything [he could] to encourage the colored agents, if it is the policy to appoint them. . . .” He “had every sympathy for them

⁶⁰W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 29 January 1915, Box 7, Folder: South Carolina 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁶¹W. W. Long to J. A. Evans, 15 February 1915; see also W. W. Long to J. A. Evans, 13 January 1915, Box 7, Folder: South Carolina 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II. The Dickson case will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

and would not mind getting into a buggy and riding every day with a colored agent.”⁶² His concern was that black agents would not be able to confer with white landlords without creating bad feelings in the landowning class for black farmers and for the extension service. “I cannot help but feel that the time is not yet with us when we can risk negro agents as a general proposition.”⁶³

Long was probably surprised when Evans took him up on his suggestion and recommended that Nance be hired at a small salary. Evans left Nance’s employment fate up to Long. However, having been accused of rank indifference to black extension work by blacks of the state and having made remarks that seemed disloyal to the federal service, Long may have felt that hiring Nance would be a prudent move. However, the political concerns of Clemson officials led Riggs to request Nance’s termination in May 1915 after only three months of employment. When those efforts failed, Riggs gathered information the next year to identify who was responsible for Nance’s appointment, fearing that “[t]he President of our Board of Trustees, Col. Alan Johnstone [of Newberry County], is likely to be attacked on this appointment when he makes his race for the State Senate [in 1916].”⁶⁴ Knapp provided Riggs with the requested information showing that Long had sent in the memorandum for Nance’s hiring. J. A. Evans reassured Riggs that Nance’s appointment should have little effect on Johnstone’s chances which was correct.

⁶²W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 29 January 1915, Box 7, Folder South Carolina, 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II; Harris, “Blacks in Agricultural Extension,” 26-30, 33.

⁶³W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 29 January 1915, Box 7, Folder: South Carolina, 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁶⁴W. M. Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 3 May 1915, Box 10; J. A. Evans to W. M. Riggs, 5 May 1915, Folder 116; W. M. Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 27 May 1915, Folder 117, Riggs Collection; W. M. Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 20 June 1916, Box 11, Folder: Miscellaneous South Carolina, 1915-1916, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

Johnstone ran unopposed in the August primary and garnered 1,685 votes—only three fewer than the highest vote recipient in Newberry county.⁶⁵

The intersection of the politics of extension work and the politics of race demonstrate the formidable forces black extension agents faced in South Carolina. With battle lines clearly drawn, the struggle over the very existence of this class of black professionals began. Racial protocol, politics, and stereotypes played a powerful role in the debate over the black service in South Carolina. Had U. S. Senator Sterling's admonition been heeded by his peers, the use of black agents would have been moot. But their failure to do so led to a contest which was not as unequal as the racial context might lead one to expect. Both the Great Migration and the creation of the NAACP inclined federal power toward blacks , leading to patronage positions and to increased federal services as well. While white South Carolinians and other southerners did not have to deal with black political pressure, politicians outside the South did. Black voters and the NAACP were pressure groups whose voices within the federal halls of governance could not be fully ignored.

From the state perspective, employment of black agents under the supervision of Clemson College violated of the sanctity of white institutions and states' rights. From the federal perspective, hiring black agents was essential to the preservation of conservative racial progressivism. Indeed, the arguments put forth by persons like U. S. Senator Jones were not measures to guarantee equal treatment of blacks in the program. They called for equitable distribution of the funds by which they meant that about 28 percent of the fund

⁶⁵W. M. Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 27 May 1915, Box 10, Riggs Presidential Records; J. A. Evans to W. M. Riggs, 28 June 1916, Box 11, Folder: Miscellaneous South Carolina, 1915-1916, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II; *The State*, 30 August 1916, 9; *Reports and Resolutions*, II (1917): 15.

should be spent on black work—much like 1890 Morrill funds were. On the state level, employment of black agents would, perhaps, kill the Progressive Democrats' efforts to seize legislatures and governors' mansions as white southerners' fears were stoked by reactionaries. On the federal level, employment of black agents might prevent the return to power of more liberal Republicans. Several northern newspapers expressed astonishment at the actions of southern Senators—particularly Vardaman and Hoke Smith.⁶⁶

The negative assessments of black character also became a two-edged sword. For state policy makers the supposedly inherent immorality of blacks meant that blacks would refuse to follow the leadership of black agents. From the federal perspective, black immorality was a problem that could only be attacked through the employment of the right type of black agents, perhaps because these agents would have rescued themselves from the perils of their environment and would best know how to rescue their fellow blacks. In the discussions between Riggs and Knapp, these arguments unfold.

In a letter to W. W. Long in late 1914 Riggs acknowledged the disparity in power between federal and state extension officials. He noted that the “terms of the memorandum of understanding are [and he inserted above the typed sentence ‘perhaps unfortunately!’] perfectly clear.” He noted that any time State and Federal Smith-Lever funds were to be used on a project, both his and Bradford Knapp’s approval must be given. Bradford Knapp argued that the college’s agreement with the federal extension service required it to carry on all extension work in the state and the only means by which the college could omit participation in black work was to discontinue the program. He suggested that it might not be good policy to discontinue the program completely.

⁶⁶“The Smith-Lever Bill and Judge Terrell,” *The Crisis* v. 7, n. 6 (April 1914): 283-4.

Recalling the fight for the Jones amendment, Knapp argued that should the composition of the Congress change to a Republican majority, total elimination of the black service could lead to a federal inquiry into the program and a possible amendment of the Smith-Lever Act to give a share of the funds directly to the black colleges. "I am sure that the Colleges would be in a much better situation if they show a reasonable fairness toward the negro work, than they would if they showed that they had paid no attention whatever to it." But if the Clemson officials decided not to carry the program, Knapp felt he had no choice but to ask for the resignation of the agents "if that is the agreement between yourself and the Secretary [of Agriculture]."⁶⁷

Clemson Agricultural College and Black Extension Work

Clemson's Board of Trustees voted not to have black agents and Riggs relayed their decision to Knapp. Riggs asked Knapp to terminate the agents and offered Clemson's revised plan, which was to increase to 600 the number of black farm demonstrators. Using white agricultural agents, the program would target tenant farmers—with the approval of their white landlords—but not black landowners. Echoing the sentiments of southern senators during the Smith-Lever debate, Riggs suggested that "negroes have less confidence in men of their own race than in competent white men, who also have more moral authority to have their instructions followed." In time, Riggs promised, as funds increased and if "it seems desirable to use negro agents," the Clemson extension service would enter a cooperative agreement with South Carolina State College for supervision of the work.⁶⁸

⁶⁷W. M. Riggs to W. W. Long, 28 November 1914, Folder 108; Bradford Knapp to Dr. W. M. Riggs, 22 December 1914, Folder 109, Riggs Presidential Records.

⁶⁸Walter M. Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 6 January 1915, Folder 110, Riggs Presidential Records. While

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Riggs was probably surprised when Knapp responded to his request by refusing to fire the agents. Knapp did not challenge the idea of white dominance of extension work. He said that “[t]he basis for all demonstration work ought to be a well trained white County Agent in every county” and that all extension workers in the county ought to be under that agent’s supervision. But, he argued, there were simply some areas in which black agents could be more effective than white ones. Further, since it had been federal practice to place black agents in counties where “the county civilization [was] distinctly and emphatically negro” and where the counties were overwhelmingly “segregated . . . with no white population” there did not seem to be a reason to reject black agents. He pointed out that in most of the other southern states some arrangement had been made between the white and black land-grant colleges for black agents to be employed and that in most places where the agents worked they had been well-received.⁶⁹

Knapp may have been referring to the situation in Alabama. Louis Harlan asserts that Booker T. Washington knew that the Smith-Lever Act meant that blacks would be discriminated against in extension programs and therefore began a campaign to get a share of the funds for blacks. He wrote to Alabama Governor Emmet O’Neal and asked that a portion of the funds be given to Tuskegee because it had been involved in extension

Knapp opposed this plan as a replacement for black agents, he described a similar plan in a letter to Thomas Jesse Jones in the Bureau of Education, asserting that black farmers received extension services not only from the 53 black agents at work in the field but also from white agents as well. Knapp estimated that white agents spent about twenty-five percent of their time directly with black clients. Bradford Knapp to Thomas Jesse Jones, 6 May 1916, Box 35, Folder: Director, SC, 1917-1918, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁶⁹Bradford Knapp to Walter M. Riggs, 27 January 1915, Folder 110, Riggs Presidential Records.

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work for twenty years. A blue-ribbon panel assembled by O'Neal concluded that thirty percent of the Smith-Lever fund should be devoted to black extension work because Alabama's population was thirty percent Negro. Fifteen percent of the fund was designated for use by Tuskegee and the other fifteen percent for use by Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical College for Negroes. Encouraging the governor to accept the committee's proposal, Washington wrote, "I am anxious to have it demonstrated to the world that the distribution of such a sum of money is left to our Southern white people and that they will do justice to the black without such appropriations having to be restricted at the original source by Congress or any other organization outside the state." The governor approved the division but Auburn Agricultural College's extension department managed the funds. There has been no South-wide study of this period of extension work so it is impossible to know what the response to black extension work was after the passage of Smith-Lever. In a letter to Thomas Jesse Jones of the Bureau of Education, Washington wrote that white Alabamians were congratulating themselves "on the fact that they are going to do more than any Southern state south of Virginia" for black extension work.⁷⁰

Knapp suggested that Riggs consider an arrangement with South Carolina State College. He argued that it would be in Clemson's best interest to continue to use a few black agents. For if Senator Jones and other amendment supporters renewed their fight and prevailed in having the funds dispersed separately to the white and black colleges in the southern states "it would very seriously cripple the white Agricultural colleges." Knapp also informed Riggs that he had just discovered that an organization with headquarters in Washington, D. C.—most likely the NAACP—was lobbying for the black

⁷⁰Harlan, *Wizard of Tuskegee*, 210-211.

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extension program.⁷¹ He “suspect[ed] that their plan was, whenever there is a change of administration so as to bring those into power who are friendly toward them, to make a showing and ask that the bill be amended so as to make a provision on the basis of the Morrill fund.” Knapp had earlier pointed out that a Republican administration might be more solicitous of black claims to program participation than were the Democrats.⁷² His desire to forestall a political conflict with activist groups working on behalf of black interests shows that even in extension work the federal government felt the increasing political power of black citizens and other supporters of racial justice.

Clemson officials pleaded the college’s case with other federal officials and lined up local support. In early 1915 W. W. Long wrote J. A. Evans, assistant chief of the Office of Extension Work in the South and a Georgian. Long repeated the standard arguments against black agents to Evans: “. . . the negro agent can only work with the negro landowner; . . . the white landlord will not permit negro agents to go on their land . . . fearing that he will use his influence to make the negro tenants dissatisfied with their conditions. Long’s remarks are ironic when one considers that the main objective of extension work was to create dissatisfaction with the depressed conditions on farms. This provides yet another example of racist perversions of progressivism. There is a subtext that seems to suggest that like progressivism itself, the desire to improve personal surroundings was a goal that was limited to whites only. Long argued that black “secret societies,” such as Masonic lodges, would have a negative effect on extension work because the black agent would have no influence with black farmers unless he joined

⁷¹Because there was an active Washington, D. C. branch of the NAACP, Long may have erroneously believed that the capital was its headquarters.

⁷²Bradford Knapp to Walter M. Riggs, 27 January 1915, Folder 110, Riggs Presidential Records.

their societies. “[R]epresentatives of the United States Department of Agriculture would be entering these societies and clubs and dabbling in things that he [sic] had nothing at all to do with.” Long even pointed out that most of the “leading [white] men” in South Carolina agreed with him that black extension work should be done by white agents and hastened to add that these men were not “negro haters.”⁷³

Long also appealed to H. E. Savely, the field agent for Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida; and eventually Long took his case to Bradford Knapp. In each instance, he used the same line of argument he made to Evans in the hope of removing the black agents from their posts. Long believed that using four to six hundred black farmers as demonstrators would satisfy any Congress “that we are working earnestly, conscientiously and with consecration with four, five or six hundred negro farmers, . . . If we could make known to the members of Congress, who did not understand the situation we are dealing with, . . .” Long had “no doubt but that the results would be satisfying . . .”⁷⁴ Long’s arguments were based on localism. He reported to Savely that white agents would refuse to work with black farmers if black agents also did extension work, which if true, goes to concerns about appearances of equal status between black and white agents. Long did not oppose black work completely. To J. A. Evans he wrote, “I don’t know the conditions elsewhere but I think I know what I am talking about here.” To Bradford Knapp he wrote, “I do not want you to get it into your

⁷³W. W. Long to J. A. Evans, 13 January 1915, Box 7, Folder: South Carolina, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁷⁴W. W. Long to H. E. Savely, 19 January 1915; W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 29 January 1915, Box 7, Folder: South Carolina 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

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head for a minute that I am opposed to negro agents. It is simply a matter of knowing the expediency, . . .”⁷⁵

Evans equivocated in his response. He “wish[ed] the policy for this colored work could be settled definitely,” but he also recommended that Long appoint a black who sought employment. Neither Knapp nor Savely supported Long’s proposals. Savely, like Knapp, stated that he believed that black agents should only be placed in areas where there was a large black population. Unlike Knapp, he believed they should be placed in areas of high black land *ownership*. He also stated that these agents could be placed in other areas at the request of white landowners who wanted agents to work with their tenants. Savely also raised the possibility of white agricultural colleges losing the funding battle in Congress. He pointed out that if the Republican party came to power in Congress in the 1916 election then revisions to the Smith-Lever Act might occur.⁷⁶

Federal officials were of one mind regarding the role of black agents in the service. They were clearly to be subordinate to white extension agents. Knapp wrote Long that black agents were to be considered “supernumeraries to do definite types of work in definite territories.” H. E. Savely advised Long that the “wisest thing to do is to keep a few negro agents in each state in territories where they can do the most good, and try to see to it that we have the very best negro agents that can be found. . . .”⁷⁷ But their

⁷⁵W. W. Long to J. A. Evans, 13 January 1915; W. W. Long to H. E. Savely, 19 January 1915; W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 29 January 1915, Box 7, Folder: South Carolina 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁷⁶J. A. Evans to W. W. Long, 18 February, 1915; H. E. Savely to W. W. Long, 19 January 1915, Box 7, Folder: South Carolina 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II; Pete Daniel, *Breaking the Land: The Transformation of Cotton, Tobacco and Rice Cultures since 1880* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 10-1, 300 n. 15.

⁷⁷Bradford Knapp to W. W. Long, 3 February 1915, H. E. Savely to W. W. Long, 19 January 1915, Box 7, Folder: South Carolina 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

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presence was also needed to demonstrate the commitment of the federal bureaucracy to a modicum of racial progress. Savely recommended to Long that black agents receive the same instruction and attention as white agents and also suggested that white agents needed to instruct black farmers as well.⁷⁸

In a letter to Riggs, Knapp pointed out the success of black extension work in Alabama and Virginia and asked that Riggs take no action on black extension work until Riggs and Long met Alfred Charles True, the chairman of the States Relations Service, and Secretary of Agriculture David Houston to discuss the matter. Knapp warned Riggs that Houston was opposed to completely ending black extension work in South Carolina. But, Knapp added, the Secretary was “very anxious to see that the right kind of material is employed and that inefficient men be discontinued.”⁷⁹

Meanwhile, in a letter to Alan Johnstone, Riggs wrote:

We are having a little trouble with the Washington authorities in regard to our policy of negro demonstration work. The Washington people want to insist that we use some negro agents, whereas we do not think this is best, and furthermore, it would be in opposition to the expressed opinion of the Board [of Trustees]. It may be necessary for Mr. Long and me to go to Washington and have a conference with Dr. True and the Secretary of Agriculture and get this matter in shape for presentation at the April meeting of the Board.⁸⁰

⁷⁸H. E. Savely to W. W. Long, 19 January 1915, Box 7, South Carolina 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁷⁹Bradford Knapp to Dr. Walter M. Riggs, 15 February 1915, Folder 112, Riggs Presidential Records. The State Relations Service was organized in the USDA to oversee extension work in 1915. The Office of Extension Work in the North and West and the Office of Extension Work in the South were separate divisions within it. In 1921 the two divisions were merged to create the Federal Extension Service. Henry C. Wallace “To All Extension Directors,” 20 September 1921, Box 821, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 D, RG 16, NA II.

⁸⁰W. M. Riggs to Senator Alan Johnstone, 24 February 1915, Folder 112, Riggs Presidential Records.

Writing to B. H. Rawl, an employee of the USDA and a former Clemson trustee, Riggs said, “[W]e had rather planned to have a conference with Dr. Knapp, Dr. True and the Secretary of Agriculture on the subject of the negro demonstration work in this state, regarding which we are at outs. . . .”⁸¹ Rawl was one of two South Carolinians who assisted A. Frank Lever in drafting the language of the House version of the Smith-Lever Act.⁸² Riggs did not ask Rawl to intercede on Clemson’s behalf but probably wanted his support.

Without federal extension officials’ approval, Long also initiated his plan for white extension agents to do work with black farmers. In a memorandum to all white agents working in South Carolina he wrote, “I trust you have not overlooked the work that we are to do for the negro farmers of the State. We should undertake demonstration work with at least ten or twelve colored farmers in each county.” The notice outlined an intricate pattern of operation for working with tenant farmers. First the white landlords’ consent and participation, including agreements to rent land to the tenant for three years if the tenant’s conduct was “not objectionable,” not to raise the rent on the land, and to furnish legumes to the tenant, were required before the tenant could enroll. The agents were to present the work to the landlords as an experiment to see the effect of longer terms for renting land on black farmers. After all the landlord issues had been resolved, the black farmer had to agree to follow the program as laid out for him by the white county agent. The basic problem, according to Long, was that white landlords didn’t see

⁸¹W. M. Riggs to Mr. B. H. Rawl, 6 March 1915, Folder 113, Riggs Presidential Records.

⁸²Morgan, “The First Fifty Years of Smith-Lever,” 8. Morgan reports that Lever claimed the act as “almost entirely the product of South Carolina thinking.” Lever credits Rawl with “start[ing] the framework of the bill.”

any utility in extension programs. This is contrary to southern senators' arguments during the Smith-Lever debates that landlords were eager for any assistance that would make their tenants more productive.⁸³

Had Long's program been fully implemented and accepted at the federal level—bureaucratically or legislatively—it could have been used to eliminate the black agents' work. In all likelihood there would never have been a black extension force in South Carolina. However the chances of its success were slim. The subterfuge that Long had to undertake to implement the program suggests that there was at least a perceived hostility to any improvement in the condition of rural blacks at all. More importantly, black landowners were totally overlooked in Long's proposed plan. Long informed Savely that only seven percent of black farmers were landowners—a figure that by historical statistics was about one third of the actual percentage of farmers.⁸⁴ In the right hands, all these factors could have been used at some point to garner support to amend the Smith-Lever bill.

When Riggs met with Secretary of Agriculture Houston, he perhaps expected sympathy. After all Houston, a North Carolina native, graduated from the University of South Carolina in 1887, less than a decade after it had closed in 1877 rather than remain racially integrated when Reconstruction collapsed. The university reopened in 1880 and its "redemption" was complete as it was again all-white in faculty and student body.

Houston certainly was aware of the state's racial customs and politics. Houston attended

⁸³W. W. Long to All Agents, 19 March 1915, Folder 114, Riggs Presidential Records; *Hearings, Report and Debate: Smith-Lever Act of 1914*, 2749, 3064; W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 29 January 1915, Box 7, Folder: South Carolina 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁸⁴W. W. Long to H. E. Savely, 19 January 1915, Box 7, Folder: South Carolina 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II; Smith and Horton, *Historical Statistics of Black America*, volume I: Table 173: "Owner Status: Percentage Distribution of Black Owner and Tenant Farms, by Region and State, 1910-1930," p. 138.

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graduate school at South Carolina for a year then earned a master's degree at Harvard. He taught political science and later served as dean of faculty at the University of Texas, President of Texas A & M, and Chancellor of Washington University at St. Louis. He had been a member of the Southern Education Board, an organization composed of northern philanthropists and southern white college presidents. It was connected to the General Education Board, and the Peabody and John F. Slater Funds, all of which were well-known for their contributions to black education. Although the Southern Education Board was connected to these other boards through an interlocking directorate, Louis Harlan points out that the Southern Education Board's "purpose was really the promotion of white public education. The southern white college presidents who formed the southern contingent on the board insisted on this." Northerners on the Board deferred to the judgement of the whites when conflicts arose. Houston was also a member of Woodrow Wilson's administration that was systematically terminating or segregating blacks in the federal workforce.⁸⁵

Riggs left his April 1915 meeting with Houston disappointed. After returning from the conference, Riggs sent Houston a telegram informing him that in addition to the work white agents were doing with black tenants, he planned to ask Clemson's Board of Trustees to keep the black agents and make their headquarters South Carolina State College. The Secretary replied that he thought the plan was "very wise."⁸⁶ Clemson's

⁸⁵Daniel Walker Hollis, *University of South Carolina*, vol. II, *College to University* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1956), Chapter IV, "The Radical University, 1873-1877," especially pages 82-90. See also Yates Snowden, *History of South Carolina* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1920), vol. II: 916-8, 975; *Journal of the House, Regular Session, from Nov. 28 to Dec. 22, 1876 and the Special Session, from April 24 to June 9, 1877*, 17; *Acts*, (1877): 315, (1877-78): 532, 536; Harlan, *Wizard of Tuskegee*, 187; Past Secretaries of the United States Department of Agriculture, <http://www.usda.gov/history/pastsec.htm#Houston>.

⁸⁶Telegram, W. M. Riggs to Secy. D.F. Houston, 5 April 1915; telegram, D.F. Houston to President

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Board of Trustees ratified the employment of black agents. Trustee W. W. Bradley, who three years earlier had put forth the motion that excluded black agricultural agents from the cooperative agreement Clemson made with the USDA, moved that an agreement with State College for the oversight of black extension workers be made. The minutes of the meeting are silent on the politics of the issue. The agreement put black agents under the “immediate supervision” of South Carolina State College although they remained under the “general supervision” of Clemson College.⁸⁷

How can we explain this turn of events? I suggest two possibilities. First Houston, like Samuel Chiles Mitchell, might have been a progressive—in relative terms—on race relations. However, his participation in the Southern Education Board under its racially-restrictive mandate and his service in Wilson’s administration suggest otherwise. Houston’s position was more likely the result of the administration’s practice of *realpolitik*, the politics of the possible. After all, he was a member of the first Democratic administration since Cleveland’s second term ended in 1897 and served under only the second Democrat elected since 1856. In politics, the object is not merely to achieve power but to keep it. The Great Migration had created a situation similar to that of southern whites before their disfranchisement of blacks. For many northern politicians, the black vote became crucial to maintaining their offices and Republicans in states with significant black immigration, like Illinois for example, were more than willing to court black votes to win elections. In the struggle with the Republicans for power, federal Democrats had to be somewhat

W. M. Riggs, 5 April 1915, Folder 115, Riggs Presidential Records.

⁸⁷Clemson University Board of Trustees, Trustee Minutes, (hereafter referred to as Clemson Trustee Minutes), 7-8 April 1915, 955, Series 30 Clemson University Board of Trustees Records, 1888-1991, STICUL; W. M. Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 14 April 1915, 11 A.M., Folder 115, Riggs Presidential Records.

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responsive to racially progressive pressure groups to attract some of these new voters to their standard.

Even though the Smith-Lever Act's supporters had fended off attempts to amend it, they failed to adequately gauge the possibility that the federal government could play an obstructionist role in the disbursement of funds. Indeed, Senator Sterling's observation that college administrators would feel compelled to comply with federal policies to receive extension monies proved true. The requirements for mutual agreement between the Secretary of Agriculture and the colleges on the conduct of programs, and that the Secretary approve annual plans of work before funds would be disbursed were powerful forces that Houston could use to pressure states to adopt black extension workers.⁸⁸ Booker T. Washington had expressed the hope to Thomas Jesse Jones that Secretary Houston would use his veto power to pressure southern states to use some of the funds to hire black agricultural agents.⁸⁹ It seems that there may have been at least the threat of such use in the South Carolina situation.

Had Clemson College and Secretary Houston had a showdown over the issue of black agents? Probably so. Had Clemson officials persisted in their position, South Carolina's white extension program might have collapsed. The Secretary could refuse to certify that the state was entitled to receive the funds and provide his reasons to the President and the Congress. In the meantime, the state's extension funds would be held separately in the federal treasury "until the expiration of the Congress next succeeding a session of a legislature of any State from which a certificate has been withheld, in order

⁸⁸Smith-Lever Act, Section 2 and Section 6.

⁸⁹Harlan, *Wizard of Tuskegee*, 211.

that the State may, if it should so desire, appeal to Congress from the determination of the Secretary of Agriculture”⁹⁰ Such a move would not only kill, effectively, extension work in South Carolina but an appeal to Congress would alert Jones amendment supporters that the concerns they had about racial unfairness in extension funding had some basis.

Withholding funds from a state for failure to comply with a federal act was not unprecedented. Indeed, this had happened to South Carolina in the early 1890s. Between 1890 and 1892 Secretary of the Interior John Noble withheld South Carolina’s share of funds from both the Morrill Act of 1862 and the Morrill Act of 1890, over which he had control, from Clemson College. Republican President Benjamin Harrison supported his actions. The Morrill Act of 1890 required an equitable division of appropriations in states where land-grant college education was provided to citizens in racially segregated institutions. Benjamin Tillman, then South Carolina’s governor and a Clemson College trustee, divided the fund equally between Clemson College and Claflin College in Orangeburg, a private black college where the state had set up an annex to provide land-grant education for blacks. Secretary Noble asserted that a 50-50 split of the funds was not equitable since blacks accounted for two-thirds of the state’s population. Both the Governor and the Secretary held firm to their positions. In 1892, Tillman’s brother George was elected to the House of Representatives and was successful in getting a bill passed to release the Morrill funds to South Carolina “over the objections of the Secretary

⁹⁰Smith-Lever Act, Section 6.

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of the Interior.” Harrison signed the bill into law, Joel Schor suggests, because it was an election year.⁹¹

However, there was an object lesson in that incident for white South Carolinians. Since Clemson College had just been created in 1889, withholding Morrill Act funds probably slowed its early development. While federal bureaucrats could not withstand the demands of politics indefinitely, their decision would certainly have an adverse effect on white extension work in the short run. Had the 1892 stand-off been repeated in 1915—and it was probably a tangible threat given Riggs’ and the Board of Trustees’ change of heart—South Carolina’s extension service would become dormant. What would be the result of Houston’s refusal to certify the plan of work submitted by the College? The law is unclear whether once a college’s plan was rejected; it had to stand behind that plan until the plans’ acceptability was adjudicated under the described procedures or whether the institution could submit a new plan. Since state legislatures are mentioned in the plan perhaps the law intended that the legislature could change the school designated to receive the funds—in which case the objectionable plan would become moot and the new institution(s) would submit their own plans to the Secretary for approval. In either of these situations the matter could be resolved in short order if the state’s legislature was in session at the time a Secretary rejected the plan. Most likely the consequences would be more dire.

Either of the following scenarios could have occurred if Clemson officials had held firm in their commitment not to use black agents. The sixty-third Congress ended March 3, 1915. However, the sixty-fourth Congress would begin on December 6,

⁹¹Schor, “The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service,” 5.

1915—before the South Carolina General Assembly convened. If the General Assembly decided to designate another college in place of Clemson College, the earliest it would have been approved to receive any Smith-Lever funds would not be until April 2, 1917 when the sixty-fifth Congress convened. The funds would not be disbursed until July 1, 1917. But if the General Assembly stood firm in its support of Clemson College (the more likely outcome since Governor Manning and Senator Tillman were both Clemson trustees), then the delay would have been even longer. The General Assembly met only during January and February each year. The sixty-fifth Congress would already be in session before the 1918 meeting of the General Assembly. Since there was no provision for modifying the withholding of funds in the Smith-Lever Act, one can assume that even if an acceptable plan of extension work was developed the state would not receive any extension disbursements before the sixty-sixth Congress convened on March 19, 1919. If that Congress took no action before July 1, 1919, the state could not receive any monies until January 1920—the next bi-annual disbursement. By then other states would have been five years into their extension programs.⁹² Given such negative prospects, it is not surprising that Riggs relented. The rising power of the federal government over the states and of the supremacy of national party strategies was evident. The South was a one-party region—no matter what. The battleground for political survival was in an increasingly racially diverse, increasingly populated North.

⁹²Office of the Clerk, United States House of Representatives, Sessions of the United States Congress, <http://clerkweb.house.gov/histrecs/history/sessions/sessions.htm>; The South Carolina General Assembly met annually for a forty-day session that began on the second Tuesday in January. Constitution of the State of South Carolina microform: ratified in convention, December 4, 1895 (Columbia, SC: Charles A. Calvo, Jr., state printer, 1895; microfiche, Westport, CT: Greenwood, c. 1972), Article III, Section 9.

Joel Williamson argues that the Wilson administration was indeed aware of the potential political fallout of enthusiastic support for southern congressmen's racial views. He asserts that "[d]uring 1914 [racial] Radicalism seems to have used up most of its strength in the higher reaches of the administration; it had also, apparently, spent its coin in Congress." Over thirty bills to expand federal segregation failed in Congress. Williamson suggests that Wilson's failure to deliver on promises he made to black patrons troubled him. It did not trouble him enough that he abandoned selective segregation and unjust discharge when it suited him politically. On the up side for black federal employees, even racial radicals came to recognize that their push to expel blacks from federal employment would not yield instantaneous results. Williamson quotes Tillman who responded to a hot racial speech by his former protégé, Coleman Blease, by saying "'President Wilson cannot do more than he is now doing through his cabinet officers to get rid of the negro. Otherwise he will arouse all the old abolition sentiment through the North . . . The race question fight is not up now and the South is wise to let it sleep a while longer until the Republicans and fanatics of the North come to their senses . . . and [a] few more [of] the old ones die off.'" ⁹³

Following Clemson's Board's ratification of the decision to accept black agents, Riggs wrote R.S. Wilkinson informing him that Clemson would furnish State College with six black agents to work in sections of the state where the population was almost "entirely negro." Riggs stated: "We feel that out of deference to the sentiment in the State, as well as from the fact that it is proper for your institution to do so, that we ought

⁹³Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 384-390.

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to delegate the immediate supervision of negro work to the negro college.”⁹⁴ J A. Evans, acting on behalf of Bradford Knapp, whom he felt would approve of the arrangement, encouraged Riggs to enter immediately into a cooperative agreement with State College.⁹⁵ State College announced the association with Clemson College in its 1915 report. Wilkinson acknowledged “Governor Manning and President Riggs” whose “kindly interest” encouraged the Clemson Board of Trustees to enter into the cooperative agreement. State College viewed the association as a “marked step forward, and . . . only raises the institution in the estimation of its friends. . . .” Wilkinson also expressed his gratitude privately to Riggs in a letter in which Wilkinson said that he had also written the Secretary of Agriculture “expressing our deep appreciation for the opportunity given us through you and the Clemson authorities.”⁹⁶ Clemson’s annual report made no mention of the arrangement.

Controlling Black Extension Work

Clemson’s acceptance of black supervision shifted the balance of power into the state extension bureau’s hands. Having been saddled with black extension work, Clemson officials would brook no further interference from the administration of the program. Bradford Knapp encouraged Riggs to make it clear that Long was “head of extension work for the whole state.” Knapp expressed concerns regarding the nature of the relationship after the projects that Long submitted for the 1915-1916 year did not clearly indicate that Clemson officials had supervisory control of the black program even though the

⁹⁴W. M. Riggs to R.S. Wilkinson, 14 April 1915, 2 P. M., Folder 115, Riggs Presidential Records.

⁹⁵J A. Evans to W. M. Riggs, 19 April 1915, Folder 115, Riggs Presidential Records.

⁹⁶*CNIAMC*, 19 (1915): 5; R.S. Wilkinson to W. M. Riggs, 24 May 1915, Folder 117, Riggs Presidential Records.

memorandum of understanding suggested they did. Knapp pointed out that the General Assembly had selected Clemson College as the sole beneficiary of the Smith-Lever Act and as such, Riggs could not “transfer the administrative responsibility for the expenditure to any other institution.” Riggs shot back, insisting that Knapp’s office could not “object to the agencies by which we seek to carry out any projects which are approved [by the Secretary].” He stated that Clemson was not relinquishing control of black work or of any of the monies allotted for it. Even Long attacked the federal service. He accused federal authorities of overstepping their bounds and “assuming authority that the bill does not and it was not intended they should assume.”⁹⁷ Knapp’s muted response to Riggs confirms that power in the administration of black extension work had shifted from federal to local hands. As Joel Schor asserted, the domination of black extension work by southern whites was one of the goals of the Smith-Lever bill.

. . . Federal overall supervision of extension activities remained limited to financial inspection and to efforts to raise the general standard of extension service. Federal officials did not exercise direct authority over individual county agents or state expenditures. While [World] war [I] emergencies and the Depression might expand federal influence over extension work, true administrative control and program supervision remained with respective state extension administrators.

Although the Department of Agriculture collected and tabulated data of all local agents, direct administrative control and general supervision remained with white state administrators. . . .⁹⁸

Beyond the coerced retention of the few black agents already on the payroll, whites would dominate black extension work through the power of the purse. This policy

⁹⁷Bradford Knapp to W. M. Riggs, 8 May 1915, Folder 116; Bradford Knapp to W. M. Riggs, 24, June 1915, Folder 119; W. M. Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 12, July 1915, Folder 120; W. W. Long to W. M. Riggs, 27 July 1915, Folder 121, Riggs Presidential Records.

⁹⁸Schor, “The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service,” 40-41.

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of a small extension force was justified by extension propaganda. W.B. Mercier, Assistant Chief in the Office of Extension Work in the South, produced a circular in 1920 called *Extension Work Among Negroes, 1920*. On the cover of the report is a picture of a white man and two blacks. The caption reads “White demonstration agents help Negro farmers as well as white[.]” On the first page of the report it reads: “from the inception of demonstration work, . . . considerable attention has been given to the Negro farmers by white demonstration agents, and even before the Negro agents were appointed a conservative estimate would be that 25 percent of the white agents’ time was given to aiding Negro farmers . . . in the thickly settled Negro communities.” The figure to which Mercier refers in this quotation is another picture with the caption “A boll weevil mass meeting of Negroes addressed by a white demonstration agent.”⁹⁹

Having secured a token force of black agricultural agents federal extension workers either adopted the southern view that black extension work had to advance slowly or used it as a cover for their inability to force an enlarged black service on southern states. Mercier writes, “The employment of Negro agents can not be pushed more rapidly than public sentiment can be educated to appreciate and receive them. Owing to the circumstances, the progress of extension work among blacks has been slow in some sections, and there are still places with a large Negro population where *the time has not yet come* [my emphasis] to employ Negro agents.”¹⁰⁰ The strategy of waiting for

⁹⁹Mercier, *Extension Work Among Negroes*, 1, 3, 4. I am uncertain whether the claim of 25% of time devoted to black work was an assessment based on any measurable standard. As I stated in note 70 of this chapter, Bradford Knapp had estimated in 1915 that white agents spent exactly 25% of their time with black clients. With the explosion of white extension work over that five year period it seems that the amount of time given to black work would have increased.

¹⁰⁰Mercier, *Extension Work Among Negroes, 1920*, 4-5. On page 19 of this report Mercier writes that “[a] serious handicap to the rapid expansion of the work is the scarcity of capable and trained leaders.” He declared that there was a “need for the right kind of Negro leaders all over the South . . .”

public sentiment to become favorable was the exact opposite of what was then occurring in white extension work where the belief was that if an agent was placed and his usefulness demonstrated then extension work would be accepted.

Blacks throughout the South had to settle for an extension program that was not only separate but also clearly unequal. While all who supported black extension work could claim a force of any size as a victory, supporters were probably disappointed that the program did not flourish. The size of the black agricultural extension force was, of course, smaller than that of whites. In South Carolina, as in most states, there were no black home demonstration agents as late as January 1915.

Although Seaman Knapp had paid lip service to the need for improvement of home conditions on all of America's farms, there were no home extension workers appointed during the years he administered the program. Seaman Knapp had hired white women to work as (white) girls' club agents in South Carolina in 1910 and 1911—the year he died—and in some other states. He was certainly influenced to make the South Carolina appointments by former South Carolina Superintendent of Education Oscar B. Martin who had become a Knapp disciple in 1907 and a Knapp employee in 1909. Club work with girls soon expanded to include home clubs for their mothers. In his 1910 report "A Work for Girls," Knapp described how girls club work was used to change attitudes of white farm homemakers in South Carolina:

. . . Having secure[d] the confidence of the girls and their mothers, Miss [Marie] Cromer has been able to accomplish a great deal in the way of home sanitation, hygiene, cooking and other lines of home improvements greatly needed. If she had started with the avowed intention of giving suggestions on home improvement she would doubtless have been repulsed.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹Morgan, "The First Fifty Years of Smith-Lever," 7; Oscar B. Martin, "The Beginning of Home

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By 1912 there were at least two white women agents in South Carolina whose title was “Home Demonstration Agent.” By the next year, the General Education Board paid a portion of the salaries for sixteen white home demonstration agents and one supervisor in South Carolina.¹⁰²

These experiments, however, did not lead to a similar concern for black women and girls. As black club work began to develop in 1913, no clubs for black boys or girls were organized in South Carolina, although black boys clubs were organized in five other southern states that year. This can almost certainly be accounted for by the politics in South Carolina. The issue of black women’s role in extension work in South Carolina first came up in 1915 during discussions about the fate of the black agricultural agents after the Smith-Lever bill had passed. Bradford Knapp wrote to Clemson President Walter M. Riggs:

. . . there are some things which the white County Agent and the white woman Home Economics Agent cannot do for the negroes, . . . and that is when we come to touch on the negro home. The matter of moral, sanitary and economic conditions in negro homes under the Lever bill, is something which I would not want to tackle except with persons who could go into these homes. Therefore, in the home economics extension work for negroes, I should certainly use negro employees by putting a few to work and supervising them carefully.¹⁰³

However, the federal view of the necessity of black home demonstration agents was not one that was widely shared in the South. The federal report on extension work for 1916 noted that there was a total of sixty-three black agents—men and women—working

Demonstration Work,” n. d., p. 1, (typescript), Series 32, Box 82, Folder 1, STICUL.

¹⁰²Payroll roster, South Carolina, Box 4, Folder: Secretary of Agriculture, DC 1913-1914, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II; “Materials related to the Beginning of 4-H Work in South Carolina,” n. d., (typescript) p. 2, Series 32, Box 82, Folder 1, STICUL; Morgan, “The First Fifty Years of Smith-Lever,” 7; Martin, “The Beginning of Home Demonstration Work,” 1.

¹⁰³Bradford Knapp to Walter M. Riggs, 27 January 1915, Folder 110, Riggs Presidential Records.

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in southern states in predominantly black areas. The report asserted that “[h]ome economics work for negro women has been carried on quite successfully.” The scale of this success has to be questioned. The 1917 report noted that, for black work, there were sixty-six men agents and seven women agents.¹⁰⁴ In earlier years, the number of women agents was certainly less. Therefore, it is impossible that any meaningful work could have been done with black women anywhere. With seven black women agents located in the fifteen southern states, it is not surprising that South Carolina was one of those states with no participation in the black home demonstration agent program. Clemson officials expressed no interest in black home demonstration work. After preserving the jobs of the black agricultural agents, it appears that federal extension officials pushed the Clemson extension service no further. It remained for the black community to turn the focus to their homes.

“All the Women Were White”: Blacks and Home Demonstration Work

Black South Carolinians had their own brand of racial progressivism. Community leaders attended farmers’ institutes sponsored by black leaders of all political stripes—from the racial conservatism of Richard Carroll to the moderate liberalism of Thomas Miller. They were also the main advocates of home demonstration work for black women and girls in the state. Mrs. Miller Earl promoted tomato clubs for black girls as early as 1914. Ransom W. Westberry—the agent Long fired—also was very active in promoting home extension work. In the speech he made in Anderson, (see note 53) Westberry discussed the necessity of improving black farm women’s lives to race uplift. “No race of

¹⁰⁴United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), *Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, 1916* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), 24-5; USDA, *Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, 1917* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), 28-9.

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people can rise above their women. They should be encouraged in their efforts to teach girls to raise tomatoes. . . . We hope the next generation will understand the arts of farming better than we do. . . . I know of no other being who is more willing to learn new things than the females.”¹⁰⁵

South Carolina State College President Robert S. Wilkinson, who had worked to get supervision of black agricultural agents for his school, also turned his attention to black home demonstration work. Although Wilkinson was president of State College, power over the institution lay in the hands of the all-white Board of Trustees that always had a member from Orangeburg county to oversee the college’s activities. In 1915, the Board authorized Wilkinson to enter a co-operative agreement with Winthrop College for supervision of black women’s work. (Winthrop and Clemson had a cooperative agreement that gave Winthrop supervision of home demonstration work. For this reason, perhaps State College’s trustees thought it proper to make a contract with Winthrop.) In form, the agreement between Winthrop and South Carolina State College was similar to the one State College had entered into for black agricultural work with Clemson College. The arrangement was made with at least the tacit approval of Riggs and Long whom Wilkinson informed of his Board’s decision. South Carolina State College’s trustees appropriated \$300 to hire a black woman to do at-large work in Orangeburg County. This unnamed woman organized Mother’s Clubs and showed women how to prepare meals and how to develop year-round gardens. She also worked to build a spirit of community

¹⁰⁵Westberry, “Advice to Negro Farmers: Delivered Before Farmers’ Union of Anderson County, April, 1914,” 79-80

using churches and schools as foundations. This agent continued to be employed through 1918 as an at-large state worker.¹⁰⁶

Despite the role racial politics played in Clemson officials' initial hesitancy to accept black work, it cannot explain why they did not expand their black services to include home demonstration work after 1915. Since the college had continued to employ black agricultural agents, Clemson's having "negroes in their employ" was no longer an issue. The lack of black women agents must be attributed to Clemson officials' tightfisted fiscal policy where blacks were concerned, and perhaps even to some sour grapes over having been forced to employ black men. At the basis of either of these explanations was the obvious racism, and probably unconscious sexism, of extension officials regarding black women. "All the Women Are White," the first clause of Gloria Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith's book, probably best expresses the sentiment regarding black women.¹⁰⁷

Both under-funding and limited employment opportunities were part of the system of white supremacy that existed in the state—one that Idus Newby effectively documents. However, South Carolina was not alone in its neglect of black women. As stated earlier, there were only seven black home demonstration agents nationwide by 1917. However, racism in South Carolina was combined with fear of a black majority in the population. With the Great Migration underway, some white South Carolinians had no desire to

¹⁰⁶CNIAMC 19 (1915): 5, 11; R.S. Wilkinson to W. M. Riggs, 24 May 1915 Folder 117, Riggs Presidential Records; Clemson Agricultural College of South Carolina, The Extension Division, *Annual Report of the Demonstration and Extension Work in the State of South Carolina for Calendar Year 1916* (n. p., n. d.), 131; CNIAMC, 21 (1917); CNIAMC 22 (1918).

¹⁰⁷Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1982).

undertake actions that would encourage blacks to remain in the state. In other states, where black domination was not a palpable fear among whites, black girls' clubs and black home extension work had already begun. Annie Peters Hunter in Boley, Oklahoma—a state with an 8.3 percent black population in 1910—was appointed the nation's first black home demonstration agent in January 1912. Mattie Holmes was appointed a “collaborator” in Hampton, Virginia, a state with a 32.5 percent black population, in May 1912. After Holmes resigned to marry three months later, Lizzie A. Jenkins replaced her.¹⁰⁸

Nor was black home demonstration work universally unpopular with white southerners. Even racially conservative Clarence Poe, editor of the *Progressive Farmer*, noted the importance of improving black farm homes. In “Success Talk for Farm Boys: How Can White Farmers Escape the Dangers of Negro Competition,” Poe argued that teaching blacks to work better without improving their living standards hurt the South. While insisting the races must be kept apart, Poe argued that “[h]ome demonstration work for the Negro is even more important than industrial education.” Poe's ultimate goal, it must be noted, was to raise blacks to prevent them from dragging down whites.¹⁰⁹

Clemson administrators may also have believed that hiring black home demonstration agents was unnecessary because of the work of Jeanes teachers in the state. These itinerant teachers trained rural school teachers in rudimentary home economics. Jeanes

¹⁰⁸Schor, “The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service,” 126; Smith and Horton, *Historical Statistics of Black America*, volume II: Table 1792: “Black Population by States at Each Census, 1790-1910; Indian and Other 1910 - I [continued],” p. 1580.

¹⁰⁹Clarence Poe, “Success Talk for Farm Boys: How Can White Farmers Escape the Dangers of Negro Competition,” *The Progressive Farmer* Volume 36, April 16, 1921, 429. Jack Temple Kirby provides an excellent overview on Poe's views on black rural life. According to Kirby, Poe encouraged segregation of rural society—essentially the removal of blacks—to allow poor whites to become landowners and elevate themselves. See Kirby *Darkness at the Dawning*, 119-30.

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teachers had proved invaluable to rural education. “They devoted their entire time to such activities as improvement of instruction, the improvement of home conditions, the live-at-home programs, the promotion of community organizations, and the collection of materials needed to enrich the lives of rural boys and girls.”¹¹⁰ The work of Jeanes teachers had always been important to black education as Wesley Jones demonstrated in the statistics he used to argue for his amendment. During the summer months, Jeanes teachers worked with black clients in canning, cooking, and sewing projects. They also established Homemakers’ Clubs in 1918.¹¹¹ During the early years of uncertainty regarding the use of black agents in both agricultural and home demonstration work—but especially in the latter field—the work of Jeanes teachers was crucial. Table 1 shows the number of Jeanes teachers employed by sex between the years 1909 and 1921. It demonstrates that for most of that time, female Jeanes teachers were a significant presence in rural schools. Their work was not confined to areas of high black population. Indeed, in one upstate county, Spartanburg, there were two Jeanes teachers employed simultaneously between 1909 and 1911 and again in 1914.

¹¹⁰Courtney Sanabria Woodfaulk, “The Jeanes Teachers of South Carolina: The Emergence, Existence, and Significance of Their Work” (Ed. D. dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1992), 71-2, 81.

¹¹¹*Hearings, Report and Debate: Smith-Lever Act of 1914*, 3196; Woodfaulk, “The Jeanes Teachers of South Carolina,” 71-2, 81.

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YEAR	MALE	FEMALE
1909	2	9
1910	4	12
1911	3	11
1912	4	11
1913	3	8
1914	6	10
1915	4	7
1916	4	5
1917	4	6
1918	4	11
1919	4	12
1920	4	15
1921	1	4
Total Jeanes Teacher Employment	47	121
Average Annual Jeanes Teacher Employment	3.6	9.3

Table 1: Black Jeanes Teacher Employed in South Carolina by Sex, 1909-1921¹¹²

Black school teachers also probably helped to fill the void through training they may have received at mid-winter courses at South Carolina State College. The courses were established in 1912 for people interested in learning about agriculture and domestic science. The college also offered courses in domestic science and sewing in its regular curriculum. In 1914, the South Carolina General Assembly appropriated \$500 for a summer school at the college. The summer course trained black school teachers in agriculture, domestic science, and mechanic arts. Home Economics agents from Winthrop College taught some of the summer courses. J. H. Dillard, president of the John F. Slater

¹¹²Woodfaulk, Appendix A, 166-70. This count is not definitive. Woodfaulk lists the names of the agents. In most cases the gender of the worker is obvious. Men tend to use their initials rather than their given names, married women's names contain the prefix Mrs. or Miss. A few are unclear. For example, I would have considered Dr. L. Bragg Anthony a male had her name not shown up in other sources on black women's work. Others were counted on best guess. Arta and Eveh (which sounded like Eva when pronounced) were counted as female.

Fund and a member of the General Education Board, donated \$100 for the salaries of teachers in domestic sciences. The next year he increased that amount to \$150. Through these programs rural teachers gained expertise and they carried it back to their schools.¹¹³ Additionally, the black agricultural agents and the staffs of Penn School on St. Helena Island and Brewer's School in Greenwood also provided information on home economics to people in their communities.¹¹⁴ For nearly four years, then, these *ad hoc* programs were the means by which home economics work was offered to the black community in South Carolina.

The 1918 federal report on extension noted that all the field workers had become convinced that it was necessary to give special attention to black work. This also may have increased federal extension administrators' interest in establishing a black women's extension branch for the southern states. Although there had always been more black men agents than black women agents—outnumbering them 66 to 7 in 1917, nationwide by 1918 there were 194 black women agents (including 19 who were employed in city work) and only 142 black men agents. Notably South Carolina with its over fifty percent black population, Kentucky, and West Virginia with its small black population were the only southern states without women agents. Bradford Knapp noted in a memorandum to the Secretary of Agriculture that there had been “a little inclination to increase the number” of black women agents after the United States entered World War I.¹¹⁵ Such inclinations

¹¹³“Report of the President,” *CNIAMC* 16 (1912): 9; *CNIAMC* 17 (1913): 16; *CNIAMC* 18 (1914): 10; *CNIAMC* 19 (1915): 5.

¹¹⁴“What the Agricultural Extension Service is Doing for South Carolina, Annual Report for 1920” (Clemson College, SC: Clemson College, 1921), 96.

¹¹⁵USDA, *Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, 1917*, 29; USDA, *Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, 1918* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1919), 48-9; Bradford Knapp, “Memorandum for the Secretary,” 4 June 1919, Box 662,

were clearly evident in the southern states, including in some sectors of South Carolina's officialdom by 1918.

In February 1918, The Russell Sage Foundation published a report and recommendations compiled by Hastings Hart at the request of Governor Manning regarding South Carolina's wartime preparedness. Hart's report, *The War Program of the State of South Carolina*, recommended that youth clubs and home demonstration agents work with white and colored [sic] "to produce money, cotton, raw and manufactured, and foodstuffs."¹¹⁶ The food shortage brought on by World War I required that the full productive capacities of blacks as well as whites be harnessed. Both Clemson and Winthrop extension officials knew that it was socially and politically impossible to have white women agents enter black homes and offer their services to black farm wives. If services were to be provided with any consistency, black women would have to be appointed. Edith Parrott, South Carolina's Supervisor of Home Demonstration Work in 1918, wrote that while white agents had assisted black clients whenever they could, black agents had to be hired if extension work with blacks was to be done "properly." Parrott's supervisor, Winthrop College president David Johnson wrote to Bradford Knapp and requested \$7,500 from the USDA's war emergency funds to hire black women agents.¹¹⁷

Folder: Extension Work 1919, (Folder 2 of 3), Entry 17 C, RG 16, NA II.

¹¹⁶Hastings Hart, *The War Program of the State of South Carolina: A Report Prepared at the Request of Governor Richard I. Manning and the State Council and the State Board of Charities* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1918), 7-8, 14.

¹¹⁷"Financial Needs of the Home Demonstration Work in South Carolina," attachment to David B. Johnson to Bradford Knapp, 6 June 1918, Box 35, Folder: Misc. S. C., 1917-1918, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

Apparently, federal officials granted some level of funding for the next fiscal year. Thirteen black women became emergency home agents in 1919. White home demonstration agents from counties where blacks constituted a sizeable minority or a majority of the population selected women from their counties for training. In official reports, they were referred to as “assistants” in home demonstration—perhaps a demonstration of whites’ resistance to elevating black women to a coequal status with white women.¹¹⁸ Reports for the war years are not available. The first extant report covers the year 1920. Christine South, who had replaced Edith Parrott as the State Supervisor of Home Demonstration Work, reported that emergency workers who had been hired during the war emergency had been terminated when that funding ended in 1919. R.S. Wilkinson complained about this injustice. He had asked for “a quota of home economics workers” in his appropriation request for 1920. “Our girls were being trained for this work, but no openings afforded them opportunities to render service among their people.”¹¹⁹

. . . Realizing that there is no greater need among the colored people today than proper instruction in these industrial necessities, I would suggest that this work be undertaken by the college independently of the Smith-Lever funds and a request be made of the Legislature for an appropriation to maintain six home economics workers in as many counties, who will supervise and demonstrate instruction to the public schools and local conferences.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸“What the Agricultural Extension Service is Doing for South Carolina, . . . 1920,” 92-3.; Wayman Johnson, “History, Growth and Transition,” 19; “Report of the President,” *CNIAMC* 24 (1920): 11. Field workers were trained June 28-July 2.

¹¹⁹*CNIAMC*, 23 (1919): 11.

¹²⁰*CNIAMC*, 23 (1919): 11.

In the summer of 1920, fourteen black women went to South Carolina State College where Winthrop College home economics supervisors and staff from the tuberculosis association and the state health department trained them for their work.¹²¹

Bradford Knapp's hope that the use of emergency workers would increase sentiment for black women's home demonstration work in the southern states was partially fulfilled. By 1920, black home extension work became a permanent part of the extension service in all states. However, there were reductions in staff after the war emergency passed. In 1919, there were 177 black men and 250 black women agents nationwide. By 1920, the number of black men agents was 225 while the number of black women agents was drastically reduced to seventy nationwide.¹²² Table 2 (see below) shows the small size of the black extension force in the South through 1930. In South Carolina, the downsizing of the black women's staff was drastic. Once the emergency appropriation ended, the length of black women's employment was cut to terms of only two and a half months, which demonstrates Knapp's observation that "it is hard to get the Colleges in the South to give proper recognition to negro work."¹²³ However, Knapp must bear some responsibility for the significant reduction in the number of black women working for the extension service after 1919.

¹²¹"What the Agricultural Extension Service is Doing for South Carolina, . . . 1920," 92-3; Johnson, "History, Growth and Transition," 19. The term increased to three and a half months in 1922. Mattie Mae Fitzgerald, "District Work: 2. Report of Negro District Agent" in "Result of Home Demonstration Work in South Carolina, December 1922," 5, Box 1, Series 33, Cooperative Extension Service, Field Operations 1909-1985, STICUL. Hereafter this collection will be referred to by series number.

¹²²USDA, *Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics*, 1918, 48; USDA, *Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics*, 1919 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1921) 14; USDA, *Report on Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics*, 1920 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1922), 9-10.

¹²³Bradford Knapp, "Memorandum for the Secretary," 4 June 1919, Box 662, Folder: Extension Work 1919, (Folder 2 of 3), Entry 17 C, RG 16, NA II.

Year	All States					South Carolina				
	Total	Men	Women	Supervisory or Club		Total	Men	Women	Supervisory or Club	
				Men	Women				Men	Women
1911	26	see club	0	26	0	7	7	0	0	0
1912	34	32	2	NA ¹²⁴	0	6	6	0	0	0
1913	36	34	2	NA	0	7	7	0	0	0
1914	100	40	60	NA	0	7	5 ¹²⁵	0	0	0
1915	63	49	17	NA	0	7	5	1 ¹²⁶	1	0
1916	57	52	5	NA	0	7	5	1 ¹²⁶	1	0
1917	73	66	7	NA	0	10	8	1 ¹²⁶	1	0
1918	338	142	194	2	0	13	11	14	1	0
1919	429	177	250	2	0	20	6	13 ¹²⁷	1	0
1920	297	225	70	2	0	20	5	14	1	0
1921	NA	NA	NA	2	0	18	6	12	0	0
1922	NA	NA	NA	2	0	24	9	13	1	1
1923	278	170	106	2	0	13	8	3 ¹²⁸	1	1
1924	301	183	108	10 ¹²⁹	0	16	9	5	1	1
1925	273	164	107	2	0	16	8	6	1	1
1926	272	163	107	2	0	17	9	6	1	1
1927	279	NA	NA	2	0	17	9	6	1	1
1928	273	160	108	5	0	17	9	6	1	1
1929	329	192	135	2	0	18	10	6	1	1
1930	NA	NA	NA	2	0	20	10	8	1	1

Table 2: Negro Agricultural and Home Extension Agents in The Southern States and in South Carolina¹³⁰

¹²⁴“NA” indicates that the data is not available. I have not been able to locate federal reports for the years 1921, 1922, and 1923 that contain this statistical data. In other cases reports give numbers only in the aggregate.

¹²⁵Two agents were terminated during the year.

¹²⁶South Carolina State College provided the funds to hire this woman, whose name appears nowhere in the record. The worker may have been Marian Baxter Paul. In 1930, Wilkinson wrote a letter of recommendation for her appointment as State Agent for Negro work in which he states that she worked for the extension service from 1914 to 1917. Paul was in college at that time. However, this may have been a summer job for her.

¹²⁷The numbers listed for 1919 through 1922 are for temporary summer workers.

¹²⁸The third agent was appointed in July 1923, after the second semi-annual Smith-Lever disbursement.

¹²⁹Includes 8 agents doing club work not identified by gender. Because more emphasis was usually placed on agriculture than on home economics I assume that these agents were men.

¹³⁰The figures in Table 2 are based on numbers reported in Federal, State, and Negro extension reports from the years noted. In cases where numbers conflict, I selected the figure that best demonstrated the volatility of staffing in the Negro program. For example, Robert Wilkinson's report for 1919 notes six agricultural agents, but he says that the number of agents declined from 11 in 1918 when emergency

The General Education Board, members of which administered the Jeanes Fund as well, had provided \$100,000 to state departments of education to pay Jeanes teachers to direct garden and canning club work for black girls. Some of the Jeanes teachers had worked as emergency agents during the summers when public schools were out of session. Marian Baxter and Dr. L. Bragg Anthony, for example, were among the Jeanes teachers thus employed. Wallace Buttrick, a General Education Board Member and administrator of the Jeanes fund, approached Secretary of Agriculture Houston about employing industrial teachers for the summer months to do extension work. Based on the advice of Bradford Knapp, who seemed incensed that the General Education Board would claim credit for the development of home makers' clubs, Secretary Houston refused this cooperative arrangement. "I am so deeply disturbed about this whole matter," Knapp wrote, "that I recommend to you, and with your approval will take prompt action to terminate all participation on the part of the Department of Agriculture with any persons who receive any other employment at any time; in other words, terminate all this summer-time employment of Negro women. This will be done June 30th. Our fund in the Department here is so meager at the present time that we cannot afford to spread it around too far"¹³¹

appropriations were available. Federal supervisory totals include special agents Campbell and Pierce. A Bureau of Plant Industry Report for 1908-1909 (Entry 3, General Correspondence of the Extension Service and Its Predecessors, June 1907-June 1943, Box 1, Folder: Plant Industry 1908-1909, Record Group 33; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD) reports that seven Negro agents were working with Negro landowners in the South: two in Alabama, one in Mississippi, and four in Virginia. In cases where there were no annual figures I relied on Mercier's *Extension Work Among Negroes*, 1920. However, since the number of agents employed could fluctuate throughout the year, this report is a last resort since figures prepared for annual reports were probably more timely. It has been difficult to totally account for the number of Negro agents in the South—some of whom were working under the auspices of the federal government before 1910.

¹³¹Bradford Knapp, "Memorandum for the Secretary," 4 June 1919; "QUESTIONS REGARDING THE STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES EMPLOYING AS HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENTS UNDER THE SMITH-LEVER ACT- COLORED INDUSTRIAL TEACHERS WHOSE ANNUAL

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Houston agreed with Knapp and informed Buttrick that after the fiscal year ended on 30 June 1919, women who received salaries from any other source during the year would not be employed by the extension service. Houston stated that the employment documents the Department had did not indicate the women's previous employment so extension officials had no idea they were even hiring Jeanes teachers. At any rate, the emergency had ended and henceforth extension work would be done only with federal, state, and local appropriations. To accept funds from private sources would violate the federal Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Act of 1917 unless the funds were given to a state without restrictions on its expenditure.¹³² The effect on black extension work in South Carolina was significant. Wilkinson reported that the number of agricultural agents was cut from eleven to six. All the women agents were discontinued. White State Home Demonstration Director Christine South noted that all emergency home demonstration work during the war was "abandoned with the withdrawal of the emergency appropriation."¹³³

Once funding became available in fiscal year 1920, black women's work resumed and remained under the direction of Winthrop College. Although he was probably

SALARIES HAVE BEEN PAID IN PART BY THE JEANES FUND AND THE GENERAL EDUCATION BOARD," Box 662, Folder: Extension Work 1919, (Folder 2 of 3), Entry 17 C, RG 16, NA II. The General Education Board had also provided money that was used for similar purposes in Maine. Northern and Western extension work under Dr. Alfred Charles True was administered separately from extension work in the South. In stark contrast to his father, who forged the link between the USDA and the General Education Board, Knapp condemned True's cooperation with the Board in his memorandum. He called it a "serious mistake to have anything to do with these people."

¹³²David Houston to Dr. Wallace Buttrick, 4 June 1919, Box 662, Extension Work 1919, (Folder 2 of 3), Entry 17 C, RG 16, NA II. Attached to this letter is a memorandum dated 6 June 1919 written by Houston's assistant, TR[?] Harrison to Alfred True. He sent a copy of Houston's letter to True and asked him to consider the relationship of the extension service North and West to the General Education Board as well.

¹³³CNIAMC, 23 (1919): 11; Christine South, "Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work in South Carolina for 1920," (March 1921), 45.

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gratified that black women agents would be part of the state's extension forces, Wilkinson was dissatisfied with South Carolina State College's marginal participation in the black women's program. Black women agents continued to work under white women agents' supervision and through Winthrop College. In other southern states, both black men and women extension agents worked under the supervision of the black land-grant colleges.

Wilkinson had contacted Clemson officials in 1919 seeking to expand State College's role in extension work. In his 1919 annual report, he complained that while his college supervised the black agricultural agents, inspected their field operations, held conferences, and made annual reports, Clemson College provided no funding to cover associated expenses—including paying for postage because he was not granted franking privileges. Wilkinson requested a “salaried district agent . . . with headquarters at the college and the franking privilege along with home demonstration workers.” The protracted negotiations with Clemson officials resulted in the appointment of Harry Daniels as Assistant District Agent. He, not Wilkinson, was granted franking privileges which continued the exclusion that began when Benjamin Hubert was appointed his assistant. However, Wilkinson made no headway on the subject of home economics work. He was so adamant that black home economics work should be undertaken that he took a forceful position.

Realizing that there is no greater need among the colored people today than proper instruction in these industrial necessities, I would suggest that this work be undertaken by the college independently of the Smith-Lever funds and a request be made of the Legislator for an appropriation to maintain six home economics workers in as many counties who will

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supervise and demonstrate instruction in the public schools and local conferences.¹³⁴

This tendency to keep Wilkinson and South Carolina State College on the fringes of the extension program was certainly grating to him. In the 1921 report Wilkinson noted that except for the mid-winter farmer's conference held at State College, which was attended by the six black agricultural agents and "their cooperative forces in the agricultural and educational lines," the school played no other part in the extension work.

Aside from this [mid-winter conference] we have no share in the Smith-Lever work. We have cooperated for years by contributing facilities, supplies and board to demonstration agents sent here from time to time by Clemson and Winthrop Colleges for periodic training under special instructors. . . . The College directs six local demonstration agents among colored farmers, but does not handle the funds. We have no part whatever in the Home Economics work. This is carried on entirely by Winthrop College. Our students therefore have no incentive to improve themselves along this line. It is hoped that by some means an opening may be created whereby the college will participate in this very important work among the people.¹³⁵

Wilkinson also noted that the previous year he had canceled a planned trip to Washington to discuss separate appropriations for black extension work with Agriculture Department officials.¹³⁶ Perhaps he had done so on a promise of some role in black home extension work for State College.

¹³⁴*CNIAMC*, 23 (1919): 10-1; Johnson, "History, Growth, and Transition," 18-9. Wilkinson's limited role in extension work is discussed fully in the next chapter. Benjamin Hubert had served as the assistant director of extension work since 1914. However after 1918, he was involved in numerous projects related to agricultural teaching which probably minimized the time he had available to direct extension work himself. By January 1919 Hubert was in France where he served as "supervisor of agricultural instruction for black troops of the American Expeditionary forces" with headquarters at the University of Beaune. See Clyde W. Hall, *One Hundred Years of Educating at Savannah State College, 1890-1990* (East Peoria, Ill.: Versa Press, 1991), 34; Mark Roman Schultz, "A More Satisfying Life on the Farm: Benjamin F. Hubert and the Log Cabin Community" (Master's thesis: University of Georgia, 1989), 37-8.

¹³⁵"Report of the President," *CNIAMC*, 25 (1921): 12.

¹³⁶"Report of the President," *CNIAMC*, 25 (1921): 12.

Extension reports covered the fiscal year. This fact is important because it was not Wilkinson's statements—which would not appear in print until 1922—but another event that occurred after the new fiscal year began in July 1921 that may have served as the catalyst for changes in the black program. The potential problems of a white woman's oversight of the black women's program during the age of segregation were made clear in 1921. J. B. Pierce, a black federal employee who worked as Special Field Agent for Negro Work in the upper South, wrote to Christine South, asking her to provide him with statistics on black women's work. Miss South turned the letter over to Long who contacted Clarence Beamon Smith, who had replaced Bradford Knapp as the Director of Extension for the southern states, and demanded to know under what authority Pierce had made his request. Long claimed to have no problem providing Pierce with the requested information but wanted to know who authorized Pierce to collect it [from Christine South?].¹³⁷

A. B. Graham, the USDA's assistant agriculturist in charge of subject matter, reminded Long that Clemson officials had been made aware of Pierce's duties upon his appointment the previous year. He would be gathering the statistics annually as part of a report on black extension work. Graham said that Pierce made his request because Smith wanted the reports of all home and demonstration agents in the Washington office by 20 December. Pierce, along with the other Negro Special Agent, Thomas Campbell, and other federal agents had been instructed to collect material for their reports. Graham assured Long that it was no one's intent not to notify Clemson but since Long was aware

¹³⁷J. B. Pierce to Christine N. South, 12 November 1921; W. W. Long to Dr. C. B. Smith, 16 November 1921, Box 112, Folder: Director South Carolina 1920- 1921, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

of Pierce's duties it seemed unnecessary. Graham promised Long that his office would be notified in the future when Pierce had to make such requests.¹³⁸

The furor probably erupted because Pierce's request certainly transgressed racial protocol—at least in Miss South's mind and probably in Long's as well—as it seemed that a black was giving an order to a white woman. R. S. Wilkinson corresponded occasionally with women who had held this position but at no time was he in a position in those conversations where he was superior. Pierce's letter, and in form it was a neutrally-worded request for information, placed Miss South in a position of having to take an order from a black man which, however minor the request, was probably demeaning. One has only to return to the complaints about the appointment of Dr. William Crum in Charleston to gauge the white community's sentiment. Simkins writes, “the very Charlestonians who had praised Crum now went into hysterics. A mulatto was placed in a position of official superiority to white lady clerks—Charleston aristocrats! This made white Charlestonians shudder. . . .” Joel Williamson recounts the outrage that southern Senators felt over this possibility. Vardaman, Tillman and Hoke Smith moved to thwart any appointment where a black (male) would supervise a white woman because “. . . Negro bosses acquiring the habit of giving orders to whites in public places would come to presume that they could give orders to white women in private places.” Vardaman declared that southern [white] women “were living in a state of siege.”¹³⁹

The Pierce incident, coupled with Wilkinson's complaints led to changes in extension organization. A new cooperative agreement made Mattie Mae Fitzgerald, a

¹³⁸A. B. Graham to W. W. Long, 18 November 1921, Box 112, Folder: Director South Carolina, 1920-1921, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

¹³⁹Simkins, *Pitchfork Ben Tillman*, 316-17; Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 369, 379-81.

graduate of South Carolina State College, the State Supervisor of Negro Work with headquarters at State College as of 1 July 1922. Fifteen black women—most of them State College alumni—were trained as temporary summer workers with the promise that two permanent workers would be hired in January and more after July. These new workers would work year-round rather than just in the summer.¹⁴⁰ However, Fitzgerald's appointment proved mostly cosmetic. The actual planning and coordination of black home demonstration work continued at Winthrop College. Nor was Fitzgerald's position as State Supervisor of Negro Work acknowledged by Christine South, who referred to Fitzgerald and to Dora Boston (who succeeded Fitzgerald in August 1923) as Negro "District" agent.¹⁴¹ Winthrop officials probably felt justified in interfering with black women's work. After all, the money for black home demonstration work came from the meager twenty-five percent of extension funds that Clemson officials set aside for white women's work. The \$4,567.50 Clemson set aside for the black women's program was not an inconsiderable amount.¹⁴² The employment of black home agents therefore retarded the growth of the white women's program since Clemson College felt justified in taking the lion's share of the funds for its program. The disparity in appropriations for men's and women's work was a point of complaint. In 1921, Riggs asked Winthrop President David

¹⁴⁰*CNIAMC*, 26 (1922): 11. According to a gloss of white extension agent J. M. Napier's "Guide and Suggestions for South Carolina Agricultural Extension Workers," Nettie Kenner was the first black supervisor appointed July 1, 1920. "A History of Negro Extension Work in South Carolina, by Negroes," 3, n. d., (typescript), Series 32, Box 80, Folder 3, STICUL.

¹⁴¹Johnson, "History, Growth and Transition," 19; Fitzgerald, "... Report of Negro District Agent . . ."; Dora E. Boston, "Annual Narrative Report of State Supervisor of Colored Home Demonstration Work, 1923," Series 33, Box 1, Folder 65; Dora E. Boston, "1924 Narrative Summary of Annual Report of Dora E. Boston, State Supervisor of Colored Home Demonstration Work of South Carolina," p. 12, Series 33, Box 4, Folder 152; Dora E. Boston, "Report of Dora E. Boston, State Supervisor of Colored Demonstration Agents, 1925," Series 33, Box 5, Folder 190, STICUL.

¹⁴²*CNIAMC*, 26 (1922): 10.

Johnson to censor Christine South's annual reports since they were not sent to Washington through Clemson. South had included a section entitled "The need of more money" in her report. Riggs suggested that a larger portion of the extension appropriation was devoted to home demonstration work in South Carolina than in "any other state that I know of. [¶] I have no objection at all to Miss South's ambition to build up still a larger work, but fiscal policies must be agreed upon between Clemson and Winthrop, and Miss South needs to be restrained from announcing policies of her own."¹⁴³ Whether Riggs' assertion was accurate is beyond the scope of project. Suffice it to say that while white agricultural agents worked in all but three counties by 1920 (with two agents each in Greenville and Orangeburg counties), white home agents served only 34 counties. Although white agricultural work was harder hit by cutbacks in the 1920s than white women's work, its agent force—even after the cuts—remained greater than that of white women.¹⁴⁴

Wilkinson's presidential reports testify to the limited role South Carolina State College continued to play in home demonstration work after Fitzgerald's appointment. While he gave detailed examples of the accomplishments of agricultural agents, he virtually ignored the women's work, listing only a statistical statement on home extension work.¹⁴⁵ Wilkinson's complaints about his college's limited participation in the black women's program mirrored concerns raised by black leaders with the federal extension

¹⁴³W. M. Riggs to President D. B. Johnson, 12 May 1921, 4 P. M. Folder 232, Riggs Presidential Records.

¹⁴⁴*What the Extension Work is Doing For South Carolina*, (1920), 6-8; *A Year of Progress: Annual Report of the Extension Service for 1925* (Clemson, S. C.: July 1926), 47-8.

¹⁴⁵"Report of the President," *CNIAMC*, 28 (1924): 27-8.

service regarding the role of black women in extension work. In 1923, a committee composed of Alain Locke, representing the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools, Archibald Grimké, the president of the Washington branch of the NAACP represented that organization, and Coralee Franklin Cook, chairwoman of the District of Columbia Board of Education, brought their concerns to Secretary of Agriculture Henry Cantwell Wallace. Among the suggestions they made were that a black woman be appointed at the federal level to oversee black home economics work. They also suggested that black land-grant colleges serve as “coordinate centers for the administration of extension work among colored people, with direct recourse and authority from the Federal department.”¹⁴⁶ The national branch of the NAACP also continued to take an interest in the plight of black farmers. In “The Negro Farmer,” an article that appeared in one of the 1922 issues of *The Crisis*, the organization noted the economic value of black farmers to the American economy. The journal endorsed the findings and recommendations of the “colored sub-committee of the National Agricultural Conference.” The committee called upon the federal and state governments to provide “more generous support” to black agriculture colleges and closer monitoring of their activities to ensure the development of “intelligent agricultural leadership.” They also called for “a more adequate distribution of the Federal funds that are allocated to the different states under the Smith-Lever and the Smith-Hughes Acts so that Negro farmers may receive greater benefit, to the end that we may have a larger number of well-trained men and women to advise and to work in the rural districts.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶Alain Leroy Locke to The Honorable Secretary of Agriculture, 11 January 192[3], Box 983, Folder: Extension Work 1923, Entry 17 E, RG 16, NA II..

¹⁴⁷*The Crisis* v. 24, no. 1 (May 1922): 10.

The South-Pierce incident demonstrated that a black female chain of command would be useful in maintaining racial protocol. However, without federal support, there was no significant change forthcoming in the operation of black home extension work at the state level. In an internal memorandum to Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Charles Pugsley, extension chief C. B. Smith reported that the petitioning committee was not “closely, if at all, associated with our extension work.” He argued that Thomas M. Campbell and James B. Pierce, who were headquartered at Tuskegee and Hampton Institutes respectively, did a good job of supervising black work. Smith did not predict a “substantial increase” in the number of black agents because all the Smith-Lever funds had been accounted for. He asserted that the Locke committee was “recommending the appointment more from a desire to see recognition given to negro workers than as a result of any study they have made of our actual needs in the supervision of this work.” Smith repeated the mantra of extension officials that negro extension work could “go no faster . . . without danger than local public sentiment will permit . . .” He suggested that, rather than make changes to the service, they thank the committee for their concerns and assure them of the department’s “sympathy with promoting negro extension work as rapidly as conditions in the states seem to justify.”¹⁴⁸

Neither was a delegation from the Republican National Committee which included Hallie Q. Brown, Director of Colored Women, M. C. Lawton, Chairman of the Eastern Division, and Myrtle Foster Cook, Chairman of the Western Division successful when they appealed to President Coolidge in 1925 to create “positions for colored women” parallel to those “held by white women under the Federal Government.” This

¹⁴⁸C. B. Smith to Charles Pugsley, 17 February 1923, Box 983, Folder: Extension Work 1923, Entry 17 E, RG 16, NA II.

letter, a copy of which was sent to Secretary of Agriculture William M. Jardine, also suggested the appointment of qualified "colored men and women . . . for positions in the experiment stations of the Department of Agriculture."¹⁴⁹

In September 1921, Secretary Henry C. Wallace had declared that "cooperative agricultural extension work has become a permanent nation-wide system of practical instruction. . . ." However, while white extension work was on a firm footing by then, black work was still in its infancy. It was not until 1923 that federal officials declared that extension work in the southern states had "found a definite and permanent place as part of the educational system of these States." The next year, they declared the black service "for negroes and by negroes . . . a substantial development" for its ten-year [under Smith-Lever?] existence. "The work is established, the pioneer workers have done well."¹⁵⁰

Over the next decade, the black home demonstration service never reached the level of staffing it had at its height in 1919 (see Table 3 on page 116). The white home demonstration program in South Carolina grew slowly but progressively after the passage of Smith-Lever, until by 1931 each of the state's 46 counties boasted at least one white agent. In contrast black women's work experienced restricted growth because of the limited financial resources white administrators allocated to the black program. In 1923, the length of the work year for black home extension agents increased from three and a half to eleven months. However, the number of agents declined proportionately. In 1922 thirteen agents under Fitzgerald worked an aggregate forty-nine months, the following

¹⁴⁹Hallie Q. Brown, M. C. Lawton, and Myrtle Foster Cook to Mr. President [Calvin Coolidge], 6 May 1925, Entry 17 AE, General Correspondence, Negroes, Box 2 (1924-1939), RG 16, NA II.

¹⁵⁰Henry C. Wallace "To All Extension Directors," 20 September 1921, Box 821, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 D, RG 16, NA II; USDA, *Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, 1923* (n. p., n. d.), 58; USDA, *Cooperative Extension Work, 1924: with 10-year review* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1926), 95.

year three agents and the supervisor worked an aggregate forty-four months. Two more agents were added in 1924, not because of an increase in funds, but because local officials in Charleston, Marion and Richland counties valued the services of their agents enough to pay for them, thus freeing funds used to hire two more agents.¹⁵¹

As in the rest of the South, conditions in South Carolina changed slowly over the decade. The 1924 federal report marveled at what the black extension program had accomplished. It noted that black extension work had been established during “a period of transition, turmoil, and readjustment”—an assertion this chapter demonstrates.¹⁵² In South Carolina the period of “transition, turmoil, and readjustment” continued. State extension officials reacted to improve the black service only in response to actual or perceived federal pressure.

After the creation of the position of State Supervisor for Negro Home Demonstration Work in 1921, there were no other significant changes in the operation of this program until 1928 when South Carolina State College assumed full control of the black women’s program. The manner in which that change came about shows that Clemson officials had adopted an official policy of keeping only a small black extension agent force to assuage federal officials. In 1928, federal officials challenged Clemson’s minimalist approach to black extension work. Congress had passed the Capper-Ketcham Act which required that 80% of the funds distributed to each state be spent to hire new agents. The remaining 20% was specifically designated for black work. This specific statement was probably necessary because, as had been feared during the Smith-Lever

¹⁵¹Fitzgerald, “. . . Report of Negro District Agent, . . .,” 5; Boston, “Annual Narrative Report . . . 1923,” 3; Boston, “1924 Narrative Summary . . .,” 6.

¹⁵²USDA, *Cooperative Extension Work, 1924*, 95.

debates, blacks did not receive a significant amount of extension dollars. Director Long ignored the act's provisions. He set aside 75% of the money for white men's work and hired three white home agents out of the 25% of funds allocated to white women's work. Long probably planned to re-build the white men's county agent staff, which had been downsized during the decade because of a \$2 million shortfall in state funds.¹⁵³

When federal officials objected that he had shortchanged both women and blacks, he transferred the black women's headquarters from Winthrop College to State College and replaced Smith-Lever funds appropriated for their salaries with Capper-Ketcham funds. He insisted to federal authorities that by giving State College \$2,500 (half of the first-year Capper-Ketcham appropriation) he had carried out "the principle of the law." Federal officials disagreed, observing that "[c]hanging the supervision from Winthrop to the negro college does not make it a new piece of work." Responding to Long's explanation that new agents could not be placed in a county without its legislative delegation making a matching appropriation, Acting Chief of Extension T. W. Harvey said that the Department had no problem fully funding an agent until extension work had been fully established in a county. Harvey used the leverage the Capper-Ketcham provided to pressure Long's compliance. "If you feel that it is impossible for you to comply with the intent of Congress in the expenditure of these funds this year," he wrote, "it is suggested that the funds be placed in reserve until you are in a position to do so." In 1929, Long agreed to hire three new black women agents, bringing the total to eight. Another black agricultural agent was hired, bringing the total number of agents to ten.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 489.

¹⁵⁴There were thirty-nine white women agents by 1929s. W. W. Long to C. B. Smith, 28 July 1928; T. W. Harvey to W. W. Long, 1 August 1928, Box 187 Director SC 1928-1929; W. W. Long to J. A.

The new prominence of State College's role in supervising black women agents no doubt pleased President Wilkinson, who included a section on the women in his 1928 report and praised their "outstanding accomplishments." South Carolina State College finally had gained official control over all black extension work, although the white State Supervisor of Home Demonstration Work continued to play a role in administering black women's work for some time afterward.¹⁵⁵ However, her role in home extension was on the decline. The 1924 federal report states that, "Now that a system of extension work for negroes by negroes has been evolved gradually, there is more and more a tendency for responsibility to be turned over to them."¹⁵⁶ As the extension force moved from a cadre of local leaders tapped to serve their communities to one of college-trained men and women who were schooled in agriculture and home economics, the black extension workers were able to claim more autonomy over their program.

Conclusion

Control of black extension was contested terrain on multiple levels. If race was the primary reason that the South Carolina black extension service existed then South Carolina State College, Wilkinson reasoned, should be the focal point of all black extension work. While Clemson officials conceded this control for men's work, they were

Evans, 29 August 1928, (telegram); J. A. Evans to W. W. Long, 30 August 1928, (telegram); J. A. Evans to W. W. Long, 30 August 1928; W. W. Long to J. A. Evans, 30 August 1928, (telegram); J. A. Evans to W. W. Long, 31 August 1928; W. W. Long to C. B. Smith, 3 May 1929, Box 187, Dir. SC, 1928-1929, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II; C. W. Warburton to All Extension Directors, 13 November 1928, Box 1345, Folder: Extension Work, 17 F, RG 16, NA II.

¹⁵⁵"Report of the President," *CNIAMC*, 25 (1929): 28-9. The black State Supervisor received directions from the white State Supervisor; her reports were sent through the white women's extension headquarters at Winthrop rather than directly to Clemson College. There were no black specialists, so white specialists trained black home agents to do specialist's work in addition to their normal duties. The white State Supervisor also played a role in funding decisions.

¹⁵⁶USDA, *Cooperative Extension Work*, 1924, 95.

less willing to go forward and establish a solid program for black home demonstration work. Black extension work was stifled by Clemson's commitment to do only enough for black South Carolinians to keep federal officials satisfied.¹⁵⁷ Black agricultural extension agents who had worked directly under the supervision of white federal extension officials for so long continued to view themselves as federal employees and accountable to Washington. The agents often made their reports and took their complaints directly to Washington. When they did so, they were instructed to deal with state extension officials.

This account of the development of black extension work in South Carolina demonstrates how both racism and the politics of race stifled the institutional growth of black extension work. Partial data for the 1920s (see Table 3) demonstrates the limited development of black extension work.

¹⁵⁷*CNIAMC*, 25 (1921): 12.

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Year	State-Level Supervisors				State-Level Specialists and Club Agents				County Agents		Assistant County Agents		Home Agents		Assistant Home Agents	
	Men		Women		Men		Women									
	w	N	w	N	w	N	w	N	w	N	w	N	w	N	w	N
1920	4	1	NA ¹⁵⁸	0	NA	0	NA	0	46	5	NA	0	NA	NA	NA	0
1921	5	1	NA	0	NA	0	NA	0	43	6	NA	0	NA	12	NA	0
1922	NA	1	5	1	NA	0	NA	0	25	9	NA	0	NA	13	NA	0
1923	NA	1	5	1	NA	0	5	0	NA	8	NA	0	36	3 ¹⁵⁹	0	0
1924	NA	1	5	1	NA	0	5	0	NA	9	NA	0	38	5	0	0
1925	3	1	5	1	25	0	5	0	40	9	NA	0	38	6	0	0
1926	NA	1	5	1	NA	0	5	0	NA	9	NA	0	35	6	0	0
1927	NA	1	5	1	NA	0	5	0	41	9	NA	0	37	6	0	0
1928	NA	1	5	1	NA	0	5	0	NA	9	NA	0	35	6	0	0
1929	5	1	5	1	26	0	5	0	43	10	3	0	39	8	1	0

Table 3: Employees of the South Carolina Extension Service, 1920-1929

In 1930, fifteen years after the enactment of Smith-Lever, the number of black agricultural agents in South Carolina was ten and the number of black home demonstration agents was eight. There was one supervising agent for black men's work and one for black women's work. In 1929 the South Carolina General Assembly passed what is commonly called the "County Agent Law." It required that an agricultural and home agent be maintained in each county at state expense (rather than requiring the county to appropriate money before an agent was placed.) While the bill did not explicitly exclude blacks from those positions, its specific of Clemson and Winthrop colleges certainly

¹⁵⁸"NA" indicates that data is not available. Although I have earlier data on the black extension program, see Table 1, the earliest statistical data I have been able to find on the white program is from 1920. Annual reports are not always available and there are some gaps in staff rosters in the primary source collection.

¹⁵⁹The third agent was appointed in July 1923, after the second semi-annual Smith-Lever disbursement.

implied that those workers would be white.¹⁶⁰ In the white extension program in the by 1935, there were 46 agricultural agents 15 assistant agricultural agents, another 14 assistant agents in soil conservation, and 22 agricultural specialists. While there were only 39 white home demonstration agents in 1929, the county agent law led to their being 46 white home demonstration as of January 1, 1930. In addition by 1935 there 4 assistant home demonstration agents and 7 home economics specialists. There were 4 white male state supervisors and 5 white female state supervisors¹⁶¹ Despite the growth of the black men's program and the "rebound" of the black women's program, the number of agents was nowhere near the percentage of blacks in the population, which while no longer a majority was nearly forty-six (45.6) percent. The number of state supervisors for black work was 2, one for men and one for women. There were 15 black agricultural agents and 13 black home demonstration agents. Out of 193 state extension workers, blacks accounted for 30 or 15.5 percent.¹⁶²

Before Smith-Lever, with the support of northern philanthropy, black extension work had developed at a faster rate in South Carolina than white extension work. Once the extension program came under the almost limitless control of white state officials, they did only what was necessary to meet federal guidelines. This reality foreshadows the

¹⁶⁰South Carolina General Assembly, "A BILL Authorizing and Directing the Employment of at Least One Home and One Farm Demonstration Agent in Each County and Providing Compensation for Their Services," (hereafter referred to as County Agent Law), *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina: Passed at the Regular Session of 1929*, 16 March 1929 (Columbia: Joint Printing Committee of the General Assembly, 1929), 1053-4.

¹⁶¹Clemson College Board of Trustees, *Forty-fifth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of Clemson Agricultural College*, (1930), 89; County Agent Law, 1053-4. Because of cutbacks in state financing, the number of agents for 1930 is unavailable. Therefore, the statistics for the first available year are used.

¹⁶²Smith and Horton, *Historical Statistics of Black America*, volume II: Table 1797: "Distribution of Population by Sections, Divisions, and States, 1790-1930 - I," p. 1586.

future of black institutions as they became “integrated” and placed under the jurisdiction of white institutions. South Carolina State College’s role in promoting agriculture was significantly diminished. The massive institutes once held by the South Carolina State College were now a thing of the past. Riggs’ statement that establishing a separate black extension force would be an “unfortunate dissipa[tion of]” Smith-Lever funds clearly demonstrates that the “separate but equal” doctrine handed down in *Plessy v. Ferguson* and popularly supported in southern states was irrational. Indeed, Riggs’ statements—and those of southern Senators who criticized segregated programs as uneconomical—show that whites were aware that their actions were discriminatory. If properly carried out, equal support would create two extension organizations, neither of which was capable of competing with the unified extension programs in the North and West. Separate but equal was also an illusion because it *would not* be carried out. Localism and states’ rights were triumphant, but not completely. The influence of the NAACP in pressing for black inclusion in extension work and in forcing concern from federal officials that blacks derive some of the program’s benefits meant that some justice—no matter how minor—would be done for black farm families. Localism, though dominant, was therefore never absolute.

Black extension work—like other aspects of black life—felt the heavy weight of white prejudice. Its growth—like that of other publicly-controlled black institutions—was stifled. The goals whites established for the black program were limited both by racially-based expectations of black farmers’ abilities and by white landowners’ economic imperatives. Racially-tinged progressivism meant that the agents who were hired faced

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daunting obstacles—both institutional and social—to their success. These obstacles are the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

"[T]HE OUTLOOK SEEMS VERY ENCOURAGING AND BRIGHT": TO BE A BLACK EXTENSION AGENT IN SOUTH CAROLINA

[T]he outlook seems very encouraging and bright. We are on the right road for greater accomplishments along these lines now, and, for all these possibilities, we owe you unlimited thanks and appreciation.—R. S. Wilkinson to W. M. Riggs

I do not want any state to adopt as a general policy the having of negro agents, and they are only to be regarded for the present as supernumeraries to do definite types of work in definite territories.—Bradford Knapp to W. W. Long

[M]y father always said that when he first went to work with the extension service, which was in the late [nineteen] twenties, working with the extension service, at that time, was a big job. And they were considered some sort of like top employees in the counties.—Dr. Barbara Williams Jenkins, daughter of future State Agent for Negro Agricultural Extension Work, E. N. Williams

This chapter explores what it meant to be a black extension agent in a white supremacist society. It examines the relationship between black extension agents and the white community as represented by the South Carolina and Federal extension services. The manner in which whites administered the program serves as a reminder that being a public professional did not necessarily lead to respect when one was also a black in South Carolina. There were two visions of black extension work—one of great possibilities, as the first epigram suggests; the other of limited prospects, as the second epigram suggests. The federal extension report for 1919 noted that blacks who are involved in extension work are “anxious to make good. The men [sic] who become agents are usually the best products of the negro industrial institutions and are proving very capable leaders.”¹ Given what whites in the southern and federal extension services, in southern politics, and in southern white communities expected of these agents, this description is an accurate one. But for what pro-equality activists expected the program to accomplish, even the best

¹USDA, *Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, 1919*, 15.

products of the best institutions were sometimes insufficient for a task which stifling social and economic constraints made nearly impossible.

Early Black Agents: Personal Reputation vs. Personal Preparation

The level of education that is typically expected of professionals was not an absolute requirement for the first black extension agents. This greatly reflects the results of the South's system of unequal education. Indeed, in every facet of training, black agents—most of whom were educated at southern black agricultural colleges where the teaching was typically more practical—generally lacked the level of scientific knowledge that southern white agents trained at any white agricultural college. Indeed, as far as whites were concerned, the most essential requirement for blacks to be employed was not professional training. Rather, it was of paramount importance to whites that black agents accept the racial paradigm of white supremacy—or at least accommodate themselves to it. Respect for the paradigm required black agents to disseminate knowledge in a manner that would not challenge the prevailing caste system. Encouraging economic autonomy, political activism, or social equality all were out of bounds. Whites disapproved of leadership that could potentially transform society, as James Anderson's study of black education in the South demonstrates. Anderson documents the difficulty some black colleges experienced in their quest for financial support when they attempted to institute liberal education. Both white southerners and northern white philanthropists were concerned that this type of educational approach would trickle down to lower educational levels and cause a shift away from the Hampton-Tuskegee model of industrial education

and racial accommodation.² White money and the power it gave them had a profound influence on the shaping of the black public professional class.

To respect the paradigm required a disservice to the race. Therefore, a paradox existed. black extension agents, like other black professionals who worked in the public sphere, found themselves at the intersection of competing allegiances—to the dictates of their employers on the one hand and to the aspirations of themselves and their race on the other. Black extension agents' professional identities were shaped by their responses to multiple interest groups. If they hoped to continue their employment in the service, black agents had to adhere to racial protocol and respect white supremacy in their contacts with whites and seem to do so in their contacts with their fellow blacks. The agents also had to make their black clients economically productive and socially compliant to prove their value to white supremacy's supporters. Black agents understood that their job security rested most heavily on whites' funding decisions. These decisions were shaped, in turn, by how useful whites believed black agents were to the preservation of the white South. If the agents failed to produce expected results, or if the agents proved too interested in encouraging black independence any one—or all of them—could be discharged.

However, these agents also had to produce results that satisfied the black community. To prove their economic and social value to their own race, black agents had to convince their fellow blacks that the agents had the black farmers' best interests at heart—not those of white landlords, or white society generally. While the agents had some leeway when dealing with black landowners, they navigated treacherous waters when dealing with dependent classes of black farmers: sharecroppers and various types of

²Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 253.

tenants who constituted nearly 80 percent of black farmers in South Carolina as late as 1930.³ If agents could show the farmers how they could make marginal land grow a profitable cotton crop, how to provide better fare for the table through home gardening, how to acquire better-bred livestock for milk and meat, help farm women brighten their dreary ramshackle surroundings, prepare better meals, or help itinerant croppers to develop a sense of community, blacks were interested in extension programs and more than willing to support their agents. However, if blacks perceived the agents as doing the white man's bidding, black farmers could exercise resistance by refusing to produce more profit for their landlord's benefit. White extension officials would assume that an agent's failure represented ineffectiveness at best and incompetence at worst. In either case, the result would be the same—termination. Black agents had the arduous task of convincing whites and blacks that they served each groups best interests, and to some degree, they did. Being a black agent required one to wear the mask. In some cases, it is clear that the mask was worn for whites. In other instances, it is more difficult to ascertain for whom the mask was worn. The written record is purely official and obviously in line with whites' sentiments.

A Shadow Administration: the Decreasing Importance of South Carolina State College

The institutional history of the South Carolina black extension service reveals that it lacked economic and administrative autonomy because it was an appendage of the white extension service. The cooperative agreement between Clemson and South Carolina State Colleges, gave State College officials no direct control over money allocated to the program. Clemson extension officials told President Wilkinson how

³Smith and Horton, *Historical Statistics of Black America*, volume I: "Table 173: Owner Status: Percentage Distribution of Black Owner and Tenant Farms, by Region and State, 1910-1930," p. 138.

much money they allotted for the black program and how many agents could be hired. He recommended persons for the agents' positions and approved charges against the appropriation, which were sent on to Clemson for settlement. He could nominate persons to serve as agents or recommend that an agent be discontinued, but the final decision on their employment or termination was in the hands of Clemson officials.⁴ Wilkinson could make requests to Clemson officials for additional funds or for more agents but there was no guarantee that his requests would be honored; usually they were not. Wilkinson's situation was similar to that of Thomas Campbell, the supervisor of black agents in Alabama and Mississippi. Joel Schor reports that Campbell "could recommend individuals but could not hire them without prior approval from federal officials."⁵ While South Carolina State College shared the same administrative relationship to the South Carolina Extension Service as Winthrop College, it did not receive the velvet glove treatment that the locus of white women's home demonstration work received. While the level of appropriation for white women's work was far from equitable, it was better funded and the number of white home demonstration agents increased much faster than black agricultural and home demonstration agents. Winthrop College had powerful legislative friends that ensured its better treatment. After all, it was the state institution that served budding white womanhood. Yet, Winthrop College's financial autonomy in extension matters was equally restrictive and race politics stifled its efforts for greater autonomy. When Congressman Asbury F. Lever of South Carolina wrote Bradford Knapp to ask if

⁴Memorandum of Understanding Between the Clemson Agricultural College and the State Colored Normal and Industrial College of South Carolina Regarding Demonstration Work in South Carolina by Negro Agents With Negro Farmers, attachment to W. M. Riggs to President R. S. Wilkinson, 12 May 1915, Folder 116, Riggs Presidential Records.

⁵Schor, "The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service," 31.

the money for home demonstration work could be disbursed directly to the college, Knapp replied, "If Winthrop College could secure an allotment of money to be paid over to it to manage and account for, the State College for Negroes at Orangeburg might well claim the same arrangement."⁶

Knapp seems to have encouraged this centralization of money management. He objected to the second item of the Clemson College-South Carolina State College memorandum of understanding that permitted Wilkinson to approve the bills that he forwarded to Clemson for settlement. In Knapp's view, Clemson officials were "transfer-[ring] the administrative responsibility for the expenditure of funds" which, Knapp argued, the school could not do. Since the General Assembly designated Clemson College as the sole beneficiary of the Smith-Lever funds, Knapp suggested to Walter Riggs that turning over control of money to persons at other institutions without an exercise of fiscal control by Clemson officials would be unwise.⁷ Clemson officials also favored centralization of power under their administration. They prevented Winthrop College from circumventing Clemson College's fiscal authority (see chapter 2). Despite the fiscal control by Clemson, Winthrop College, as the center for expertise on women's programs, experienced less interference in home demonstration decisions from inexperienced men.

As in all other facets of the southern bi-racial bureaucracy that controlled blacks' access to public services, whites made the important decisions and were usually the final word. The appropriations procedures are representative of a variety of historical power

⁶Bradford Knapp to A.F. Lever, 13 July 1917, Box 35, Folder: Miscellaneous South Carolina, 1915-1916, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁷Bradford Knapp to W. M. Riggs, 16 July 1915, Folder 121, Riggs Presidential Records.

relationships. They reflected the federal authorities' increasing ardor for bureaucratic hierarchy, but local control fit well with white southern racial sensibilities as well. Clemson officials quickly made it clear that there would not be equal power-sharing between black and white administrators in extension supervision. Once Wilkinson made his nominations of agents to Long, he sent the agents names to President Riggs, who then sent the names to Clemson's Board of Trustees, which approved all hires. There was no role for the white Board of Trustees at South Carolina State College at all. At any stage of the process, Wilkinson's judgement could be overruled. Indeed, J. A. Evans' declaration to a former black agent "that the matter of appointments or removal of colored agents in South Carolina is entirely in the hands of Wilkinson *subject to [W. W. Long's] approval*," [my emphasis] shows how ephemeral Wilkinson's authority was. This was not the case only with men's work. In women's work as well, Wilkinson had no true authority. In 1928 when Connie N. Jones resigned, several women in the community contacted white *county* agent seeking the post. She actually recommended one of these women to Lonny I. Landrum, the white State Home Demonstration Agent. Landrum wrote Wilkinson, "I have asked that Dora [Boston] find out about the training of the various applicants. We are of course *always glad to have your recommendations for any vacancy which may occur*" [my emphasis].⁸ Wilkinson's lack of institutional control reflected a growing trend toward limiting the power of black college presidents in the early twentieth century. Anderson's research on southern higher education shows that the more black schools had

⁸J. A. Evans to W. W. Long, 3 December 1915, Box 11, Folder: Miscellaneous South Carolina, 1915-1916, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II; Lonny I. Landrum to R. S. Wilkinson, 30 April 1928, Folder 92, "Extension Work Matters B-W-1929-1933, Itinerant Extension Workers; Demonstration Workers General 1933-1934; H. E. Daniels, J. P. Burgess, M. E. Pugues, W. W. Wilkins, M. B. Paul," South Carolina State University Historical Collections, Miller F. Whittaker Library, Orangeburg, South Carolina. Hereafter, this folder will be cited as Folder 92, SCSUHC.

to rely on white money—public and private—the less control black leadership had over a variety of areas ranging from curriculum to employment appointments.⁹

Wilkinson's presence at South Carolina State College was akin to that of Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute—especially in his community outreach. In addition to managing daily college affairs, he was very involved the college's extension work including making speeches at farmers' institutes South Carolina State College sponsored throughout the state. For example in 1914, Wilkinson spoke at sixteen of twenty off-campus farmers' institutes he included in his annual report under the title "Agricultural Extension." In these engagements, he spoke before 13,080 persons; the entire institute series reached only 19,462.¹⁰ He had expected, it seems, that as head of the black agricultural college, he would be the leading black official in the black extension bureaucracy. This was not the way that things played out. Although Wilkinson was appointed "District Agent" for Negro Work, it turned out to be a title with few actual responsibilities.

This contrasts with Walter Riggs' role in Clemson College's extension program. While Riggs did not participate in daily extension work decision-making, Long made no major decisions regarding the level of staffing or funding without Riggs' input. For

⁹Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, chapter 4 "Normal Schools and County Training Schools Education the South's Black Teaching force, 1900-1935." See especially pages 115-123, which discuss the presidency of John W. Davison, an Atlanta University graduate and *founder* of Fort Valley High and Industrial School. White philanthropists who supported the school and favored what Anderson refers to as the "Hampton-Tuskegee" idea forced Davison out in 1903 for promoting classical education. Pages 130-131 of this chapter provide a more detailed view of white philanthropists' problems with Davison's attitudes and also their views on their hand-picked successor to Davison, Henry Alexander Hunt. See also chapter 7, "Training Apostles of Liberal Culture: Black Higher Education, 1900-1935."

¹⁰*CNIAMC*, 18 (1914): 9-10. These totals include only those meetings at which Wilkinson is listed as a speaker. In addition there was an institute (attended by 32 farmers) and a conference (attended by 300) at the College. No speakers were listed for these events but in all likelihood Wilkinson participated here as well.

example, in one instance Riggs and Long disagreed about whether black agents needed to receive part of their salaries from federal Smith-Lever funds to be considered federal agents. Riggs insisted they did and directed Long to write federal officials to settle the disagreement. Long wrote the letter and confidently remarked to Bradford Knapp that he [Long] “understood of course, that it does not make a difference from what part of the fund these agents are paid so far as the appropriation is concerned.” Long was probably surprised when J. A. Evans agreed with Riggs’ interpretation of the law.¹¹ Riggs’ intense involvement in extension matters seems to have been the result of Long’s less-than- fully competent performance of the job. In a letter Knapp wrote to Riggs on 17 May 1915 Knapp noted that he was pleased with the result of a conference that he had had with Long. Long had apparently overspent his appropriation and Knapp had given him extra funds to cover the shortfalls. Knapp reported that he had informed Long that it was “absolutely necessary for him to handle the situation next year. I consider it unsafe for [Long] to proceed with such large financial matters without adequate financial records and assistance intrusted to the supervision of a man employed for that purpose.”¹²

A point of greater contrast between Wilkinson’s and Riggs’ status is evident in remarks Riggs made to extension officials. The two schools’ cooperative agreement required that the President of South Carolina State College or his authorized representative deal with the Director of Extension Long. It soon became apparent that this representative could be chosen without Wilkinson’s consent. Clemson officials appointed

¹¹W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 21 September 1915; J. A. Evans to W. W. Long, 25 September 1915, Box 11, Folder: Miscellaneous, SC, 1915-1916, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

¹²Bradford Knapp to Dr. W. M. Riggs, 17 May 1915, Folder 117, Riggs Presidential Records, STICUL

Benjamin Hubert, a professor of agriculture, as Wilkinson's Assistant State Supervisor for Negro Work. For his services, Hubert received additional pay; Wilkinson received no pay at all. Wilkinson argued that Hubert should not be designated to receive the funds given to the supervisor of agents since Hubert's responsibilities to the college were reduced to allow Hubert to visit the agents in the field. Rather, Wilkinson suggested that the funds be used to hire clerical help for himself since he was the primary supervisor and "shall have to do most of the [mental?] work involved in the scheme."¹³ Riggs discouraged Wilkinson from becoming directly involved in extension work and advised him to leave it in the hands of the "well prepared" Hubert. "It is a bad thing," Riggs wrote,

for the chief executive of a College to undertake any detailed line of work, and furthermore you would not be prepared by education or training for such work. My strong advice to you would be to put Prof. Hubert in charge of this work just as I have put Mr. Long in charge here. This would not deprive you of any authority or supervision of the work, and yet would relieve you from this detailed administration.¹⁴

Although Riggs suggested to Wilkinson that their positions were comparable, that is largely inaccurate. Riggs did not have an extension title; Wilkinson did. While both presidents had a subordinate who managed the daily affairs of extension work, Riggs had direct authority over his subordinate; Wilkinson did not. Despite Riggs' assertion to Bradford Knapp that dealing with one of Wilkinson's subordinates in black extension matters "would be a bad organization and is likely to cause trouble," Riggs decided that Hubert and each agent—but not Wilkinson—would have franking privileges (which

¹³R. S. Wilkinson to W. M. Riggs, 13 September 1915, Folder 123, Riggs Presidential Records. Hubert had been at the College less than three years at that time.

¹⁴W. M. Riggs to R. S. Wilkinson, 9 October 1915, Folder 127, Riggs Presidential Records.

would have only cost \$1 from federal funds). The denial of franking privileges left Wilkinson out of the formal administrative loop.¹⁵

The franking decision seems to have been made by Riggs and Knapp. W. W. Long had written Riggs requesting that he write Knapp to ask whether Wilkinson or Hubert should be given the frank. Knapp gave two criteria for the receipt of the frank: availability of funds, and actual performance of extension work. Knapp made it clear that he would not want to put both Hubert and Wilkinson on the payroll at \$1 but preferred to pay one “some substantial part of their salary out of our funds.” On Wilkinson’s letter of 13 September, Riggs wrote in his own hand, “Hubert would do good agr[icultural] w[or]k in field. W[ilkinson] does not know any agr[iculture]. Hubert @ 10.⁰⁰ [and] all other colored ag[en]ts @ 10.⁰⁰. Ha[ve] co[lored?] agents meeting at College . . . [Assistant Director of Extension Work W. H.] Barton presiding and will give them enough notice to write others about Nov. 15.”¹⁶ These handwritten notations reflect the statements Riggs’ made in his letter to Wilkinson and demonstrate Riggs’ level of involvement in extension matters.

Given the language of the Memorandum of Understanding and his actions with the franking privileges, Riggs’ assessment of the effects of Hubert’s appointment was, at least, insincere. Riggs’ correspondence with Knapp, others at the USDA, and with Long shows that he paid detailed attention to extension work. Riggs must have known that the proposed administrative structure would minimize Wilkinson’s participation in the black

¹⁵Memorandum of Understanding Between the Clemson Agricultural College and the State Colored Normal and Industrial College of South Carolina, W. M. Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 12 July 1915; W. W. Long to W. M. Riggs, 10 September 1915; W. M. Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 13 September 1915; Bradford Knapp to W. M. Riggs, 18 September 1915, Folder 125, Riggs Presidential Records.

¹⁶R. S. Wilkinson to W. M. Riggs, 13 September 1915, Folder 123, Riggs Presidential Records.

extension service. Bradford Knapp pushed for an unambiguous centralization of the programs and encouraged Riggs to have W. W. Long make it “pretty definitely understood that [Long] is the head of extension work for the whole state.”¹⁷ Riggs subsequently told Knapp that when Wilkinson was informed that W. W. Long would be directing all extension work, Wilkinson was “not only willing for this, [but] expresse[d] his appreciation of the assistance that will be received in that way.”¹⁸ But Riggs’ letter of 9 October [see note 14 page 130] and Wilkinson’s remarks below suggest that the men held very different views on the importance of Wilkinson’s participation in the program:

I have no idea now of doing the extension work but did think that it would be necessary to take up a portion of it for a while until the field was covered in a way to give me comprehensive ideas as to what should be done and expected, however, this will now be left entirely to Prof. Hubert, and I shall devote my time merely to supervision.¹⁹

It is evident from statements in his letter of 13 September [see note 13 page 130] and those just quoted that Wilkinson expected and wanted to play an active role in black extension administration. Far more revealing of Riggs’ true attitude about Wilkinson’s role was his declaration to Bradford Knapp that “it [was] immaterial whether we deal with the President of the institution, holding him responsible and *allowing* [my emphasis] him to nominate the agents under him, or whether we deal with one of his subordinates. . . .”²⁰ The exclusion of Wilkinson from active participation in the extension program can be better understood in light of this dismissive remark and the attitudes regarding blacks that were prevalent among South Carolina whites. A clause in the

¹⁷Bradford Knapp to W. M. Riggs, 8 May 1915, Folder 116, Riggs Presidential Records.

¹⁸W. M. Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 12 May 1915, Folder 116, Riggs Presidential Records.

¹⁹R. S. Wilkinson to W. M. Riggs, 12 October 1915, Folder 127, Riggs Presidential Records.

²⁰W. M. Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 12 July 1915, Folder 120, Riggs Presidential Records.

memorandum affirmed the right of the presidents of Clemson and South Carolina State colleges to discuss extension work directly.²¹ However, in light of the full context of black extension administration, this proviso probably had little meaning. Riggs was correct regarding Wilkinson's lack of collegiate training in agriculture. His teaching experience was in the liberal arts tradition. Wilkinson taught Latin and Greek at the State University of Kentucky (for blacks) and taught Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry at South Carolina State College. Hubert also had a liberal arts degree from Morehouse College. However, he also had earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1912. That same year he accepted a teaching appointment at South Carolina State College. Hubert was already supervising vocational teacher training when he was appointed assistant director of extension. In addition, he supervised the State Colored Fair Association and worked closely with Richard Carroll. Hubert worked on a variety of projects related to agricultural education in South Carolina, including the Food Administration Board. He returned to South Carolina from France in 1919 and by 1920 had accepted a job at Tuskegee as Director of its Department of Agriculture. Hubert went on to become the president of the Georgia State Industrial College for Colored Youth (Savannah State College) and a history of that institution states that Hubert had "a strong commitment to agriculture."²²

²¹"Memorandum of Understanding Between the Clemson Agricultural College and the State Colored Normal and Industrial College of South Carolina Regarding Demonstration Work in South Carolina by Negro Agents With Negro Farmers," attachment to W. M. Riggs to President R. S. Wilkinson, 12 May 1915, Folder 116, Riggs Presidential Records.

²²Potts, *The History of South Carolina State College, 1896-1978*, 43; Nelson, *Who's Who in America*, 15 (1928-29): 2224; Hall, *One Hundred Years of Educating at Savannah State College*, 33; Schultz, "A More Satisfying Life," 36-40.

Wilkinson, not surprisingly, seems to have accepted his exclusion from the extension program with great reluctance. Indeed, once his arguments were rejected he had no choice but to graciously concede the *fait accompli*. Wilkinson was personally beholden to Riggs for giving Wilkinson a positive professional assessment when South Carolina State College's Board of Trustees asked Riggs about Wilkinson's suitability for the presidency of South Carolina State College. Indeed, due to Riggs' recommendation, Wilkinson's tenure was no longer evaluated annually. Wilkinson even sought Riggs' help in administrative matters. Reverend Bollie Levister, who taught Mathematics at the school, had been fired because he had been judged "unfitted for the classroom" not only by Wilkinson but also by the state's white education bureaucrats. Levister secured letters of support from leading whites from his home county of Newberry including one from the chairman of Clemson's Board of Trustees, State Senator Alan Johnstone. Wilkinson asked Riggs to explain the situation to Johnstone "for sometimes those influential men become sensitive at a disregard of a request of that nature," Wilkinson reported that his Board had "pledged me unfailing support in the future."²³

Perhaps Riggs did not recognize it, but he held immense personal power over Wilkinson's future. Wilkinson must have known it and like all black public professionals, he could not alienate his paternalistic benefactor and expect to remain employed. Joel Williamson provides an excellent example of this sentiment of public professionals. Henry E. Baker, who worked in Washington, told Oswald Garrison "Villard that 'we who are in the Departments making our daily bread through our service there . . . cannot, in my

²³R. S. Wilkinson to W. M. Riggs 24 May 1915, Folder 117, Riggs Presidential Records. For a discussion of the changes in school governance see Potts, *A History of South Carolina State College*, 44-6.

opinion, put ourselves on the firing line in this fight, if we wish to keep our positions.”²⁴ Wilkinson’s failed effort to enlarge the role of South Carolina State College in extension work to include black home demonstration work discussed in chapter two further speaks to his lack of administrative clout. Clemson officials’ actions concerning black women’s work—the slowness to approve its initiation, the drastic reduction of the women’s force from thirteen to three and the decision to increase the working period for the remaining agents despite Wilkinson’s recommendations to the contrary, demonstrates the tangible power that whites had over the state’s black extension programs. Although Wilkinson often stated his views frankly, he also knew when to defer to the whites’ judgement. As he stated in one letter, “This is only a suggestion however, . . . I have stated the ideas thought of in this connection, hoping that you will be able to arrange, if possible, to have them carried out.”²⁵ His pragmatism, I believe, contributed to the survival of the extension service. It certainly accounts for his longevity as president of South Carolina State College, which he led until his death in 1932.

Wilkinson’s lack of authority in extension matters was recognized in some corners of the black professional community as well. Martin A. Menafee, the treasurer of Vorhees, a private black college in Bamberg County, wrote directly to Bradford Knapp to ask that C. D. Menafee of Alabama be appointed to work with boll weevil eradication projects in Orangeburg, Barnwell, and Bamberg counties. He also offered the college’s cooperation in counties where the eradication project was already under way. Knapp

²⁴Williamson, *Crucible of Race*, 375-6. Williamson suggests that the situation was somewhat different for blacks who worked outside the South and the capital.

²⁵R. S. Wilkinson to W. M. Riggs, 13 September 1915, Folder 123, Riggs Presidential Records.

expressed interest in cooperating with the college but informed Martin Menafee that employment arrangements had to be made through W. W. Long [not R. S. Wilkinson].²⁶

Even the black agents recognized Wilkinson's impotence. When Benjamin Barnwell was drafted into the Army during World War I despite his supposed exemption as a necessary government worker, he appealed to Bradford Knapp for assistance. The mere fact that Barnwell was drafted suggests that local, white-controlled draft boards had no respect for black public professionals' skills. (The draft board was also unmoved by the appeals of some local white farmers for Barnwell's continuation as agent.) Federal extension officials refused to fight to retain Barnwell's exemption status despite the fact that "[i]n a number of cases the decision of local and district [draft] boards has seriously hurt [extension] work." When Barnwell wrote a follow-up letter pushing for release, J. A. Evans flatly responded, "we do not believe it would be practicable to secure your release from military service in order to resume county work."²⁷ Without information that would reveal whether the extension service had a consistent policy of not interfering with local draft board decisions, we cannot gauge whether Knapp's and Evans' refusal to assist Barnwell reflects a racial bias in extension policy. Knapp suggested in his letter that in numerous cases local draft boards had inducted agents. Since there were more whites than blacks in the service, we must assume that some of the agents inducted were white. Knapp reported to Barnwell that there had been some difficulty in replacing agents but

²⁶Martin A. Menafee to Bradford Knapp, 16 December 1918; Bradford Knapp to Martin A. Menafee, 20 December 1918, Box 59, Folder: Miscellaneous South Carolina 1918-1919, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

²⁷Benjamin Barnwell to Bradford Knapp, 25 September 1918; Bradford Knapp to Benjamin Barnwell, 2 October 1918; Benjamin Barnwell to Bradford Knapp, 4 October 1918; J. A. Evans to Benjamin Barnwell, 19 October 1918, Box 59, Folder: Miscellaneous South Carolina, 1918-1919, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

“[i]n your case I presume the established authorities of the War Department decided they needed you in the military service, hence we must be content with their decision.”²⁸

Significant in this exchange is that there is no evidence that Barnwell appealed to Wilkinson for assistance.

Two former agents, I. C. Wiley and J. A. Bates, complained about their terminations to white extension officials. There is no extant copy of the letter Wiley, once the agent for Orangeburg County, wrote Bradford Knapp. However, it is possible to deduce Wiley’s allegations from Knapp’s letter of 23 November 1915 to Long. Wiley reported that Wilkinson requested his resignation. He stated that Wilkinson claimed to have no knowledge of why his resignation was needed, that Wilkinson had expressed no dissatisfaction with his work, that he had been asked to resign just as he was preparing an exhibit for the white county fair to which he had been invited. Wiley offered to provide references from the leading black farmers and the leading white businessmen. He reported a rumor—which turned out to be fact—that he would be replaced by a South Carolina State College graduate whose abilities Wiley questioned. (The alumnus, Wiley claimed, placed third in a competition with two other black farmers at a fair.) Wiley also suggested that the extension posts were being sold.²⁹

Bates’ initial complaint of December 1915 also was not in extension files. W. W. Long dismissed it out of hand as an attack on R. S. Wilkinson. Long defended Wilkinson, declaring that he was the victim of black politicians:

²⁸Bradford Knapp to Benjamin Barnwell, 2 October 1918, Box 59, Folder: Miscellaneous South Carolina, 1918-1919, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

²⁹Bradford Knapp to W. W. Long, 23 November 1915, Box 11, Folder: Miscellaneous South Carolina, 1915-1916, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

Wilkinson is one of the most responsible negroes in this state. He has the confidence of all the best white people, and runs that institution to the best interests of the negro race. He is not as popular with the negro race as he would be if he were to permit the negro politicians to dictate the policy of the institution. . . . they knew that we understood the situation, and appreciated how Wilkinson was regarded by the white people.³⁰

Two years later Bates lodged his complaint again, accusing Wilkinson of doing Bates and his county (Kershaw) "a crime that shoul[d] be handled." Like Wiley, Bates declared Wilkinson could not have found fault in his work. He said that he had written Wilkinson seeking answers but Wilkinson had not replied. (Yet Bates states later in his letter that Wilkinson told him that his county did not need an agent). Bates insisted that his county did need help and that he was writing Knapp seeking a post so that he could help the farmers in his county to "prepare for the future. I believe you have power over Dr. Wilkerson [sic] and can have me reappointed." Like Wiley, Bates offered references from men [probably white] who knew Knapp personally.³¹

In all these instances, it is clear that not even blacks recognized Wilkinson as the final word in black extension work administrative matters. In the correspondence between white federal and state extension officials, it is clear that they did not grant Wilkinson's authority either. In the Wiley case, Knapp expressly forewent any power he might have had to rehire Wiley. He warned Long that "we have got to watch this negro work with a great deal of care . . ." and encouraged Long to proceed cautiously. "It certainly would be a mistake to dispossess a good negro and replace him with a poorer one. If Wiley is to be dispossessed of the place there certainly should be some good reason for the change. Let

³⁰W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 17 December 1915, Box 7, Folder: Miscellaneous South Carolina, 1915-1916, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

³¹James A. Bates to Bradford Knapp, 1 April 1918, Box 35, Folder: Miscellaneous South Carolina, 1917-1918, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

me hear from you." In letters to both men, federal officials made it clear that employment decisions were the within Clemson officials' jurisdiction. J. A. Evans' view of the situation bears repeating. Evans wrote Long in 1915 that he had informed Wiley "that the matter of appointments or removal of colored agents in South Carolina is entirely in the hands of Wilkinson subject to your approval." Evans told Bates that "[a]ll extension work in South Carolina is under the general supervision of W. W. Long, and complaints as to injustice by your immediate supervisor should be directed to him . . ."³² Although Wilkinson's decisions in these cases were upheld, it is clear from Knapp's suggestion for Long to investigate Wiley's firing that Wilkinson was not the final authority.

Certainly administrative appeal is not out of the ordinary, however, the manner in which it was done in these cases shows how race complicated the issue. Wilkinson was not the only black administrator whose judgement was re-examined. Joel Schor mentions—without elaborating—Thomas Campbell's difficulty in firing agents, which suggests that Wilkinson's experience may have been typical.³³ Wilkinson was, in some ways, little more than an office boy for white extension officials. He provided requested information and completed requested tasks. However, in this capacity there was often the appearance that he indeed possessed some personal influence that worked to his and his institution's advantage.

³²Bradford Knapp to W. W. Long, 23 November 1915; J. A. Evans to W. W. Long 3 December 1915, Box 11, Folder: Miscellaneous South Carolina, 1915-1916; J. A. Evans to James A. Bates, 11 April 1918, Box 35, Folder: Miscellaneous South Carolina, 1917- 1918, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

³³Schor, "The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service," 31.

Solidifying South Carolina State College's Prestige in Extension Work

Wilkinson's tact when dealing with white extension officials had tangible rewards as they tended to accept his judgement on extension personnel matters. He showed little concern when the black leaders of the state's colored fair planned to have white pressure brought to bear on him to require him to send agricultural agents back to the fair. J. E. Dickson informed Wilkinson that "G. C. Williams of Newberry offered a motion in the colored state fair meeting held here February 26th to write Mr. W. W. Long and demand him to make you and the county agents come back to the state fair, but I. S. Leevy of Columbia, suggested that a committee be appointed[,] that you were trembling in your boots and would be glad to come back if a committee [of Negroes] called on you."³⁴

Wilkinson responded with confidence:

... The actions of the Colored State Fair people are amusing. Mr. Long would pay no attention to their demands; he, as well as Mr. Watkins, know the State Fair organization pretty well and they are already confident in the belief that there must be something wrong that causes us to drop relations with them. That class of people does not run over the heads of constitute [sic] authority. They are at least civilized to that extent, so you may depend upon the fact that our system will not be interfered with.

You know I. S. Leevy pretty well, so does everybody else. Most of his public statements carry little weight. Should a committee approach me on the subject I shall continue the same attitude we have always maintained towards them.³⁵

Wilkinson's prediction that Clemson officials would not work with fair members was correct. In late 1931, A. J. Collins, President of the State Colored Fair, wrote Long

³⁴J. E. Dickson to R. S. Wilkinson, 5 March 1929, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

³⁵R. S. Wilkinson to J. E. Dickson, 7 March 1929, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

requesting to meet with him to discuss (among other things) the lack of cooperation of South Carolina State College in the fair.³⁶ Long bowed out of the battle.

. . . I have nothing whatever to do with the administration of the Colored Agricultural College. We are cooperating with the Colored Agricultural College in the extension work that they are doing. I might add that I have always found President Wilkinson disposed to do whatever was best for the interest of the colored citizens of this state. If there is any difference between the authorities of the State Fair and the Agricultural College, I am very sure that President Wilkinson will do whatever he thinks is for the best interest of all concerned. . . .³⁷

Long sent Wilkinson a copy of his response; Wilkinson wrote him that the problem with the state fair was one of finance. The committee wanted black agents to set up displays at the fair at no charge and "for the public good." South Carolina State College officials decided not to participate in the fair under those circumstances.³⁸

Wilkinson's conciliation of whites had earned him their trust. He may even have surpassed Richard Carroll as the most trustworthy black in South Carolina. When Congressman Lever suggested to D. W. Watkins that Carroll would make a good speaker at agents' meetings on issues related to crop production Wilkinson objected. "Confidentially, we would prefer not to have Dr. Carroll of Columbia associated in any way with our meetings. There is an old saying that, 'no one knows the Scotch like a Scotchman.' It is equally true that 'no one knows the Negro like a Negro.' Mr. Lever does not know Carroll. Daniels will explain more fully the next time he sees you. We would appreciate a hint from you to Mr. Lever not to have Carroll address meetings arranged

³⁶A. J. Collins to W. W. Long, 18 November 1931, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

³⁷W. W. Long to A. J. Collins, 19 November 1931, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

³⁸R. S. Wilkinson to W. W. Long, 23 November 1931, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

though our service." Wilkinson's meaning is not clear but extension reports do not indicate that Carroll spoke at any farmers meetings that year.³⁹

Wilkinson used the trust whites gave him to his advantage. In the Wiley case, Long wrote Bradford Knapp expressing "great confidence in Wilkinson's judgement as did Dr. Riggs who has known him for a number of years and I believe he will act to the best interest of all parties concerned." Long stated that he done nothing other than support Wilkinson's actions. Wilkinson told Long that he had asked Wiley to stop working when Long informed Wilkinson that the funding would be provided for only five black agents. Once funding for six agents was approved, Wilkinson recommended the appointment of South Carolina State College alumnus George Daniels instead of reappointing Wiley. Wilkinson justified Wiley's firing by claiming that his performance had been substandard. He said that he had become convinced that rumors that Wiley spent more time at his home in the city of York (118 miles away) than in Orangeburg, were true. "I believe a worker should live on the ground where he is employed, and consecrate himself to the task. Wiley has been away from this county since last June." Wiley, according to Wilkinson, also lacked the confidence of most of the black farmers in the county.⁴⁰

Evans' recommendation in 1918 that Bates contact Long to press his grievance probably ended his efforts to secure re-employment, given Long's view of the situation. However, Bates invocation of Knapp's power is both revealing and disturbing. It shows how deeply ingrained white control of institutional life was. Since he received no salary

³⁹D. W. Watkins to R. S. Wilkinson, 12 February 1931; R. S. Wilkinson to D. W. Watkins, 16 February 1931, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

⁴⁰W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 27 November 1915; R. S. Wilkinson to W. W. Long 25 November 1915, Box 11, Folder: Miscellaneous South Carolina, 1915-1916, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

or franking privileges from the USDA, Wilkinson should not have been accountable to the Federal Extension Service, yet he had to give a report of his actions to federal officials when they requested it. Both Wiley's and Bates' appeals to federal power is certainly rational. That the men succeeded in having a hearing by attacking Wilkinson rather than Clemson officials, whose good will was essential for those seeking employment as black agents suggests that these men, too, were well aware of the vagaries of the racial politics of extension work.

Wilkinson also used white extension officials' trust to soften whites attitudes' toward black agents. In the case of H. A. Woodard, discussed below, Wilkinson may have averted personal harm to an agent who had seriously transgressed the bounds of racial propriety. In another instance, W. W. Long directed Wilkinson to investigate an agent whom Meredith C. Wilson of the U. S. D. A's Extension and Teaching Division accused of submitting poorly prepared reports. Wilkinson sent Harry Daniels to meet with Maloney reported back to Long that "Agent Maloney realizes his mistake and promises in the future to conform to the regulations of the service."⁴¹ That this statement was accepted as the end of the incident demonstrates the importance of operating within the confines of white supremacy to the continuation of the black service.

The deference displayed by Wilkinson was absolutely essential for those blacks who worked at the county level where local whites would not tolerate any breach of white supremacy. White extension officials and local whites expected black agents to respect the protocols southern racial conventions required. Black extension leadership took

⁴¹M. C. Wilson to J. C. Maloney, 28 October 1931; W. W. Long to R. S. Wilkinson, 5 November 1931; R. S. Wilkinson to W. W. Long, 9 November 1931; R. S. Wilkinson to W. W. Long, 25 November 1931, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

deliberate pains to avoid offending local whites' sensibilities by bringing Negro agents into situations that could be perceived as flaunting their status as federal civil servants and challenging white authority. R. S. Wilkinson's report on extension work for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1916 noted that in the counties where Negro agents were located, "it was deemed advisable to confine [their] operations to the negro land owners entirely, leaving the negro tenants to be assisted by white agents in co-operation with the white farmers."⁴² Black agents approached black tenants only after agents gained the white landlord's approval. One instance in which this contact is documented found the Negro agent offering to help the landlord "control" his tenants. The landlord told the agent how he could best serve him" [*the landlord*].⁴³ The fact that serving tenants was perceived as service to white landlords probably justified, in whites' minds, the small black extension force in a way that the idea that landless, voteless peasants were entitled to public services could not. Agents who displayed subservience endeared themselves to local whites. Agents who violated expectations of deference usually could expect termination without reprieve.

"Reliable" Men: The Racial Protocol of Black Extension Work, Part I

The firing of Negro agent R. W. Westberry, recounted below, illustrates how white supremacy served as a bulwark against Negro advancement. From most whites' perspective Westberry was certainly the wrong type of man for the job. He was born and received his early education in South Carolina where he graduated from the academic course at Benedict in 1892. He moved to Chicago as a young man where he took the civil

⁴²*Annual Report of the Demonstration and Extension Work in the State of South Carolina for Calendar Year 1916*, 128.

⁴³W. W. Long to E.W. Sikes, 14 May 1928, Series 32, Box 106, Folder 16, STICUL.

service exam and made an “unusually high” rating. He attended Wilberforce University for one term before being recalled to Chicago where he became a mail carrier. Westberry had been an executive in the Chicago Letter Carriers’ Association—a predominantly white organization—President of the Chicago Mercantile Company, a member of the Illinois State Militia, and a noncommissioned officer with the Colored United States Volunteers to Cuba where he served for eleven months.⁴⁴

He returned to Sumter in 1905 to settle his deceased father’s affairs, and decided to remain in South Carolina. R. W. Westberry began working with his neighbors to improve their farming methods. He used demonstration as a means of teaching his neighbors better farming and home practices. He started a school for Scientific Farming, Cooking [and] House-Keeping in his Sumter home.⁴⁵ Westberry was active in Negro civic affairs, serving as Secretary of the South Carolina Colored State Fair Association (for which he was praised by Dr. J. H. Goodwin). He also was the State Organizer for Booker T. Washington’s Negro National Business League.⁴⁶ He had self-confidence and had interacted with whites on a basis of equality some southern whites certainly would find threatening.

Certainly, his lay experience in demonstration work—and apparent success in his endeavors—suggests that Westberry was at least as competent as other non-agriculturally-trained agents were. He was the best paid among the Negro agents, at \$675 per year from

⁴⁴Wilson, "Biography of Hon. Ransom W. Westberry," in *Life and Speeches of Ransom W. Westberry*, 13-6.

⁴⁵Wilson, "Biography of Hon. Ransom W. Westberry," in *Life and Speeches of Ransom W. Westberry*, 17.

⁴⁶Dr. John H. Goodwin to the Editor of *The (Columbia, SC) State*, 6 October 1916; Wilson, "Biography of Hon. Ransom W. Westberry," in *Life and Speeches of Ransom W. Westberry*, 17.

the General Education Board. Had Westberry been white, he would have been a wonderful example of the turn-of-the-century ideal of the self-made man. His biographers' description of his early life and experiences reads like the classic rags to riches story: he overcame a myriad of childhood diseases to become "a healthy, robust, well-grown lad." He became interested in his father's farm when he was "a very small boy." At his request, he was given a garden to grow his own crops. His hoped to own his own farm and convinced his father to buy land for himself and Westberry's father ultimately became a large landowner. When he received his father's permission to go to Chicago after college, he took only five dollars beyond his train fare. "He was going away to hunt a job—to make his own mark." His first job was to fill water pitchers at the World's Fair. From his conscientious attention to this job, he was promoted to waiter then to night watchman. He remained a sober young man, spending his time at the YMCA, and attending the Olivet Baptist Church where his generous monetary donations led to his elevation to deacon—the youngest ever appointed in that church at that time.⁴⁷ Before he acquired his postal position, Westberry had followed the nineteenth century model of success. Had Westberry been white, he might have received even better pay like the white agricultural agent from Sumter County who received only \$560 from General Education Board Funds but another \$240 from Clemson College funds. However, he was a Negro living in the South whose activities and self-confidence violated everything that being a southern Negro meant. He sought economic independence for himself and his race; he had been a labor activist; he was a veteran, and most egregiously, he had lived and received some education in the North where a Negro man who had expanded economic

⁴⁷Wilson, "Biography of Hon. Ransom W. Westberry," in *Life and Speeches of Ransom W. Westberry*, 12-5.

opportunities might have grown to expect it and might have become less deferential. For these reasons alone, he was unfit—by white standards—to be an agent.

If the attitudes James F. Byrnes expressed from the floor of the Congress in 1919 at the height of that year's race riots is representative of the general white attitude in the state during that era [and I believe it is] Westberry didn't have much of a chance to continue his work as an agent. In his speech, Byrnes noted that Chicago newspapers had published open entreaties to southern governors seeking employment for blacks who had recently emigrated to the North. Byrnes response suggests that Westberry's former domicile may have been his downfall. Byrnes declared, "The South can provide employment for every law-abiding negro who wishes to return. But for any negro who has become inoculated with the desire for political equality or social equality there is no employment in the South, nor is there any room for him in the South."⁴⁸

Westberry's dismissal grew out of events that happened over a year before Clemson College assumed control of Negro extension work. In January 1914 Long worked with Bradford Knapp to find replacements for Westberry and [J. H.] Goodwin. Long agreed to assist J. B. Pierce, the Negro field agent for the South Atlantic states, in locating replacements.⁴⁹ Despite the stellar credentials cited above, Long characterized Westberry quite unflatteringly as an "inefficient demonstration agent" in a letter to Bradford Knapp. Long claimed that Westberry devoted most of his time to personal business and used his status as a demonstration agent and representative of the United

⁴⁸"A Segregationist on Negro Militancy, *James F. Byrnes*," in Idus A. Newby, ed., *The Development of Segregationist Thought* (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1968), 121.

⁴⁹W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 6 January 1914, Box 4, Folder: South Carolina, 1913-1914, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

States government to further his own real estate ventures. Long noted that Westberry had some "shrewdness" and accused Westberry of "deceiv[ing]" influential white friends who had stood by him. In Long's estimation, Westberry "was a man wholly without the missionary spirit and entirely wanting in consecration."⁵⁰

What Long meant was that Westberry had money—a significant amount of money. According to Wilson, Westberry saw the wisdom of Negro home ownership early and encouraged it. "In this way he has built up an extensive real estate business, which while making money for himself, has at the same time furthered the best interest of his people. By 1921, he not only had properties in Chicago but also owned 700 acres of farm land and 150 acres of forest, and twenty-one houses."⁵¹ While the line between government bureaucrat and private entrepreneur had been more firmly drawn because of the enactment of civil service laws in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was not one that was clearly demarcated. It would not have been unusual to find a white agent who mixed his public profession with other money-earning work or with private for-profit farming to supplement a low extension salary. Since agents were not employed for the entire year, for some agents it was probably imperative that they pursue more than one line of employment for their own financial security.

It was not unusual for whites to invert their value system where blacks were concerned. If a white agent's continuing to conduct business while working as an extension agent was seen as energy and drive, the black agent's similar actions could

⁵⁰W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 1 July 1914; Bradford Knapp to W. W. Long, 3 July 1914, Box 4, Folder: South Carolina 1913-1914; Box 7, Folder: South Carolina 1914-1915, U. S. D. A, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁵¹Wilson, "Biography of Hon. Ransom W. Westberry," in *Life and Speeches of Ransom W. Westberry*, 19-20.

easily be perceived negatively. A textual examination of Long's remarks affirms my hypothesis that Westberry did not fit southern white expectations for blacks generally, let alone for a black man acting under the color of state authority. Westberry was "shrewd," a characteristic greatly admired in men like Rockefeller, Carnegie, or Morgan but seen as unnatural—and perhaps criminal—in a Negro. His alleged misuse of his status as a representative of the government to further himself in private affairs and Long's accusation that he was deceptive suggest that Westberry lacked personal ethics. He lacked the "missionary spirit . . . and dedication." Two of Westberry's reports I have examined did not contain the traditional line about the backwardness of his people. He did not present blacks as supplicants in need of the paternalistic patience, love, and instruction of their white superiors as many white-favored Negro leaders did.⁵² His failure to do so suggests a lack of commitment to white leadership and white supremacy. Of greater interest is that Westberry and Dr. J.H. Goodwin seem to have traveled in the same circle. Both men may have represented threats to whites.⁵³

Long's aspersion could also be interpreted from an economic perspective. Despite a level of financial success that would enable him to live well with a lower salary, Westberry may not have been willing to work for the pittance the Clemson offered the

⁵²Westberry, "Scientific Farming by Negroes," "Negro Farmers Make Progress," *Life and Speeches of Ransom W. Westberry*, 60-3, 65-7.

⁵³Goodwin, a physician, had been the agent for Richland County in 1907. When Westberry was appointed Negro food administrator for South Carolina during World War I, he recommended Goodwin for a district appointment. Goodwin may also have been one of the more radical men among the state's Negro leadership. He was among a group of Negro and white men Reverend Richard Carroll accused in 1919 of trying to create a political party that would challenge the white vote. Carroll informed Governor Robert A. Cooper when Goodwin assumed leadership of the Colored State Fair Association after Carroll's resignation from the organization. George Devlin suggests that Carroll divulged this information to prevent the association's bid for state funding. George A. Devlin, *South Carolina and Black Migration* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989), 241.

black agents. With the exception of Samuel Nance who "volunteered" his services for \$20 per month, perhaps in the hope of earning a full-time position, all the other agents earned \$50 per month. According to the memorandum of understanding, Clemson College appropriated \$2,700 for six black agents. The agents worked eight to and eight and one half months out of the year. If all the appropriation was devoted to salary, it averages out to \$450 per agent. The average work week varied; R. S. Wilkinson's report for 1916 shows that of the five agents then employed, two worked only 4 days per week, two worked 5 days per week and one worked six days per week. The differences in time worked per week probably accounts for differences in the months worked.⁵⁴ Westberry's salary would have averaged nearly \$80 per month.

Westberry's failure to be the kind of black southern whites expected was reason for his termination. The views of some white intellectuals of the early twentieth century fill in the contours of prejudice that help us understand Westberry's plight more completely. These intellectuals in a search for "truth" concluded that blacks were indeed an inferior species. Robert Bennett Bean, a professor of anatomy at the University of Virginia, in a 1906 article entitled "The Negro Brain," suggested that a less-fully-developed frontal area had negative effects on black character. Lesions in this area supposedly led to ". . . a diminution in the capacity for ethical and esthetic [sic] judgement, . . ."⁵⁵ Historian Idus Newby points out that racist thinkers demonstrated blacks ' supposed lower intelligence and "appreciated the benefits of [it]. . . . Here was a

⁵⁴R. S. Wilkinson, "District Agent's Report—Work of Colored Farm Demonstration Agents for Year Ending June 30, 1916," in *Annual Report of the Demonstration and Extension Work in South Carolina for the Calendar Year 1916*, 129-30; Financial Report of the General Education Board, Box 4, Folder: U. S. D. A, Secretary of Agriculture, DC, 1913-1914, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁵⁵Robert Bennett Bean, "The Negro Brain," 46, 51 in Newby, ed., *The Development of Segregationist Thought*.

source of his incompetence as a worker: his inability to master complex skills and follow intricate instructions, . . . his need for close supervision. Here was a source of his improvident character, his tendency to immoral conduct. . . ."⁵⁶

Contemporary historians provide us with reflective insight into the social context of the age. Darlene Clark Hine and her co-authors of *The African American Odyssey* capture the spirit of the age in their discussion of Social Darwinism. They write:

Social Darwinism applied both to individuals and "races." It conveniently justified great disparities in wealth, suggesting that such men as John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie were rich because they were "fit." . . . Social Darwinism increasingly influenced the way most Protestant white Americans perceived their society, leading them to believe that people could be ranked from superior to inferior based on their race, nationality, and ethnicity. Black people were invariably ranked at the bottom of this hierarchy. . . . Black people were capable, so the reasoning went, of no more than a subordinate role in a complex and advanced society as it rushed into the twentieth century.⁵⁷

Leon Litwack illuminates whites' discomfort with successful blacks. Litwack quotes Daniel L. Russell, once governor of North Carolina, who said in 1903 that

The truth is the negro is going to fare best and be happiest when his position is most subordinate. Financial and industrial equality is as bad in the eyes of whites as social equality. The negro who gets very prosperous is to be pitied, for straightway he is in a situation where danger confronts him. . . . if I were an insurance agent I would not make out a policy on his life. . . . The Anglo-Saxon element North and South is not going to brook much elevation of an inferior race.

Litwack argues that the rise of a black generation that had been born in freedom "aggravated white fears of black success . . . For whites accustomed to blacks only as servants and slaves, successful or ambitious blacks were quite simply an anomaly, difficult to imagine and entirely 'out of place'." Litwack recounts the history of the

⁵⁶Newby, *Jim Crow's Defense*, 124.

⁵⁷Darlene Clark Hine, William Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *The African American Odyssey* (Upper Saddle River New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 2000), 334.

persecution of successful blacks dating back to the Reconstruction era. He also points out one of the great ironies of the age: that while black leadership encouraged their race to embrace the Protestant values of the mainstream, “whites consciously withheld from blacks the tools and opportunities available to other Americans to lift themselves up. . . . Neither individual worth, intelligence, nor achievement seemed capable of bridging racial barriers and easing the prevailing tensions; on the contrary, those very qualities in black people might inflame tensions.” Litwack relates the story of Jim Hutchinson, an Edisto Island black, who helped local blacks get clear titles to their land. Hutchinson was killed because “[h]e was leading the Colored people too much.”

Persecution of successful blacks was all too common throughout the South. Success meant that blacks were stepping out of their assigned place. Litwack recounts numerous examples ranging from farmers, to entrepreneurs, to government employees who were punished for their success. “The qualifications or competence of the individual accounted far less than race; . . . The danger lay in the probability, moreover, that such appointments would encourage other blacks to aspire to higher places. . . . Progress,” Litwack writes, “could be an enemy, detrimental to health and personal safety.”⁵⁸

Westberry’s actions fit the mold that whites held in contempt. In 1912, he told his fellow blacks that the black extension agent was “The First Man to See.” He encouraged them to tend to their business and to elevate their race. Indeed, at the Anderson speech in

⁵⁸Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 150-63.

June 1914 (see chapter 2) Westberry encouraged racial progress and emphasized the importance of uplifting black women to uplift the race.⁵⁹

Despite his supposed inefficiency, Westberry served the black community in a public capacity after he was fired from his extension post. The Sumter County Chamber of Commerce appointed him as food administrator for that county during World War I. In 1917, Governor Manning appointed him to a statewide, all-black subcommittee of the Central Commission on Civic Preparedness. Westberry's work as food administrator was so successful that the U. S. D. A appointed him to take charge of the "colored department" for the state. According to his biographer, Westberry was "the first colored man to be honored with such a position [and] was given absolute power to arrange a system according to his own judgement."⁶⁰ Westberry's firing right before the election of fellow Sumter County resident Manning has already been discussed earlier. Everything about his firing smacks of the anxieties that whites had in the age: "The assumption prevailed well into the twentieth century that blacks were incapable of competing equally with whites. But no matter how often whites repeated the belief, the fear persisted that blacks might prove them wrong."⁶¹

Westberry's successor in Sumter County, H. A. Woodard, also found himself in trouble after he complained to Washington officials that he had been treated poorly by Orangeburg police because of his race. The following account of the incident has been pieced together from reports by others since no letter from Woodard was extant in

⁵⁹Westberry, "The First Man to See," "A Program for the Farmers," "Idleness on the Farm," "Advice to Negro Farmers," *Life and Speeches of Ransom W. Westberry*, 81-3, 103, 105-6, 79-80.

⁶⁰Wilson, "Biography of Hon. Ransom W. Westberry," *Life and Speeches of Ransom W. Westberry*, 19; Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 188.

⁶¹Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 163.

extension files. Woodard had come to Orangeburg to attend a meeting of the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools. He carried several pieces of luggage which—according to L. S. Wolfe, the white county agricultural agent who investigated the incident—police believed were either stolen or contained liquor. They found no contraband after searching Woodard's bags. He was rightly [in my view] indignant at the arbitrary nature of white South Carolina justice. Rather than conceal his anger, as would be expected of a black, Woodard threatened to sue the city, and was then arrested. He was released on bail and “proceeded to scatter the information concerning his arrest by telegram thruout [sic] the country” [including to Bradford Knapp]. The charges were dropped the next morning. According to Wilkinson, the mayor dismissed the case after being convinced that “Woodard had done no other harm than to get besides [sic] himself and talked too much.”⁶² However, Woodard's getting beside himself concerned the mayor enough to call Wolfe to express concern about Woodard's demeanor. Woodard supposedly called the police “mutton headed” and told the mayor that local authorities had “no right to arrest him because he was a government man.”⁶³

Woodard's experience with law enforcement was typical for blacks of his day. Litwack asserts that “the police [and the courts] played a critical role as the enforcers of Jim Crow.” Black encounters with the police demonstrate the energy whites focused on blacks to control them. Actions of the police, use of excessive force for example, “underscored the determination to remind blacks at every opportunity of their

⁶²R. S. Wilkinson to D. W. Watkins, 6 August 1919, Box 79, Folder: Director South Carolina, 1919-1920, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁶³L. S. Wolfe to D. W. Watkins, 5 August 1919, Box 79, Folder: Director South Carolina, 1919-1920, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

vulnerability and helplessness.”⁶⁴ Wolfe’s role in the investigation emphasizes two points made thus far: that R. S. Wilkinson had little actual power over black extension agents and that whites would forcefully meet any challenge to white supremacy. The Memorandum of Understanding between Clemson College and South Carolina State College placed each black agent under the general expert supervision of the white agents in the different counties. But the way the investigation went in the Woodard case suggests that local white extension agents had a super jurisdiction over any black agent who entered their county. Woodard was not Wolfe’s subordinate, since Woodard worked in Sumter county. However, because the incident occurred in Orangeburg county, Wolfe apparently could claim authority under the memorandum. That the mayor chose to call Wolfe in the town that was the home base of black extension work, rather than the supervisor of that program, speaks volumes about whites’ disdain for the competency of black professionals. Indeed, one could surmise that Wolfe had more authority over black extension agents than either black supervisor since all the agents met periodically in Orangeburg for various reasons. Wolfe’s assessment was that Woodard was a “Smart Alex and was rather fresh.” Wolfe believed that Woodard’s claim to be a government man suggested that Woodard “seemed to take himself [too?] seriously.”⁶⁵

Even R. S. Wilkinson was of no help to Woodard. While Wilkinson stated that Woodard had been “accosted” by the police, his letter to D. W. Watkins—Long’s assistant—was conciliatory in tone. Wilkinson blamed Woodard for the incident because he had flaunted his position, “assuming that his employment by the government makes

⁶⁴Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 256, 264.

⁶⁵L. S. Wolfe to D. W. Watkins, 5 August 1919, Box 79, Folder: Director South Carolina, 1919-1920, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

him immune from the responsibility of the local law.” Wilkinson even suggested that Woodard was “verging on insanity, . . . that his work has had some affect [sic] on his mental balance.”⁶⁶ Such remarks at first glance might seem traitorous. However, when one considers what had happened to another black man who showed insolence in the face of white authority, Woodard was probably lucky to have escaped with his life.

Anthony Crawford, a prosperous black farmer from Abbeville County, was not so fortunate in 1916. Crawford owned 427 acres of land and had a personal worth that was estimated at around \$20,000. In October 1916, Crawford rejected the bid of W. B. Barksdale for his cotton because it was too low. “In the argument that followed, Crawford stated that he was ‘worth as much money as Barksdale’ and besides he had earned his wealth and had not received it ‘through marriage’ as Barksdale supposedly had. He [Crawford] vowed that he would not sell his cotton to Barksdale at that price.” The verbal altercation, as in Woodard’s case, led to the black man’s arrest by local white authorities. Crawford posted his bond and was released. Barksdale engaged the services of some local men to whip Crawford to remind him of his place. Crawford resisted, striking one of his attackers with a sledge hammer and was arrested again after he refused to go home. Later that evening, he was retrieved from jail by farmers and mill workers who had nothing better to do on a Saturday than lynch a black.⁶⁷

There were lessons for blacks in the Crawford case and the Woodard case as well. Both illuminate Litwack’s point about the perils of success and the arbitrary use of law enforcement where blacks were concerned. The lesson of the Crawford case is abundantly

⁶⁶R. S. Wilkinson to D. W. Watkins, 6 August 1919, Box 79, Folder: Director South Carolina, 1919-1920, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁶⁷Devlin, *South Carolina and Black Migration, 1865-1940*, 172-5.

clear. In the Woodard case, the mayor's actions and Woodard's subsequent termination were far more instructive to the black public professional class than his conviction in a court would have been. It made the point that public professionals' continued employment relied on their willingness to respect the racial paradigm.

In her book on county agents, Gladys Baker discusses the type of blacks that white officials viewed as suited for extension work. Because they had to be willing to adjust themselves to southern traditions, northern blacks were considered too aggressive. Southern blacks from Piedmont areas where blacks were a numerical minority, and where, Baker argues, whites and blacks interacted more freely were seldom placed in black belt counties.

[C]ompetent Negro agents who observe racial customs and traditions, once established, remain in a county for an almost indefinite length of time. . . . The position of county agent ranks high in comparison with other professions open to Negroes in the South. It attracts a high type of nonaggressive and nonmilitant Negro leadership—those who would follow the Booker T. Washington way of slow advancement without active challenge to the dominant order.⁶⁸

Joel Schor's assessments of the requirements for black agents confirms what Baker asserts regarding terms of tenure. Those of the Booker T. Washington stripe were the ones who would most likely receive the funding to continue employment. He reports that the agent for Limestone County Alabama served for thirty-six years. Another agent was fired for offering to shake hands with a white county commissioner and another for "driving a car deemed 'too large' for his status."⁶⁹

⁶⁸Baker, *The County Agent*, 200, 202, 206.

⁶⁹Schor, "The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service," 80, 109-10.

The situation for black extension agents in South Carolina was analogous to that of the states black public school teachers, who had no job security. Deviation from acceptable conduct in or out of the classroom or the espousal of unorthodox views on race or education meant loss of employment.⁷⁰ Wilkinson seemed to be training his pupils to walk the docile path as the following account in Newby relates:

On the eve of World War I a special investigating committee of the state legislature reported that the white citizens of Orangeburg were pleased with the [South Carolina State] college. President Wilkinson and the faculty, they reported, teach the students politeness and gentility, and the true ideas of service to their *superiors* [my emphasis] in addition to the usual educational branches.⁷¹

Whites insisted that subordination be enforced in black professionals. Following the Woodard incident, Watkins directed Wilkinson to write each of the black "agents warning them against activity in affairs affecting politics and racial friction." Wilkinson complied but he also took great pains to insist (erroneously in my view) to Watkins that race was not the issue but rather that Woodard felt that his status as a government employee had not been given respect. "I must say," Wilkinson wrote, ". . . that Woodard's actions or statements were not at all connected with boasting of the probability of race trouble. . . . Race matters were not ever mention [sic] in the whole affairs [sic]."⁷²

This color-blind conservatism, which prefigures the views of modern black conservatives, was typical of the educated elite among South Carolina blacks. Newby attributes the conservatism of black professionals, the majority of whom were public

⁷⁰Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 91-9.

⁷¹Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 264.

⁷²R. S. Wilkinson to D. W. Watkins, 6 August 1919, Box 79, Folder: Director South Carolina, 1919-1920, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

school teachers, in part to their dependency on whites for employment, to the conservative character of black spirituality that was otherworldly and fundamentalist, and to a business and professional class that was subject to both private and state economic pressure. However, he also argues that the social and racial values taught in the educational system emphasized that educated blacks had a special obligation to act responsibly in public, and thereby belie the white supremacists' stereotypes of the race. Those who imparted these lessons were not the blacks who chafed so much under segregation that they favored exile. These blacks were the ones who, Newby argues, were able to submerge their resentment and who educated the next generation in their racial responsibilities. "Responsibility meant behaving with prudence and decorum, identifying with the larger society. . . . The educated black Carolinian accepted the major institutions of his society . . . without serious question, just as he accepted social segregation of the races."⁷³

There probably was heightened racial sensitivity on both sides at the time of the Woodard incident because some blacks were casting off the mask of deference. The "Red Summer" of 1919 witnessed white assaults and black resistance in almost every area of the country—including the nation's capital. black participation in World War I had led some of them to expect—and in some cases—demand respect. Whites violently resisted any calls for more black participation in public spaces. Du Bois's assertion that blacks would return fighting from the war was prophetic. They took the rhetoric of making "the world safe for democracy" seriously and for their trouble, many blacks lost their lives and their communities were destroyed.

⁷³Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 108-9.

Numerous scholars have recounted the violence of the major sites of carnage of that era. In its aftermath, 38 people were killed (23 of whom were black) 537 were injured (342 of whom were black) and 1,000 families, mostly black families, were homeless.⁷⁴ In South Carolina some blacks pushed for increased autonomy with mixed results. The Charleston branch of the NAACP protested the use of white teachers in black schools in 1919 and succeeded, by 1921, in having white teachers replaced with black ones. Their success was probably the result of two factors: it was economical to hire black teachers who could be paid less than white teachers, and having all black schools hardened the lines of segregation. Social conservatism was an acceptable goal. Whites balked, however, at the suggestion by some blacks that political means be employed to effect even moderate changes. This was perceived as revolutionary. The state NAACP held a conference at which they encouraged their fellow citizens to push for two-party democracy and criticized whites' illegal use of voter laws to disfranchise black voters. They called for black appointments to public school boards, encouraged blacks to try to register

⁷⁴Statistics are from Wilma Dykeman and James Stokely, *Seeds of Southern Change: The Life of Will Alexander* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 57. For general overviews of the violence see John Hope Franklin and Alfred Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, seventh edition, volume II (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 346-53; Hine, et. al, *African American Odyssey*, 381-2; and Lee E. Williams and Lee E. Williams II, *Anatomy of Four Race Riots: Racial Conflict in Knoxville, Elaine (Arkansas), Tulsa, and Chicago, 1919-1921* (Hattiesburg: University and College Press of Mississippi, 1972). For case studies of specific riots see: William M. Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Atheneum, 1974), also by Tuttle, "Violence in a 'Heathen' Land: The Longview Race Riot of 1919" *Phylon* 33, no. 4 (1972): 324-33; Leah Wise, "The Elaine Massacre" *Southern Exposure* 1 (3/4): 9-10; Bill Murrah, "The Knoxville Race Riot: 'To Make People Proud'" *Southern Exposure* 1(3/4) 105-111 among others. Tuttle's work provides an excellent overview of the place of racial riots in U.S. History and the context that made 1919 ripe for the riots that occurred in the introductory chapter of his book on pages 10-31. The senior and junior Williams also offer some brief generalizations in their conclusion, 97-101.

to vote and to establish clubs, and prodded other organizations to encourage voter registration. The organization also protested the inequality blacks faced in public spaces.⁷⁵

Despite the conservative demands of South Carolina's black leadership, whites' reactions here were violent as well. A shootout in Bamberg County led to the deaths of two blacks and one white—the sheriff's son—and a fear that a larger race riot would erupt.⁷⁶ A riot that began the night of 10 May 1919 grew out of a fight between a black man and a white sailor into an all-out assault on the black Charleston community and its property. Most histories of the period do not even mention events in Charleston, however historian William Tuttle describes Charleston as the scene of “the first of the major riots of Red Summer.”⁷⁷ White sailors “broke into two shooting galleries, seized an assortment of weapons, and rampaged through downtown streets beating up blacks who had the misfortune of crossing their paths. . . .” Although the riot was quelled by the following morning, three black men had been killed, and another seventeen injured, while eight whites suffered injuries.⁷⁸ Whites were determined that there would be no social revolution. Whites in Columbia organized “the South Carolina Constructive League to promote ‘the just treatment of the negro and the cultivation of harmony between the races’ as long as it was understood that the ‘state shall be dominated by its white citizens’.” This

⁷⁵William M. Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 23-5; Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 190-1.

⁷⁶Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 192.

⁷⁷William M. Tuttle, *Race Riot*, 23-5.

⁷⁸Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 192.

organization had no lasting effect on race relations as it dissolved after the tensions of 1919 resided.⁷⁹

James F. Byrnes, a Congressman from South Carolina, condemned blacks who demanded more rights. Byrnes blamed the riots of 1919 on “a crowd of radicals who appealed to the passions of the negroes and inciting them to deeds of violence” rather than listening to men like “[Robert R.] Moton and others, who following in the steps of Booker Washington, preached conservatism to the race. . .” Byrnes quoted extensively from articles and speeches by black thinkers of the day. He used selected quotations to question the loyalty and Americanism of blacks who wanted to resist racial oppression. He associated the calls for black-white equality with the Bolshevik violence of the Russian Revolution, which had made the general population fearful of anarchy. Byrnes selected quotations which suggested that in some areas the usual deference was abating. Among those quotations was one by Monroe Trotter, in which he stated “[a] new negro is facing the white man to-day—one who has been aroused by a consecutive number of insults. Instead of replying ‘Yes, dear sir,’ and ‘No, dear sir,’ a sharp ‘Indeed’ or ‘Yes’ is heard, as the case may be. There will be no peace until White Americans learn to respect the rights of colored Americans.” To expressions such as Trotter’s Byrnes made it emphatically clear that “. . . in seeking political and social equality they [Negroes] are cherishing false hopes and are doomed to disappointment. [¶]If the two races are to live together in this country it may as well be understood that the war has in no way changed the attitude of the white man toward the social and political equality of the Negro. . . . he

⁷⁹Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 481.

can not to quickly realize that there are in this country 90,000,000 determined not to extend political and social equality to the 10,000,000 negroes, . . .”⁸⁰

Given the turbulent context, it is not surprising that W. B. Mercier saw fit to comment on the demeanor of black agents in his 1920 federal report on black work. Mercier suggested that there were “special conditions” under which black extension work must be conducted. Not only was knowledge about agriculture important, but black agents must be familiar with the racial situation in their communities. They were expected to “use tact and good judgement in approaching the people regarding their work.” Mercier noted that some black agricultural colleges were producing “graduates who have proved, so far, that they could be *trusted* [my emphasis] with this responsibility. . . . In the main, the State extension divisions have been fortunate in selecting workers who have shown rare caution and common sense in approaching the difficulties incident to the performance of their duties as agents.”⁸¹

Federal extension officials also expressed a desire for racially submissive black agents in their private correspondence. Bradford Knapp asserted in a letter to W. W. Long that the primary need of black work was “good close supervision, such as our white work has, and some good *faithful* [my emphasis] negro men in the field.” He lamented that “it’s much harder to get a *safe* [my emphasis] county man who is a negro than it is to get white men.”⁸² In his proposal for hiring black club agents, I. W. Hill, a federal Assistant in Demonstration Club Work, emphasized that any man hired for that position should be “a

⁸⁰Newby, *The Development of Segregationist Thought*, 113-4, 117, 119-20.

⁸¹Mercier, *Extension Work Among Negroes*, 1920, 4-5, 19.

⁸²Bradford Knapp to W. W. Long, 21 March 1914, Box 4, Folder: South Carolina, 1913-1914, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

reliable negro, well-trained along lines educational and agricultural.”⁸³ The emphasis on reliability is not something that is often seen as an expressed precondition of employment for white agents. In all likelihood, it would be assumed that any white agent who was hired would automatically be reliable while that certainly was not the case with black men.

However, “safe,” “reliable” black men did exist. One of the best examples of the type of agent whites defined in this manner was Thomas M. Campbell, the South’s first black agent and a Tuskegee Institute graduate. Throughout his long tenure (Campbell completed a total of 47 years in the service) first as a local agricultural agent and then as a federal district agent who coordinated black extension work in the lower South—from Georgia westward, Campbell espoused views that validated white social and extension policies regarding blacks. His writings and speeches could be (and probably were) used to rebut critics of the service’s racial policies. In a letter written to Secretary of Agriculture Henry Cantwell Wallace in 1921, Campbell referred to an enclosed letter, (which I did not find in this file) which, he said, “substantiates what I have said . . . in regard to the growth of Negro Extension Work, viz., that it is difficult to advance same beyond the standards set by [white] public sentiment.”⁸⁴ Campbell’s letter to Director of Extension C. W. Warburton in which he compliments Warburton on overview of black extension work, seems to be an attempt to ingratiate himself with the extension program’s highest official. “I think you have made a distinct contribution to your Division,” Campbell

⁸³I.W. Hill, “MEMORANDUM FOR MR. [J. A.] EVANS IN RE Establishment of Agricultural Improvement Clubs Among Negro Boys of the Southern States,” Box 5, Folder: Plant Industry, DC, 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁸⁴T. M. Campbell to “Dear Sir,” 8 November 1921, Box 821, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 D, RG 16, NA II. I assumed that this letter was to the current Secretary of Agriculture since it was in his files.

writes, "and I hope that many copies will find their way into the hands of the interested public."⁸⁵

Campbell's correspondence reveals a man cut from the cloth of racial accommodation. As late as the 1940s Campbell remained a voice of conservatism. In that decade he advocated the continued racial segregation in 4-H programs when other members of the black leadership were pushing for integration.⁸⁶ Allen Jones, a student of Campbell's life, points out that like Booker T. Washington, Campbell was not blind to the impact of race on blacks' lives. Jones reports that Campbell kept records on racial incidents "but he rarely took any action or made a public issue of the many humiliations and insults he suffered because he was black. After he retired from government service, Campbell became more outspoken and critical of discrimination."⁸⁷

One South Carolina agent, E. D. Jenkins, seemed as interested as Campbell in currying the favor of white superiors. Jenkins often wrote to Bradford Knapp informing Knapp of what he (Jenkins) had been doing in the field. The Washington office of extension had collected South Carolina black agents' reports before Smith-Lever went into effect. After its enactment, the agents were expected to send their reports to South Carolina State College for approval and forwarding to Clemson. However, Jenkins made opportunities to put his name before the top extension officials. In February 1918 he wrote Bradford Knapp about a farm workers' conference he organized that was attended by George Washington Carver. Jenkins reported that the conference had been attended by

⁸⁵Thomas M. Campbell to C. W. Warburton, 10 May 1924, Box 1058, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 E, RG 16, NA II.

⁸⁶"Thomas M. Campbell Reported Advising: Keep Races Apart," *Pittsburg Courier*, 8 June 1946.

⁸⁷Allen W. Jones, "Thomas M. Campbell: Black Agricultural Leader of the New South" *Agricultural History* 53, no. 1 (Winter 1979): 58.

the "leading farmers, preachers, teachers, and college professors [from South Carolina] and adjoining states." In another letter Jenkins begins "I just feel like writing a few lines directly." Clearly he recognized that he need not write Knapp but wanted to keep him informed of his activities. Perhaps in this regard Jenkins may have wanted to establish his value to the program. He reported that his "efforts for the last few years have not resulted in failure in regard to wheat growing" and that one of his clients had broken the state's wheat growing record. He also informed Knapp about successful projects in corn production.

In another letter Jenkins informed Knapp that he planned to continue working because he had not been told to go on unpaid furlough. Jenkins declared "I really enjoy this work. . . ." He also expressed good wishes to Knapp and the hope that Knapp "would be able to give to [the] country many more years of your most valuable service." The next year Jenkins offered Knapp sympathy after Knapp issued a memorandum informing agents that someone had suggested that he be criminally charged for suggesting that the South's cotton acreage be reduced.⁸⁸ Knapp's proposal came at a time when cotton prices were at their peak. These prices were the result of declining yields caused by boll weevil infestations and increased demand caused by World War I. Cotton prices regionally reached a high of 46 cents per pound by June 1919 before falling back to 35 cents per pound by the time the crop was ripe. Cotton prices in South Carolina had risen from 11 cents per pound in 1915, to 36 cents per pound in 1919 before falling back to 16 cents per pound in 1920. Jenkins assured Knapp that "the people of the South appreciate your

⁸⁸E. D. Jenkins to Bradford Knapp, 15 February 1918, Box 35, Miscellaneous SC, 1917-1918; E. D. Jenkins to Bradford Knapp, 19 July 1918, E. D. Jenkins to Bradford Knapp 8 August 1918, E. D. Jenkins to Bradford Knapp, 4 June 1919, Box 59, Miscellaneous SC, 1918-1919, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

service and will appreciate it more as the years go by. Your service to the people of the South has been most valuable[.] The South has prospered by leaps and bounds under your administration these last few years and will continue under your safe leader-ship[sic]."⁸⁹ I have taken Jenkins' utterances at face value and assume that they reflect his true character. Nothing that I have seen in the documented record has hinted at radicalism on his part.

Given the treatment of Woodard, and the obvious dependency of black agricultural agents generally, it is surprising that any black man could assert his dignity and remain employed in the South Carolina extension service. J. E. Dickson serves as a clear exception to the expected rules of behavior. He wrote Bradford Knapp in 1915 to complain that he had been discriminated against when he had attempted to get a job in the service. Bradford Knapp forwarded a copy of this letter to W. W. Long asking Long to handle the matter. While the letter has not been discovered, Long's reply to Dickson illuminates Dickson's complaints.

Dickson claimed that Long had done him an "injustice by putting him off with indefinite promises" when he had asked for a position in the black agent force. Long explained in his letter (and stated that he had done so previously) that there was not money available for expanding the agent force. Long also told Dickson that he had had to write letters of a similar nature to at least one hundred white men.⁹⁰ After Dr. J. H. Goodwin's termination in early 1914, Richland county did not have an agent appointed

⁸⁹Gilbert Fite, *Cotton Fields No More: Southern Agriculture, 1865-1980* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1984), 95; Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 199.

⁹⁰W. W. Long to J. E. Dickson, 15 February 1915, Box 7, Folder: South Carolina, 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

until June 1917 when Dickson was hired as a relief agent during World War I. He was kept on after the war ended.⁹¹

"Sensible Women": The Racial Protocol of Black Extension Work, Part II

Demeanor also mattered with black women but their gender mitigated the need for frequent displays of submission. Whites also sought characteristics of "missionary spirit" and "consecration" in black women. Christine N. South, who became the State Agent for Home Demonstration in South Carolina in 1919, described the black assistants as "sensible and practical women. All of them far above average in education, and remarked Some of them were real leaders of their people."⁹² The unequal status of black and white women were signified in other ways. black women in the South could not expect to be addressed with "Miss" or "Mrs." as titles of respect and in her reports, Christian South refers to the black home agents by their given names only. Her successor, Lonnie I. Landrum continued that practice. In a letter she wrote to R. S. Wilkinson in 1927 she used first names for all the agents to whom she referred. She wrote Wilkinson regarding "Mable Price," a county home demonstration agent who failed to attend the annual extension conference. Landrum expressed pleasure that the conference was successful told him that "Dora" (Boston) who was resigning as State Agent for Negro Home Demonstration Work and "Nettie" (Kenner) who replaced Boston had written her about

⁹¹R. S. Wilkinson, "District Agents Report," 128; J. E. Dickson, "Historical Appraisal of Extension Work in Richland County," J. E. Dickson Collection (hereafter referred to as Dickson Collection), SCL.

⁹²"What the Agricultural Extension Service is Doing for South Carolina, Annual Report for 1920," 92.

the conference.⁹³ Idus Newby provides insight into the culture that supported this lack of respect:

He [the Negro] addressed post-adolescent whites with titles of respect though such titles were never extended to him. Instead of the respectful "Mr." he might be called "Professor" or "Reverend" for white Carolinians regarded these terms as neutral. If he were elderly and "respected," he was addressed as "Uncle." If his wife were old and "faithful," she was "Aunt" or "Auntie"; otherwise "Jane" or "Mary" but never "Miss" or "Mrs."⁹⁴

Reports sent in by these early black home demonstration agents have not survived so we can only speculate about their mentality. Chapter four discusses one white land-owner's response to the black home demonstration agent in his area which suggests that at least in that instance the agent's demeanor fit expected patterns. Economic motivation may not have been as important as missionary zeal in the desire of women to work as agents. South's description suggests that many of the earliest home agents may have been race women dedicated to the uplift of their community.

Cynthia Neverdon-Morton discusses activities of some southern black women in Home Makers' Clubs and Mothers' Clubs and their importance in the black community.⁹⁵ Many community activists attended summer schools at South Carolina State College where Winthrop Home Economics faculty often taught. Some of these women may have written white officials volunteering themselves for service to their community or they may have been recruited during one of the summer institutes.

⁹³Lonnie I. Landrum to R. S. Wilkinson, 15 June 1927, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

⁹⁴Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 49.

⁹⁵Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895-1925* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989). Neverdon-Morton makes scattered references to both types of clubs. See "Home Maker's Clubs:" and "Mother's Clubs and Meetings:" in her index.

“Marking Race”: Professional Titles in the Black Extension Service

Black men and women in the service had to be flexible and understand that being a black agent was not gender specific. “Negro” was their primary identity. They could not expect their work to be organized strictly along gender lines as white extension work was. Home Demonstration agents might have to give advice on cash crop production. Conversely, agricultural agents might find themselves making a visit to give advice on home beautification if their county had no home agent, as did J. E. Dickson.⁹⁶ Try as they might, black agents could not escape the association of their race and their profession. In a 1923 memorandum on field titles, the new Chief of Extension Work, Clarence Beamon (C. B.) Smith, recommended the continued use of titles for accounting purposes because it would “clearly show the expenditures for agricultural agents, home demonstration agents, club agents, and negro agents.”⁹⁷ Appointment papers sent to black agents during Smith’s tenure included a racial designation as part of the employment title. The appointment papers of Willie Mae Thompson and Jesse J. Wilson serve as examples. Thompson’s official title was “Negro Home Demonstration Agent,” Wilson’s, “Negro Agent.” The appointment form includes the underlined sentence, “Do not use any title other than that indicated in the above address.”⁹⁸ Such practices marked black agents as different but they also permit us to track the extension service’s discriminatory policies.

H. E. Daniels, Wilkinson’s assistant found the racial titles offensive and encouraged Wilkinson to protest their use. Wilkinson did not dismiss the idea out of hand.

⁹⁶J. E. , Weekly Field Report, 17 December 1921, Dickson Collection, SCL.

⁹⁷“MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY [Charles] PUGSLEY RE: Field Titles,” 10 March 1923, Box 983, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 E, RG 16, NA II.

⁹⁸Form 41 for Miss Willie Mae Thompson and Jesse J. Wilson, 30 May 1925, Box 154, Folder: Director South Carolina, 1924-1925, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

I would offer no objection if it could be done. My opinion, however, is that there could be only one Director in a State, which position is held by Mr. Long. It appears also that the head of special work such as that of the Negro extension and other activities is designated by the term District Agent. . . . [¶] Personally, I do not care for any official title, but it seems to me that as matters now stand during the period of reforms and transformation going on whereby they are seeking to place the Negro work under white County Agents, it would be well for me as head of the College to be in a position to protest influence and secure the permanency of our present organization. I therefore think a change at this time would be inadvisable. For the good of all concerned, matters should remain as they are."⁹⁹

Wilkinson's remarks demonstrate the great paradox of segregation where racial separation provided a modicum of autonomy to black bureaucratic agencies. However, their influence was limited to these small racial islands.

Black agents could not expect to advance to higher positions in the federal government. Gladys Baker's statement that competent black agents could hold their positions fails to make clear that these positions constituted a proverbial glass ceiling for blacks in extension work. Better-paying jobs in Washington were off limits for blacks. If they wanted to continue to be employed by the federal government, most blacks after the Woodrow Wilson era had to resign themselves to these entry-level positions.

J. E. Dickson discovered this reality in 1924 when he wrote J. A. Evans asking that he be transferred to Washington or to have headquarters at Washington. Evans replied that, while he would be happy to help Dickson secure a position, "So far as I know, however, there are no possibilities open in this city to which it would be possible for you to secure a transfer." He asked Dickson what types of employment he sought. Dickson wrote back that if he could not get a position in Washington, he would like "a position in the field service, propagating[,] or photographic department." Twenty-five

⁹⁹R. S. Wilkinson to H. E. Daniels, 1 May 1930, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

years later when he retired, Dickson, as he put it in 1924, was "still holding [his] same position."¹⁰⁰ It should not be surprising that Dickson never received a promotion. Litwack points out that "whites resisted appointments of blacks to prominent or upgraded positions. . . . The objection was to a black person holding any other than a servile job."¹⁰¹ As black agents were often called upon to "assist" white agents in demonstrations by doing the dirty work, and were always under the supervision of the white agent,¹⁰² the position of black extension agent fit that bill.

Financing the Black Extension Service

The overwhelming influence of race in the administration of extension work is clear when one looks at the funding for the two programs. Under the Memorandum of Understanding between Clemson and the Bureau of Plant Industry, Clemson College had a total of between \$26,000 and \$35,000 dollars annually to devote to white extension work between 1911 and 1914. The General Education Board provided around \$23,000 in 1911 and around \$25,000 in subsequent years. The college provided \$3,000 in 1911 and in later years they had to devote at least \$10,000 to match the Board's funds. In 1911 the Board spent an additional \$2,518.70 on black extension work in the State with the Bureau

¹⁰⁰J. E. Dickson to J. A. Evans, 20 August 1924; J. A. Evans to J. E. Dickson, 28 August 1924; J. E. Dickson to J. A. Evans, 16 September 1924, Box 154, Folder: Director South Carolina, 1924-1925, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II. Dickson's date of retirement (30 June 1949) is listed on forms used to configure his retirement pay, see Series 65, Agricultural Business Office: Personnel Records, 1920-1963, Box 3, Folder 39, STICUL. Hereafter this collection will be referred to as Series 65, with box and folder references inclusive.

¹⁰¹Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 162.

¹⁰²Schor, "The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service," 110.

of Plant Industry managing the funds. By 1913-1914 the Board spent \$3,240 on black work.¹⁰³

The monies available to pay for extension work increased significantly as a result of the passage of Smith-Lever. Clemson College was guaranteed \$10,000 the first year. In addition, the college provided another \$10,880. When the General Assembly provided matching funds, the college received an additional \$40,000 from the U. S. D. A (of which \$6,000 was set aside for white women's work), \$41,382 from Smith-Lever and State appropriations, and \$3,441.95 from county monies. Federal officials expected the funding for black work to come out of the \$34,000 remaining in the U. S. D. A appropriation. According to Bradford Knapp, the funds for black work had been accounted for with the South Carolina appropriation from the GEB even though Clemson officials had never administered the money. Therefore, in 1911, slightly over 9.2 percent of the money the General Education Board spent on extension work in South Carolina was spent on blacks. Assuming that the salary tables Clemson officials submitted to the U. S. D. A for 1913-1914 reflect actual salaries paid to the agents, \$38,363.51 (\$25,588.28 from GEB funds, \$4,403.61 from local sources, and \$8,371.62 from Clemson College funds) was spent on agent salaries of which \$3,240 (8.52%) was spent on black agents' salaries. The next year black agents' salaries were paid for almost entirely out of Smith-Lever funds (ultimately each received \$10 from the U. S. D. A monies which permitted them franking privileges). The college allotted \$2,690 of its funds for black work. This amount, while representing

¹⁰³*Memorandum of Understanding* between the Farmers Cooperative Demonstration Work of the Bureau of Plant Industry, United States Department of Agriculture, and Clemson Agricultural College of South Carolina, 26 December 1911; Bradford Knapp to W. M. Riggs, December 26, 1911; Walter M. Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 15 December 1914, folder 109, Riggs Presidential Records; Payroll roster, South Carolina, Box 4, Folder: Secretary of Agriculture, DC 1913-1914; Bradford Knapp to Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones, 6 May 1916, Box 35, Folder: Director, SC 1917-1918, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

6.5 percent of Smith-Lever funds, was only 3.11 percent of the total extension monies, \$86,358.45, available for agricultural work. Clemson officials set aside \$10,345.50 (11.98%) for white women's home demonstration work. While \$13,141.50 (15%) of total extension monies was allotted to white agricultural agents' salaries, Clemson officials used additional monies from county and U. S. D. A appropriations for white agricultural and home agent salaries.¹⁰⁴

While I have located no detailed salary schedules for white women for these years, the tradition that began when the General Education Board funded extension work of county delegations supplementing home agents' salaries was probably continued. The black program might have grown faster if Bradford Knapp had not discouraged the continued acceptance of GEB funds. Knapp became irritated because he thought the GEB claimed credit for extension programs that had been carried out under his office's auspices. Knapp encouraged the Secretary of Agriculture to rebuke the organization.¹⁰⁵ While all the money certainly would not have been put toward black work, both the black program and the white women's program could have benefitted greatly from this infusion of capital.

For almost the entire life of the black program, South Carolina black agricultural and home agents experienced uncertainty in their employment for economic reasons. The effects of white supremacy can clearly be seen in the salary rates for black agents. From

¹⁰⁴*Memorandum of Understanding* between the Farmers Cooperative Demonstration Work of the Bureau of Plant Industry, United States Department of Agriculture, and Clemson Agricultural College of South Carolina, 26 December 1911; Bradford Knapp to W. M. Riggs, 26 December 1911, folder 48; Walter M. Riggs to Bradford Knapp, 15 December 1914, Folder 109; W. W. Long to W. M. Riggs 21 June 1915, Folder 119, Riggs Presidential Records.

¹⁰⁵Bradford Knapp, "Memorandum for the Secretary," 4 June 1919, Box 662, Folder: Extension Work 1919, (Folder 2 of 3), Entry 17 C, RG 16, NA II.

the early years of the program under Smith-Lever the lack of money was a problem for the black service. Funding for black extension work—like that provided to black school and higher education—was extremely low. Riggs pleaded a lack of funds in Clemson's initial decision not to employ black agents.

However, it was not necessarily foreordained that black agents had to be poorly paid. During the years the General Education Board provided money for South Carolina Extension work, some black agents received more pay from its appropriation than some white agents. However when one examines the *total* salaries that agents received, state extension officials' discriminatory intent was at least embryonic even then. While there is little evidence of conscious discrimination in the General Education Board's salary scales, the fact that there were no state or local efforts to supplement the salaries of black agents demonstrates South Carolina whites' lack of commitment to black work.

In 1913-1914, the last year that the General Education Board paid for extension work in South Carolina, the Board provided \$27,388.28 for agent salaries. Most of the agents, regardless of race, worked eight months.¹⁰⁶ black agricultural agents' salaries from GEB funds ranged from \$225 to \$675 annually. If the GEB salaries are ranked according to amount, black salaries are distributed throughout the spectrum. R.W. Westberry's salary was third highest on the list. Greenville's C. W. Jones' salary was twelfth on the list behind seven persons' salaries tied at fifth. (Jones' total salary was \$540. He resigned

¹⁰⁶David F. Houston, "Rockefeller Foundation: Letter from the Secretary of Agriculture transmitting in response to a Senate resolution of April 1, 1914, certain information in regard to the relation of the General Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation to the work of the Department of Agriculture," 53rd Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Document No. 538 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1914), 12.

on 30 September 1915. No letter of resignation has been uncovered but Jones's salary, like Westberry's, would have broken the budgeted amount for black agents.)

Four other agents black agents' salaries were tied at twenty-sixth behind ten white agents whose salaries tied at fourteenth. J. H. Goodwin's salary of \$225 was fifty-third among fifty-four agricultural agents. Goodwin worked in a part of Richland County. R. W. Westberry had another part of the county in his area of responsibility along with Sumter and Kershaw county. This may account for Goodwin's low salary. Indeed, if the average of the two men's total salary is taken it equals that of the other agents. The average salary for agricultural agents from GEB funds was \$473.86. Five of the seven black agents received wages that were below this amount; four of those agents earned \$450 (about 95 percent of the average salary). The disparity in pay occurred when *local* funds were added in. Clemson College provided an additional \$8,371.62 to subsidize white agents' salaries. All but two white agents received a subsidy from the College. One of these two agents received a \$1,200 salary from GEB funds; the other agent received a \$400 subsidy from his county. In addition, seven other agents received additional pay from local sources: chambers of commerce, a group of private citizens, and even a high school. A total of \$38,363.51 was spend on white agricultural agents salaries, for an average of \$710 per agent. This reduces the black agents' salaries to 63 percent of what white agents received. No black agent received a subsidy from any source.¹⁰⁷

In every county where black and white agricultural agents worked, the white agent always earned more—even in counties with black majorities. The difference in salary

¹⁰⁷Financial Report of the General Education Board, Box 4, Folder: U. S. D. A, Secretary of Agriculture, DC, 1913-1914, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

ranged from \$95 in Richland County¹⁰⁸ to \$660 in Greenville County. In counties with white home demonstration agents—all of whom were paid \$675 for eight months' work—they, too, earned more than the black agricultural agent in their county. The only exception was the white home agent in Sumter who earned the same amount as R. W. Westberry.¹⁰⁹

Pay disparities continued after Smith-Lever went into effect in 1915. Monthly salaries for white agricultural agents ranged in some cases as high as \$215 to as low as \$60 (four agents who worked a full month earned this amount). Of the seven black agents, one—Jones—earned \$60 per month, five earned \$50 per month, and one, Samuel Nance, earned \$20 per month. By December 1915 no white agent who worked a full month earned less than \$70 per month. No black agent earned more than \$50 per month. Before December all of the black agents' salaries came from U. S. D. A funds. The agents received no county subsidy or financial support from Clemson College. Although their pay remained the same, by December 1915 the agents received only \$10 from the government fund, with \$20 coming from Clemson College funds and federal Smith-Lever funds respectively. The college set aside \$1,000 of its own funds for black agents which,

¹⁰⁸The black agent in the county, Dr. J. H. Goodwin, earned \$225 and a white agent who served both Richland and Fairfield counties earned \$320. In all likelihood this agent was part-time. Another white agricultural agent in Richland County received \$2,000 including a \$1,000 subsidy from the Columbia Chamber of Commerce. Financial Report of the General Education Board, Box 4, Folder: U. S. D. A, Secretary of Agriculture, DC, 1913-1914, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁰⁹Financial Report of the General Education Board, Box 4, Folder: U. S. D. A, Secretary of Agriculture, DC, 1913-1914, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

along with a matching amount from Smith-Lever, would provide the agents with nine months of work at \$50 per month, Nance excepted.¹¹⁰

The agents might not have received any pay from federal funds at all had it not been for the disagreement between Walter Riggs and Long [see note 11 above]. Had Long's view prevailed and the black agents been paid totally from state and college accounts, the federal extension service would have had no jurisdiction over the agents. College officials could then resist federal intervention regarding the black agents' working conditions by the invocation of local control.

The salary distribution forecast future discrimination. On average, about five percent of the state's monthly expenditure on extension work went to black agents' salaries. Total funds spent on white agents salaries ranged from \$5,874 (rounded to the nearest whole dollar) in July 1915 to \$4,867 in December 1915. Over that same period *total* black agent pay fluctuated from \$330 in July and September, to \$270 in October after Jones resigned, to \$220 by December after another agent was dropped.¹¹¹ The average individual monthly salary of white agents was between \$100 and \$105. A substantial number (two-thirds) of the white agents employed earned less than the average wage in any month. The average individual monthly salary of black agents—the month of August excluded—ranged from \$45 to \$47. For every dollar earned on average by white agents, black agents earned between forty-two and forty-seven cents. With the exception of two white agents who resigned in December 1915, no white agent earned less than a

¹¹⁰Statement of South Carolina Salary Rates, 30 July 1915, 30 August 1915, 30 September 1915, 30 October 1915, 2 December 1915; W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 21 September 1915; J. A. Evans to W. W. Long 25 September 1915, Box 11, Folder: Miscellaneous, SC, 1915-1916, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

¹¹¹August was excluded because only Nance worked that month. The rest were probably on furlough.

black agent. The salaries for both black and white agricultural agents were stagnant. As late as April 1917 the pay scale per agent was the same and the total of the black agents' pay was the same as it had been in December 1915—\$220.¹¹²

The policy of unequal distribution of resources was supported by federal extension officials. In his response to a query about the levels of funding for black work by Thomas Jesse Jones who worked in the Bureau of Education, Bradford Knapp's figures suggested that there had been a substantial increase in the level of funds appropriated to black work. The total amount for black agents' salaries had increased from \$12,600 to \$60,200, Knapp claimed. In South Carolina for the year of 1916 Knapp showed an expenditure of \$5,960 for black work. This figure certainly was padded heavily by including unspecified liabilities. In closing Knapp provided a stern warning to Jones regarding questions about the current distribution of money: ". . . I wish to say that we have very little patience with any propaganda which has for its object the equal division of funds between either men's and women's work or between work for white people and for colored people. Our idea is an equitable division of actual service."¹¹³

A letter from F. M. McLaughlin, an administrative assistant in the federal extension service, to W. W. Long in 1921 provides further evidence of federal complicity in financial discrimination. He noted that in an earlier letter sent out, presumably, to all state extension directors, federal officials had "suggested a plan of arriving at the

¹¹²Statement of South Carolina Salary Rates, 30 July 1915, 30 August 1915, 30 September 1915, 30 October 1915, 2 December 1915, Entry 3, Box 11, Folder: Miscellaneous, SC, 1915-1916; Statement of South Carolina Salary Rates, For the Period March 1-31, 1917, Statement of South Carolina Salary Rates, for the Period April 1-30, 1917, Box 15, Folder: Miscellaneous, SC, 1916-1917, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

¹¹³Bradford Knapp to Thomas Jesse Jones, 6 May 1916, Box 35, Folder: Director South Carolina, 1917-1918, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

intermediate rates of salary for county agents, stating that the rate might be different for men and women, white and colored.”¹¹⁴

As we trace the salary issue over time the consequences of the pay discrimination are evident. E. D. Jenkins wrote to Bradford Knapp in 1918 that he was not going on the usual one-month furlough because he had not been notified to do so. He said that furloughs were “detrimental” to him and that he wished there were no furloughs unless they were paid. Although he said he preferred to work, Jenkins’ concern about money were clear when he said, “I would appreciate a year round service and better pay.”¹¹⁵ Not even the war emergency changed discriminatory hiring and salary practices. For the fiscal year that ended June 30, 1918, seven of fifteen southern states had no employed black Home Demonstration agents using regular extension funds. Two of these states, South Carolina and West Virginia, had spent no money to hire black home extension agents even though emergency appropriations for their employment were available. Six southern states had employed more than ten black Home Demonstration agents each. In most states the pay was certainly low and the use of regular federal extension funds for black home agents was restricted. Florida, for example spent only \$70 in regular U. S. D. A funds for black home demonstration work; Virginia spent nearly \$1,000 and Georgia spent nearly \$2,000. The other states that provided regular funding spent less than \$500.

¹¹⁴F. M. McLaughlin to W. W. Long, 19 May 1921, Box 96, Folder: Director South Carolina, 1920-1921, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

¹¹⁵E. D. Jenkins to Bradford Knapp, 8 August 1918, Box 59, Folder: Miscellaneous South Carolina, 1918-1919, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

In its expenditures of U. S. D. A funds for agricultural extension work for blacks, South Carolina ranked tenth out of fifteen southern states in regular funds with expenditures of \$393.67. In use of emergency funds for black agricultural agents it ranked fourteenth—before West Virginia, which did not use any funds for black extension. South Carolina extension officials spent \$500 of emergency funds—nearly \$1,000 less than the emergency funds spent in Oklahoma. With the exception of Alabama, which spent \$6,080 in regular funds and another \$6,030.32 in emergency funds, North Carolina which spent \$1,766.67 in regular funds and \$6,586.33 in emergency funds, and Virginia, which spent \$1,900 in emergency funds and nearly \$6,300 in regular funds for black agricultural extension work, every other southern state spent a total of at least \$2,000 in emergency funds for black Agricultural extension work. While, many of these states should have contributed more to their negro extension programs, the problem is that South Carolina's contribution was so meager, even Mississippi spent significant amounts of money on agricultural and home extension work. ¹¹⁶

Professional Pay: In Black and White

There was little improvement in salary disparity after the war. The maximum a black agricultural agent could earn in 1919-1920 was \$1,080. The next fiscal year that amount dropped to \$1,050. What the agents actually received was far less than these amounts because they did not work the entire year. J. E. Dickson, for example, was paid

¹¹⁶NUMBER OF NEGRO AGENTS ENGAGED IN HOME DEMONSTRATION WORK FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE SOUTHERN STATES AND FUNDS FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE USED FOR THEIR SALARIES AND EXPENSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1918; NUMBER OF NEGRO AGENTS ENGAGED IN DEMONSTRATION AND OTHER EXTENSION WORK IN THE SOUTHERN STATES AND FUNDS FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE USED FOR THEIR SALARIES AND EXPENSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1918, attachments to Bradford Knapp to W. W. Long, 14 May 1918, Box 35, Folder: Director, SC 1917-1918, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

\$775 in fiscal year 1918-1919, and \$745 the next fiscal year. Dickson's actual salary did not exceed \$1,000 until the fiscal year 1920-1921. Salary figures for other black agricultural agents in these years are similar.¹¹⁷ By comparison the pay scales for white agricultural agents in 1919-1920 ranged from \$1,482 to \$4,000 and they received the actual amounts listed. When one looks at the disparity of workers in the same county discrimination is clear. J. M. Napier, agent for Darlington County, received \$2,416.63 in 1918-1919. The average black agent's actual salary was 32% of Napier's. Napier left the service the next year but when he returned halfway through fiscal year 1923-1924 he earned \$1,632.50 more than a black agent could earn in a year. Over the next 5 years he received \$3,600 annually; the black agent in Darlington, S. C. Disher, earned \$1,450 (about 40% of Napier's wages). J. W. McLendon, the Florence County agent, earned \$1,500, his salary rate for fiscal year 1918-1919. This amount was almost twice what a black agent who worked that year would earn. R. H. Lemmon received his listed salary of \$1,402 for that year as well.¹¹⁸ The high salary rates probably permitted Knapp to present statistics to Thomas Jesse Jones that appeared to show that a significant amount of funds was devoted to black work when the budget projections and actual pay differed markedly.

Economic hardship caused several agents to take matters into their own hands to try and increase their meager salaries. J. E. Dickson set off a controversy when he refused to sign his contract one year because of the low pay. In a letter to W. W. Long that he also

¹¹⁷Salary schedules for J. E. Dickson, G. W. Daniels, Benjamin Barnwell, and J. P. Powell, Series 65, Box 13, Folders 5, 7, 16, STICUL. These agents schedules were selected because they all were working in 1918. Other schedules are available for agents who began working in the 1920s.

¹¹⁸Salary schedules for J. M. Napier, J. W. McLendon, and R. H. Lemmon, Series 65, Box 12, Folders 10, 12, 13; W. W. Long to E. W. Sikes, 18 May 1926, in Series 1, Enoch W. Sikes Presidential Records (hereafter referred to as Sikes Presidential Records), Correspondence, 1925-1931, Box 1, Folder 7, STICUL.

sent to Harry E. Daniels who had replaced Benjamin Hubert as Assistant Agent for Negro Work, and to J. A. Evans at the U. S. D. A, Dickson noted that his salary had declined from ninety dollars per month in 1919 to \$87.50 in 1920. All his travel expenses were paid from his salary and he noted that these costs made the contract economically unfeasible. He noted the increased demands on his time as clients sought out his help to deal with the boll weevil and to visit the many hundred blacks considering migration to discourage their departure. "If their [sic] can be any arrangement made by which I can get a living salary and my travling [sic] expenses I will be pleased to take up the matter with you, but if not I will leave the work Oct. 15th."¹¹⁹

In response to Dickson's complaint, J. A. Evans wrote to W. W. Long to suggest "that \$87.50 per month, without traveling expenses, is an unreasonably low wage, particularly in this case where it appears that the man has an automobile and is prepared to do effective work." Based on Dickson's letter Evans surmised that the entire wage scale for black workers was probably too low and suggested adjustment.

I believe also that the right kind of negro agents will be of great assistance to the work during the next year or two, and, therefore, suggest that if possible you raise the scale of salaries for these men to a point where they will be offered reasonable compensation for the work they are expected to do.¹²⁰

State extension officials became defensive about the salaries they paid to black agents. They raised the total budget for black agricultural work \$700 to \$7,300 in 1920. This

¹¹⁹J. E. Dickson to W. W. Long, 30 September 1920, Box 96, Folder: Director South Carolina, 1920-1921, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

¹²⁰J. A. Evans to W. W. Long, 5 October 1920, Box 96, Folder: Director South Carolina, 1920-1921, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

amount included \$2,000 for the salary of an Assistant Director who had been hired at Wilkinson's request.

However, the raises barely put the agents salaries over \$1,000. Responding to J. A. Evans' criticism of their salary scale, D. W. Watkins explained that Clemson officials had wanted to terminate one agent and use his salary to raise those of the remaining agents but that Wilkinson had objected.¹²¹ Given Wilkinson's desire to expand the number of agents a reduction in the number of agents would certainly have been a step backward for him. White extension officials' willingness to sacrifice one agent and their failure to support the bureaucratic structure of the black program until pressured to do so demonstrates their commitment to maintaining only a token force of black agents.

At least twice in the 1920s W. W. Long requested increases in black agent salaries. In 1924 he made a request to increase the monthly pay for black women from \$15 per month to \$100 per month. This increase probably resulted from additional Congressional appropriations that year. The distribution provided South Carolina with an additional \$30,200, seventy-seven percent of which had to be used for the payment of salaries of supervisory officials, county agents, home demonstration agents, and negro agents on a monthly basis.¹²²

In 1925 Long wrote E.W. Sikes, Clemson's President—Walter Riggs died in 1924—withdrawing previous recommendations for black agent salaries. The next year he recommended raises ranging from six to twenty percent of the agents' current salaries for

¹²¹D. W. Watkins to J. A. Evans, 13 October 1920, Box 96, Folder: Director South Carolina, 1920-1921, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

¹²²C. B. Smith to W. W. Long, 24 April 1924; C. B. Smith to W. W. Long, 26 May 1924, Box 138, Folder: Director, SC 1923-1924, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

four of the five agents who did not receive county subsidies. Long pointed out that only four counties had made the required appropriations, which meant that only federal Smith-Lever funds were available for the agents' salaries elsewhere. Clemson's Board of Trustees had set a cap of \$1,500 from federal Smith-Lever funds to be given to a county for an agent. Long argued that without increases "we cannot expect to keep the number of negro agents who are now engaged in negro county agent work. It is very necessary that we maintain the same personnel, or at least the same number of negro agents, otherwise I fear the Department at Washington will take exceptions as to our policy in handling the negro work."¹²³ There is no indication that there was any pressure on the extension program at the time Long made his requests. The 1920s were dominated by Republican presidencies but there was likely some continuing pressure from the NAACP.

In Long's explanation to Sikes we can see the fruition of some of Knapp's concerns of the 1910s.

My principal reason for making this recommendation is because Washington officials feel that we are not giving a fair proportion of the Smith-Lever funds to the negro work in South Carolina. There is a negro organization maintained in Washington to look after legislation in the interest of the negro race and this organization is very insistent upon increasing the amount from the Smith-Lever funds for negro agents, especially throughout the South. In order that we may avoid trouble with the Federal authorities over this question I thought it wise to accede to their wishes. The counties were not willing to make the appropriation and if anything is to be done it has to be accomplished in this way. In the last analysis the Federal Government can refuse to approve our plans of work and further refuse to turn over to us the Federal Smith-Lever funds if in their opinion our administration is not a fair and just one. The negro ownership of farm lands in South Carolina is increasing more rapidly than among white people, and as this

¹²³W. W. Long to E. W. Sikes 15 July 1925, 19 July 1926, Series 32, Box 138, Folders 9 and 10 respectively; 18 May 1926; Box 1, Folder 7, Sikes Presidential Records.

ownership increases they become more and more an important economic factor in the agricultural development of the state.¹²⁴

The NAACP continued to press for black participation in extension programs. In a 1922 article in the *Crisis* a report by the colored sub-committee of the National Agricultural Conference was quoted and included reference to Smith-Lever. The relevant passage reads

There should be a more adequate distribution of Federal funds that are allocated to the different states under the Smith-Lever and the Smith-Hughes [vocational education] Acts so that Negro farmers may receive a greater benefit, to the end that we may have a larger number of well-trained men and women to advise and to work in the rural districts. This is especially necessary because of the fact that this class of our farming population has had less advantage than most other farming groups.¹²⁵

Government officials often had their "ears to the ground" so it is likely that Long was aware of the group's efforts on behalf of blacks in agriculture.

A subcommittee of the Clemson Board of Trustees recommended in June 1926 that the cap be waived. Most of those present for the July vote were persuaded by Long's views. A majority of Clemson's Board members approved the proposal. However, only one "no" vote was needed to prevent the waiver, and W. D. Barnett provided it.¹²⁶ The Trustees' minutes have no transcript which would enlighten our understanding of Barnett's votes. The record merely notes his negative vote, which made the vote one short of the necessary nine needed to pass an item. Only nine of the thirteen trustees were present for the vote. The failure of this vote is but one example of the lack of recognition

¹²⁴W. W. Long to E. W. Sikes, 19 July 1926, Series 32, Box 138, Folder 10, STICUL.

¹²⁵"The Negro Farmer," *The Crisis* v. 24, no. 1 (May 1922): 10.

¹²⁶Clemson Trustee Minutes, 18 June 1926, 102; 20 July 1926, 140.

of black agents' specialized skills. There was no need for better pay, presumably because any black could do the job.

In 1925, A. B. Graham, Acting Chief of Extension Work, noted a \$470 increase in funds for black demonstration work in South Carolina resulting from increased county appropriations.¹²⁷ Yet in 1927, Jenkins still sought better pay. In a letter to R. S. Wilkinson, Jenkins complained that because his county, Bamberg, offered no supplement to his salary of \$1,500, he was unable to meet, economically, the personal demands—particularly keeping his children in school—and having an "adequate means of travel" to meet his professional obligations. He asked Wilkinson for financial help but was disappointed. Wilkinson told Jenkins that all monies for the fiscal year had been expended and that there could be no adjustments before the start of the new fiscal year . . . if then.¹²⁸ In June 1929 Sumter County agent Jason Maloney, asked for an increase in his monthly salary from \$1,600 to \$1,900 but Wilkinson flatly turned him down. He told Maloney that the budget had already been completed and that his salary would remain the same. Almost all of Maloney's salary, \$1,500, came from federal extension funds. His county provided another \$100. Wilkinson told Maloney that he was "the highest paid agent on the list of Federal Funds. It is impossible to exceed this amount for we are limited to that extent." With the exception of 1930-1932, when Maloney's salary was \$1,800 and \$1,742 in each of the fiscal years, Maloney's annual salary never exceeded \$1,600.¹²⁹

¹²⁷A. B. Graham, "Memorandum for Mr. Warburton," 1 September 1925, Box 159, Folder: Dir. Ext. Secy. Agric., Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

¹²⁸E. D. Jenkins to R. S. Wilkinson, 29 December 1927; R. S. Wilkinson to E. D. Jenkins, 4 January 1928, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

¹²⁹R. S. Wilkinson to Jason Maloney, 14 June 1929, Folder 92, SCSUHC; Jason Maloney, Series 65, Box 13, Folder 14. Wilkinson was not fully candid with Maloney; he was one of three black agents who received the maximum appropriation. W. W. Long to E. W. Sikes, 18 May 1926, Box 1, Folder 7,

Stagnant salaries were a problem that all black agents faced. By 1930 only three agents, Dickson, Orangeburg County agent G. W. Daniels, and Spartanburg County agent, W. C. Bunch, had earned in excess of \$2,000. Between 1928 and 1932 both Dickson and Daniels earned between \$2,000 and \$2,200 dollars. Bunch earned \$2,000 in 1929-1930 and 1930-1931. Afterward, all the black agricultural agents' salaries fell almost to previous levels and did not cross \$2,000 annually again until 1945-1946.¹³⁰

Agents' dissatisfaction with their pay was so widespread that W. W. Long sent out a memorandum to black *and white* agents some years later warning them against taking the matter into their own hands by contacting their county legislative delegation to seek a supplement. In that memorandum he wrote: "The question of salaries depends upon the final approval of the president of this college, the board of trustees and the Secretary of Agriculture. . . . I am anxious for you to be well paid for your services but I shall have to insist that you approach this matter through proper channels."¹³¹

Once black women began to work full time, their situation was somewhat better than that of the men but nowhere near equity with white women agents. The comparisons made here are of black women who were hired as permanent agents in the 1920s and of white women who worked in the same counties during that period. Salary schedules are complete enough to discuss a pattern of funding for only two of the full-time black agents who worked in the 1920s: Connie N. Jones of Charleston County and Frances Thomas of Richland County. Between 1924 when black home agents first began working year round

Sikes Presidential Records.

¹³⁰Salary schedules for J.E. Dickson, G. W. Daniels, and W. C. Bunch, Series 65, Box 13, Folders 5, 7, STICUL.

¹³¹W. W. Long to ALL EMPLOYEES OF THE EXTENSION SERVICE, 18 September 1929, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

and 1928 when she resigned, Connie Jones's annual salary ranged between \$1,062.64 and \$1,100.06. Over that same period, her white counterpart earned between \$2,116.68 (in fiscal year 1924-1925) and \$2,049.97 (in fiscal year 1927-1928). At its highest, Jones, salary was 53 percent of her white counterpart's. Frances Thomas' salary was 57 percent of her white counterpart's in 1924 and only 47 percent in 1930.¹³² White women's salaries even exceeded the actual salaries of black men in some cases by more than 100 percent.

Not surprisingly, the salary disparity for women still existed as late as 1930. Out of the 1929-1930 Capper-Ketcham appropriation, three more black women agents were hired at salaries of \$1,100 each—slightly over 13% of the Capper-Ketcham allotment. In documents attached to a 1930 summary of projects, the salary rates of black women agents were listed as \$780 per annum. The salaries of white home demonstration agents ranged from a low of \$1,620 to \$1,800 per annum. The salary for a white assistant home demonstration agent ranged from \$1,200 to \$1,260 per annum. One white assistant home demonstration agent's salary was \$660 per annum; it is assumed that she worked only part time. The salaries of white home demonstration district agents was \$2,340 per annum. Three white women were given regional responsibilities for overseeing white women's work. Marian B. Paul, who supervised the far flung black women agents, as well as personally carrying on demonstration work in three counties which did not have agents, was paid \$1,380 per annum.¹³³

¹³²Salary schedules for Connie N. Jones, Frances Thomas, Series 65, Box 15, Folders 15 and 24, Carolina S. Alston, and Eleanor D. Carson, Box 13, Folder 41 and Box 14, Folder 1 respectively, STICUL.

¹³³"Summary of Projects and Source," Strom Thurmond Institute, Clemson University Libraries. This document was collected when the agricultural extension papers were being processed by the archivist. Neither the archivist or I have been able to ascertain its final location.

Despite their abysmal level of pay, black extension workers were far better off economically than their laboring brothers and sisters. As late as 1940 blacks in the private sector earned \$523 for men and \$275 for women. However, black laborers had a higher earnings ratio to whites in industry than black agricultural extension agents did to whites at 58 percent. However, black home demonstration agents earned more on a per dollar basis than black women laborers who earned about 40 percent of what white laboring women earned.¹³⁴ When comparisons are made within the black community, the earning power of these agents was astonishing. Based on 1930 pay figures, even the lowest salary of black home demonstration agents was 283 percent higher than that of a non-professional black woman from 1940. Black agricultural agents earned 382 percent more than the average black male worker from 1940.

The black-to-black salary analysis goes a long way to explain why the income extension jobs provided was highly prized. It explains, in part, the efforts of men like Bates and Wiley to secure re-employment. In Bates' appeal to be rehired in 1918, three years after he was let go, we see a glimpse of how difficult it was for a black professional to maintain an income. In his letter to Bradford Knapp, Bates wrote: "I have done some work on the side since I have resigned but great good can be done if an agent is appointed. I am writting [sic] you asking for reappointment so as to help the farmer to prepare for the future."¹³⁵

¹³⁴Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 248-9.

¹³⁵James A. Bates to Bradford Knapp, 1 April 1918, Box 35, Folder: Miscellaneous South Carolina, 1917-1918, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

The lengths to which Dora Boston went to keep her position illustrate how valued the positions were. According to William Hine, Boston and Orangeburg County agricultural agent George W. Daniels secretly wed in October 1927. The college had a standing policy against both spouses in a marriage working for the institution. In fact R. S. Wilkinson had rejected Benjamin Mays' request that he and his new wife Sadie both be hired at the school in 1926. Despite Sadie's father's failing health and her need to have a job to help her sister pay the mortgage on his home, Wilkinson refused to relent and the Mays went to work for the Tampa Branch of the Urban League. As soon as Wilkinson became aware of the marriage he requested that Boston resign, which she did effective 15 October 1928. Boston was succeeded by Nettie Kenner. When she married and decided to resign about two years later in the fall of 1930, Wilkinson scrambled to find a replacement. He wrote Julia A. Miller who was the state agent for Negro work in Florida offering her the appointment. When she reported that she could not be released from her contract, he approached Marian Paul. She wrote an enthusiastic letter to Harry Daniels the same day to express her interest the same day that Wilkinson invited her to apply. She was hired two days later.

The county agent positions were pursued more vigorously as the letters Lonnie I. Landrum received regarding the replacement for the Charleston Home agent shows.¹³⁶ The local situation in South Carolina also worked against blacks who desired work in extension. Clemson College's policy for black agents was not to place an agent unless

¹³⁶William Hine to H-South@H-NET.MSU.EDU, "Re: Home demonstration agents," 24 April 1998; Mays, *Born to Rebel*, 105; Resignation of Dora E. Boston Daniels, 20 September 1928; R. S. Wilkinson to Miss Julia A. Miller, 2 September 1930; Julia A. Miller to R. S. Wilkinson, 23 September 1930; R. S. Wilkinson to Lonny I. Landrum, 6 December 1930; Marian B. Paul to Harry Daniels, 9 December 1930; R. S. Wilkinson to M. B. Paul, 11 December 1930, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

there was a demonstrable commitment from the county in which the agent would work. They expected counties to provide matching funds for black agents before an agent would be placed—but did not require matching funds before placing a white agent. This policy permitted local whites to decide whether a black agent's services were desired. Unlike some locations where Joel Schor finds local sentiment and willingness to fund black work outstripping state appropriations, this requirement retarded the growth of black extension work in South Carolina.¹³⁷ The local support requirement held "three distinct advantages," according to Schor. "It allowed limited state and federal funds to go further; it indicated local interest, and it meant considerable local control—which helped overcome white suspicions."¹³⁸

However, county legislative delegations' refusal to support black work meant that the local support policy was often abrogated to keep blacks on the payroll. Clemson extension officials tended to fund black extension workers from federal and college sources rather than using the matching state Smith-Lever appropriations—which seemed more volatile—for black work. Race politics signified by the reluctance or refusal of members of the South Carolina General Assembly to vote any funds for black programs played a role in local appropriation decisions, as well. But this meant that the funds available for black work were very limited; it also meant that the Clemson College Board of Trustees, which was sensitive to political winds, had extraordinary control over the black program and a reasonable policy justification for the program's failure to expand.

¹³⁷Schor, "The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service," 80.

¹³⁸Schor, "The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service," 78.

Professional Insecurity

The lack of interest in black extension workers is made more clear when one observes what happens to a black agent who was no longer able to practice his profession. E. D. Jenkins had a stroke in 1930. He was covered under Clemson's disability insurance policy. Policies such as this originated in the late nineteenth century to ensure that workers and their families could survive the breadwinner's injuries. Before the creation of the social security system, such policies were extremely helpful in preventing destitution. By the early twentieth century, many state governments had begun to develop systems of workmen's compensation. South Carolina was far behind in that trend, being one of only four states that had not adopted some form of workmen's compensation by 1930.¹³⁹ That a policy was available and blacks were allowed to subscribe is phenomenal. However, what happened in Jenkins' case illustrates how race was used later to subvert black participation in the emerging welfare state.

Jenkins' stroke left him permanently disabled. Although W. W. Long and his assistant D. W. Watkins negotiated with Clemson College's insurer on Jenkins' behalf, the company denied his claim, which left him destitute. The company denied Jenkins' claim on the grounds that he was not totally unable to do some work for support.¹⁴⁰ There is no evidence that either Long or his assistant Watkins contested the ruling. The attitude exhibited by the officials of this company suggests that it would not have been demeaning

¹³⁹Of the 48 states all had adopted state systems of workmen's compensation by 1930 except Florida (1935), South Carolina (1935), Arkansas (1939), and Mississippi (1948), Price V. Fishback and Shawn Everett Kantor, "The Durable Experiment: State Insurance of Workers' Compensation Risk in the Early Twentieth Century," *The Journal of Economic History* v. 56, no. 4 (December 1996): 814, note 10.

¹⁴⁰E. D. Jenkins to R. S. Wilkinson, 22 August 1930; R. S. Wilkinson to D. W. Watkins, 7 October 1930, F Folder 92, SCSUHC; New Colored Agent, n. p., n. d., newspaper clipping attached to C. M. Hall to F.E. Singleton, 4 October 1930, Box 203, Folder: Dead Files South Carolina Director, 1930-1931, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

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for this professional man to accept any position no matter how menial. The logic probably was that there was no work too demeaning for a black. (It would be highly surprising if white agents were treated with the same callous disregard or if Clemson officials passively accepted rejection of their claims—if such occurred. But without access to other cases this is mere speculation.) The expectation that Jenkins continue to work, however, seems in line with whites' general attitudes about black workers. I have uncovered no references to blacks' receipt of workmen's compensation benefits but the literature on social policy is replete with examples of discrimination against blacks in distribution of benefits to extract work from them. Jill Quadagno provides one example in which South Carolina Assemblyman A. J. Hatfield inquired about the proportion of blacks and whites who would be eligible for old age pensions. There was a belief among members of the Social Security Board from which Hatfield requested the information that ". . . strong factors in S. C. [are] trying to kill Social Security and a high showing of negroes could make things worse." Indeed, the state offered pensions to a extremely limited number of persons: Confederate veterans and their widows, and to faithful slaves. Southern states routinely required more stringent qualifications for eligibility than the federal government. Benefits were sometimes cut to black workers when their labor was needed in agriculture.¹⁴¹

In matters of remuneration, Wilkinson seemed generally conservative, and attempted to make do with the funds he received. He refused to seek remedies for Jenkins that would make him the object of pity and charity. Wilkinson refused Jenkins' requests

¹⁴¹Jill Quadagno, "From Old-Age Assistance to Supplemental Security Income: The Political Economy of Relief in the South, 1935-1972," 242-4 in Margaret Wier, Ann Shola Orloff, and Theda Skocpol, *The Politics of Social Policy in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 499-500.

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that Wilkinson ask Clemson officials to grant him a pension because of his long years of service (twenty-five years), and to appoint Jenkins' son as agent for Bamberg where Jenkins could supervise his work. Jenkins was reduced to publicly soliciting money and food for his family.¹⁴²

The position Wilkinson took regarding Jenkins, however, was uncharacteristically activist and ultimately more firmly established the professional credentials of black agents. When Clemson officials mutely accepted the judgement of its insurers regarding Jenkins eligibility for settlement, Wilkinson intervened. He argued to Clemson officials that since Jenkins had been declared unable to be an extension agent—a position that was covered by the policy—his claim was valid. "In my opinion the case deserves a more thorough investigation and some influence ought to be brought to bear upon the company to adjust the claim, having accepted the payments covering protecting him as an extension worker. . . ."¹⁴³ Wilkinson wrote Jenkins as well and encouraged him to write D. W. Watkins about the situation. "To my thinking you are due payment in the work which the disability covers. . . . [T]he matter should be made a test even if it becomes necessary to take it up with the State Insurance Commissioner."¹⁴⁴

The federal response to the Jenkins case also put Clemson's extension officials on the defensive. Delegates at the National Cooperative Extension Workers' Association meeting collected \$42 for the agent. In the States Relations Service, \$8 was collected and J. A. Evans suggested to Long that Jenkins be recommended to receive a pension from

¹⁴²"New Colored Agent," n. p., n. d., newspaper clipping attached to C. M. Hall to F.E. Singleton, 4 October 1930, Box 203, Folder: Dead Files South Carolina Director, 1930- 1931, Entry 3, RG 33.

¹⁴³R. S. Wilkinson to D. W. Watkins, 7 October 1930, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

¹⁴⁴R. S. Wilkinson to E. D. Jenkins, 7 October 1930, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

Congress.¹⁴⁵ Evans wrote Jenkins that his situation might change the current retirement system in which federal employees were not rewarded for their loyal service.

The time will come shortly may we hope when a grateful State and Nation will not permit its servants who have served the rural public as long and faithfully as you have, to suffer in their old age when incapacitated from further active service. It is not impossible that your own case may bring the necessity of retirement compensation for cooperative extension workers who have given long and faithful service, so keenly to the consciousness to those in authority that action may be greatly hastened.¹⁴⁶

In late December, four months after he had been stricken, negotiations between Long, other Clemson officials, and the insurer secured a \$2,000 settlement for Jenkins. Long also offered Jenkins help in getting a pension.¹⁴⁷

Clemson officials were probably somewhat surprised by the response to the Jenkins' situation. They were essentially shamed into action. The support for Jenkins' cause transcended his race. It marks one of those rare instances in which the status of extension agent was paramount over black agents' primary association with their race. This is not to suggest that extension officials' motivations were wholly altruistic. After all, Evans points out the tremendous programmatic benefits Jenkins' case could bring. Jenkins' case would benefit the preponderance of whites (78%) who served as agents as well as the small cadre of black agents. Wilkinson's challenge to the system on professional grounds is certainly significant. His insistence that a black agricultural agent be

¹⁴⁵J. A. Evans to W. W. Long, 22 December 1930 Box 203, Folder: Dead Files South Carolina, 1930-31, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁴⁶J. A. Evans to Edmund Douglas Jenkins, 20 December 1930, Box 203, Folder: Dead Files South Carolina, 1930-31, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁴⁷W. W. Long to J. A. Evans, 30 December 1930, Box 203, Folder: Dead Files South Carolina, 1930-31, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

treated the same as any other extension employee suggests that the bureaucracy did provide a modicum of protection for the agents.

Conclusion

The money issue left a mixed legacy and largely a negative one because money and status issues are difficult to separate. On the positive side Clemson officials were forced to become conscious of the implications of salary and staffing decisions they made regarding black agents. That and the fact that a black agent's work in the service was considered worthy of a pension and universal accolades were certainly positives. However, when stock is taken of the distribution of economic resources in 1930 it is clear that being a black agent continued to mean being paid far less than white agents for the same work and in some cases having a heavier workload.

Although blacks ceased to be the numerical majority in South Carolina's population after 1923 they remained fifty-four percent of the state's rural population. However the distribution of appropriations was far short of equitable. In 1930 Clemson officials reported 8.41% of the total extension budget (\$56,335 of \$670,063) was spent directly on black extension work. Of that sum, \$37,325 was spent on men's work and \$19,030 on women's work. These figures remain a mystery, as the total of agents' actual salaries are nowhere near these amounts. Nearly 42% of regular funds, \$279,962, was spent on white agricultural agents' salaries and nearly 22% of regular funds, \$146,073, was spent on white home demonstration agents' salaries. Of \$43,454 in supplemental funds, none was spent on black agents' salaries. Counties contributed \$2,550 to extension salaries for black agricultural agents. State contributions accounted for \$1,050 of black home demonstration agents' salaries and an additional \$5,210 came from county sources.

Southern extension administrators argued that blacks received additional services from white agents and specialists and probably charged part of the cost of these programs to blacks ' accounting lines.¹⁴⁸ However, given the information on cross-racial contact provided in annual reports—and such contacts are not prominent—the assigned costs were probably excessive. Specialists attended the training sessions for the agents, but the reports I examined do not mention frequent forays into black communities by white specialists. White specialists' information and skills were taken to the black communities by black agents.

In the first phase of black extension work, it is clear that the agents fought hard for recognition and respect of their special skills. They sought these positions because it was beneficial financially when compared to other forms of employment available to blacks. While recognizing their subordinate position and attempting to maneuver for better employment conditions within the bounds of white supremacy, some agents were not opposed to standing up to the powers that be. It can be generally concluded that black agents stood on their own feet; they put their self-interest first and curried favor with their white employers. As a result, most of them worked in the extension service for decades. However, pleasing their employers was not the only reason for these agents' longevity. They also had to satisfy their clients.

¹⁴⁸"Summary of Projects and Source of Funds," Series 32, STICUL.

CHAPTER FOUR

“AN INFLUENCE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION”: RESULTS OF EARLY EXTENSION WORK IN SOUTH CAROLINA

There is ample proof for the statement that when you can get a negro tenant, farm laborer or land owner actually interested in agriculture he ceases to be a menace to the community. It has a wonderful effect upon law and order of any community to start definite educational work of this character among people who have had no opportunities to learn how to work.

—Bradford Knapp, 1915

[T]he war has in no way changed the attitude of the white man toward the social and political equality of the negro.

—James F. Byrnes, 1919

A negro can succeed in the South if he is content to be a negro and remain in a negro's place —Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 183 quoting from Carl Holliday, “The Young Southerner and the Negro,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 8 (1909)

This chapter explores the activities and results of black agricultural and home extension work in South Carolina to 1930. It assesses black agents' degree of success in addressing the problems black South Carolinians faced. It also examines the agents' influence within the black community. The objectives of the agents' work were sometimes contradictory. Some aspects of the programs and the rhetoric black leaders employed to justify them suggests that the programs' objectives were to create a servile population that would be content tilling white folks' land and keeping their homes. However, other evidence suggests that the black extension program contained subversive objectives that helped undermine the caste system whites expected it to uphold. Before 1930, however, the subversive power of the program was too subtle to be recognized.

In his report to the state General Assembly in 1924, Robert S. Wilkinson noted the effect of black extension work in South Carolina. “The Negro work,” he wrote, “is an influence in the right direction in the matter of Negro migration to Northern industrial

centers.”¹ Rural black South Carolinians’ migration to the North had declined by mid-decade—a phenomenon he unscientifically attributed to black extension work. Preventing black mobility that emerged in response to the Great Migration was not an idea that concerned only Wilkinson. Rather, preventing a mass exodus from the region had been a cornerstone of federal and local northern and southern white policy since the Reconstruction era as Leon Litwack and William Cohen demonstrate.² Blacks were a priceless pool of cheap, unprotected labor. Much as capitalists exploit underdeveloped countries’ populations to fuel the expanding global economy of our contemporary age, cheap black labor was essential in its day to the restoration of the southern economy. History proves the value of black labor to the southern economic system. It was so valuable that it was a root cause of the Civil War. The need for black labor motivated southern whites to suppress black aspirations for independence during Reconstruction and the rise of the “New South.”

In Black and White: Competing Visions of Black Extension Work

Contrary to these obvious truths, two views of the role of blacks in southern agriculture emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Some white publications argued that rural labor primarily benefitted blacks, taking the paternalistic view that southern whites sacrificed efficiency and material wealth to provide work for otherwise aimless blacks. Because of this protectionist view of whites’ role in the

¹CNIAMC, 28 (1924): 27.

²Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 316-22; William Cohen, *At Freedom’s Edge*. The point in Cohen’s book is not that whites were successful in preventing black freedom of movement. Indeed, he argues that blacks exercised a high degree mobility within the south between 1865 and 1915. However, Cohen’s book also demonstrates that whites *attempted* to control black mobility through laws of various types designed to maintain white domination of black labor.

employment of black labor, when these whites raised the subject of blacks in southern agriculture, it was not done in terms that promoted black autonomy. Rather, they emphasized the need to control blacks for their own good. The Secretary of Agriculture's Report in the 1906 *Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture* provides a clear example of this mentality. The second of the report's goals listed for agricultural colleges and schools was

To promote the efficiency of agricultural instruction in the negro land-grant colleges in order that the funds granted for negro education by the Federal Government may contribute toward keeping the negro on the farm and making him a more efficient factor in agricultural production for his own good and that of the nation, rather than as is largely the case at present, drawing him away from the farm into the uncertainties and dangers of city life.³

Such attitudes were sometimes seconded by blacks. Booker T. Washington said that "the Negro is naturally a farmer" and firmly believed that blacks' future was in the rural South.⁴

The second perspective on blacks' role in the southern economy is found in black journals. These publications noted the dependence of whites on black labor in an agricultural system for which few mechanical ways of replacing that labor existed. Those that did exist, tractors for example, were usually too expensive for the average southern white farmer. An opinion piece in the *Colored American Magazine* in 1907 excoriated Seaman Knapp for suggesting that blacks dragged down the value of southern agriculture and argued that "Dr. Knapp . . . knows as well as everybody else that if the Negro wasn't on the Southern farms they would all have been broom straw and pine scrubs

³United States Department of Agriculture, *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1907), 105.

⁴Quoted in Gary Zellar, "H.C. Ray and Racial Politics in the African American Extension Program in Arkansas: 1915-1929," *Agricultural History* v. 72, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 430.

long . . . ago—the Southern plantations would not have produced enough to pay taxes.” Indeed, they argued that farming had collapsed wherever blacks had emigrated from rural areas. The writer noted that the cry of southern whites for black farm labor, their enactment of vagrancy laws to force unemployed urban blacks back to the farms, and the high fees assessed on labor recruitment agents (and violence against them in some cases) demonstrated whites’ desire for and need of black labor.⁵

While black emigration was not the only problem southern whites faced as they attempted to reclaim the region’s economic power, it merited a significant amount of their attention. Whites saw migration as a manifestation of blacks’ dissatisfaction with the *economic* situation in the South. For them methods of producing economic satisfaction had to be developed to forestall migration. Black extension agents’ work had to demonstrate that it could create the material happiness that whites believed blacks wanted if it were to continue. White definitions of black economic happiness were certainly lower than those held by blacks themselves. In describing the expected result of black extension work in Georgia, Senator Hoke Smith remarked that “[m]uch of our land in Georgia is

⁵“Dr. Knapp Finds Another Scapegoat Place for the Negro,” *Colored American Magazine* 12 (Mar 1907): 329-30. This magazine is an important source for news regarding southern black farmers. A report on a 1905 Farmer’s Conference at Tuskegee Institute focused on improving southern black schools. It included conferees from almost all southern states and from as far away as Germany. The theme was the improvement of black schools. One person who gave testimony was a black landowner from Ellington, South Carolina. Booker T. Washington encouraged the farmer to go back to his community and help to improve the building and to extend its academic term. The writer refers to those farmers attending the Conference as “*prosperous* [my emphasis] patriarchs of the Black South [who were] unlettered, but as they rose to discuss subjects that were vital to them, one could not help but feel the power, such energy and resource, would, if developed, make any race great.”

The report of the conference gives interesting glimpses into another part of Washington’s character. He speaks out against lynching, promoted black economic independence, and pointed out southern states’ moral obligation to educate “‘all the children of all the people.’” He encouraged continued black support of black schools “lest their children grow up in ignorance,” but also advocated lobbying white officials for better school funding and pointed out the significant appropriation of black tax dollars to education white children. Jane E. Clark, “The Tuskegee Negro Farmers’ Conference,” *The Colored American Magazine* 8 (April 1905): 200-2.

farmed by negroes and owned by white men, who own large tracts. They seek to obtain a class of negroes who will take a tract and stay on it permanently. . . . Every effort is being made to stimulate the negro to a higher degree of proficiency upon the farm and to keep him from running to town.” Smith asserted that whites in Georgia would do right by blacks as extension clients because seventy-five percent of the state’s landowners got their entire profit from black farmers; it would be to their benefit to ensure that they have access to extension services. When Senator Charles Townsend of Michigan asked Smith if he was arguing in favor of a permanent tenant class he denied it. However, nothing in his remarks went suggested anything other than profit as whites’ motivation for promoting black extension work.⁶

For the developing black public professional class of extension workers, their *raison d’etre* was to serve a black clientele. As the effects of *Plessy* became more keenly felt through the public space segregation it promoted, black emigration left black public professionals with fewer clients to serve and fewer opportunities for white-collar employment. Whites would often reduce funds spent on black programs rather than granting an effective increase by keeping dollars spent constant for a smaller population. If these black public professionals wanted to preserve and expand opportunities for their race in public sector employment, black extension work had to demonstrate its effectiveness at creating a stable (and preferably docile) labor pool. Black extension workers had to stabilize their client base by convincing black farmers that a living could be made on the farm, and that a better rural life was attainable.

⁶*Hearings, Report and Debate: Smith-Lever Act of 1914*, 2749, 3064.

The expressed objectives of black extension work before 1930 supported the status quo—it promoted the subordination of blacks in southern society. The rhetoric employed by black agricultural leadership suggests that they spoke in an institutional voice that met white approval:

[W]e hasten onward with caution in our efforts to make as many friends for the work as possible, seizing every opportunity to call attention of important people to the thousands of Negro farmers, their wives and children who are actually being reached by the force of Negro men and women employees in the work—whose lives, on the whole, are rich in useful service to humanity

wrote Thomas M. Campbell, presumably to Henry Cantwell Wallace in 1921.⁷ While it is unclear whether it was the black agents or farmers whose lives were enriched by service to humanity, it is clear that Campbell de-emphasized black self-interest. Given the tenor of Campbell's entire letter, it is not unreasonable to assume that white support and approval for black extension work could only be gained if the definition of "useful service" fit white sensibilities. A program that promoted individualism, that would encourage black autonomy and break the cycle of black economic dependency—the foundation of white supremacy—probably would be viciously attacked.⁸ Karen Ferguson provides a concrete example of the visceral nature that white antipathy toward black extension often took. Thomas Campbell had approached a white farmer about meeting with his tenants. The farmer told Campbell "I don't need you, the U.S. Government nor anybody else to tell me how to handle my 'niggers'." Once Campbell explained to the

⁷T.M. Campbell to "Dear Sir," 8 November 1921, Box 821, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 D, RG 16, NA II.

⁸Historian Gladys Baker made this argument in 1939. Earl William Crosby, who wrote one of the earliest dissertations on the black extension service concurs with her conclusions and my own research confirms it as well. Earl William Crosby, "Limited Success Against Long Odds: The Black County Agent," *Agricultural History* 57, no. 3 (Summer 1983), 283.

farmer that he came from Tuskegee, the farmer replied, "O well, I know about that work of Booker T. Washington's school, and if that is the kind of work you are talking about, go ahead and do all you can. You have my hearty support."⁹ Therefore, in its early stages the black program pursued more modest goals: it attempted to improve the quasi-feudalism that characterized southern agriculture, rather than develop individualistic, capitalist-oriented programs for black families. The objectives, then, were socially and economically conservative. By meeting blacks' immediate material needs—particularly for more food—whites believed blacks would stay where they were and work contentedly.

Black agricultural leaders tapped into the white mentality when trying to secure more money and staff for the black programs. R. S. Wilkinson, like Campbell, frequently invoked the usefulness of blacks as a laboring class in order to justify his requests for increased resources to hire more agents. He used such an argument, for example, in his failed effort to secure federal funding for black women's work in 1916. While the woman whom Wilkinson had hired using South Carolina State College funds in 1916 focused on improving conditions in black homes and communities, Wilkinson did not mention the positive effects that black home agents would have on black women's lives when he sought federal money. Rather, he focused the usefulness of the black home agents in training black women workers who would serve whites. "The need for well trained

⁹Karen Ferguson, "Caught in 'No Man's Land': The Negro Cooperative Demonstration Service and the Ideology of Booker T. Washington, 1900-1918," *Agricultural History* 72, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 39.

colored women cooks and housekeepers is positive. Everywhere there are calls for good cooks,” he wrote.¹⁰

The argument that blacks were a useful resource for whites and that giving them some extension benefits enhanced that usefulness is also found in federal sources from the period. Federal officials declared that they sought only limited improvements in rural southern blacks’ lives as they encouraged whites to adopt a black extension program. Bradford Knapp told Walter Riggs that “[t]he main thing we have been trying to do . . . is to teach the poor negroes to raise cane for their own molasses, and corn as well as cotton. . . . We are trying to get them to produce their own food supply, which they have never done heretofore.”¹¹ A few years later Knapp pointed out that “[t]here is ample proof for the statement that when you can get a negro tenant, farm laborer or land owner actually interested in agriculture he ceases to be a menace to the community. It has a wonderful effect upon the law and order of any community to start definite educational work of this character among *people who have had no opportunities to learn how to work* [my emphasis].”¹²

In a memorandum to J. A. Evans, regarding Negro Boys Agricultural Improvement Clubs for the South, I. W. Hill, O. B. Martin’s assistant in club administration, discussed the importance of such clubs as a preliminary step toward bringing a more complete extension work program to blacks. Hill’s justification treats the benefits to

¹⁰“District Agent’s Report—Work of Colored Farm Demonstration Agents for the Year ending June 30, 1916,” in *Annual Report of the Demonstration and Extension Work in the State of South Carolina for the Calendar Year 1916*, 131-132.

¹¹Bradford Knapp to W. M. Riggs, 26 December 1911, Folder 48, Riggs Presidential Records.

¹²Bradford Knapp to W. M. Riggs, 27 January 1915, Folder 110, Riggs Presidential Records.

blacks as a by-product of the program. He argued that the program “. . . will result in the great good to agriculture of the Southern States, especially in those states in which the negro race furnishes a large percentage of the population . . . [and] will furnish to the negro that training for which he is well adapted, by both nature and environment.”¹³

While they needed forceful persuasion before they agreed to employ black agents, white South Carolina extension officials were not unaware of the magnitude of the plight of blacks as it affected the economic health of the state. In a letter to Bradford Knapp, W. W. Long stated that the rate of tenancy in the South was on the increase. “[U]nless we can reach the negro tenant, we will not be touching half of the people who engage in agriculture, and we should make the negro tenant as much an *asset* [my emphasis] to the State and the country at large as the white tenant.”¹⁴ Statements such as these carved out a very narrow terrain for black extension work as there seemed to be general agreement among the leadership—regardless of race—that the program would be one in which blacks would be an instrument of the economic betterment of the South.

The Economics of Black Labor

Statistics show blacks’ usefulness to staple crop agriculture in the South in the early decades of the 1900s. The four million bales of cotton they produced the year before Smith-Lever was enacted accounted for 39 percent of all production. The 90 million pounds of tobacco grown on black-operated farms accounted for 10 percent of all

¹³I. W. Hill, “MEMORANDUM FOR MR. [J. A.] EVANS IN RE Establishment of Agricultural Improvement Clubs Among Negro Boys of the Southern States,” Box 5, Folder: Plant Industry, DC, 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁴W. W. Long to Bradford Knapp, 16 March 1914, Box 4, Folder: South Carolina, 1913-1914; Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

production.¹⁵ (These numbers do not consider production by black laborers working on white-operated farms.) In South Carolina, cotton especially played a major role in the state's economy, accounting for 70 percent of the cash value of all the state's crops in 1910. As the price of cotton rose in the late 1910s, even tenants and sharecroppers had money to spend—a trend that by 1920 did not seem to be at an end.¹⁶

Of central interest to southern whites during this period was ensuring a stable pool of black labor that would cultivate and harvest cash crops in the region's labor-intensive agriculture. A variety of factors supported their logic: the neo-feudal agricultural system relied on cheap labor to be profitable, the racist assumptions that blacks were best suited to unskilled agricultural work, the cyclical cash poverty of even some of the "planter class," and a staple crop cotton agriculture which required meticulous care of plants all promoted the use of black labor in production. All these factors were at work in South Carolina.

Census statistics for the years 1910 through 1930 demonstrate that despite the demographic shift from a majority-black to a majority-white state population over these years, black farm labor—owners, tenants, sharecroppers, and laborers—remained essential to the South Carolina's economy. In 1910, there were 96,798 black farm families representing 734,141 persons and 79,636 white farm families representing 555,072 persons in rural South Carolina. South Carolina's total population at this time

¹⁵Smith and Horton, *Historical Statistics of Black America*, volume I: "Table 36: Crops: Main Crops Produced by Black Farmers, c. 1913," p. 25.

¹⁶Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 480-1; Fite, *Cotton Fields No More*, 94-5.

was 1,515,602.¹⁷ In 1920, Afro-Carolinians continued to be a demographic majority both generally where 864,719 blacks constituted 51.36 percent of the population and in the rural districts where 640,562 blacks constituted 59.6 percent of the rural population.¹⁸ Between 1920 and 1930 South Carolina's exodus of black farmers reached hemorrhagic proportions. In that decade, 158,222 persons left the state including 19,051 whites. Whites accounted for slightly more than 12 percent of the exodus but represented only a 4.4 percent decline in the farm population. The black exodus accounted for a 22.2 percent decline in the farm population.¹⁹ Whites surpassed blacks as the absolute population majority in 1923.²⁰ Still in 1930, blacks remained a majority of the rural population. The 497,954 blacks residing in rural South Carolina represented 54.3 percent of the farm population.²¹

The rural districts of South Carolina remained majority and even increasingly black as late as 1935. Blacks were legally prohibited from seeking employment in the state's emerging industries (see chapter 1). For those who could not or chose not to emigrate, farming provided the best opportunity for survival. However, the number of blacks in the rural districts was 237,000 less in 1930 than it had been in 1910, which

¹⁷Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States*, 585, 621.

¹⁸Smith and Horton, *Historical Statistics of Black America*, volume I: "Table 179: Population: Southern Farm Population, by Division and by States, 1920, 1930, and 1935," p. 144; volume II: "Table 1797: Distribution of Population by Sections, Divisions, and States, 1790-1930," p. 1586.

¹⁹Smith and Horton, *Historical Statistics of Black America*, volume I: "Table 178: Population: Change in Southern Farm Population, 1920-1930 and 1930-1935, by Divisions and States," p. 143.

²⁰Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 201.

²¹Smith and Horton, *Historical Statistics of Black America*, volume I: "Table 179: Population: Southern Farm Population, by Division and by States, 1920, 1930, and 1935," p. 144.

meant that labor was scarce, and probably more expensive particularly in the thirty-seven of South Carolina's counties in 1930 with cotton-based economies.²²

One would expect, given their fear of "negro domination," that whites would celebrate the exodus. However, by the late 1910s white South Carolinians had begun to focus on the "problem" of black emigration that they might once have counted a blessing. State agencies and the state's white citizens took note of the depletion of their labor supply and most sounded a note of concern. In its 1916 report, the South Carolina Boll Weevil Commission, which consisted of representatives from colleges, the press, and the political sphere, noted black migration from central southern states. The boll weevil, the inability to get credit for tenant farming, and the attraction of northern industrial centers whose immigrant labor pool had dried up as a result of World War I had led to significant black departures from Louisiana and Mississippi for northern industrial centers or southwestern agricultural centers. The report noted that the fight against the boll weevil could not be won unless the entire community cooperated. "The white people of the State [of South Carolina] should make the situation clear to the negroes and by helpfulness and consideration seek to retain them against the enticements which will undoubtedly be offered in this State, as it has been in other States, " the report recommended.

Among the recommendations the commission made were that "[t]he approaching problem should be explained to the negro labor, so that designing agents may not succeed in enticing it away; that landlords assure their tenants that *they would be provided for* [my emphasis] and that they could raise their own food as well as have a cow and a brood sow

²²Smith and Horton, *Historical Statistics of Black America*, volume II: "Table 1762: Distribution of Counties by State and County Types, 1930 - I," p. 1552.

for milk and meat production.” Such ideas served as the basis of what is called the “live at home program” which was offered to rural blacks. The program also encouraged reduction of expenses, and debt, as well as saving for a rainy day. Whites hoped, by these measures, to keep black labor on the farm through a three-year plan cycle proposed to short-circuit the boll weevil crisis.²³ The commission did not reveal its plans beyond that three-year period.

Following the lead of the commission, other sectors of the state’s bureaucracy began to focus on emigration as well. In June 1917 Thomas Cathcart, Jr., a state farm help specialist with the Clemson extension service, prepared a report on black migration for David R. Coker, who chaired the State Preparedness Committee. Cathcart’s report was based on interviews with various white county agents. It demonstrates the magnitude of migration as well as whites’ reliance on black labor. Cathcart’s use of the terms “farmers” and “county agent” in the report refers to whites and are used in that context in this discussion of his report. In Marion County, about 300 blacks left in June alone, as did about 5 percent of the laborers in Richland County. The county agents for Barnwell and Greenwood reported that there were 5 to 10 percent fewer workers than there had been in 1916. About 1,500 people had left Greenwood County. Four to five hundred left Aiken County; 1,000—an estimated 10 percent of the labor force—had left Anderson County in the northwestern part of the state and another 1,000 abandoned Marlboro county in the

²³“Boll Weevil: Report of the South Carolina Weevil Commission,” Senate Document 76, 67th Congress, 1st Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921), 6-7, 14, 19. This report was originally published by the Government Printing Office in 1917.

northeastern part. Sumter County bucked the trend.²⁴ While there seemed to be little emigration, the county agent reported general dissatisfaction of the workers.

Almost every county agent noted the need for laborers and dire consequences for farmers facing the labor shortage. The Lee County agent reported that farmers there could use about “25 percent more good farm labor . . . a good many cotton chopping and picking hands had left.” It was “impossible to hire . . . laborers” in Richland or Fairfield Counties. In McCormick County 50 percent of the farmers needed laborers. White farmers had mules they could not use because they lacked plow hands. Cathcart reported that farmers “had to take their children out of school early so as to get the crops worked,” and “they were having to do a great part of the work themselves.” “Some who could afford it purchased mechanical cultivators to deal with the shortage of plow hands.” Some even plowed under cotton acreage and planted food or forage crops.²⁵

Cathcart’s report contains recommendations similar to those of the commission:

1. Keep in close touch with the movement of negroes from the farms, and try to get an influential negro in each community to talk to them and show them that it is to their advantage to stay on the farms.
2. Put on a campaign this fall for more grain crops with more improved machinery to work with.
3. Try to get every farmer to show more interest in his tenants by giving them from one-half to one acre of land to plant garden and field crops for hog [sic] and cow [sic] and see that he keeps it worked well. Always allow the tennant [sic] to have all that he can make off of his patch, never charging

²⁴The situation in Sumter was probably different because of the presence of R. W. Westberry. John Wilson reports that after the Chamber of Commerce appointed Westberry to the post of “Food Administrator for the county, to work among colored citizens[,] This work was done so well that his fame reached the Agricultural Department at Washington, D. C.” Wilson, “Biography of Hon. Ransom W. Westberry,” *Life and Speeches of Ransom W. Westberry*, 19.

²⁵Thomas M. Cathcart to D. R. Coker, 28 June 1917, David R. Coker Papers, SCL.

him for the time that he takes off to keep it worked, nor for the teams required to work it.²⁶

These recommendations were conservative and only the second challenged the reliance on black labor. Even in his recommendations on food crops, Cathcart's proposal calls for whites to play a supervisory and permissive role that would perpetuate paternalism and white supremacy.

Local white opinion on migration and the need for black labor was mixed. Walter Edgar reports that some rural communities passed ordinances against labor recruiting. In one case a black man in McCormick County was discovered to have three train tickets in his possession and faced fines and jail time because he did not have a laborer recruiter's license.²⁷ T. J. Wise of Greenwood wrote to *The State* that blacks emigrated because they were mistreated, exploited, and victims of prejudice—even at the hands of foreign whites who immigrated to the state. Wise argued that even progressive whites were reluctant to support fairness for blacks publicly for fear of being labeled “‘a negro lover’.”²⁸ Wade H. Cooper, the President of the United Savings Bank, believed that blacks were emigrating because they were “misguided.” Quoting a *New York Times* editorial, Cooper suggested that blacks left the South because of the promise of high wages but found instead cold weather and that they were “incapable of meeting the requirements of living conditions . . . despite the wages they received.” Cooper encouraged every South Carolina newspaper to publish the editorial

²⁶Thomas M. Cathcart to D. R. Coker, 28 June 1917, David R. Coker Papers, SCL.

²⁷Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 486.

²⁸T. J. Wise, “Why Negroes Leave: Another Letter on the Migration Question,” *The State*, 15 April 1917.

as it will do a great deal toward enlightening the good, honest, hardworking negroes of the South as to what they may expect when they move North.

The South needs the negro and the negro needs the South, and it is far better for him to live and enjoy the sunshine and happiness of the South than it is for him to risk the charity of a soup kitchen in the North.

When the negro moves North, he necessarily enters into the keenest kind of competition, a competition that he has never known and which he is not prepared to meet.²⁹

The reports produced by groups concerned with the economic health of the state certainly prove that one part of Cooper's declaration was correct. The South, indeed, needed blacks. Statistics from 1913 show that black farmers produced great economic wealth for the region but little in the way of sustenance for themselves. Black farmers produced significant amounts of two food crops: sweet potatoes (12 million bushels and 21 percent of all production), and rice (20 million pounds and 9 percent of all production). While these two numbers are impressive, the statistics are silent on crucial issues that are needed to assess the significance of these numbers. Whether such production was for the market or personal consumption is unclear since the available data fails to mention the number of farmers involved in production of these food crops. Whether for market or not, the production of other food crops was negligible. The 100 million bushels of corn black-operated farmers produced was far below Midwest production and accounted for only 3.5 percent of the national yield. Wheat and oats for example, each accounted for less than one percent of national production. Four million bushels of wheat and 4.5

²⁹Wade H. Cooper, "When They Go North: Misguided Negroes Will Find Mistake Then," *The State*, 18 April 1917, 4.

million bushels of oats accounted for a mere 0.5 and 0.4 percent of production nationally.

The four million bushels of white potatoes accounted for 1 percent of national yield.³⁰

In 1909 in South Carolina, 54.1 percent of farms growing corn were operated by blacks, however, only 41.8 percent of the acreage was dedicated to growing corn. The yield and value of the crop was only 35% of the state's total. That same year, 56.2 percent of black farms reported growing cotton. Over half (53.4 percent) of the total acreage of black farms was dedicated to growing cotton and the yield was 47.9 percent of all cotton produced.³¹ While black farmers produced other food crops, the acreage and yield were less than that from cotton. The production of dry beans and peas was close to cotton statistics at 41.1 and 38.9 percent for acreage respectively; and 43 and 43.2 percent in yield respectively.³² With the exception of sweet potatoes, which accounted for 47.9 percent of the acreage but only 37.3 percent of the yield, cotton acreage and yield significantly exceeded the production of food crops in the state. Only 28.2 percent of black farm acreage was devoted to white potato production, which accounted for only 18.7 percent of the yield of the crop. The 27.7 percent of acreage in rice production

³⁰Smith and Horton, *Historical Statistics of Black America*, volume I: "Table 36: Crops: Main Crops Produced by Black Farmers, c.1913," p. 25.

³¹Smith and Horton, *Historical Statistics of Black America*, volume I: "Table 27: Crops: Corn Raised on Farms by Southern Division and State, 1909;" "Table 29: Crops: Cotton Raised on Farms by Southern Division and State, 1909," pp. 19, 20.

³²Smith and Horton, *Historical Statistics of Black America*, volume I: "Table 32: Crops: Dry Edible Beans Raised on Farms by Southern Divisions and State, 1909;" "Table 33: Crops: Dry Peas Raised on Farms by Southern Division and State, 1909," p. 23.

accounted for 20.3 percent of the yield. Only 29.6 percent of acreage was devoted to wheat, which provided 23.6 percent of the yield.³³

The percentages of crop yield remain relatively steady for those crops for which statistics are readily available for the end of the period. State statistics for 1920 show that cotton accounted for 55.8 percent of farmers' revenues and farmers received \$117,673,000 from the sale of cotton. While numbers were off the following year because of the boll weevil and falling prices, almost 50 percent of the farmers' revenues came from cotton.³⁴

The statistics demonstrate that black farmers could not feed themselves. This was not a new situation rather, it was the result of a historical decision made to reduce blacks to abject dependency to control both their labor and their lives. The staple crop agriculture and blacks forced dependency upon whites for the necessities of life seem to have developed in the early eighteenth century. Peter Wood argues that as masters in South Carolina colony became concerned about the increasing autonomy of their black slaves, they channeled black labor into staple crop production while restricting the range of employments they had been able to do in the colony's formative decades. The government passed laws that required the masters to provide slaves with food and clothing, and to control their slaves' free time. In Wood's view, the intent of these laws was to create a

³³Smith and Horton, *Historical Statistics of Black America*, volume I: "Table 45: Crops: Sweet Potatoes Raised on Farms by Southern Divisions and State, 1909;" "Table 40: Crops Potatoes Raised on Farms by Southern Division and State, 1909;" "Table 41: Crops: Rice Produced on Farms by Southern Division and State, 1909;" "Table 48: Crops: Wheat Raised on Farms by Southern Division and State, 1909," pp. 32, 28, 29, 34.

³⁴*Yearbook and Eighteenth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture, Commerce, and Industries of the State of South Carolina, 1921* (Columbia: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1922), 47.

“forced dependence.”³⁵ Therefore, a proposal that tenants be allowed to grow their own food, then, was a radical one that threatened the absolute dependency on whites that had been a center post of slavery, the sharecropping system and of southern white supremacy. Perhaps not since Jefferson Davis’s suggestion that slaves be emancipated to preserve southern independence had established southern leaders considered such heretical actions. It shows that, at least in the short run, South Carolina’s white leadership was willing to loosen the cord of dependency to protect the state’s economy.

However, it is equally clear that the reforms they promoted, like Davis’s propositions in his time, were conservative: these actions were not intended to elevate blacks to equality with whites but to make paternalism more secure. The justifications made for extension work included no discussion of improvement in social conditions or in political rights as a means of keeping black labor. The basic assumption was that migration was solely an economic phenomenon so whites offered an economic solution. It was also a solution whites may have believed they were capable of implementing on their own. While the boll weevil report noted the importance of extension agents in confronting the boll weevil crisis, it made no special mention of black extension work. While Cathcart noted the necessity of using “influential negroe[s],” he also failed to suggest a prominent role for black extension workers.

The recommendations and observations of public and private white South Carolina are significant. They demonstrate the accuracy of the *Colored American Magazine* and other sources that black labor was essential to southern prosperity.

³⁵Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), 196, 210.

Southern whites considered measures that benefitted blacks when those measures promoted white security. However, the solution to the problem of black labor was not simple. Charles E. Hall, writing in the *New York Age*, encouraged northern industrialists to deal with the European immigration quotas by hiring black southern farm laborers. "If the employment representatives of Northern industry are crying, as some newspapers report, for unskilled labor, they should canvass the rural districts in the South where there are thousands of colored farmers operating small farms under a 'cropper system' that will not permit them nor their children, nor their children's children to become owners." Hall's criticisms were leveled specifically at the sharecropping system, which restricted black autonomy. He even suggested that if recruiting were done in majority black counties, the exodus of blacks could alleviate the fear among whites of "Negro domination."³⁶

While some southerners believed that the appropriate action to deal with the labor situation was to be fairer to blacks, others shared Hall's pro-emigration views. An editorial in *The State* in the summer of 1917 stated that black migration was desirable. The state's devotion to staple crop plantation agriculture had crippled it in the editor's view and especially hurt "the average white man." The editorial opinion asserted that Taylor Kennerly, who wrote a series of letters to the *New York Evening Post* regarding black migration, was correct when he stated that "neglect to train the negro has held back the South and that the low scale of wages and standard of living of the negroes have been

³⁶Charles Hall, "Negro Farm 'Croppers' in the South Offer Large Labor Supply to the North," *New York Age*, 28 April 1923, n. p., Box 1, 1909-1923, Entry 17 AE, General Correspondence, Negroes, Records of the Secretary of Agriculture, RG 33, NA II.

a millstone about the neck of the poor white man as well.” The state’s industrial backwardness was caused, in part, because “the South has rumbled and bumped along in the same channels for fifty years and the negro’s relation to the white man has had more points of resemblance to the ante-bellum system than points of difference from it.”³⁷

While *The State* advocated black emigration, it recommended that it not be “too sudden and swift.” They decried attempts to prosecute labor agents because it “puts the slow moving mind of the negro farm-hand to thinking in a way that nothing else would . . . that he would better go while he can.” *The State*’s editors also disagreed with some of Kennerly’s conclusions—his assertion that the plantation system made blacks poorer than whites, for example. They asserted that independent black farmers were less successful than those who worked under white supervision were. *The State*, perhaps hoping to forestall alarm in the rural districts, also insisted that Kennerly was inaccurate in his assertion that blacks were migrating from rural areas to towns, (a statement that the migration history of African Americans refutes). The newspaper suggested that South Carolina blacks lived a dichotomous existence. They either were on the farms or had left for the North. Paradoxically while the newspaper’s editors encouraged northward migration, they also insisted “the negro’s opportunity is best in the South for the simple and sufficient reason that the room for him in the South has not been taken up.” While recognizing that the South had suffered economically from its failure to educate blacks, *The State* justified it because of Northern actions during Reconstruction, which they argued “deliberately undertook to displace Southern [white] civilization with black anarchy.” They pointed out that it was not until recently that northern whites and their

³⁷“More About Migration,” *The State*, 13 June 1917, 4.

newspapers began to assert “that ‘what the negro has wanted and should have been given was not social equality, but education and a square deal’.”³⁸

Negrophobic observers saw emigration as a positive event. William Watts Ball, the editor of the *South Carolina: A Handbook*, declared in 1927 that the loss of black farmers was not important because they had farmed marginal lands. More importantly, there was a “new freedom,” for “South Carolina has become at last a white state.”³⁹

Despite its obvious anti-black stance, during World War I *The State* published letters to the editor from whites that were temperate in tone, and which emphasized black patriotism. The newspaper prominently publicized the meetings of blacks in support of the war effort. However, as the war neared its end, white South Carolina’s matter-of-fact racism re-emerged in the public discourse. *The State*’s reference to Reconstruction as “black anarchy” is but one example. In 1919, former Governor Duncan Heyward weighed in on the subject by invoking the specter of black domination and the “lost cause.” Heyward lamented the fact that rather than becoming extinct, as expected once they were emancipated, the free black population had doubled its former numbers. But he found more alarming statistics he demagogically provided to readers of the front page of *The State*. He cited a national \$70 per capita statistic of black wealth, (total wealth of \$700,000,000) and land ownership of 21 million acres nationally, black ownership of banks, newspapers, colleges, black service in the military, and negro professionals as threats to white supremacy. Heyward saw these factors—as well as the state’s nearly equal black and white populations—as hindrances to more progressive treatment of the

³⁸“More About Migration,” *The State*, 13 June 1917, 4.

³⁹Devlin, *South Carolina and Black Migration, 1865-1940*, 285 citing W. W. Ball, *South Carolina: A Handbook* (Columbia, SC: n. p., 1927), 20.

black. "Our people as a rule are willing to accord the negro full justice and to give him ample opportunities to better his economic condition, in fact one difficulty with the advancement of our state today is that our negro laborers are not rising to their opportunities, but we are determined, of course, to keep governmental control of our State in the hands of the white man." Heyward called on the federal government to provide the same assistance to resolving the race problem in the South as it was giving to "questions which affect the territory and the government of various European, Asiatic and African peoples." To resolve the issue, Heyward recommended white immigration.⁴⁰ Heyward's recommendation was one that was considered in several southern states including Arkansas, where Zellar reports plans to invite "respectable northern European immigrants or whites from the Midwest to replace the departing Negroes."⁴¹

Two years later, the state's commissioner of agriculture, Bonneau Harris, weighed in on the situation. In a discussion of land tenure, he noted that declining farm size and dependence on cotton made white tenants "unable to make enough . . . to provide for the standard of living [they] should maintain." Harris also noted that when cotton had an economic windfall in 1918 and 1919 the state "had one great danger—that too much land would gravitate into the hands of an undesirable element." That it did not occur "is the

⁴⁰"Send White Men Heyward Urges: Immigrants Is South's Best Hope: . . .," *The State*, 9 February 1919, 1.

⁴¹Zellar, "H. C. Ray and Racial Politics in the African American Extension Program in Arkansas: 1915-1929," 440.

only comfort we are able to derive from the lesson of that period—the white farmer now has a better hold upon farm labor conditions than he would have had with cotton continuing at 40 cents a pound.”⁴² That specter of black property ownership (and perhaps a demand for citizenship rights) led Harris to a different conclusion about what needed to be done:

the greatest thing that could happen for this country would be to shut down on all immigration for a period of five years. The North would then absorb a lot of the negro population of the South and our farms would get down to a more business basis. It is the irresponsible negro cropper who makes it so difficult to handle the cotton crop situation. With him firmly in hand, the South would be better off industrially.⁴³

There is no indication that Harris took into account the national consequences of such a demographic shift. While most of the states’ white leadership may have shared Harris’s opinions to varying degrees, the reality of the state’s labor problems had to be addressed. Despite its black majority, South Carolina had passed laws to restrict labor “enticement” agents six times between 1891 and 1922. Under the 1922 law, agents paid a \$2,000 annual license fee—a \$1,500 increase over the former fee. “The laws regarding labor agents were designed to prevent laborers from leaving the state.”⁴⁴

While vacillation characterized the chasm between white belief and action, some white leaders began to face the difficulties of black migration head-on. When G. L. Toole of Aiken recommended to Governor Thomas G. McLeod that the Clemson Extension Service be prohibited from publishing black migration statistics because it “had the

⁴²*Yearbook and Eighteenth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture, Commerce, and Industries of the State of South Carolina, 1921*, 71.

⁴³*Yearbook and Eighteenth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture, Commerce, and Industries of the State of South Carolina, 1921*, 67.

⁴⁴Devlin, *South Carolina and Black Migration, 1865-1940*, 249-50.

‘psychological effect of increasing rather than decreasing the exodus of blacks’,” McLeod disagreed with Toole’s assessment. McLeod believed that to keep black labor in the state a way had to be found “to make farming more profitable.”⁴⁵ Whites were sometimes seconded in their views by the actions of black leaders they respected. In 1923, the USDA sent Thomas Campbell to northern industrial areas to investigate the causes of black emigration from the South. Campbell concluded that white landlords’ ill treatment of their tenants and sharecroppers was the root cause of the move. “If the South would give the Negro a fair chance economically,” said Campbell, “he would live productively in the South.”⁴⁶ Campbell’s affirmation of the economic-migration nexus, with no emphasis on financial independence or better social conditions for blacks, probably made federal officials even more comfortable with the limited programs southern extension offices developed for blacks.

Afro-South Carolinians challenged the notion that blacks were bad for southern farms. To its credit, *The State* printed refutations of such aspersions. Asa H. Gordon, a professor of history at South Carolina State College, challenged this notion in an editorial for the paper. Gordon’s pioneering revisionist assessment of blacks’ role in South Carolina’s history, *Sketches of Negro Life and History in South Carolina* was published in 1929. In the book, he includes the full text of his letter published in *The State* “[d]uring the height of the migration of Negro farm laborers from this state. . . .” Gordon argued that the paper’s support of recruitment of white farmers who would purchase and cultivate land and become productive members of the community was short-sighted. He

⁴⁵Devlin, *South Carolina and Black Migration, 1865-1940*, 269.

⁴⁶Jones, “Thomas M. Campbell: Black Agricultural Leader of the New South,” 49-50.

asks if it would “not be possible and practical, by giving the blacks now present in this state larger educational and economic opportunities, to inspire and satisfy them that they will, in larger numbers, be content to ‘buy the land, cultivate it themselves and thus become a permanent and valuable asset to their respective communities?’” Gordon inquires why, if the state prefers a community of independent small-holding citizens, blacks were not allowed to purchase land. “[W]hy not use the Negroes . . . rather than send to Europe or elsewhere at great expense for aliens who, although they may be easily assimilated, are not as well adapted to the South . . . ?” Gordon asserted that the response to this question should be to offer blacks these opportunities. Gordon then rhetorically speculated on the reason that the answer to the question might be negative:

It may be argued that such Negro citizens are not desirable; that this is to be a white man’s country, unless the Negro is content to remain permanently, in the mass, a body of laboring people without property, education, political rights and economic privileges.⁴⁷

Heyward’s remarks and Gordon’s apt assessment of white mentality illustrate whites’ visceral aversion to even a modicum of black independence. Like most demagogues, Heyward relied on the prejudices of his audience, who did not think about the rationality of his distorted statistics. Averages of wealth and land ownership obscured the condition of most blacks in America at that time. More than anything else, Heyward seemed concerned about the impact of black land ownership on the state’s agriculture. Blacks were closing the gap in acres per farm but not because they were farming larger parcels. In 1900, the average farm acreage for black farmers in the State was 44.4 while for whites it was 145.7. By 1920, black acreage per farm was 40.2 compared to 96.2 per

⁴⁷Gordon, *Sketches of Negro Life and History in South Carolina*, 161-62. Gordon provides no date for the letter to the editor, entitled: “*Are the Negroes of South Carolina a Potential Asset to the State?*”

white farm operator; and by 1930 it was 41 to 89.7 acres as white farmers continued to lose land, descend into tenancy, and leave the farm.⁴⁸ However, as late as 1920, more than half (53.7 percent) of the 83,683 farms operated by whites were operated by owners while only 20.9 percent of the 109,010 black farmers were owners of the land they tilled. White owners held 69.2 percent of the 8,046,672 acres of land farmed by whites in 1920. White tenants held 25 percent of that total. Black owners held 26.2 percent of the 4,380,003 acres farmed by blacks in 1920 while black tenants held 73 percent of the land farmed. White managers held 4.8 percent of all white-held acreage while black managers constituted only 0.85 percent of black farmers. Nearly a third (30.1 percent) of the tenants were “croppers,” a group that brought nothing to the farm but their labor; another 20.7 percent were share tenants—people who were slightly more independent because they had farm implements of their own.⁴⁹

Heyward was not alone in his disdain for black autonomy. For example, whites in Sumter County—which was 75 percent black—had a tenancy rate of 86 percent. Wages were low, and black illiteracy was at 95 percent. Yet, whites in Sumter County wanted to maintain a depressed wage scale and wanted to prevent black farm ownership. Their past experiences indicated that whenever blacks became owners white farmers moved away. Whites believed that if black farm ownership continued to increase “the entire county

⁴⁸Smith and Horton, *Historical Statistics of Black America*, volume I: “Table 99: Acreage/Square Miles: Average Farm Acreage by Farm Location in 1900 and 1910, and Change 1900-1910;” “Table 100: Acreage/Square Miles: Average Farm Acreage by Farm Location in 1920 and 1930,” 80-1.

⁴⁹*Yearbook and Eighteenth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture, Commerce, and Industries of the State of South Carolina, 1921*, 68-9.

might as well be turned over because agriculture was the major industry.”⁵⁰ There was strong opposition to measures that would enhance black independence. David Coker, on whose farm empty tenant cabins stood in 1924, was already upset at competition from seafood industries for workers. He opposed the Bonus Bill proposal that would have given World War I veterans a promised bonus sixteen years early because many South Carolina blacks were veterans. Coker, like many whites, believed that primal needs were an important coercive factor in black employment. If they had money, he believed, the veterans would not work and would make the labor shortage even worse.⁵¹

While whites could choose other employment options, blacks had limited economic opportunities. Heyward’s alarm was probably stimulated, in part, by the decline in whites’ ability to make a living on the farm and by the apparent prosperity of some black farmers. Momentary black economic progress was sufficient to inspire some black South Carolinians to protest disfranchisement and the glaring inequities of segregation at a statewide convention in 1919. White South Carolinians responded by reaffirming their commitment to white supremacy. James F. Byrnes in 1919 joined other whites to deny the war’s effects on black rights. Even the South Carolina Constructive League, which called for “just treatment of the negro and the cultivation of harmony between the races,” insisted that the “state shall be dominated by its white citizens.”⁵²

Heyward’s alarm over black property ownership and Cooper’s assertion that blacks were not suited to competitive society express what most whites probably took as

⁵⁰Devlin, *South Carolina and Black Migration, 1865-1940*, 270-1.

⁵¹Devlin, *South Carolina and Black Migration, 1865-1940*, 273-4.

⁵²Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 481.

a given. Their views can best be described as a “feudal-materialism,” which I define as the belief that economic improvement was possible without a commensurate expansion of individual rights and autonomy. Whites believed that economic improvements alone would ensure blacks’ happiness. They embraced the creeds of their slaveholding ancestors and the redeemer generation that blacks—as a barbaric people—had never been able to create a stable government or civilization and should therefore be barred from the ballot box and from the general public space to prevent their ineptitude from dragging down white civilization. Whites’ reservation of the more capitalistic programs of the extension program for whites only fits this logic.

Educating for Servility?: White Expectations of Black Extension Work

When we examine the activities and results of black extension work, we must recognize that in the years before 1930 these core assumptions of white South Carolinians—and of some whites at the federal level as well—influenced the design of black extension programs. Extension officials’ policies, the programs for blacks they approved, and white responses to black progress demonstrate whites’ limited desire to improve rural black life. The white community’s words and actions indicate that they hoped to create a productive but subordinate caste of workers for southern society.

Seaman A. Knapp made several remarks that must be considered disparaging to black ability to understand the concepts of scientific farming central to for-profit agriculture. In testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture in 1908, Knapp said that in extension work, detailed instructions, which it would take an intelligent man a month to

cover, had to be condensed so that the “common negro can understand them.”⁵³ Knapp made an extended statement on blacks as participants in extension work to extension agents at Macon, Georgia in September 1910:

In attempting to raise the condition of the colored man we frequently start too high up and in talking of the higher progress talk right over his head. When I talk to a negro citizen I never talk about the better civilization, but a better chicken, a better pig, a whitewashed house. Of the 150 negro schools, seminaries, colleges, etc. in the South three years ago very few were carrying out fully, to my mind, their proper mission. Many of them were trying to teach Latin and Greek, which would be of very little use to most of them. I know of a colored section where there were 6,000 colored people settled during the war and a school was started in 1865. They have been carrying on that school and it is costing \$26,000 a year. The managers of the school came to me year before last and said: “the condition of those people is worse than it was when we took hold of it. Go down there and see what the matter is.” I found they were teaching every child that knew anything at all to get away from that country. They were not influencing the people on the farm or helping them at all. . . . I said: “You are doing a great wrong. Why don’t you get at the people themselves and teach them something practical?”⁵⁴

“Something practical” most likely was staple agriculture with some subsistence farming added. There might also be some focus on improving black health—and thereby their capacity to work. Home food production increased the value of black labor to white landowners since they would not have to “carry” the croppers completely through the year with advances of food, clothing, or money. The concern for production of cash crops intersected well with southern whites’ goals of social and economic control over the black population that—in some areas—surrounded them.

⁵³U. S. Congress, (House), House Committee on Agriculture, *Hearings*, 60th Congress, 1st Session, January 22, 1908, 193.

⁵⁴Seaman A. Knapp, “The Mission of Cooperative Demonstration Work in the South,” USDA, Office of the Secretary, Circular No. 33, 1 November 1910, 4.

As Knapp's remarks show, whites seemed quite interested in channeling black economic life into areas regarded as appropriate by whites. As black extension work got off the ground, white interest in support for the work was probably an impediment to establishing a broad-based appeal for extension among rural blacks. The 1920 black home demonstration report from Connie N. Jones, the home agent in Charleston, remarks on white support of her work.

I am glad to be able to say that the white people are beginning to take note of and to comment favorably on my work in the county. Yesterday afternoon while waiting for the boat at Mt. Pleasant, to my surprise one of the big planters asked me if I had many folks out to the meeting. I told him 24, and he replied: "You should have had 100 or more, and we want you to stop at Seven Mile, too. When can you come to them?"⁵⁵

In Richland County, agricultural agent J. E. Dickson received strong support from local white officials. He made vital contacts with whites in a variety of ways. For example, in August 1923 he held a spraying demonstration at the home of Jeff B. Bates, a member of the state House of Representatives who resided in Richland County.⁵⁶

Governor Thomas G. McLeod spoke to some of Dickson's farmers in 1926 and "complimented the county agent and his advisory board on their work." Dickson's work received favorable responses in the white press, as well as from the county superintendent of education, and from business men and women.

Dickson frequently invited whites to be guest speakers at his county meetings. At a farmer's conference he held in September 1926, J. S. Edmunds, "one of the bankers and

⁵⁵Christine South, "Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work in South Carolina for 1920," (March 1921), pp. 45-6.

⁵⁶J. E. Dickson Narrative Report from December 1, 1922 to December 1, 1923, Of Work done by J. E. Dickson, Local Farm Demonstration Agent of Richland County," 8, Dickson Collection, SCL. Future reports will be cited as Narrative report with the year included.

largest merchants in Ridgeway, S. C.," spoke to a group of black farmers from that town. "He advised the farmers to stay in line and those who are not in line to line up with the extension work of the county because it is their only salvation."⁵⁷ Senator James H. Hammond attended a black farmer's conference in Richland County where he declared "that the only way the [black] farmers would succeed is to take instruction and follow the advice of their county agent. He said that he was proud to see the advancement the Negro farmers are making under the leadership of their agent and advised them to continue."⁵⁸ An article from *The Columbia Record* noted that state Representative R. Beverly Herbert was scheduled to speak at a farmers' conference as well.⁵⁹ Dickson noted that Herbert was "a strong supporter of my work" and said that Herbert "gave a very strong and forceable address on Cooperation to a congregation of about 2,300." Dickson's work was so well received by local white officialdom that his state legislative delegation appropriated \$600 to purchase the movie equipment he used to show government films "as their appreciation of my work in the county."⁶⁰

Dickson's work in Richland County was so successful that it also served the propaganda needs of white racist apologists. Dickson's work was cited in an 11 July 1930 article in *The State* as an example of the influence that black agricultural agents had in their communities and to refute statements from Carter G. Woodson's book, *The Rural*

⁵⁷Dickson, Narrative report for 1925-1926, p. 3, Dickson Collection, SCL.

⁵⁸"Negro Farmers In Annual Conference," *The State* (Columbia, SC), 13 August 1928, p. 1, Dickson Collection, SCL.

⁵⁹"Negro Farmers to see Movies: Representative Herbert will address Richland agriculture Conference," *The Columbia (SC) Record*, n. p., August 1929, Dickson Collection, SCL.

⁶⁰Narrative report for 1928-1929, 2, Dickson Collection, SCL.

Negro. The article disagreed with a statement by Woodson's "man in the field," [John McKinley]. McKinley had visited the state and through interviews and observations determined that extension work among black Farmers is "'sometimes opposed by planters,' because [it is] 'considered prejudicial to the interests of the landed aristocracy.' "

The newspaper insisted that the situation Woodson described did not apply to South Carolina. The editors specifically cited Dickson, "whose intelligent labors among his people *The State* [my italics] has known of in a general way for some years, without having once heard of any obstacles being interposed by planters or any other interest."⁶¹

I do not wish to imply that Dickson was an "Uncle Tom" who supported the *status quo*. His actions in his own behalf that are discussed in chapter two make it clear that he chafed under the system of segregation. Dickson seems to have successfully mastered the art of serving multiple interest groups in ways that left everyone satisfied—a talent that any black agent who expected longevity in employment had to develop. R. S. Wilkinson was pleased with the publicity that Dickson garnered for black work and congratulated Dickson "on the marvelous success you are making by which a very high regard for the work of colored agents throughout the State is being estimated and measured."⁶²

Despite such accolades and apparent support for black extension work, the reality was more complex. Even when whites supported the program, they always wanted it distinctly understood that the black program was subordinate to the white program. When the results of this program are assessed, that reality must be considered. The limits of the

⁶¹*The State*, 11 July 1930, 4.

⁶²R. S. Wilkinson to J. E. Dickson, 11 July 1930, Folder 92, SCSUHC. Woodson's discussion of South Carolina will be treated below.

progressive impulse must be also considered if one wishes to accurately gauge the program and its results. We must examine the program through the prism of race. Daniel Singal points out—and this work has demonstrated—that the Progressive era “witnessed the most virulent display of racism in American History.” Anti-black feeling extended outside the South. Its objective of “[k]eeping the Negro and others of dubious skin color at the margins of American life was indispensable to realizing the progressive vision of a homogenous society.”⁶³

White interest in and support of black extension work came, in part, from the desire to create a homogenous society. Blacks would play their role to support U.S. dominance but they would be almost invisible when it came time to reap the bounties they helped to create. Nothing makes that more clear than Thomas Bailey’s explanation of the racial creed of white southerners, several points of which are germane to this discussion: “negro[es]” were to be forever inferior without social or political equality; “[t]he status of peasantry is all the negro may hope for, if the races are to live together in peace[;]” and the education of the “negro” should be industrial “as will best fit him to serve the white man.”⁶⁴ Black farmers might become more productive but whites would reap the profits. Hoke Smith made that abundantly clear when he asserted that “the profit from his [the white landlord’s] land comes from the net return that the negro must bring from the soil.”⁶⁵

⁶³Daniel Joseph Singal, “Ulrich B. Phillips: The Old South and New,” *The Journal of American History* 63, no. 4 (March 1977): 880.

⁶⁴Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 181 citing Thomas Bailey, *Race Orthodoxy in the South* (New York: The Neal Publishing Company, 1914), 92-3.

⁶⁵*Hearings, Report, and Debate: Smith-Lever Act of 1914*, 3064.

The extension programs show the racial limits of progressivism as a means to provide equality of opportunity to all Americans. The issue of children's club work, mentioned briefly in chapter two, further illustrates the institutional obstacles to blacks' equal participation in—and benefit from—extension programs. As club work coordinator for the USDA, Oscar B. Martin resisted organizing clubs for black girls. When it became evident that black girls' clubs would be organized, the South Carolina native wrote Bradford Knapp a memorandum regarding the new program's structure. Martin warned Knapp that black girls' club work should be sharply distinguished from white girls' club work. He suggested that black girls wear different uniforms, that their clubs be called "Home Maker's" clubs rather than canning clubs, and that they should not be encouraged to get into the "business of canning."⁶⁶ In the memorandum proposing the creation of "Agricultural Improvement Clubs" for black boys, I. W. Hill also made it clear that not only were the black boys' clubs to have different emblems from the [white] boys' clubs, "[t]hey should under no circumstances, be brought into competition [with white boys' clubs]."⁶⁷ It is evident through the examples given above that a separate and *unequal* system prevailed in extension services as in society at large.

Extension program objectives for blacks were narrowly focused and paternalistic, limited by white extension officials' conscious and unconscious racism. Whites believed that improved conditions for blacks could only occur within a framework that fed whites' need to believe that blacks were satisfied with their present status in society and would

⁶⁶Bradford Knapp to O. B. Martin, 1 December 1913; Memorandum for Mr. Knapp [from O. B. Martin], 2 December 1913, Box 4, Folder: South Carolina, 1913-1914, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁶⁷I. W. Hill to J. A. Evans, 28 September 1914, Box 5, Folder: Plant Industry, DC, 1914-1915, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II. Clubs for white boys included Corn Clubs, Cotton Clubs, Potato Clubs, Peanut Clubs, and Pig Clubs. All of these clubs emphasized an entrepreneurial approach.

not challenge white supremacy. Keeping black children from direct competition with white children, or denying them the right to use the same emblems were obvious markers of the social separation the South valued. The explicit proscription of black girls' participation in "business" is most telling of white southerners' motivations. Even in women's work, the intent to limit the scope of program offerings was clear. In the 1921 women's work report, Christine South notes the restricted nature of the black women's program as it focused on food production and disease prevention.⁶⁸ Certainly, the program represented the most pressing needs of black families. With limited periods of employment in the early years, black home demonstration work could not be expected to move beyond subsistence.

White South Carolinians' approach to extension work was utilitarian but also racially elitist—the greatest good for the program had to accrue to white landowners and other whites who would move from the tenant to property-owning classes. Blacks were to become content and healthy workers who would be economically productive, while being fully aware of the distinct character of their supportive position within southern staple agriculture. Indeed, Agricultural Commissioner Harris's 1922 annual report said as much. "To make every tenant farmer a landowning farmer would not be desirable or even practicable. There are many, particularly in the case of the negro, who thrive better as share-tenants and croppers under the close supervision of white landlords than they would

⁶⁸Christine South, "Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work in South Carolina for 1921," (January 1922), p. 49; *Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of Clemson Agricultural College*, (1918), 125.

were they their own bosses, and it is better for the economic well-being of the common-wealth that they remain so.”⁶⁹

A letter W. W. Long wrote to E. W. Sikes, President of Clemson College, demonstrates this assertion. It reads in part:

The work among the negroes is growing more important each year. Some little time ago a white farmer, one of the most prominent [sic] in Anderson County, [the county line begins less than ten miles from the college] came into my office to express his appreciation of the services of our negro agent in his county. He made this statement: That the negro agent had visited him to discuss just how he (the agent) could be of help in aiding him in controlling [sic] and directing his negro tennants [sic]. After talking the matter over he indicated how he thought the agent could best serve him. The agent requested permission to hold a meeting of the planter's tennants and discuss with them those things that the planter was anxious to have them undertake. The meeting was held and the negro agent has continued to visit from time to time, advising the tennants. The planter stated that the attitude of his negro tennants had been absolutely changed and that they were now carrying out instructions that here-to-fore were impossible for him to enforce. In this way the negro agents are serving large white owners and they are opening up a new field of service, not only for the white land owners but for the colored tennants.⁷⁰

This “new field of service,” based on this description, is one in which the agent steps into the space occupied by the slave driver in antebellum years. Without a transcript of the agents' remarks to the farmer, it is uncharitable to indict his approach. Such language was probably important to getting the agent in the door. To his white supervisors, the black agent was “serving large white landowners”—not blacks. It is also important to note that through assisting a white man in controlling his tenants, the agent secured esteem for the black program with white extension officials. Noticeably absent from Long's account was any hint of the effects the agent had on the lives of the blacks.

⁶⁹Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 239 citing *Yearbook and Nineteenth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture, Commerce, and Industries* [1922], 138.

⁷⁰W. W. Long to E. W. Sikes, 14 May 1928, Series 32, Box 106, Folder 16, STICUL.

Education for Autonomy?: Black Expectations of Extension Work

By even the strictest definition, Afro-South Carolinians of the first third of the twentieth century were a subaltern people. High illiteracy, borne of inadequate schools, poverty, and exploitation left their voices as silent as those of their slave ancestors—if they were not slaves themselves. To recover their experiences, we have to search the interstices of the public record where they become visible. Historians routinely use this method in African American history, re-reading the texts left by whites to uncover alternative meanings. This study of extension work benefits from the resource of more sympathetic informants—black extension agents who shared the disadvantages of caste with their clients. While extension agents clearly were not disinterested reporters since their jobs depended on successful work, their approach to serving their clients was one that recognized the potential of their fellow blacks to become successful if given a chance.

For the most part, published reports of the work of black agents before 1930 emphasized economic comfort rather than independence and avoided political and social equality issues—even when the clients were independent black landowners. Indeed, demographics from the 1918 report shows that few black landowners benefitted from black extension programs—despite prior claims that this small population was the only one black agents could advise. The agents visited 1,741 farmers of which 988 were enrolled as demonstrators. Statistics that are more specific are provided only for the demonstrators, of which 856 (86.64 percent) were *not* farm owners, while 132 (13.36 percent) owned their farms. Most of the farmers (86.9 percent) were not self-sufficient,

while 13.1 percent were. Slightly more than 95 percent of the farmers were unable to trade on a cash basis while 4.66 percent were.⁷¹ The focus on dependent farmers was most likely a general trend. For example, by the early 1920s H. C. Ray, a Booker T. Washington protégé and leader of black extension work in Arkansas, decided that he needed to shift the emphasis of his program to include black tenants and sharecroppers.⁷²

Not only were black landowners a minority of those served by South Carolina's extension programs, the majority of the programs provided did not support independence. A crude analysis of the annual reports for the 1910s and 1920s confirms that for blacks, extension work consisted mostly of subsistence programs. The 1916 report that describes work with black landowners notes an agents' conference where L. S. Wolfe, the white county agent for Orangeburg County gave a talk on "practical agriculture." The report further notes that "special stress is placed upon the production of home supplies for the family and stock, and upon the improvement of sanitary and home conditions."⁷³ The 1918 report quoted Wilkinson, who asserted that "[e]verywhere—along the line the gospel of food production and food conservation is being carried, and it is having a tremendous effect upon our people."⁷⁴ Similar remarks appear in the 1919 annual report where the two black programs selected for emphasis were the "Better Gardens" cam-

⁷¹*The Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of Clemson Agricultural College*, (1918), 135.

⁷²Zellar, "H. C. Ray and Racial Politics in the African American Extension Program in Arkansas: 1915-1929," 439.

⁷³*Annual Report of the Demonstration and Extension Work in the State of South Carolina For Calendar Year, 1916*, 132.

⁷⁴*The Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of Clemson Agricultural College*, (1918), 135.

paign, which emphasized year-round home gardens, and the “Dairy Cow” program, which promoted using more milk and butter in the black diet.⁷⁵

As the 1920s went by, food production became an increasingly prominent part of the black extension program because of economic conditions, eventually became a larger part of the program than cotton production. Statistics for 1920 are incomplete on cotton and corn crops so it is not possible to determine the average size of these demonstration plots. Among black farmers, total acreage and participant figures for food and forage crops show that in most cases little acreage was devoted to these crops in the early years of the decade as it was the heyday of cotton prices. The average size of demonstrations in oats was 25.28 acres; in wheat 4.11 acres, and in Spanish peanuts, 4.47 acres.⁷⁶ The 1921 figures show that about 10 percent more acreage was devoted to cotton than to either corn or oats. The average cotton demonstration plot was 50 percent larger than a corn plot and 75 percent larger than an oat demonstration plot.⁷⁷ Soon food production, preservation, and preparation was important in both men’s and women’s work. In his 1920 report, State Extension Director Long noted that South Carolina farmers planted 820,000 acres more in food crops than in cotton.⁷⁸ That trend is reflected in statistics on cotton demonstrations. By 1920 the main thrust toward diversification had arrived along with the boll weevil. Among blacks, there were 125 cotton demonstrations that year, about 25 percent

⁷⁵*The Thirtieth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of Clemson Agricultural College*, (1919), 129-30.

⁷⁶“What the Agricultural Extension Service is Doing for South Carolina . . . 1920,” 94-5.

⁷⁷*The Thirty-second Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of Clemson Agricultural College*, (1921), 154-5.

⁷⁸“What the Agricultural Extension Service is Doing for South Carolina . . . 1920,” 1.

of the nearly 500 enumerated demonstrations.⁷⁹ In 1922, the number of cotton demonstrations plummeted to 38 on 670 acres.⁸⁰

By 1923—the next year for which averages can be computed—cotton demonstration acreage dropped precipitously, almost 66 percent. The number of demonstrations increased to 54 but the total acreage involved was only 306.⁸¹ This was the year after the bottom dropped out of the cotton market and the black exodus that left South Carolina a majority-white state. Cotton acreage was less than half the acreage in forage crops. The size of corn and wheat demonstration plots exceeded those of cotton demonstrations by 15 and 20 percent respectively.⁸² Reports from the middle of the 1920s are scant. Those that are available are short and provide no statistical information on black farmers. Walter Edgar reports that the state experienced a \$2 million deficit.⁸³ By 1928, the number of persons involved in black agricultural demonstrations had declined to 712 with only 86 (12.1 percent) involved in cotton demonstrations.⁸⁴ Keeping blacks on the farm through subsistence while reducing the acreage they planted in cotton provided a labor force but would also allow whites to reap the profits of cotton production if, as expected, reduced acreage would lead to increased cotton prices.

⁷⁹“What the Agricultural Extension Service is Doing for South Carolina . . . 1920,” 95.

⁸⁰*The Thirty-third Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of Clemson Agricultural College*, (1922), 154.

⁸¹*The Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of Clemson Agricultural College*, (1923), 103.

⁸²*The Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of Clemson Agricultural College*, (1923), 103-4.

⁸³Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 489.

⁸⁴*CNIAMC*, 32 (1928): 25.

Building People: The Work of Black Home Demonstration Agents

The early work in the black women's program began around the same time as the shift toward food production and disease prevention. Christine South, the white State Agent for Home Demonstration work, stated that black home demonstration work "followed the same plan in beginning the work that was used with our white work." What South meant by this is unclear. She may have been alluding to the girls' tomato clubs that pre-dated the formal extension program with women. The black "assistants," as Miss South referred to the early black agents focused primarily on winter gardens, canning, and bread making and prevention of malaria, typhoid, and tuberculosis.⁸⁵

Long's 1921 report lists six goals, all of which address agricultural production for domestic consumption. Black agents emphasized year-round food crop cultivation. Black home agents promoted diversified diets as a way to strengthen the body to combat diseases. Food production and conservation constituted the most popular part of the black extension program. In 1922 black home agents reported that over 9,000 women were involved in home and winter garden demonstrations and they estimated the value of the canned fruits and vegetables black women produced in excess of \$79,000.⁸⁶ Statistics for 1925 show that club members canned 23,462 quarts of fruits and vegetables, made 4,230 quarts of jelly and preserves, 2,426 quarts of pickles and dried over 6,765 pounds of fruits

⁸⁵"What the Agricultural Extension Service is Doing for South Carolina . . . 1920," 91-2.

⁸⁶Fitzgerald, ". . . Report of Negro District Agent . . . 1922," 3.

and vegetables.⁸⁷ Agents encouraged farm women who participated in extension programs to use more dairy products in rural homes and worked to incorporate milk into rural school diets.⁸⁸

The employment of black women to promote food production goals met Hastings Hart's recommendation that all forces be mobilized to address this critical area of civic preparedness.⁸⁹ But the agents' work went beyond food production and preservation to attempt to affect cultural norms as well. Fitzgerald writes in her report that "valuable instruction has been given in proper serving, fundamental table manners and decorative methods and artistic arrangement of a table have not been left out. One is much gratified at the neat, white, clean appearance of the tables."⁹⁰

After the war, white supervisors shifted the emphasis of the women's program. Public health issues seem to have become the primary focus of the black Home Demonstration program. However, this shift in focus, like food production, was not an obvious threat to white supremacy. During the summer of 1920, the agents received summer training on malaria, typhoid, and tuberculosis prevention from employees of the Anti-Tuberculosis Association and the South Carolina State Health Department. "In such a brief period," wrote Christine South in 1921, "the agents must necessarily attempt a rather restricted program of work. It has been our aim to strike at the fundamental problems in the life of our colored people, such as unsanitary home surroundings, poorly prepared

⁸⁷Dora Boston, "Report of Dora E. Boston, State Supervisor of Colored Demonstration Agents, 1925," 20.

⁸⁸Fitzgerald, ". . . Report of Negro Home Demonstration Agent . . . 1922," 1.

⁸⁹Hart, *The War Program of the State of South Carolina*, 7-8, 14.

⁹⁰Fitzgerald, ". . . Report of Negro Home Demonstration Agent . . . 1922," 3.

food, [and] lack of a balanced ration. . . . Some good work has been done by the agents in sewing, canning, cooking, gardening, nutrition, sanitation, and the prevention of tuberculosis, typhoid, and malaria.”⁹¹

Black home demonstration agents’ work was essential in slowing the spread of infectious disease. No doubt, white concern about germ transmission was made urgent by the deadly influenza epidemic of 1918 and the historically pandemic nature of communicable diseases among rural blacks. Eradication of disease among rural blacks meshed well with Christine South’s goals for white women’s extension work. In her 1920 report South noted the increased contact between white farm homes and the “outside world.” “If the laundress has tuberculosis or lives in a house laden with tubercular germs,” she wrote, “the disease invades the [white] home.” Although she cited this example to illustrate the importance of white women’s extension work, it certainly underscored the necessity of work with black women, many of whom worked as laundresses or domestics for white families, as well. It would do the white farm wife little good to “disinfect” a laundress or cook, who washed laundry in or returned home to a germ laden community and transferred the contagions of their environment to back to white homes. In this respect, the work of black women agents benefitted whites as well.

Disease prevention programs were, for the most part, well-received. Fannie Archey, the Marion County home demonstration agent, reported in 1920 that in her three months of summer work, she demonstrated how to bathe a child with fever, directed the cleaning of ten ditches, and her clients screened sixteen sick rooms. Agents supervised

⁹¹Christine South, “Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work in South Carolina for 1920,” 45-6; Christine South, “Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work in South Carolina for 1921,” 49.

the cleaning and oiling of ditches to eradicate mosquitoes, and showed their clients how to make garbage containers. Connie Jones reported that she distributed disinfectant. With the help of white state officials, Dora Boston, the agent for Colleton County in 1922, referred several clients to the county's health nurse where they received treatment. Local white authorities also helped her establish a two-day clinic. The state tuberculosis association sent two speakers to the clinic and one of its nurses went to meetings with Boston to make speeches on tuberculosis prevention. That same year, Erbanna English, the Hampton County agent, held a county fair where a representative of the Anti-Tuberculosis Association gave a talk. In 1924 the Richland county agent, Frances Thomas, obtained free medical treatment for several of her clients.⁹²

At times, working to improve rural blacks' health was not always an easy task because some had become resigned to their fate. Dora Boston recalled that when she approached a man about cleaning a ditch to prevent malarial mosquitoes from breeding he remarked "I've had this fever for years and most people around here have it. I'll just have to work before it comes on because I am not much good afterwards." However, his was not the general response.⁹³

The campaign to improve black health had been carried on for some time by black leadership. Booker T. Washington established Negro Health Day in 1914 that expanded to National Negro Health Week in 1915.⁹⁴ Better black health was also a goal of many

⁹²"What the Agricultural Extension Service is Doing for South Carolina . . . 1920," p. 93; Fitzgerald, ". . . Report of Negro Home Demonstration Agent . . . 1922," p. 3; Boston "1924 Narrative Summary . . .," p. 10, 12.

⁹³Boston, "Annual Narrative Report . . . 1923," 6.

⁹⁴Harlan, *Wizard of Tuskegee*, 235-36.

black Women's clubs. In South Carolina, where black extension workers were active in disease prevention, there is no record of their participation in this national effort before 1924. After 1924 the black agents committed themselves to it. During Health Week in 1924 participants cleaned yards, livestock pens and homes while over 430 school children wrote and read papers on health.⁹⁵ Aspects of personal hygiene, many of which in our modern world are taken for granted, were unheard of in many corners of rural black South Carolina. In 1924, black home agents established sixty-five extension clubs and developed a Head to Foot Club to promote personal hygiene and to improve personal appearance. Dora Boston insisted that emphasizing personal appearance helped in forming "the habit of cleanliness" through which "homes would be affected." Agents taught club members how to wash and comb their hair, how to care for their skin and teeth, how to make clothes (including underwear), and how to dress properly.⁹⁶

By 1930, black Home Agents clearly embraced public health as part of their mission. Under the heading "Negro National Health Week," Nettie L. Kenner reported that the home agents' health programs focused on eradication of malaria, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, and pellagra—these first three were problems that Christine South had black home agents attacking at the start of the decade. Agents gave talks, engaged public health nurses, and even showed movies to get out the health message. In Spartanburg, for

⁹⁵Boston, "Annual Narrative Report . . . 1923," p. 6; Boston, "1924 Narrative Summary . . .," p. 10; "Report of the President," *CNIAMC*, 33 (1929): 29.

⁹⁶Boston, "1924 Narrative Summary . . .," 2.

example, the movies “‘Tuberculosis’, ‘Deadly Fly’, [and] ‘Comedy on Small Pox’” were shown.⁹⁷

Even agricultural agents were involved in public health improvement, though on a specifically environmental basis. The 1920 report of their work included the following statistics: ten home water systems installed, 1,200 home sanitary conditions improved, and 150 homes screened against flies.⁹⁸ The agents continued health work the next year when they helped install thirty water systems, improved sanitary conditions at 221 homes, built 66 sanitary toilets, and screened 99 homes.⁹⁹ The 1925 report states that “many homes were screened and numerous other things done to assure health.” In 1928, eight homes were screened as part Negro Health Week and 62 screened the next year.¹⁰⁰

Despite these early efforts, Carter G. Woodson documents a continuing crisis in southern rural health in the 1920s in his survey of black rural life, *The Rural Negro*. He points to the lack of knowledge about germ transmission among “Negro peasants” as a major cause of ill health. Germ theory had “just begun to have a hearing, and few of them [blacks] have been converted so such doctrines.” Woodson argued that many blacks believe that diseases “result in the natural course of things, or they come as the vengeance of God to afflict the wicked.”¹⁰¹ More importantly, Woodson cites the limited commit-

⁹⁷Nettie L. Kenner, “South Carolina 1930 Narrative Summary of Annual Report of Nettie L. Kenner, Home Demonstration Agent,” pp. 11, 14, Folder 92, “Extension Work Matters, B-W-1929-1933,” SCSUHC.

⁹⁸“What the Agricultural Extension Service is Doing for South Carolina . . . 1920,” 96.

⁹⁹*The Thirty-third Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of Clemson Agricultural College*, (1922), 155-56.

¹⁰⁰CNIAMC, 29 (1925): 23; CNIAMC, 32 (1928): 27.

¹⁰¹Carter G. Woodson, *The Rural Negro* (n. p., 1930, repr. ed. New York: Russell & Russell, 1969), 6-7.

ment of state governments to improvement of black health. Specifically Woodson cites opposition to public taxation for education generally, and stronger opposition to black education. There was no consensus on what constituted proper health education programs. Black teachers lacked appropriate training and there were inadequate and limited faculties for training black personnel. As a result, blacks' chances of surviving tuberculosis, for example, were 1 in 25.¹⁰²

Broadening Horizons: The Life of the Agents and Their Clients

While practical aspects of the program were certainly needed and the logic behind their implementation was sound, blacks in South Carolina were not uninterested in the aesthetic aspects of rural life or in acquiring material comforts like their white neighbors. With few exceptions the summaries written by Christine South focused more on health and food. General reports written by blacks after 1921 offer a more rounded view of black clients.

Once Mattie Mae Fitzgerald took over as the first black supervisor of work for black women there was consistent inclusion of gender-centered programs—ones intended for pleasure of the homemaker rather than the family economy—in the women's program including such activities as flower-making and ornamental gardening.¹⁰³ Fitzgerald may have suggested some adjustment in emphasis to include such programs.

South's and Fitzgerald's reporting practices point to the difference between white and black emphasis for the program. Black home agents reported better home conditions;

¹⁰²Woodson, *The Rural Negro*, 8-13.

¹⁰³Fitzgerald, "... Report of Negro District Agent . . . 1922," pp. 1, 3-4.

their white supervisors' reports emphasized "unsanitary home surroundings."¹⁰⁴ In her 1920 report, South recites a visit by Connie N. Jones to a client: "There was neither knife nor fork in the house. She had to cut her food with a carving knife with no handle. Jones showed the housekeeper how she could save elsewhere to buy utensils. When Jones visited her month later, the housekeeper had a nice set of knives and forks and declared her intention of buying a cooking stove."¹⁰⁵ Most interior improvements usually consisted of more efficient re-arrangements of furniture because money for new items was scarce. Some piecemeal repairs were made to homes probably by recycling wood from dilapidated outbuildings that the clients tore down. Black women also demonstrated higher aspirations for their surroundings. In 1922, 10 women installed cabinets in their homes and 5 women purchased stoves. In 1924 some women in Jones' Charleston County built kitchens, and replaced boxes used for steps with real steps.¹⁰⁶

Black men also spent time on aesthetic and comfort improvements. Through their efforts in 1920, for example, 10 farm families installed modern plumbing in their homes, 65 installed electric lighting, 725 improved their yards, 75 (some of whom are probably included in the 725 already noted) removed stumps from their property, and 40 terraced sloped portions of their property to prevent erosion.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴Christine South, "Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work in South Carolina for 1921," p. 49.

¹⁰⁵Christine South, "Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work in South Carolina for 1920," p. 46.

¹⁰⁶Fitzgerald, ". . . Report of Negro District Agent . . . 1922," pp. 3-4; "What the Agricultural Extension Service is Doing for South Carolina . . . 1920," pp. 91-3; Boston, "1924 Narrative Summary . . .," pp. 9-12; "Report of the President," *CNIAMC*, 33 (1929): 28-29.

¹⁰⁷"What the Agricultural Extension Service is Doing for South Carolina . . . 1920," 96.

Basic cleanliness was important. While efforts in this area were minimal in 1923, by 1924 home agents assisted in cleaning and scrubbing 1,237 homes and 573 yards. Whitewash was an essential beautifying agent. Dora Boston reported 196 houses and 32 outhouses were whitewashed in 1924. Several of J. E. Dickson's reports include mentions of home and barn white washings for beautification. Dickson's reports also suggest that aesthetic concerns extended beyond the home. In his 1925 report, Dickson notes that he also worked on school beautification and encouraged "25 farmers, their wives, and school teachers to clean their home and school yards and to beautify them with flowers, shrubbery and trees. . . ." ¹⁰⁸ Such activities represent the rudimentary subversiveness of black extension work. If, as Dora Boston suggested, personal cleanliness created a desire to clean the home, certainly better care of the improvement of their surroundings led to more personal pride in their community among black clients. After freedom, South Carolina whites continued to believe that blacks needed outside force to live successfully in civilized society. Such self-directed improvements would have seemed beyond the ability of whites' stereotypical old time black who happily lived amid squalor.

Blacks were also interested in home ownership. In 1921 black agricultural agents helped erect 69 buildings, improve 54, and plan 20 more. In all likelihood some of these buildings were farm homes. J. E. Dickson initiated a community competition for home building. In the Hopkins community, the completion of a "modern seven room home" by J. D. Clarkson inspired two of his neighbors to build homes of their own. Fitzgerald reports that 181 homes were repaired, 24 were remodeled and 41 new homes were

¹⁰⁸J. E. Dickson, "Narrative Report from December 1, 1924 to December 1, 1925," p. 9, Dickson Collection, SCL; Boston, "Report of Dora E. Boston, . . . 1924," p. 10.

constructed in 1922.¹⁰⁹ However, home ownership for Negroes was not a high priority for whites in the state. W. W. Long made a speech in 1923 in which he observed sixty-five percent of the farmers in the state were tenants. He noted that because 9,000 white families had moved to the mills and thousands of blacks had migrated out of the state, large estates were declining in value. Long argued that a problem faced the state: "How to assist the 38,000 white families who now reside on the farms as tenants to become permanent settlers through home ownership. . . ." Long argued that land ownership was essential [for whites?]. Quoting James J. Hill, Long stated that "land without population is a wilderness, and population without land is a mob." Yet his interest was only in finding a method by which white tenants could move into the ranks of property holders.¹¹⁰ Presumably, the black mob would be well in hand through the operation of white supremacy. The black agents' reports should have suggested to whites that blacks were interested in owning their own homes and making them comfortable for their families. Black women were not housekeepers but homemakers as white women were. Yet whites consistently omitted references to black home ownership in their synthesis reports.

Whites in Sumter County's hostility to black home ownership has already been discussed. Whites there were not alone in their desire to keep blacks dependent. Sarah E. Godbold and G. A. Williamson's study of Marion County concluded that blacks left that county as well because of the inability to become home owners. Whites opposed black home ownership because dependency meant that blacks remained under white supervi-

¹⁰⁹W. W. Long, "The Extension Service, Annual Report for 1921," 30, Series 33, Box 1, Folder 2, STICUL; J. E. Dickson, "Narrative report for 1925-1926," pp. 3-4, Dickson Collection, SCL; Fitzgerald, ". . . Report of Negro District Agent . . . 1922," pp. 3-4.

¹¹⁰Speech by W. W. Long to encourage the creation of the State Land Ownership Board of South Carolina, c. 1923, Series 32, Box 103, Folder 1, STICUL.

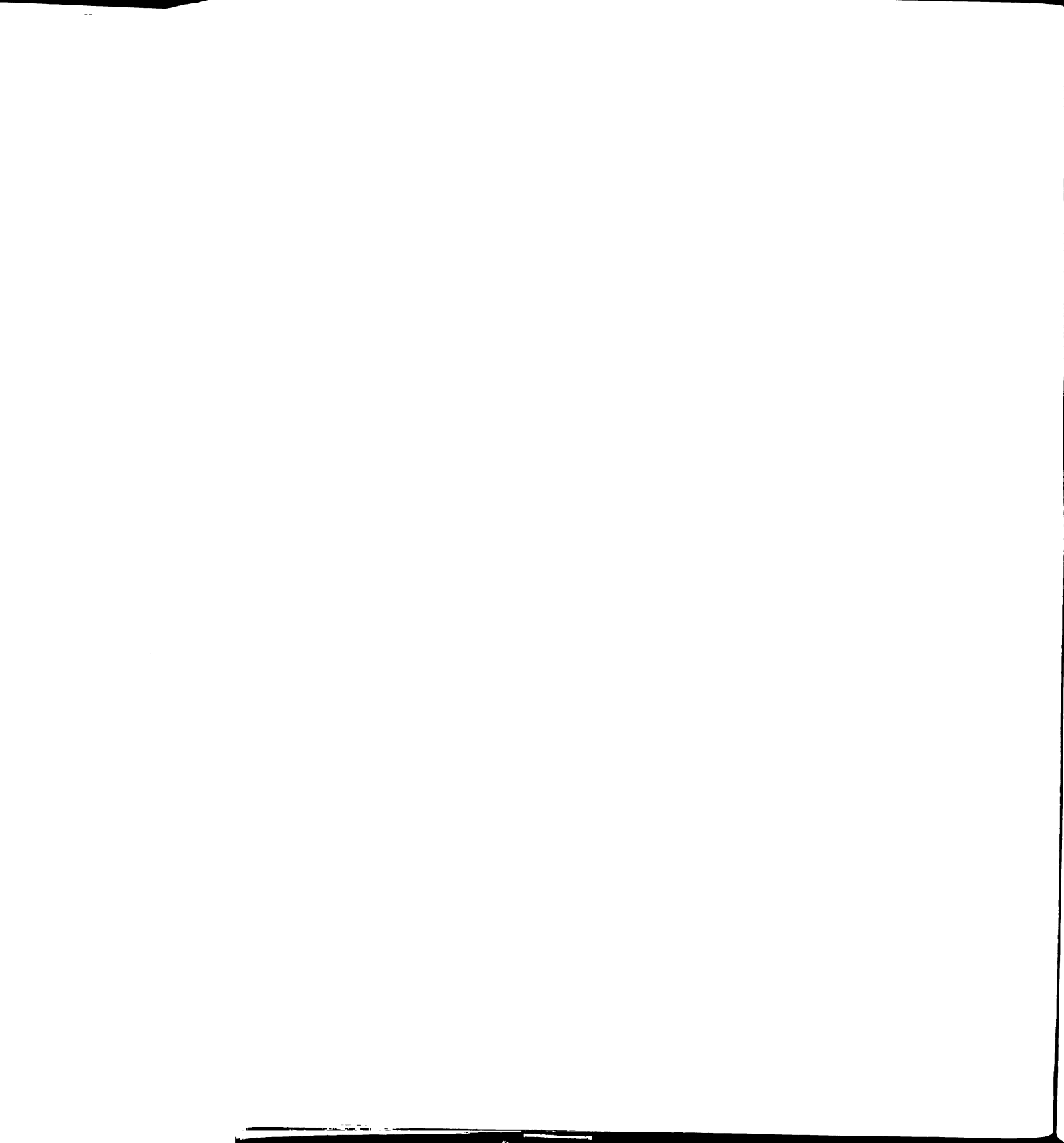
sion. Nearly twice as many blacks (1,129) as whites (620) would be helped by any plan that promoted home ownership. Whites also believed that tenancy was the only system of labor for their predominantly black county because blacks would not work for others if they could work for themselves.¹¹¹

Building Community: Overcoming Apathy

Beyond the material aspects of the program, the agents' work was also useful in strengthening blacks' attachment to their home state. While agricultural commissioner Harris lauded the decline of the black majority in his 1921 report, by the mid-1920s whites were less certain that the black exodus was in their best interest. Whites expected the agents to be a driving force in preventing the labor exodus from rural areas. During the war crisis, mistreatment of blacks and their decision to emigrate was a subject of great concern, leading to solutions that—in South Carolina at least, were relatively liberal. Concern over black emigration by some sectors of the state's white population evaporated with the armistice. However, for those who depended on black labor for their financial security, it remained a problem. A federal report on cooperative extension written in 1923 noted that blacks who remained impoverished migrated North at higher rates than blacks who owned their homes and practiced diversified agriculture.¹¹² Those who were more likely to migrate were those impoverished "croppers" to whom Charles Hall referred when he encouraged northern labor recruiters to seek new employees in the southern states.

¹¹¹Devlin, *South Carolina and Black Migration, 1865-1940*, 270.

¹¹²*Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics*, 1923, 57.



Black extension workers served as a counterbalance to emigration. From Richland County, J. E. Dickson reported that the farmers—presumably farm owners—were more interested than before in extension. “I have not had a dem[onstrator] quite [sic] his farm and go north although quite a few of the farm labors [sic] are leaving every day. But the farmers that have been sticking to the demonstration work since I have been here are still on the farm and I am most sure [they] will stay here.” Dickson’s views are echoed in the State College report for 1923. “If there ever was a time when Demonstration Work was needed, it is during this tremendous exodus, in order to attract farm laborers and hold them to the land.” Certainly, it was in the agents’ own best interest to encourage blacks to stay. Given the strictures of segregation, significant emigration of their client base could lead to unemployment. What is most interesting is how the explanation was framed. The 1923 report declared that the “exodus was the result of economic depression, caused by boll weevil devastation, which could be remedied or checked by scientific agriculture.”¹¹³ Such pronouncements relieved whites of any responsibility for the situation blacks found themselves in.

The decision to remain in South Carolina was not widely embraced by blacks. Precise numbers are difficult to obtain but by any standard, the exodus was significant. The State College report for 1923 estimated that 100,000 blacks, including 22,750 from rural areas, had left. Using the 1925 agricultural census figures, Negro Agricultural Agent Benjamin Barnwell reported in “The Negro Farmer in South Carolina,” part of a chapter of Asa Gordon’s book, that by 1925 the number of black farmers had declined to

¹¹³J. E. Dickson, Monthly report, May 26, 1923, item 40, Dickson Collection, SCL; *CNIAMC*, 27 (1924): 8.

90,578—an estimated drop of 18,529. Gordon estimated that only about 15 percent of the migrants were owners; the other 85 percent were tenants. Since these numbers only include the heads of households, it obscures the magnitude of the exodus. Newby reports that 204,000 blacks departed in the 1920s.¹¹⁴ On numerous occasions, black agricultural agents were summoned to train depots to discourage their fellow blacks' departure. In a letter of complaint regarding his low salary, J. E. Dickson asserted that, "[t]he labor condition is becoming alarming and I am being called on to assist in settling the minds of the many hundred Negroes who are planning to leave the farm this fall. . . ."¹¹⁵ As late as 1929, concern over black emigration remained an issue. In March, Wilkinson requested, and received approval, for Harry Daniels to travel to Buffalo, New York to speak before the Colored Branch of the YMCA about black extension work in South Carolina. The letter Wilkinson wrote to Long, notes the significant number of native-born South Carolinians in that city. Wilkinson expressed the hope that many would be enticed to come back to the state if they became aware of the expanding industrial opportunities "especially along agricultural lines" that were available. Long approved of the objectives of the plan which speaks to white agriculturists' desire for a large pool of black laborers.¹¹⁶

Of greater importance in encouraging blacks' continued residence in the state was deepening their ties to their local communities. Developing a community ethos among

¹¹⁴CNIAMC, 27 (1924): 8; Gordon, *Sketches of Negro Life and History in South Carolina*, 165, 169-170; Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 193.

¹¹⁵J. E. Dickson to W. W. Long, 30 September 1920, Box 96, Director South Carolina, 1920-1921, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

¹¹⁶R. S. Wilkinson to W. W. Long, 8 March 1929; W. W. Long to R. S. Wilkinson, 18 March 1929, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

rural blacks proved crucial for the success of black extension work, but before that could be accomplished, the agents had to attract the interest of local blacks and secure their participation. Mistrust between black agents and rural dwellers usually existed wherever whites were enthusiastic boosters of the work. Their mistrust can also be attributed to the world view of the black community. Like many intellectuals of his academic generation—and blacks who accepted a western paradigm for social relationships—Idus Newby finds disorder and pathology rife in the lives of the blacks he studied.¹¹⁷ Building his argument on the Moynihan thesis, he suggests that blacks had racial self-hatred inspired by white supremacy as a major cause of family disintegration. In spirituality, he finds South Carolina blacks were fundamentalist and parochial.¹¹⁸ Newby describes rural blacks' social life as "constricted," not only because of the reasons just cited but also because there was "a lack of recreational facilities and social organizations" for blacks. The "pathologies" of the black community provided ample substance for studies by whites at the University of South Carolina who sought graduate degrees. Their lives were also data for professional papers by whites in agriculturally-related work, such as the South Carolina Agricultural Extension Station bulletin *The Play and Recreation of Children and Youth in Selected Rural Areas of South Carolina*.

From these studies one can draw information regarding the lives of rural blacks. The overwhelming majority of children had never attended a dance or a movie and none

¹¹⁷Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 138-43. Newby cites both blacks and whites to support his conclusions. Given the content of these pages, it seems that Newby shares Moynihan's description of black pathology but centers racism rather than matriarchy as the cause of it. United States Department of Labor, Office of Policy Planning and Research, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1965), 29-34.

¹¹⁸Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 139, 146-53.

of the children in the study had ever played cards—activities disdained by the black church. There was almost no school-related club or enrichment activities, or sports. Boys would swim, hunt, or fish for diversion. Boys and girls attended picnics or dinners—usually church-related. Saturdays in towns (often black day in many areas) and [wagon?] riding were common activities. Black adults' lives followed similarly constricted patterns.¹¹⁹ As agents introduced their programs, they faced legitimate suspicion and a cultural chasm that represented the difference between the feudalistic reality of most rural blacks' lives as described above and the modern ideas of capitalism. Extension required that the farm family do more than the minimum required to survive. It meant sacrificing some present benefit for future gain. But the racial exploitation inherent in South Carolina's economy had discouraged black South Carolinians. What history had shown them was that regardless of Booker T. Washington's testimony that hard work and economic success would eliminate prejudice, in South Carolina, economic success had less of an effect on one's status than being black. Afro-South Carolinians worked within the established system because they had to do so to survive. However, at the same time, they took time for themselves and life's simpler pleasures. South Carolina blacks' concepts of entitlement to their own time and working according to their own sensibilities—particularly when the profits went to someone else—were issues that had to be addressed if extension work was to be successful.

Some South Carolina blacks remained suspicious of the agents whom whites so heartily supported. During the food conservation drive of 1920 Connie Jones reported that a Charleston County woman remarked, "Ain't foolin' wid dat lady, first thing we all

¹¹⁹Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 210-4.

know we'll all be canning in France[!]"¹²⁰ Expressions such as this challenge the notion of disorganization that would cause *ennui*, as Newby suggests.¹²¹ The remark of this woman is a telling example of how the black community may have received extension workers. In all likelihood blacks knew whether black agents had the approval of local whites. That, in and of itself, was probably just cause for suspecting the agents' motives.

In a state where more than two-thirds of all farmers, black and white, worked as non-landowning tenants, it should not be surprising that extension agents were viewed with suspicion by their clients, regardless of race. Landless farmers had become accustomed to their exploitation at the hands of the landowning and merchant classes in the South. Historian Gilbert Fite suggests that in the South, more than in other regions, "there was widespread resistance to 'book farming' [scientific farming]" as well.¹²²

Gaining trust was no easier in black women's work. In 1920 Christine South offered conflicting views of the blacks' response to black extension work. In one passage, she reported that black home demonstration work was well-received by both whites and "colored" people. In that same report she declared that "[t]he greatest difficulty to be overcome was an occasional sign of distrust among the colored people themselves." Charleston agent Connie Jones' statements clearly show white support. Jones suggests blacks' resistance to the program wasn't merely a matter of suspicion but of the clients' sense of dignity often manifested in embarrassment over their circumstances. "I . . . am . . . trying to get them to take time to clean up their premises and children and to take

¹²⁰"What the Agricultural Extension Service is Doing for South Carolina . . . 1920," 92.

¹²¹Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 213.

¹²²Fite, *Cotton Fields No More*, 84.

more pride in their homes . . . It requires some common sense to be able to go into a woman's house and show her how to wash and clean up her children and surroundings and keep her pleased with you too."¹²³

In her 1923 report, Dora Boston, who replaced Fitzgerald as the State Agent for Negro Home Demonstration Work in September 1923, stated that "the big problem was getting the interest of the people and that had to be done through confidence and various methods were used in getting close to them." As late as 1930 Nettie Kenner reported that "[i]n many communities it is very difficult to interest a group in club work."¹²⁴

The following excerpt from 1923 provides a good example of the level of effort it took to gain the interest of the local community:

My first visit in this community was to the school. I secured the cooperation of the teachers and preacher then after speaking and giving a demonstration to the children, we planned a meeting. I sent cards and invited everybody of that community and had it announced in church; the results were good, men, women and children came. The purpose of the meeting and work were explained and I gave a demonstration after which people were invited to effect an organization. Quite a few agreed to join and the club was organized. Many said they would wait. After several meetings we had a display of the things made by the club and invited the entire community again to see the work. After the meeting the club served refreshments and everyone went away seemingly benefited. [sic] We did not ask anyone to join but made it plain that they were welcome; at our next meeting those who refused to join at first and others came in, now that is one of the best clubs in the county, everybody is anxious to follow up a project and begin a new one, thus our meetings are always crowded. . . .¹²⁵

¹²³"What the Agricultural Extension Service is Doing for South Carolina . . . 1920," 92-3.

¹²⁴Mattie Mae Fitzgerald and Dora Boston, "Annual Narrative Report of State Supervisor of Colored Home Demonstration Work, 1923," p. 2; Kenner, "South Carolina, 1930, Narrative Summary of Annual Report," p. 1.

¹²⁵Fitzgerald and Boston, "Annual Narrative Report of State Supervisor of Colored Home Demonstration Work, 1923," p. 2. It is not clear whether this was an excerpt from a county agent's report or that of the State agent who also did extension work in counties without agents.

Richland County agent J. E. Dickson's approach to reaching the community was equally energetic. In his 1921-1922 report he writes:

During the year I made visits to 227 demonstrators; stopped by to see 50 cooperators on my trips to see demonstrators. Stopped by the farms of 30 other different farmers.

Called on 10 business men in conference about the welfare of my farms. Received 333 callers at office and home; answered 58 telephone calls from farmers and business men relative to the work. Held 40 farmers' and Field Meetings, spoke at 39 of such meetings to a group [total?] of 3,709 farmers, their wives and children. Sent out 50 circular letters, wrote 107 official letters. . . . Mailed and handed out 800 U.S. Department Bulletins, assisted 30 farmers in borrowing \$21,000 from the federal Loan Bank. Organized and visited 14 Farmers' Clubs with membership of 887.

Visited and spoke at 25 churches on Sunday, thereby reaching 3,709 farmers, their wives and children. I traveled 6,824 miles.¹²⁶

The evidence suggests that the agents were breaking down the wall of suspicion.

In her 1921 report, Christine South declared that "[t]he feeling of suspicion of the Home Demonstration Agent has practically disappeared." While that assessment was not wholly accurate, there are indications of a warming of agent-client relationships. In 1923 Boston suggested that the home agents ". . . are better understood." In 1924 she reported that "the agents are making their way by adopting to their work and the actual needs of the communities and proving to farm women that they are really interested in their problems and the meeting of them." Nettie Kenner's remarks at the end of this era show the agents'

¹²⁶"NARRATIVE REPORT FROM DEC. 1, 1921 TO NOV. 15, 1922, OF WORK DONE BY J. E. DICKSON, FARM DEMONSTRATION AGENT OF RICHLAND COUNTY AND GRADUATE OF STATE A.M. COLLEGE OF ORANGEBURG, S.C.," p. 6, Dickson Collection, SCL.

continuing recognition that the program had to be for the clients and not for the landowners. “The arousing of the people must be accomplished in terms of *their daily lives or of their welfare*” [my emphasis].¹²⁷

Keeping the Interest of the People

Agents used every means at their disposal to entice the farming community to join their efforts and new technologies were part of the hook to bring in the crowds. The State Agent for Negro Agricultural Work, Harry Daniels, reported in 1923 that “[m]otion pictures have proved a great asset in extension work and rural life.”¹²⁸ Dora Boston’s agents used a rented motion picture projector in 1924 with good results. The home agents’ movies on diseases and J. E. Dickson’s movies created interest and generated attendance. In May 1929 1,765 blacks attended Dickson’s meetings— a fact that he attributed to showing movies. The movie for that month, a United States Department of Agriculture production, was “Helping Negroes Become Better Farmers and Home Makers.” Dickson reported a fifty percent increase in participation in his programs and declared that the movies made it possible for him to reach some populations that he otherwise could not.¹²⁹ He also showed other titles in subsequent months including

¹²⁷Christine South, “Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work in South Carolina for 1921,” p. 49; Fitzgerald and Boston, “Annual Narrative Report of State Supervisor of Colored Home Demonstration Work, 1923,” p. 6; Boston, “Report of Dora E. Boston, . . . 1924,” p. 13; Kenner, “South Carolina, 1930, Narrative Summary of Annual Report” p. 1.

¹²⁸“Meeting Farm Problems: Annual Report of the South Carolina Extension Service for 1923,” (Clemson: Clemson College, 1924), 15.

¹²⁹Boston, “Report of Dora E. Boston, . . . 1924,” p. 6; “1,765 Richland Negroes Attend Meetings in May: J. E. Dickson, Colored Farm Agent, Leads People in Agriculture Work,” *The Sunday* (Columbia, SC) *Record*, 16 June 1929, n. p., Dickson Collection, SCL.

“Behind the Breakfast Plate,” “The Horse in Motion,” and “Fighting Insects from Aeroplanes.”¹³⁰ The introduction of a medium of popular culture provided a rare opportunity for rural blacks to participate in the cultural changes that were occurring throughout the country. That, in and of itself, might have had a positive effect on their view of extension.

County fairs built on traditional patterns of association and provided another way of reaching rural blacks. Public health speakers attended the fairs to provide information on health issues. Black clubsters showed off the products of their labor. Canned foods and fresh produce were displayed in abundance. Many blacks who were initially suspicious of extension work became converts when they attended these fairs. Some extension agents participated in the State Colored Fair where their displays in competitions generated interest in their programs.

Agents also organized community fairs and these were probably most successful in reaching potential clients. In the report on black agriculture for 1923, Daniels wrote, “Community, county, and state fairs have brought more tangible results than any other feature of this kind among the people.”¹³¹ Perhaps the fairs’ resemblance to revival meetings, with the exception that people gathered for days to hear the exhortations and testimonies of extension work, made them so popular. In the same report in which she recalled the suspicions of blacks regarding extension work, Connie Jones also notes that some black participants traveled up to 14 miles to attend her demonstrations.¹³²

¹³⁰NARRATIVE REPORT From 1928 to 1929 . . . , p. 2, Dickson Collection, SCL.

¹³¹“What the Agricultural Extension Service is Doing for South Carolina . . . 1920,” p. 97; “Meeting Farm Problems, . . . ” p. 15.

¹³²Christine South, “Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work in South Carolina for 1920,” p. 45-6; Christine South, “Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work in South Carolina for 1921,” p. 49.

Clubs also were an important way of stimulating community interest in extension work. In her 1922 report Fitzgerald noted the popularity of club activities among both women and girls. Women and girls alike enjoyed giving “club yells” and singing “club songs.”¹³³ Members of the 1924 “Head to Foot” club made 2,978 pieces of underwear and over 2,600 dresses and coats. Frances Thomas, the Richland County agent, held “two community fairs and two meetings which she called popular days” to bring half of the county together each time. Thomas employed community-based contests through which the members “unconsciously . . . learn[ed] the necessity of a community center.” In Marion County, Gertrude Johnson held a county club day that brought all “club members together to meet and learn what each club was doing, [compete] and see the value of rural social life.”¹³⁴

This same community spirit evident in black women’s programs prevailed in the programs of agricultural agents as well. The 1928 report on mens’ and boys’ club work stated that “[t]he objective is educational in that real life situations are uncovered involving issues affecting their own interest . . . together with those of the community as a whole.”¹³⁵ These reports suggest that South Carolina’s black extension agents had managed to overcome the suspicions that plagued agents in Alabama. How can this be explained? Joel Schor suggests a possible explanation. Quoting Martin G. Bailey, the retired State Leader for Negro Work in Maryland, Schor writes, “You had to bootleg extension.” Bailey further stated:

¹³³Fitzgerald, “. . . Report of Negro District Agent . . . 1922,” p. 1.

¹³⁴Boston, “Report of Dora E. Boston, . . . 1924,” pp. 2-3, 12

¹³⁵*CNIAMC*, 32 (1928): 26.

Those agents who modified their programs to suit as many local community needs and aspirations as they could without appearing total deviates from the accepted pattern were apt to be successful. This applied in matters large and small. . . . In every agent's career, the decision would have to be made . . . as to who must be best served—clients or administrators. The most caring agents chose their clients. . . .¹³⁶

Becoming Race Leaders: Extension Workers and Traditional Black Leadership Groups

As they earned respect from the most independent sectors of the black population, agents were also able to secure cooperation of these most respected citizens in promoting their programs. Achieving that respect was not always easy. Nettie Kenner noted that “[t]he progress of home demonstration work depends largeley [sic] upon the cooperation given to and received from other agencies.” She noted that people often did not understand the nature of extension work. However, once it was explained to them, members of these organizations used their influence with potential clients to gain participation. The enlistment of the black leadership class—teachers, preachers, independent businessmen, and professionals—as well as more liberally-minded whites was a general tactic for attracting interest in the work. Dora Boston reported that public schools and other organizations cooperated with efforts to develop community projects. She said that she had spent the year “perfecting the support from the various organizations.”¹³⁷ J. E. Dickson noted that “the school teachers, preachers, [along with the white] trustees and county superintendent of education gave their much needed assistance in helping put over the community and county fairs.” Dickson, a Mason, spoke at lodges as well. In his 1926 report he reproduced a letter that he sent out to 100 teachers and ministers. He asked the

¹³⁶Schor, “The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service,” 116.

¹³⁷Kenner, “South Carolina, 1930, Narrative Summary of Annual Report” p. 11; Fitzgerald and Boston, “Annual Narrative Report of State Supervisor of Colored Home Demonstration Work, 1923,” pp. 1, 6.

ministers to read a letter he wrote that promoted cotton stalk destruction to prevent the proliferation of boll weevils. “[Y]ou have the greatest opportunity at this time in the year to get over a vital message to the farmers of the County,” Dickson wrote. In 1928-1929 he noted the cooperation of local leaders in securing the support of ministers and teachers in gaining community interest. Local churches often served as gathering places for large meetings and ministers frequently turned their pulpits over to extension workers to preach the gospel of scientific agriculture. Kenner reached beyond the local community to secure cooperation from the “[Colored] Women’s Federated clubs [sic], Inter-racial Commission, Fairs, State and County Health Departments and newspapers.”¹³⁸

The suspicions black home agents encountered were not atypical. Gladys Baker reported that blacks demonstrated indifference or outright hostility to making improvements on structures they did not own feeling that it would have adverse consequences such as higher rents or displacement from the farm. Further, if whites displayed enthusiastic support of extension work, it would naturally arouse suspicions that the agents were minions of the landowning class. Baker’s research from the 1930s documents the continued suspicion among some blacks and has served as the basis for other historians’ similar conclusions.¹³⁹ Karen Ferguson’s work shows that such suspicions ceased as early as the first decade of extension work. She casts the black community in Alabama as one

¹³⁸NARRATIVE REPORT From December 1, 1924 to December 1, 1925 of work done by J. E. Dickson, Local Farm Demonstration Agent of Richland County, pp. 1, 4; NARRATIVE REPORT From 1926 to 1927 . . . , pp. 1, 3; NARRATIVE REPORT From 1926 to 1927 . . . , p. 1; NARRATIVE REPORT From 1928 to 1929 . . . , p. 2, Dickson Collection, SCL; Kenner, “South Carolina, 1930, Narrative Summary of Annual Report” p. 11.

¹³⁹Baker, *The County Agent*, 203-4. For other historians’ acceptance of this view see Crosby, “Limited Success Against Long Odds,” 283 and Schor, “The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service,” 93-4, for example.

which was extremely hostile to Tuskegee Institute and its message. Ferguson finds that tenants in Alabama resented the agents' adherence to the accommodationist rhetoric of Booker T. Washington feeling that the agents lacked "race pride." Ferguson reports that the roots of resentment originated in the agents' interest in reforming community life while ignoring the "economic and social structures" that were the root of their poverty.

Given the oppressive structures of cotton tenancy, agents found it impossible to convince black farmers that they represented tenant interests, especially when they [the agents] worked closely with planters. . . . Tuskegee's exhortations for hard work and clean living directly served the planters' interests by encouraging high yields and tenant self-improvement without any investment by the planter. . . . Planters only risked the possibility that a tenant might become so efficient that he or she could move into the landholding class. But corruption in the settlement of tenant debts and the refusal to sell to blacks, among other coercive methods, easily kept black tenant farmers in their place.¹⁴⁰

The South Carolina experience—particularly the involvement of the clergy in promoting extension—is a striking contrast to Alabama, where Ferguson reports that ministers discouraged their congregations from participating in extension programs.¹⁴¹ South Carolina State College's position as an institution with racial accommodationist tendencies was not as strident. Perhaps this was by design. Wilkinson's desire that Richard Carroll, the Booker T. Washington of South Carolina, not speak at any black extension meetings suggests that he recognized the danger of black extension work being associated with any black who appeared too submissive.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰Ferguson, "Caught in 'No Man's Land'," 43.

¹⁴¹Ferguson, "Caught in 'No Man's Land'," 44.

¹⁴²See chapter 3 for a discussion of the Carroll matter.

The Impact of Black Extension Work

Reports from the first fifteen years of black extension work in South Carolina suggest that the agents were successful at “bootlegging extension.” Nothing better exemplifies that than the fact that black extension agents were establishing a place for themselves among the traditional leadership groups in the black community. In her 1921 report Christine South declared that “[t]he Home Demonstration Agent is taking her place in the county with the local teacher and preacher.”¹⁴³ The legitimacy of the agents’ leadership was significant for two reasons: first it suggests that they had transgressed a barrier to black leadership. Asa Gordon argues that “New Negroes” questioned “the ability of . . . white-chosen leader[s] to represent properly the Negro’s interest.”¹⁴⁴ Other contemporary historians also suggested a change on the southern landscape. In their biography of Will Alexander, Wilma Dykeman and James Stokely wrote

War and migration had created, if not a new Negro throughout the South, at least a glimpse of a new way of life for many Negroes. . . . Knowledge of this made many white people uneasy. Segregation was still rigid and legal, but subservience was no longer total. The Negro soldier might store away his uniform and put on the old overalls of the field or the white jacked of the kitchen, but could he lay aside the straightforward look and assume the old humble inferiority?¹⁴⁵

Were Afro-South Carolinians who lived such parochial lives “New Negroes?” Certainly they were not products of the intellectual currents that led to the name. However, I believe that a rejection of the paradigms of white dominance is a criterion of being a New Negro. Such a rejection of white supremacy was something that even unlettered

¹⁴³Christine South, “Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work in South Carolina for 1920,” p. 45-6; Christine South, “Annual Report of Home Demonstration Work in South Carolina for 1921,” p. 49.

¹⁴⁴Gordon, *Sketches of Negro Life and History*, 202.

¹⁴⁵Dykeman and Stokely, *Seeds of Southern Change*, 54.

black farmers sometimes possessed. That these agents who had to have the approval of whites to become and remain employed were able to secure the trust of blacks as well, proves their success at negotiating competing allegiances. Second, the agents' movement into rural leadership gave them increased opportunities to produce client satisfaction and self-esteem.

The agents fully recognized that part of their charge was to make blacks more satisfied with rural life. The 1928 report from South Carolina State College declared that "advancing country life is a fundamental part of [its] extension service."¹⁴⁶ Indeed, the agents' jobs relied on there being a clientele on the land that they could serve. There can be no denying that as employees of the state, the extension agents' access to white-dominated institutions made it possible for them to acquire resources that benefitted their clients. Agents who could bring a state health nurse to a black community for a clinic—as several did—or get a child medical treatment were perceived as miracle workers.¹⁴⁷

Agents undertook a variety of activities for community uplift. In Bamberg County, E. D. Jenkins reported that local farmers were cooperating to build a rural school.¹⁴⁸ One can only imagine what J. E. Dickson's standing in Richland County was, given what he accomplished. With the \$21,000 Dickson borrowed from the Federal Farm Loan Association for farmers in his county, his clients constructed a cooperative cotton gin, three farm homes, two barns, a potato storage house, two improved poultry houses, one sanitary

¹⁴⁶*CNIAMC*, 32 (1928): 26.

¹⁴⁷Boston, "Report of Dora E. Boston, . . . 1924, p. 12; Kenner, "South Carolina, 1930, Narrative Summary of Annual Report," p. 14.

¹⁴⁸E. D. Jenkins to Bradford Knapp, 19 July 1918, Box 59, Miscellaneous South Carolina, 1918-1919, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

privy, three individual potato houses, two movable hog houses, and assisted in building a Rosenwald school.¹⁴⁹

Dickson's work is representative of the agents' efforts to bring their clients into the market economy. His reports for the 1920s are replete with examples of cooperative buying and marketing that saved his clients thousands of dollars on farm supplies when buying and earned them higher profits when selling their goods. This program was not one that white extension officials emphasized with blacks and it provided many farmers with significant money income. Through Dickson's efforts, many of his clients were able to take advantage of federal farm loan programs rather than rely on local merchants. He helped four farmers secure loans in 1923 and twenty in 1924. In 1927 he held a county wide meeting to "acquaint the farmers with productive credit unions." Six hundred farmers attended a talk by H.A. Hunt of the Farm Credit Administration on the services available to the farmers. In 1929, Dickson secured \$12,785 in seed loans for clients.¹⁵⁰

Dora Boston noted that home agents demonstrated how community cohesion "stabiliz[ed] rural life." Probably nothing demonstrated the increasing satisfaction with rural life than Boston's report that some club members had decided to keep budgets and others were planning to buy furniture. In addition, homes and outbuildings had been

¹⁴⁹"NARRATIVE REPORT FROM DEC. 1, 1921 TO NOV. 15, 1922, OF WORK DONE BY J. E. DICKSON, FARM DEMONSTRATION AGENT OF RICHLAND COUNTY AND GRADUATE OF STATE A.M. COLLEGE OF ORANGEBURG, S.C.," p. 6. The gin burned the same year. Dickson does not mention whether the blaze was accidental or intentional. The community rebuilt and improved the gin the next year. "NARRATIVE REPORT From December 1, 1922 to December 1, 1923 . . .," p. 1, Dickson Collection, SCL.

¹⁵⁰"NARRATIVE REPORT FROM DEC. 1, 1921 TO NOV. 15, 1922, OF WORK DONE BY J. E. DICKSON, FARM DEMONSTRATION AGENT OF RICHLAND COUNTY AND GRADUATE OF STATE A.M. COLLEGE OF ORANGEBURG, S.C.," p. 1; NARRATIVE REPORT From 1922 to 1923 . . . , 8; NARRATIVE REPORT From 1924 to 1925 . . . , p. 10; NARRATIVE REPORT From 1927 to 1928 . . . ,p. 4a; NARRATIVE REPORT From 1924 to 1925 . . . , p. 4, Dickson Collection, SCL.

painted or whitewashed, family nutrition and clothing had improved, and family incomes had increased. "The homes are more comfortable and women have broader visions, a greater income, better living and community conditions, . . . and a rural society that will produce satisfaction," she wrote. "Home Demonstration workers have as an aim an *efficient satisfied* [my emphasis] rural State and are working toward that goal."¹⁵¹

Black South Carolinians were excited about the benefits of extension work. The 1917 agricultural report noted "a growing interest on the part of Negroes in the demonstration work." The 1918 agricultural extension report includes the assertion that

Everywhere our agents have met with fine cooperation on the part of the people and a general desire to improve their economic and social conditions. There seems to have been an increased desire in every county to do good farming and right living. . . . Each [agent's yearly] report shows that the agents recognize their responsibility to the State and Nation. Where this work has been carried on among our people, they seem better able to pay their accounts, school their children, and buy their homes.¹⁵²

Local agents' reports support these general conclusions. In his letters to Bradford Knapp, E. D. Jenkins claimed that black farmers in Bamberg County had become prosperous.¹⁵³ J. E. Dickson's reports for the 1920s demonstrate the magnitude of material progress in one county. Through two cooperatives Dickson established, Richland county blacks saved \$740 dollars on fertilizer purchases and secured \$145 more than the bushel rate by selling peas and sweet potatoes cooperatively. He reported an average yield on an acre of corn that was 17 bushels more per acre than the county average and 10

¹⁵¹Boston, "Annual Narrative Report . . . 1923," p. 2; "Report of the President," *CNIAMC*, 28 (1924): 28; *CNIAMC*, 33 (1929): 29; Boston, "1924 Narrative Summary . . .," pp. 10, 12-13.

¹⁵²*Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of Clemson Agricultural College*, (1917) 120; *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of Clemson Agricultural College*, (1918) 135.

¹⁵³E. D. Jenkins to Bradford Knapp, 8 August 1918, Box 59, Folder Miscellaneous South Carolina 1918-1919, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

bushels more per acre than others in (white?) extension demonstrations. By using an aggressive approach against the boll weevil infestation that was just beginning to grip the state, Dickson's demonstrators were able to harvest 883 pounds of cotton per acre compared to 243 pounds per acre in his county. At a time when many farmers were going under, Dickson reported that his cotton demonstrators had built a cotton gin which saved them \$500 per year on ginning costs, leading to a net profit of \$1,000. He was able to purchase the gin for the community at \$6,400—a savings of \$1,600 over what the farmers would have paid for the same equipment.¹⁵⁴ Such purchases moved blacks beyond the sphere of white control. Perhaps had Anthony Crawford not had to sell his cotton to a white factor, he might have lived to be old as well as prosperous.

The Development of Local Leadership

However, we should not consider rural blacks as passive recipients of extension programs. The agents got their clients actively involved in planning programs to suit the community. Use of local leaders—respected men and women in the community who had strong lay abilities—relied on traditional social patterns to secure cooperation of the community. Since agents covered wide geographic areas—and the state agents often organized extension work in counties without agents to attract interest in the program—these leaders were essential in keeping extension work vital. Indeed, the mere fact of playing a role in the decision-making process for the local extension program must have been exhilarating and self-affirming to those who had no opportunities to distinguish themselves in the larger society. J. E. Dickson's narrative reports show the importance of

¹⁵⁴“NARRATIVE REPORT FROM DEC. 1, 1921 TO NOV. 15, 1922, OF WORK DONE BY J. E. DICKSON, FARM DEMONSTRATION AGENT OF RICHLAND COUNTY AND GRADUATE OF STATE A.M. COLLEGE OF ORANGEBURG, S.C.,” p. 3, Dickson Collection, SCL.

extension work to community leadership development. He reports in his 1921-1922 narrative that he consulted with “four strong, energetic farmers” from various parts of Richland County on local conditions. They not only offered their opinions, Dickson reported that “They go back to their communities and work in the interest of all farms.” Between 1917 and the end of 1922 he had organized fourteen farmers’ community clubs with a total membership of 887 (including the wives and children of farmers). The clubs met once a month whether Dickson was present or not and each member shared their problems. “[I]n this way,” Dickson wrote, “we work out the problems of each community.”¹⁵⁵

By 1923, Dickson had organized a County Advisory Board that assisted him in making plans for extension work in the County. The Board assisted him in developing a community fair and in developing farmers’ conferences for the county. Although the first board was composed entirely of men, a woman was included on the board by 1925, and by 1929 two women were among the twelve elected advisory board members. In 1927 Dickson created a County 4-H Boys’ Federation.¹⁵⁶

Of even greater import were the early lessons extension programs provided in political action and leadership to a generation that had been deprived of a civil voice. Mattie Mae Fitzgerald reported that agents gave club members instructions in parliamentary procedures and that clubs elected their own officers. The report noted the

¹⁵⁵“NARRATIVE REPORT FROM DEC. 1, 1921 TO NOV. 15, 1922, OF WORK DONE BY J. E. DICKSON, FARM DEMONSTRATION AGENT OF RICHLAND COUNTY AND GRADUATE OF STATE A.M. COLLEGE OF ORANGEBURG, S.C.,” p. 1, Dickson Collection, SCL.

¹⁵⁶“NARRATIVE REPORT From December 1, 1922, to December 1, 1923 . . . ,” p. 1; “NARRATIVE REPORT From December 1, 1924, to December 1, 1925 . . . ,” p. 1; NARRATIVE REPORT From 1925 to 1926 . . . , pp. 1-2; NARRATIVE REPORT From 1926 to 1927 . . . , pp. 1-2, 5; NARRATIVE REPORT From 1928 to 1929 . . . , p. 2, Dickson Collection, SCL.

“zeal and great willingness” of women club members, which “demonstrat[ed] the fact that the one great necessity is leaders.” Leadership opportunities were also available to youth involved in club work. Dickson’s report for 1927 reveals that one of the 4-H boys from his county had been elected president of the State Negro Boys’ 4-H which met at South Carolina State College.¹⁵⁷ These opportunities to develop local leadership were crucial. In a society in which group activism is often the root of political power, the lack of *politically* structured institutions in black South Carolina was a distinct disadvantage. Idus Newby concluded that black South Carolinians remained powerless because those of better education and training often quit rural life. He cites this to bolster his assertion that the communities were disordered.¹⁵⁸ If we look for activism in the 1910s or 1920s, we will not find it. What we will find is a leadership class in its embryonic stages nurtured under the enforced segregation that white supremacy required. Wilkinson said as much when he responded to J. B. Pierce’s request for information regarding the state’s black extension service. In addition to the farming-related results of extension work, Wilkinson also asserted that

... these agents have helped to lift the Negro farmer out of his isolation and bring him into working relations with his fellow farmer and his agricultural college. They have rendered him [the farmer] more *independent*, more *self-reliant*, more tolerant and inspired him with more *community pride*. They have developed a *new leadership* in rural affairs. Through common counsel and mutual helpfulness in connection with the simple problems of daily life they have developed a *cooperative spirit*, [my italics] thus placing at the farmer’s disposal a better organization by means

¹⁵⁷Fitzgerald, “. . . Report of Negro District Agent . . . 1922,” p. 1; Dickson, NARRATIVE REPORT From 1926, to 1927 . . . , p. 5, Dickson Collection, SCL.

¹⁵⁸Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 212-3.

of which he is doing more accurate thinking, reaching safer conclusions and living a more satisfactory life.¹⁵⁹

Those who took up roles in rural leadership and remained formed the nucleus of a conscious rural proletariat that would ultimately change the state.

These successes seem all the more remarkable when one considers the obstacles created by black poverty and white bigotry. White extension officials believed that the lion's share of funds spent on extension work should be spent on white extension programs because whites provided most of the tax dollars. Dora Boston asserted that black home agents "may be compared to a farmer without farm implements; they have no equipment,"—no pressure cookers for canning, no projectors to show motion pictures. When black agents were lucky enough to have offices, they were often located in their own homes or in a room provided by black businessmen. Most had no office furniture and none had clerical help.¹⁶⁰

Competing Allegiances: Negotiating the Divide between White and Black Expectations

The agents' obvious commitment to their communities and race uplift are distinguishing features of their work which help us understand how they were able to negotiate the treacherous waters between advocating accommodation or rebellion against the caste system. They equipped themselves with knowledge of local conditions and developed themselves professionally to improve their ability to serve their communities. In one report, Dora Boston recommended that agents be given furloughs to attend summer school because "paramount preparation makes one fit for service." Of the home

¹⁵⁹R. S. Wilkinson to J. B. Pierce, 6 January 1929 in Folder 91 "Extension Work Matters, 1926-1932," South Carolina State University Historical Collection, Miller F. Whittaker Library, Orangeburg, S. C. Hereafter, this collection will be cited as Folder 91, SCSUHC.

¹⁶⁰Boston, "1924 Narrative Summary . . .," 5-6, 11, 13-4.

agent program itself she wrote, "Although the negro work is still in its experimental stage, good work has been done and it has a bright and promising future."¹⁶¹

The agents' actions demonstrated to their clients they served that the agents were indeed interested in the well-being of their fellow blacks. The agents frequently transgressed the boundaries established by white visions of extension work to promote a more black-centered view. The emphasis on community cohesion and reliance shifts the focus from planter desires for a satisfied peasant class—regardless of its structure—to more cooperation among sharecroppers and tenants for their own benefit. If the community bonds that had been forged in the slave quarters had become as tattered as the black agents' reports suggest, the fairs and club meetings served, in part, to re-knit them. Most importantly, the parliamentary procedure in clubs gave a generation that had come to maturity under the disfranchising constitution of 1895 valuable experience in acting politically.

The first phase of black extension work was the conception of worldlier Afro-South Carolinians. By acquiring property—even personal property—South Carolina blacks took their first steps away from abject dependence toward independence and the market economy. Some of their children, inspired by work in 4-H and visits to State College, were matriculating at that institution.¹⁶² They also moved toward an era of rising expectations and demands for civic equality and economic opportunity.

¹⁶¹Boston, "1924 Narrative Summary . . .," 5-6, 11, 13-4.

¹⁶²Dickson reports 5 club boys entered college in 1926 and 6 in 1927, for example. Dickson, *NARRATIVE REPORT From 1925 to 1926 . . .*, p. 1; *NARRATIVE REPORT From 1926 to 1927 . . .*, p. 1, Dickson Collection, SCL.

However, the success of these agents must not be overstated. Dickson could declare 1921-1922, for example, that “about 25% of the farming population is now in line with us.” That left 75 percent of his county outside his sphere of influence. The time constraints and the poverty of some of his clients prevented his having viable boys’ club programs in that reporting period. Those black farmers who had saved money did so in a time of general economic hardship and many of the club boys’ fathers could not afford to pay cash for the fertilizer their sons needed to participate in corn clubs or to pay for the pigs their sons would raise in hog clubs.¹⁶³ By the next year Dickson’s programs seem to have fallen apart. He had contact with more county residents, 5,000, and traveled more miles, 7,224, than the previous year, and had even formalized his consultations with leading farmers in a County Advisory Board. He had led 200 farmers in a caravan that visited demonstration sites throughout Richland County. But he only actively worked with eight of the fifteen clubs he had established. Club membership had declined from nearly 900 to 300. One of the cooperatives he had established was dormant and the profits from cooperative buying and selling were far lower than in prior years. Many farmers failed to complete their demonstrations or to complete their reports.¹⁶⁴ Many more were probably participating in the mass exodus that occurred in 1923.

¹⁶³“NARRATIVE REPORT FROM DEC. 1, 1921 TO NOV. 15, 1922, OF WORK DONE BY J. E. DICKSON, FARM DEMONSTRATION AGENT OF RICHLAND COUNTY AND GRADUATE OF STATE A.M. COLLEGE OF ORANGEBURG, S.C.,” pp. 3, 7, Dickson Collection, SCL.

¹⁶⁴NARRATIVE REPORT FROM DECEMBER 1, 1922, TO DECEMBER 1, 1923 OF WORK DONE BY J. E. DICKSON, LOCAL FARM DEMONSTRATION AGENT OF RICHLAND COUNTY, pp. 3-5, 6, 8-9, Dickson Collection, SCL.

Conclusion

In the early years, the black extension service's organization was never as complete as that for whites. White extension officials did not increase their financial commitment to black extension work. Whites remained committed to an expanded white program in the midst of an economic decline. However, there was no similar commitment regarding the need for black extension workers even though black farmers remained a necessary component of the state's economy. Black farmers were taken for granted. Appreciation of South Carolina's black extension workers and farmers was not what it should have been. In 1926 the editors of the *Crisis* excoriated then Secretary of Agriculture W. M. Jardine for speaking for an hour on the issue of cotton at Charleston, South Carolina "saying nothing about the American Negro, his labor in raising cotton, his remuneration, the methods of selling forced upon him and the social surroundings which distress him." They credited Jardine with "an agility in mental gymnastics" by which he "succeeded in saying just about as near nothing as one would expect of a public official who did not dare tell the truth."¹⁶⁵ While this statement was written four years before the period under study ended, the sentiment—that blacks' improvement of the agricultural environment was unappreciated and unrewarded, seems evident as we move into the decade of the Great Depression.

By 1929, colored farmers in South Carolina (including "Negroes, Indians, Chinese, Japanese, and all other nonwhite races") produced 46.8 percent of all cotton—a slight decline. Sweet potato yield increased slightly to 39.3 percent. Tobacco yield, of which colored farms accounted for only 23.5 percent in 1909, by 1929 accounted for 32.1

¹⁶⁵"Cotton," *The Crisis* v. 32, no. 3 (July 1926): 111.

percent of production.¹⁶⁶ It was evident that the rural black in South Carolina remained an important economic asset. For that, black agents merit credit for their diligence.

Alain Locke suggests that the Great Migration was “a deliberate flight not only from countryside to city, but from medieval America to modern.”¹⁶⁷ For those blacks who remained on the farm, the modern era had not yet fully arrived. The statistical view of rural black South Carolina remained bleak. Idus Newby reports that the average black Carolinian in the 1920s and 1930s remained a “tenant farmer, sharecropper, agricultural laborer, or the wife or child of one of these. . . .”

Total income for almost all black farmers was at or below subsistence levels. The value of products they sold, traded, or consumed in 1929 averaged \$675 per farm, and the Depression made matters worse. The total cash income from livestock and crop sales for South Carolina Farmers dropped from \$129,910,000 in 1929 to \$44,428,000 in 1932, a decline of 66 percent. This was the worst year of the Depression. That year the average yield per acre for important crops was 21 percent below the previous year. . . .¹⁶⁸

South Carolina’s black farmers’ debt increased—in part because they faced higher prices for the same goods and lower returns for the same products as whites—as the state’s ratio of mortgage debt climbed from 6.3 percent in 1920 to 21.2 percent in 1928. Newby reports that in the South, generally, black renters paid 10.3 percent of the value of the land in rent while whites paid 6.9 percent. Black landowners were disproportionately

¹⁶⁶Smith and Horton, *Historical Statistics of Black America*, volume I: “Table 31: Crops: Cotton and Cottonseed Produced by State, 1929;” “Table 44: Crops: Sweet Potato and Yam Production in States with High Sweet Potato/Yam Producing (10,000 Bushels or More) Black Farmers, 1929;” “Table 46: Crops: Tobacco Produced on Farms by Southern Division and State, 1909;” “Table 47: Crops: Tobacco Production in States with High Tobacco-Producing (10,000 Pounds or More) Black Farmers, 1929” pp. 22, 31, 33.

¹⁶⁷Alain Locke, “The New Negro” in Alain Locke, ed. *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1925; repr. ed., New York: Johnson Reprint Company, 1968), 6.

¹⁶⁸Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 203-4.

smallholders yet they found themselves more heavily burdened by economic policies than larger landholders. A 1933 study showed that Afro-South Carolinians paid \$1.07 in taxes per \$100 dollars of land value while whites paid \$0.83. This resulted in disparately high taxes on the smallest farms. Interest rates were exorbitant with smallholders—who could only get credit from high-risk sources—paying sometimes up to 47 percent interest.¹⁶⁹

Given these statistics, did the black agents' work represent "limited success" as Earl W. Crosby suggests? In some respects it clearly did for as these statistics demonstrate, without an agent in every county—or an agent in a nearby county who could travel to a county without a black agent—many Afro-South Carolinians received no benefits whatsoever from the first phase of black extension work. However, it must be remembered that Jeanes teachers, some of whom may have worked briefly in extension and who certainly received similar training at summer institutes at South Carolina State College, were actively educating rural blacks as well. For South Carolina black farmers fortunate enough to be served by extension workers the 1920s was a segue between serfdom and free peasantry. As the reports show, black extension work had rebounded by the end of the period. Thousands of blacks eagerly participated in activities that were designed to provide them not merely with the means to produce more materially but also to have a well-rounded life. Recreational activities, encouragement of better parenting skills and parental involvement with their children, community and church interest—all the things that were markers of white Anglo-Saxon Protestant civilization—were being cultivated among South Carolina's black population. Often white merchants and politicians participated in the spread of black extension work because the economic results fit their

¹⁶⁹Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 205-6.

own agendas. Their prejudice probably blinded them to the explosive potential of blacks' rising material success. They probably saw the community-based programs as another weapon in their arsenal of social control of the black population. Even as an economic depression bore down on the nation, the reports of the black extension agents suggest that they and their clients were optimistic for the future in their home state.

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**"A RAY OF HOPE FOR LIBERATION": BLACKS IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA
EXTENSION SERVICE, 1915-1970**

Volume II

By

Carmen Veneita Harris

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History

2002

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CHAPTER FIVE

"A NEW ERA IS APPROACHING": EXTENSION WORK IN THE MIDDLE YEARS, (1931-1949)

The Negro population can not be overlooked in the Southeast. . . . They will remain for generations tillers of the soil.—Dr. E. W. Sikes, President, Clemson Agricultural College, 1932

Education, the recent war where many of our boys gave their lives, and the plea for democracy and world peace, have made the Negro dissatisfied with the status quo. For eighty-two years, he has 'with the crumbs from the table' patiently waited for a better opportunity, for justice, for citizenship. . . . Now, with recent court actions a new era is approaching.
—Marian B. Paul, 1948

The second stage of black extension work began with fiscal year 1931 (July 1930) and lasted until the end of fiscal year 1948. By 1931 Robert S. Wilkinson's dream had been achieved: the men and women's services were united under the control of South Carolina State College, thus solidifying the school's status as the center of black extension work in the state. By 1930 Wilkinson could declare that "[t]he College occupies a prominent position in the educational field of South Carolina and possesses exceptional opportunities for the development of Negro leadership and service." Extension work was one of the fields which offered opportunities for leadership and service. Wilkinson had reported in 1924 that ninety percent of Smith-Lever extension agents and Smith-Hughes agricultural and home economics teachers were either graduates of the college or had received extra training there. "They are given preference when appointments are considered," Wilkinson wrote to Erwin H. Shinn, Senior Agriculturist with the USDA.¹

¹*CNIAMC*, 28 (1924): 28; *CNIAMC*, 29 (1925): 23; *CNIAMC*, 34 (1930) 3; R. S. Wilkinson to E. H. Shinn, 18 March 1930, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

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From an Expedient to a Profession: The Maturation of the Black Extension Service

From the mid-1920s through the early 1930s the black extension service grew slowly but steadily. The work was embraced and supported by many of the leading whites of the state. Despite Long's efforts to freeze the number of personnel in the black program in 1928, the intervention of federal government officials ensured that blacks received some share of new appropriations. Such actions demonstrate the federal bureaucracy's increasing sensitivity to rising black political power.

Even during the Great Depression, black extension work seemed to have found a place of usefulness and indispensability in the extension bureaucracy for a time. White philanthropists, federal extension officials, and white southern extension officials all saw the value of the black service as the Depression began to displace many blacks from the land. Federal extension officials began to support increased professionalization of the agents as a way of making them more useful at moments of economic crisis.

Yet this phase of the black extension program's history began in a time of national economic crisis and uncertainty. The depression had hit the agricultural regions of the nation—and hence agricultural peoples like southern blacks—particularly hard long before 1929. When the Great Depression was at its deepest, whites abandoned their concern for progressive programs like extension work. Black extension work, especially, became a target of austerity measures and its supporters had to fight for the program's very existence. Local white leadership also chafed at some of the egalitarian requirements of New Deal programs. Under the new Democratic leadership of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the federal administration responded to black Americans' needs in ways that none of the Republican presidents of the 1920s had. As black votes in northern states tempted the

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national Democrats, the Roosevelt administration became interested in ensuring that the disfranchised southern brothers and sisters of northern blacks received some benefits from the federal government. As a result, southern blacks also became more politically involved as some signals they received from administration policies suggested that they, too, were citizens. They began to stake their claim to extension dollars in proportion to the black population in rural districts. Some leaders also began to attack the rank discrimination that existed in the extension service and found a receptive audience among some of the New Deal's policymakers.

The success in attracting the interest of the federal government during the 1930s inspired some agents to think about the possibilities for blacks' participation in the larger society. By the time World War II began, for some blacks in the South, the proverbial "gloves were off." They began to raise their voices loudly against discrimination and whites began to respond. Richard Dalfiume has characterized the years encompassing World War II as the "'Forgotten Years' of the Negro Revolution," which have been overlooked by "ahistorical social scientists, and the historians who, until recently, have neglected modern Negro history."² This forgotten era was of great importance in South Carolina. The movement for civil rights in the state began to move beyond its embryonic roots to mature into collective effort to change the harshest aspects of the state's segregated system. For most of this era, whites seemed not to perceive these movements as vital threats to whites' domination of the state. Even black public professionals participated in the growing chorus of voices seeking redress of grievances. However, by the mid-1940s, particularly as the courts began to rule against southern states, the situation

²Richard M. Dalfiume, "The 'Forgotten Years' of the Negro Revolution," *Journal of American History* 55, no. 1 (1968): 90.

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changed dramatically. By 1948 it was dangerous for any black public professional to declare political or social equality as desirable.

Black farmers continued to leave the land despite the black extension service's efforts to encourage them to stay. However, for those who remained, the programs offered by black extension agents were such that they undermined the fundamental ideology of an extension program for blacks. More and more, farmers were able to labor for themselves and for their families, to send their children to school and even college, and to recognize, through their economic success, their fundamental right to full citizenship.

"Agriculture led the descent into the depths of depressions," writes George Brown Tindall. Southern agriculture was particularly hard hit. Cotton production in 1925 and 1926 had earned farmers 20.19 cents per pound. In 1929 the price was 16.78 cents per pound and by 1930 the price had fallen to 9.46 cents per pound. South Carolina's economy represented the proverbial "canary in the coal mine." The economy was already in decline by the time the Depression began in 1929. In 1928 fifteen banks in eastern South Carolina closed within a month. A rainy season in 1929 ruined crops, which made matters worse. Walter Edgar reports that the state's deficit had climbed from \$2 million in 1925 to \$5 million by 1931—astronomical amounts in today's dollars. He also notes that by 1930 the value of farmland and buildings had declined fifty percent, that a third of the state's farms were mortgaged, and that seventy percent of all farmers were surviving on borrowed money.³

³Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 359, 354; Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 458, 489.

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However, black extension workers initially seemed immune to the hard times—an argument that Warburton made in 1932 to Thomas Jesse Jones, a former federal employee who was Educational Director of the Phelps-Stokes Funds. Warburton declared that

Negro extension work is a definite part of our system of extension work in the South. The white people of the South realize that negro extension work is vital to the progress of that section of the country. This splendid sentiment in favor of negro extension is amply verified in the fact that, notwithstanding the serious drouth [sic] in some of the Southern States in 1930, and the general agricultural depression, the States have discontinued the negro extension agent only in rare instances, although in many cases it has been difficult to find the local funds to pay the agents' salaries. In some cases we have been able to retain the agents with the amount of Federal funds allotted to certain counties.⁴

Despite the onset of the Great Depression, 1930 began auspiciously for black extension workers. The Capper-Ketcham Act of 1928 led to the appointment of more black agents. Effective July 30, 1930 agents would be employed on a twelve month basis.⁵ The agents were also offered opportunities to develop their professional skills with financial support. For years South Carolina's black agents—and probably those of other states as well—had spent their summers enhancing their professional skills. A variety of options were available by which they were able to improve themselves. Some agents attended summer school to earn a baccalaureate degree (usually by attending South Carolina State College). Others attended annual conferences the college held in the summer for both extension agents and Smith-Hughes teachers. Still others sought higher degrees, pursuing master's level work at Hampton, Tuskegee, or one of the non-southern

⁴C. W. Warburton to Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones, 11 January 1932, Box 2, Folder: Negroes, 1924-1939, Entry 17 AE, Records of the Secretary of Agriculture, NA II.

⁵Kenner, "Narrative Summary . . . for 1930," p. 7; W. W. Long to C. W. Warburton, 5 July 1930, Box 203, Folder: Dead Files, SC 1930-1931, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

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white land-grant colleges like Iowa State, Cornell, Michigan State, or Minnesota with financial support from philanthropic organizations like the Julius Rosenwald Fund.⁶

Training for a Profession

The Rosenwald Fund's generosity extended to new heights when its board became co-sponsor of a series of summer schools for black extension agents that began in 1930. South Carolina State College, along with Tennessee State College in Nashville and Prairie View A & M in Texas, were selected as sites for the inaugural Rosenwald Summer schools. Black agents from South Carolina, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida convened at South Carolina State College.

The schools originated as the product of various groups' interest in black progress. In late January 1930, Alfred K. Stern, the Director of the Rosenwald Fund, called a conference attended by federal director of extension Clarence Beamon Smith. Other USDA officers including Thomas Campbell and J. B. Pierce, Arthur Raper of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, and several black college presidents including Benjamin Hubert of Georgia State Industrial College for Colored Youth, W. J. Hale of Tennessee State College, and Robert S. Wilkinson also attended. J. A. Evans recommended the summer school as an alternative to the individual scholarships which the Rosenwald fund had been recently funding for agents' summer study. Evans believed that the schools would benefit a broader number of agents.

The conferees agreed that the schools were necessary to upgrade the preparation of agents who were already on the job. Statistics compiled by Campbell and Pierce

⁶Ophelia Williams, the home agent for Sumter County received a scholarship from the Julius Rosenwald Fund for work toward her baccalaureate degree at Iowa State University, for example. Kenner, "Narrative Summary . . . for 1930," p. 2.

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demonstrated the low level of preparation of most agents. Of the 237 agents then employed over 45 percent were not college graduates. Nineteen had completed grammar school as their highest level of education (although twelve had taken further training), and 88 were high school graduates, of whom thirty-six had taken further training. One hundred thirty were college graduates, of whom 12 had some post-baccalaureate training. The agents from the region Campbell supervised were, on the whole, better trained than those from Pierce's region—which included South Carolina. In all likelihood, Tuskegee Institute was able to use extension work to place many of its alumni. Of the agents who were college graduates, 110 (roughly 85 percent) worked in the states under Campbell's authority. There were only twenty college-graduated agents working in Pierce's region (Arkansas, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia).

The number of baccalaureate college graduates working in the South Carolina Negro Extension Service in early 1930 is unclear. Wilkinson made reference to the number of state college graduates who worked in the service in 1922 when he noted that six of nine agricultural agents and the majority of home agents were graduates of State College. However, the college did not offer a baccalaureate degree until the end of the 1924-1925 academic year.⁷ In Wilkinson's 1925 report he notes that ninety percent of extension workers were graduates of the college but the degree they received is not disclosed. Given the fact that Assistant District Agent Harry Daniels was granted an honorary Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, it seems safe to speculate that agents who had been employed prior to 1928 (and certainly before 1925) did not have the Bachelor's

⁷William C. Hine, "South Carolina State College: A Legacy of Education and Public Service," *Agricultural History* 65, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 153.

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degree unless they received it from an institution other than South Carolina State College. Although it is incomplete, there is some data from which we can make speculations about the degree of preparation of the agents employed in 1930. Personnel forms of three black agricultural and four black home agents who were employed in 1930 are available. Two of three agricultural agents had completed a Bachelor's degree the same year they began working as extension agents (1928). A third agent who had been working since 1926 completed his degree in 1935 at the age of 46. Of the women employed one had completed the baccalaureate degree at Pennsylvania State University prior to her first term of employment in 1920. A second agent who began working in 1929 was in the process of completing her degree in 1930 and completed it in 1932 at Iowa State College. An agent who began working in 1924 indicated four years of undergraduate study at Hampton Institute, but did not indicate that a degree had been received. The final agent listed, who had been employed since 1920, received a Licentiate of Instruction from South Carolina State College in 1900.⁸ Of thirteen agents employed in 1935-1936—the first year in which their degrees are mentioned in the annual narrative report, only six of thirteen agents' names were followed by the initials "B. S." However, of four new agents who were hired that year, three had Bachelor's degrees in home economics and the fourth was listed as a "Graduate of Claflin College." Three home agents—including the Claflin graduate—attended State College that summer to work toward their Bachelor's degrees in

⁸"Preparation and Training of Extension Workers," [1938], forms for Larkin V. Walker, William Thompson, Box 8, Folders 62 and 52 respectively; Marian Baxter Paul, Box 7, Folder 17; France Thomas, Box 8, Folder 48; Ophelia Williams, and Willie Mabel Price, Box 9 folders 21 and 3 respectively. Resume of Ernest Nesbitt Williams, Box 9 Folder 19, Series 65, STICUL; *CNIAMC*, 25 (1921): 9-10; *CNIAMC*, 29 (1925): 23. The Licentiate of Instruction was a three-year program that included courses from the college academic curriculum and prepared recipients to teach in the public schools. Potts, *A History of South Carolina State College*, 53-4.

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home economics. The others planned to begin working toward their degrees in the summer of 1936.⁹

Available information on agents employed after 1930 show that the agents hired had Bachelor's degrees at the time of their employment.¹⁰ The Bachelor's degree seems to have become the standard for initial employment in the South Carolina black extension service unless there were other criteria that mitigated its importance. The graduate of Claflin College, for example, had fifteen years experience as a teacher and community worker. Another agent, listed as a graduate of State College (but who began work the year before the school began offering the four-year degree) had had seven years experience as an agent before her county cut off its appropriation. She was rehired in 1935.¹¹

However, long-time agents without college degrees were a valuable resource and they could not be terminated wholesale and replaced with recent college graduates without adverse consequences for the program. The recognition and good will they had created would certainly have evaporated had they been callously replaced merely because they lacked a college degree—especially since the level of college training was not fully standardized. Therefore, the summer schools offered an opportunity to help current agents become more effective.

⁹*CNIAMC*, 26 (1922): 11; Marian B. Paul, "Annual Report: Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina 1936, Negro Home Demonstration Division," pp. 4, 6, 8, Series 33, Box 24, Folder 704, STICUL. This report will subsequently be referred to as "1936, Negro Home Division"). Paul noted that Mabel Price had studied at Columbia University for two summers.

¹⁰"Preparation and Training of Extension Workers," [1938], forms for Van Buren Thomas, Box 8, Folder 50; Houston S. Person, Box 7 folder, 21; Ethel M. Taggart, Box 8, Folder 41; "Standard Form No. 2—Application for Elective Position" for Charles Preston Salley, Box 7, Folder 54; William James Warren, John William Young, Julius Westbrook, and David Benjamin Waymer, Box 9, Folders 1, 36, 15, 10 respectively, Series 65, STICUL

¹¹Paul, "1936, Negro Home Division", p. 5.

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Black college presidents enthusiastically supported the plan for the summer schools and played an important role in developing it. A subcommittee of which Wilkinson was a member came up with a proposal that was submitted to the Rosenwald Fund for consideration. According to Wilkinson, they recommended hiring a teaching staff of “special agricultural economists from reputable land grant institutions in the North, such as Cornell, Illinois and others,” experts from the USDA, specialists from southern state land-grant colleges, and a token number of black faculty.¹² The plan was submitted to and approved by the white southern extension directors who offered their hearty support when they met a month later. That they were willing to participate in this program suggests that black extension work had affected southern rural life in a manner the directors valued. In the final plan, northern faculty would play no role in the schools, which is also significant.

The federal government permitted the agents to draw the federal portion of their salaries while attending the schools and the state extension directors agreed to pay the agents the state portions of their salaries as well. The directors also encouraged counties to pay the county matching portion of the agents’ salaries while they attended the schools. Some states even allowed the agents to claim expenses incurred while in school.¹³

¹²R. S. Wilkinson to D. W. Watkins, 21 February 1930, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

¹³*Report of Special Summer Schools for Negro Extension Agents Under the Direction of Office of Cooperative Extension Work, United States Department of Agriculture In Cooperation with Federal and State Extension Services of The Southern States Partially financed by Julius Rosenwald Fund Held at Orangeburg, South Carolina[,] Nashville, Tennessee[,] and Prairie View, Texas, August 1930* (n. p.: 1930), 1-4, (hereafter referred to as the *Rosenwald Report*.) A copy of this report is archived at Series 32, Box 81, Folder 4, STICUL.

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The Rosenwald School in South Carolina

For R. S. Wilkinson the selection of State College as an inaugural site for the Rosenwald schools was significant and it received prominent discussion in his annual report. He suggested that State College was chosen “because of its forward leadership in extension work,” although there is nothing in the *Rosenwald Report* which confirms this assertion. His report notes positive references to the state’s educational progress and to the development of the college.¹⁴ Indeed, this was an opportunity for Wilkinson to shine and to demonstrate his ability to organize and coordinate his institution’s resources in the cause of agriculture. However, once again, Wilkinson found himself playing a limited and secondary role to Benjamin Hubert. Hubert directed both the Orangeburg and Nashville schools that year.¹⁵ After the program ended Wilkinson complained in a letter to Erwin H. Shinn, Senior Agriculturist in the Extension Studies and Teaching Division, that he “had very little to say or do with the preparations for direction and control of the work.” Wilkinson said that he had been contacted when something needed “to be done on the spur of the moment and he was consulted only when situations were under pressure . . . [and] had very little initiative and opportunity and practically no authority of approval.”¹⁶

¹⁴*CNIAMC*, 34 (1930): 11-12.

¹⁵*Rosenwald Report*, 10, 12. Since his departure from the school, Hubert had made a name for himself as an advocate of black rural living. He founded the Association for the Advancement of Negro Country Life in 1928 and created the Log Cabin Community Center on his father’s farm that he had purchased from his siblings. Hall, *One Hundred Years of Educating at Savannah State College*, 47; Schultz’s master’s thesis focuses on the Log Cabin community as well.

¹⁶R. S. Wilkinson to E. H. Shinn, 27 October 1930, Box 203, Folder Dead Files, S. C. 1930-1931, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

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The teaching staff from the school was bi-racial, although none of the white personnel was from land-grant colleges outside the South.¹⁷ This probably prevented the danger of any “inappropriate” equalitarian treatment of the agents. Each course in the curriculum was practical and hands-on. Given the broad number of topics covered, it seems that the agents were being prepared to do work for which white extension agents could call on specialists for assistance. According to the *Rosenwald Report*, “the aim was to make these courses simple, definite, and applicable so far as possible to the problems with which the Negro extension agents have to deal with their work. . . . One significant thing about these courses is the fact that the class periods were not taken up by a mere theoretical discussion of the problems. The agents were required to do a great deal of practical work in the laboratory or on the farm.” The outlines from agricultural and home extension courses serve as examples. In the dairy course agents considered six broad questions: “Selection of dairy breed,” including a consideration of what constituted a good dairy cow and how to select one; how to improve milk production through breeding; what to feed the cow; use of sanitary conditions to produce clean milk; the production of butter and cheese; and the marketing of dairy products. The women’s course on food conservation included issues such as the benefits of canning, the principles of canning, equipment required for canning, and practical demonstrations in how to can a variety of foods. The Orangeburg and Nashville schools also offered courses in creating a roadside market. At Orangeburg, the agricultural agents also extensively remodeled an old farm home which the home agents decorated.¹⁸

¹⁷*Rosenwald Report*, 8-9.

¹⁸*Rosenwald Report*, 15-6, 35-9, 46-8, 52-3.

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The emphasis on the practical demonstrates that little had changed in whites' attitudes regarding the purpose of black extension work. Of the two whites whose statements were selected for inclusion in the *Rosenwald Report*, J. A. Evans of the USDA mentioned significant changes in the status of blacks as a result of the schools, particularly the agents' selflessness and opportunities for self improvement. Evans emphasized the "sacrifices" the agents made to attend the schools and promised better pay as their competence improved. On the other hand, Arthur Raper of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation broached the subject of black landownership and the benefits of it.¹⁹

Even courses that promoted some modicum of independence—the course on markets for example—were limited in scope. The discussion on marketing was limited to roadside markets. And the first statement under instructions for developing a market—"Production and consumption of products for family needs first"—demonstrates that it was not expected that this would be a capitalistic undertaking. In addition to the sale of food products the course in marketing also suggested the sale of decorative arts products such as baskets and linens. Interestingly, the course on marketing also included a miscellaneous category which included laundering, catering and housecleaning as salable commodities.²⁰

This type of marketing greatly contrasts with what white South Carolinians, for example, had been privileged to since the 1920s. In his history of the first fifty years of extension work in South Carolina under Smith-Lever, Thomas Morgan describes an entirely different extension experience than that being offered to black farmers:

¹⁹*Rosenwald Report*, 56-7.

²⁰*Rosenwald Report*, 49-51.

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To meet this problem [of marketing products from diversified farming], and with the help of the newly created Extension Marketing Division, along with other extension specialists concerned, county agents developed the system of making carlot shipments of live poultry to northern markets, arranged cooperative express shipment of eggs, and organized cream stations to purchase sour cream for creameries. They developed carlot shipments of hogs and lambs to northern markets, organized wool pools, made carlot shipments of sweet potatoes, helped establish creameries, and in many other ways pioneered the beginnings of our marketing system for these new products. ¶ Under the leadership of extension, carlot shipments of hogs and poultry, and the marketing of sour cream through cream stations, enabled these enterprises to grow to the point of our own poultry dressing plants, meat packing plants and dairy processing plants could be established.²¹

This obvious inequality in programs supports Joel Schor's arguments regarding whites' desire to channel the path of black extension work. Black extension work was indeed valuable to whites, but only when whites saw its benefits accruing to themselves. It was not merely the difference in program objectives—capitalist for whites versus agrarian subsistence for blacks—that was a hallmark of the extension program. The Great Depression revealed a difference in the level of commitment to extension work under dire fiscal circumstances.

Putting a Price on Extension Work: Black Extension Work and the Great Depression

Federal extension director Warburton's assertion that southern whites valued black extension work was put to the test in South Carolina during the last two years of Hoover's administration. The Depression was, perhaps, at its worst in South Carolina in the years between 1931 and 1933. The selling price for cotton reached a dismal 4.6 cents per pound in June of 1932 before rebounding to 6 cents per pound in early 1933. Per capita income declined from \$261 in 1921 to \$151 in 1933.²² Idus Newby reports that for

²¹Morgan, "The First Fifty Years of Smith-Lever," 14-5.

²²Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 499.

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blacks, total income “was at or below subsistence levels.” The value of products they sold, traded or consumed averaged \$675. Between 1929 and 1932 cash income from crop sales dropped 66 percent. A 1933 Clemson study of conditions in Sumter County found that black farmers’ average net income was \$124 while whites’ average income was \$433.²³

Programs such as the black extension service would have been very beneficial to providing practical assistance to black farmers and in boosting their morale as well. However, as funding became a central issue in South Carolina’s deficit economy, the state’s commitment to the black extension service began to falter. The Rosenwald school’s success probably influenced Wilkinson’s decision to write D. W. Watkins, Clemson’s assistant director of extension, in December 1930 to request the appointment of a supervisor to oversee club work with black youth. This work had been carried on by black farm and home agents but the level of participation meant long hours for the already overworked agents. According to Thomas Morgan, club work for whites had begun in South Carolina in 1908 and 1910 for white boys and girls respectively. C. B. Haddon had been appointed state club agent in 1911.²⁴ Although the club movement was alive in black schools under the auspices of Jeanes teachers and in rural communities under the leadership of black extension agents, there was no club agent for blacks. Watkins expressed “sympathy with [Wilkinson’s] proposal and [the] hope that something could be worked out along this line.” Watkins promised to speak to Director Long regarding the matter and get back to Wilkinson but there is no further correspondence on

²³Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 204.

²⁴Morgan, “The First Fifty Years of Smith-Lever,” 5-6.

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Wilkinson may have believed that there was money available for a club agent elsewhere.

South Carolina received \$25,000 from Congressional appropriations made prior to the 1930 adjournment. From this money, 23.2 percent (\$5,800) was appropriated for white agricultural agents, 17.4 percent (\$4,350) was appropriated for white home demonstration work, 11.4 percent (\$2,850) for black agricultural work, and 7.6 percent (\$1,900) for black home demonstration work. The remainder was devoted to agricultural economics.²⁶

Given the state's economic situation, money was already an issue and it got worse. Since 1928, the General Assembly had been whittling away at the funding for all public institutions, cutting 5 percent of the total budget for white colleges and 3.2 percent of the budget for South Carolina State College. Although total appropriation for public white colleges increased in 1929, South Carolina State College's budget was cut by 3.3 percent. In 1930 nearly ten percent of State College's budget was cut while only three percent of the budget for white colleges was cut. The next year the cut for the white schools was larger than ever, 16 percent of the budget, bringing their net loss in funding since 1928 to 20.5 percent. State College had lost a total of 26.4 percent of its funding over the same period. In 1933, the total cut for white colleges represented a 29 percentage reduction over the funding for 1932 while State College experienced a 35 percent reduction. In monetary amounts the budget cuts fell heaviest on white schools, which on average lost \$127,750 (more than South Carolina State College's entire budget at its height in 1927). However, other factors need to be considered as well. Between 1927 and

²⁵R. S. Wilkinson to D. W. Watkins, 13 December 1930; D. W. Watkins to R. S. Wilkinson, 14 December 1930, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

²⁶W. W. Long to E. W. Sikes, 24 July 1930, Series 32 Box 107, Folder 2, STICUL.

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1933 the white colleges' appropriations were reduced a total of \$638,749—an amount that was 5 times the *total* appropriation for State College in 1927. The amount of reduction for State College was \$63,455, nearly half of what the average loss per white public college was. While appropriations to white colleges were reduced a total of 43 percent of the 1927 value, State College's 1933 appropriation of \$62,050 was less than half (49.2 percent) of its 1927 budget.²⁷

In early January 1931, W. W. Long wrote federal Director of Extension Clyde W. Warburton to report that two bills in the South Carolina General Assembly threatened the state's extension program. One bill proposed to eliminate home demonstration work all together. The other sought to relieve the state of the responsibility for paying a portion of the agents' salaries and to place that burden on the counties (a perfectly legal requirement under Section 3 of Smith-Lever; however it would have effectively nullified the County Agent Law). In addition, the Budget Commission recommended that the extension appropriation be cut by ten percent.²⁸ The proposed bills were perfectly legal under Smith-Lever. If the Secretary did not object to the elimination of home demonstration by invoking sections 2 and 6 of Smith-Lever—a highly unlikely prospect—the agricultural program could continue.

As the economic crisis in South Carolina reached its nadir in 1932 the General Assembly again put extension work on the chopping block. W. W. Long sent a telegram to Director Warburton informing him of the Ways and Means Committee's proposal to eliminate the entire appropriation that the county agent law guaranteed in a plan to reduce

²⁷Table of State Appropriations, Educational Institutions, 1924-1932, Folder 91, SCSUHC.

²⁸W. W. Long to C. W. Warburton, 30 January 1931, Box 203, Dead Files South Carolina Director, 1930-31, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

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the state's appropriation for Smith-Lever to \$24,000. Long wanted to determine the Secretary's attitude toward the continuation of federal funds under these circumstances as well as enlist the Secretary's assistance in forestalling the move by sending a federal representative to the state. The amount the legislature planned to appropriate was \$151,000 less than the federal funds provided for extension work. Warburton informed Long that "[w]e would be compelled to withdraw such part of this as you could not offset. If State and county funds greatly reduced we would not be justified in continuing present allotment nearly thirty-four thousand dollars department funds not requiring offset."²⁹

The economic crisis had already demonstrated that even the most dedicated service of black agents was not fully appreciated. Although the state had assumed the support of two agents for Greenville County, on 31 January 1931, the County legislative delegation decided to withdraw the \$900 it provided for the salary of Delphina Wilkerson, the Negro Home Demonstration Agent. The county's contribution represented sixty-eight percent of her salary. R. S. Wilkinson, State Supervisor for Negro Home Demonstration Work, Marian B. Paul, and Lonny I. Landrum, State Home Demonstration Agent at Winthrop began a campaign in Miss Wilkerson's behalf. Wilkinson wrote G. Dewey Oxner, Secretary of the Greenville County Legislative Delegation, and asked to put the case for retaining the home agent before that body. He also wrote E. W. Biggs, one of Greenville's "leading" black citizens to enlist his aid and that of other black leaders in changing the delegation members' minds.³⁰ There was both white and black support for

²⁹Telegram, W. W. Long to C. W. Warburton, 14 January 1932; C. W. Warburton to W. W. Long, 14 January 1932; Box 1689, Folder Extension Work, Entry 17 H, RG 16, NA II.

³⁰Salary Schedule of Delphina Wilkerson Arnold Series 65, Box 15, Folder 7, STICUL; R. S. Wilkinson to G. Dewey Oxner, 31 January 1931; R. S. Wilkinson to E. W. Biggs, 2 March 1931; R. S. Wilkinson to Lonny I. Landrum, 3 March 1931, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

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maintaining Wilkerson's services. Marian Paul reported to Wilkinson that she met with the county's senator, Joseph R. Bryson, and secured his support to keep Wilkerson's funding. Reverend Taylor, a white minister, wrote each member of the county's legislative delegation on Wilkerson's behalf. Paul also reported that rural blacks planned to sign a petition and to ask Greenville mayor A. C. Mann to approach the legislative delegation as well.³¹ Landrum sent district agent Blanche Tarrant to meet with the Greenville delegation. Landrum also diverted part of Winthrop's fund for a bulletin supplement to replace some of the money withdrawn by the delegation.³² Wilkerson was able to work through the remainder of the fiscal year because of funds scraped together by Winthrop College's extension service and other donations. This was not an uncommon strategy. County-wide meetings, soliciting pledges of financial support from community leaders (black and white), establishing interracial commissions and compiling interracial petitions to present to county legislators as well as using the influence of the white county agent (if he were not opposed to the black agent) were tactics used to influence the county delegations. Sometimes, stop-gap funding was found, as was done in the case of Miss Wilkerson. However, if the funding were not reliable, it would only delay the inevitable.³³ For fiscal year 1932, Wilkerson had funding for only 5½ months; however, the Greenville County Council raised \$300 to supplement Wilkerson's salary "despite economic pressure."³⁴

³¹Marian B. Paul to R. S. Wilkinson, 7 March 1931, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

³²Lonny I. Landrum to R. S. Wilkinson, 7 March 1931, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

³³Schor, "The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service," 78.

³⁴Marian B. Paul, "South Carolina 1932-1933 Narrative Annual Report of Marian B. Paul, State Supervisor of Negro Home Demonstration Work," 3, Series 33, Box 21, Folder 647, STICUL.

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The financial pressure on the state's extension program continued to have a significant and negative effect on black extension workers. However, local people could hold equal—and sometimes greater—influence over black extension work. Before the General Assembly had had a chance to convene in 1932, Benjamin Barnwell, one of the most successful black agents, found his job on the line as well. In late December 1931 the Beaufort County legislative delegation held a series of public meetings to address citizen's concerns about the economic crisis. At one meeting, William Keyserling, a white county resident, asked Senator W. Brantley Harvey, chairman of the county's delegation, to read a copy of a resolution passed at a meeting of the [white?] Farmers and Taxpayers League. The resolution asked that the office of the black farm agent be abolished. Keyserling—and several whites who spoke at these meetings—felt that the black agent's services were necessary. Keyserling pointed out that there were nearly twice as many black farmers as white farmers in the county. Keyserling saw no way that the white agent, T. H. Seabrook, could serve the entire county.

The resolution reflected the reality that some Beaufort county whites were upset because they thought Barnwell was paid \$2,100 per year. Believing that the amount reflected Barnwell's actual pay rather than the salary scale, Senator Harvey asserted that it was entirely too much money compared to the salary of the white agent. T. H. Seabrook, Harvey declared, served the entire county [rather than merely the white community].³⁵ However, Barnwell's salary for the year 1931 was \$1,900. The next year he only received \$1,585, suggesting the Taxpayers League's had had some effect.³⁶ If Barnwell received

³⁵"Meeting Held at Court House Monday Night Called by the Delegation," *Beaufort Gazette*, XXXII No. 39, 2 January 1932, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

³⁶Salary schedule for Benjamin Barnwell, Series 65, Box 13, Folder 5, STICUL

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\$2,100 in pay in 1931, his extension salary was being supplemented by the Penn School where he taught agriculture. One man, a Mr. Crocker, resented the fact that Barnwell worked with the Penn School and felt Barnwell should be removed from the school's "payroll and influence" and be placed under Seabrook's supervision, although he preferred that Barnwell be replaced. Another man, Bert Gage, complained because agent Barnwell had never visited Daufuskie Island, a Sea Island that, until relatively recently, was difficult to reach. Keyserling and another white citizen, J. R. Bellamy, suggested that agents of the county be required to devote their entire working time to the county. The delegation decided to consider legislation to require the black agent to work full time for the county and to terminate his relationship with the Penn School.³⁷

Miss Rossa B. Cooley, a Penn School Trustee, led the black community's effort to keep Barnwell. She used the words of Clemson College's president to justify the need for a black agent:

At the Southeastern Economic Conference held in Savannah, (20 October 1931) Dr. E. W. Sikes, President of Clemson College, said, "The Negro population can not be overlooked in the Southeast. There are quite 900,000 Negro farmers. . . . These several hundred thousand colored farmers can not be overlooked. They will remain for generations tillers of the soil. . . . They can not remain ignorant of modern agriculture and not be a burden to the Southeast. Has not the Southeast handicapped itself in not training him in the economical production of crops, in not having more county extension agents to work with him? The Negro Agricultural Colleges are doing a good work and are most appreciated by those who know them best. Only twelve county agents where there are a hundred thousand Negro farmers can't do much![""]³⁸

³⁷"Meeting Held at Court House Monday Night Called by the Delegation," *Beaufort Gazette*, XXXII No. 39, 2 January 1932.

³⁸Rossa B. Cooley to the Beaufort County Delegation, 2 January 1932, Folder 92, SCSUHC. Cooley, a white woman, had taught at Hampton Institute before coming to the Penn School to succeed Laura Towne who died in 1901. According to Gerald Robbins, Cooley embraced the Hampton ideal and saw practical education in agriculture and home-making as more vital to the survival of the Sea Island blacks than liberal education. See Gerald Robbins, "Rossa B. Cooley and Penn School: Social Dynamo in a

Cooley recognized of the economic issues at stake but believed that it was essential to the black community for an agent to continue:

While we are in complete harmony with the general principal [sic] of economy in the county and feel that the work of the Taxpayers League should be most carefully considered, we feel that a vigorous [sic] protest should be made against abolishing the colored demonstration agent on the ground of economy. . . . The whole economic structure of the Sea Islands, which make up Beaufort County depends on agriculture. The white county demonstration agent would not be able to cover the county including white and colored citizens, on account of the extent of the territory and the large farming population.³⁹

Additionally, she cited Barnwell's projects for 1931 as evidence of his necessity. Among his accomplishments were speaking to a total of 5,633 persons at 31 meetings he held during the year; selling 7½ carloads of tomatoes at a net profit of \$3987.62 (an average profit of \$153.37 for the 26 farmers who participated); and selling 3 carloads of Irish potatoes at a net profit of \$672.25 (an average profit of \$67.23 for the 10 farmers who participated).⁴⁰

Cooley asked W. W. Long whether Beaufort State Senator Harvey was correct when he said that Barnwell's services could be continued even if the county withdrew its \$600 supplement. Cooley believed that "politics and personalities seem to be sadly mixed in the affair but I suppose that is to be expected." She noted the criticism Barnwell received for spending too much time at the Penn School, but informed Long that Barnwell taught agriculture to the highest class of boys once a week. Barnwell also held an agricultural meeting once a week with the school's teachers, who went "out on the home

Rural Negro Subculture, 1901-1930," *Journal of Negro Education*, volume 33, issue 1 (Winter 1964): 44-9.

³⁹Rossa B. Cooley to the Beaufort County Delegation, 2 January 1932, Folder 92, SCSUHC

⁴⁰Rossa B. Cooley to the Beaufort County Delegation, 2 January 1932, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

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acres to teach and supervise” since the teachers were not trained farmers. “When Dr. Knapp was here many years ago, the connection with the agriculture work of Penn School was outlined and emphasized.”

Cooley also defended Barnwell against claims of restricted territorial coverage by pointing out that the coastal counties were divided by tidal rivers and that since Seaman Knapp’s time, the emphasis had been on making a mark on the farms he was able to visit. Barnwell had visited 132 farms in 1931 of which 30 were not on St. Helena Island, where the largest percentage of black landowners resided.⁴¹ Thus Barnwell’s decision to focus his efforts there were perfectly in line with the planned emphasis of black extension work. She reported that until recently nothing but good things had been said regarding Barnwell’s work and offered the Penn School’s cooperation in reaching some accommodation. Her greatest fear was that if black extension work were discontinued on the island, it would be difficult to get it reinstated.⁴²

Cooley also wrote R. S. Wilkinson pledging the Penn School’s cooperation in resolving the matter. She reported that Long stated that no federal appropriation could be made for black work unless the county provided money as well.⁴³ This was flatly untrue. Under Section 3 of the Smith-Lever Act an equal sum for extension work could be pledged by “the legislature of [a] State, or provided by State, county, college, local authority, or individual contributions from within the State, for the maintenance of the cooperative agricultural extension work.” The county aid requirement for black workers

⁴¹Rossa B. Cooley to W. W. Long, 6 January 1932, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

⁴²Rossa B. Cooley to W. W. Long, 6 January 1932, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

⁴³Rossa B. Cooley to R. S. Wilkinson, 7 January 1932, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

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was a Clemson decision. It thwarted the expansion of black work into the counties by giving local whites control of black extension through their legislative delegation's appropriation.⁴⁴ Barnwell could have been continued—as Delphina Wilkerson had been for a time—without county funds under the County Agent Law as well. It provided \$2,000 each for the salaries of a county and home demonstration agent, which would have left more state and federal funds available for black agents' salaries (the method of payment in the early years).

Cooley also noted that there was a possibility that Barnwell would be placed under the direction of T. H. Seabrook, the white agent, (theoretically Barnwell was under Seabrook's supervision already). She optimistically predicted that the situation could be resolved.⁴⁵ Wilkinson had H. E. Daniels working on the situation as well. Daniels had already met with Senator Harvey to discuss the matter. Regarding the possibility that Barnwell might become Seabrook's subordinate, Wilkinson was as resolutely against it as Cooley:

We are entirely opposed to the placing of the colored work under the white agent and shall resist it to the end. We feel that such an arrangement would entirely destroy the morale and efficiency of our workers. We shall continue our efforts in the matter with the Beaufort county delegation during the session of the legislature and hope to retain recognition of the service of Mr. Barnwell on present basis.⁴⁶

The cases of Wilkerson and Barnwell highlight the dire financial situation in the South Carolina Extension Service. It also created some serious concerns about the continuation of the black extension service. In 1933 W. W. Long sent a statement

⁴⁴Smith-Lever Act, Section 3; "County Agent Law," 1054.

⁴⁵Rossa B. Cooley to R. S. Wilkinson, 7 January 1932, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

⁴⁶R. S. Wilkinson to Rossa B. Cooley, 11 January 1932, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

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regarding appropriations to Clemson's President Sikes. Long estimated that between 1931 and 1932 the total appropriations for extension had declined from \$504,797 to \$439,958. The state had attempted to balance its budget, in part, by cutting fifteen percent of the appropriation for Smith-Lever agricultural work. To offset the deficit Long had cut agents' salaries by 4.5 percent. He also reported that it was evident that the state would not restore the budget cut and that the funds that had not been matched needed to be returned to the federal government to avoid embarrassing the college and the state. He also informed Sikes that the program would not be able to function through the end of the fiscal year without the restoration of some of the funds.⁴⁷

Wilkinson died of pneumonia on 12 March 1932. On 14 March the Board of Trustees elected Miller F. Whittaker as acting president and as the permanent president on 30 May.⁴⁸ Whittaker made direct appeals on behalf of the school. In April 1932 Whittaker wrote a letter, presumably sent to one or more members of the state's congressional delegation, requesting assistance in protection of federal funding for vocational education, Smith-Lever extension funding and Smith-Hughes funding to train agriculture and home economics teachers for high schools. Whittaker stated that the proposed cuts "would almost totally destroy the practical training now being given the Negro race in this State. Our people in these strenuous times are in dire need of this training that they may not become utterly dependent on charity. . . . We hope you will not aid the economy program at the expense of the practical education of the Negro race." Whittaker had local white support in his appeal. Jack Bryant, an Orangeburg pharmacist, wrote Senator James

⁴⁷W. W. Long to E. W. Sikes, 12 April 1933, Series 32, Box 107, Folder 4, STICUL.

⁴⁸Potts, *A History of South Carolina State College*, 67; William C. Hine, "South Carolina State College: A Legacy of Education and Public Service," 156.

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F. Byrnes about the a federal proposal to discontinue all federal disbursement, not merely vocational funds but Morrill Act funds as well, to the states for a year. He noted that if that policy were adopted 40 percent of South Carolina State College's budget would be lost. (The school had received \$73,000 in 1932 and its proposed budget for 1933 was \$62,050, less than half of what the funding had been at its peak in 1927 (\$126,025).) Bryant predicted that such a policy would close the 700-student college and "would almost destroy practical education for Negroes in this state, and would completely destroy the work of the farm demonstration agents." He added that such a policy would affect Clemson College as well. The potential loss was \$30,754, 42 percent of the 1932 budget and a whopping 49.5 percent of the proposed 1933 budget for the school, \$62,050. The proposed budgeted amount for 1933 was less than half the amount that the school had received in 1927, \$126,025.⁴⁹

Through the early stages of the Great Depression, black extension workers continued to experience economic setbacks. After only two years of year-round work, black home demonstration agents' working time was reduced to eleven months in 1932-1933.⁵⁰ This was surprising indeed. Federal officials insisted that people in the South appreciated the value of black extension agents. (See the exchange between C. W. Warburton and Thomas Jesse Jones above). How deep states' commitment to keeping black agents was is unclear. The situation in South Carolina is a model for the South generally, suggesting that white opinion was split on the subject of black agents. Opinions seem to have been influenced by the degree to which a particular white person recognized

⁴⁹M. F. Whittaker to Sir, 19 April 1932; W. Jack Bryant to Senator James F. Byrnes, 13 April 1933 [probably 1932], Folder 92, SCSUHC.

⁵⁰Paul, "South Carolina 1932-1933 Narrative Annual Report," 3.

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blacks as essential to their personal—or the state’s—economic health. However, white opinion was no longer the only one that mattered. Blacks seeing their economic survival in the balance often pushed for the protection of financial support for institutions for their race.

Rescuing Black Extension Work: The Role of National Interest Groups and Individuals

As a bureaucracy, the extension service was generally immune to challenges within the system; however, external protest was another matter. After receiving a letter from the National Federation of Colored Farmers, Secretary of Agriculture Arthur M. Hyde inquired into the alleged disparities in the loan program. Director Warburton responded that the federal extension service had no way of knowing how many blacks had received loans—although he confidently asserted that a “large percentage of our small borrowers are negro tenants.” He suggested that “several million dollars” had been loaned to black farmers. Warburton went on to disparage the Colored Farmers Federation: their “headquarters [he wrote] is a desk in the lobby of a cheap hotel on the west side of Chicago. [The Federation’s] main purpose is to support its President, a negro named Davis, and its secretary, [Leon] Harris.”⁵¹ However, not all inquiries could be so rudely dismissed. Paul H. Appleby, an assistant to Secretary Hyde’s successor Henry A. Wallace (the son of Secretary of Agriculture Henry Cantwell Wallace, answered the request of Dr. Roland Eutsler of the University of Pennsylvania for statistics on loans to black farmers with the assertion that loan statistics were not provided by race. However, he estimated

⁵¹C. W. Warburton, Memorandum to the Secretary of Agriculture, 25 April 1932. The letter to which Warburton refers is not in this file. However, a letter of introduction from the National Federation of Colored Farmers, Inc. disclosed that its national office was at the Vincennes Hotel in Chicago. It also touted a “*potential* [my emphasis] membership” that was “large and important.” Leon R. Harris to Hon. A. M. Hyde 21 July 1931, Both pieces of correspondence are found in Box 2, Folder: Negroes, 1924-1939, Entry 17 AE, Records of the Secretary of Agriculture, RG 16, NA II.

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that forty percent of all loans in southern states were made to blacks and that their repayment rates were “excellent.”⁵²

The difference in response to inquiries regarding the benefits blacks received from the federal extension service must partially be attributed to the entrance of the Roosevelt administration. As the decade progressed, interest in farm issues related to blacks and in black extension issues increased among black activist groups outside the South. The Colored National Democratic League, with headquarters in the northwest section of Washington D. C., wrote Secretary Wallace regarding the black extension service. They pointed out the disabilities blacks continued to suffer: segregation, lack of voting rights in some areas, and neglect from federal and state bureaucracies. They called on the government to provide “the privileges and equalities which are written into our American Government.” The writers recommended the appointment of additional black extension agents “to give improved attention particularly to the rural districts of the South.”⁵³

Blacks outside the South played a significant role in pushing the federal government for positive action regarding black extension work. W. F. Reden, a black resident of South Dakota, wrote his South Dakota Congressman Fred H. Hildebrandt, regarding the possibility of creating a separate bureau for black farmers.⁵⁴ Hildebrandt wrote Secretary

⁵²Paul H. Appleby to Dr. Roland B. Eustler, 10 November 1933, Box 2, Folder: Negroes, 1924-1939, Entry 17 AE, Records of the Secretary of Agriculture, RG 16, NA II. Eustler may have proposed a study of the problem. Appleby stated that several studies on credit and southern farmers had been done by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and included a bulletin on farm tenancy and ownership patterns in Southampton County Virginia, that included information on black credit.

⁵³Paul D. Scott, George W. Davis, W. Tecumseh Bradshaw, and T. O. Willitson to Hon. Henry A. Wallace, 4 May 1933, Box 2, Folder: Negroes, 1924-1939, Entry 17 AE, Records of the Secretary of Agriculture, RG 16, NA II.

⁵⁴Fred H. Hildebrandt to Honorable Henry A. Wallace 30 June 1933, Box 2, Folder: Negroes, 1924-1939, Entry 17 AE, Records of the Secretary of Agriculture, RG 16, NA II.

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Wallace after he received Reden's letter. Reden, who was midwestern born and University of Iowa-educated, like Wallace, also wrote the Secretary. Reden asserted that he once held opinions similar to Wallace's regarding the undesirability of creating a separate institutions. Reden reported that his experiences in the South had changed his view. Reden had worked in the Yazoo Delta of Mississippi. He recounted the segregation and disfranchisement blacks in the region experienced, as well as his own experiences. As principal of an agricultural high school in Sunflower County, where Fannie Lou Hamer would later become a prominent farm and civil rights leader, Reden received one third the salary (\$1,200) of the white high school principal who also had a secretary and bookkeeper. The black extension agent received half the monthly salary (\$100) that the white agent received.

Reden suggested that legislation was already in place that would permit the appointment of a black bureau chief. Reden was clearly aware that the winds of change were in blacks' favor. He made references to Congressman Oscar DePriest, who had recommended the appointment of a special assistant to the Secretary. He also discussed the harsh and exploitative conditions under which blacks labored. Reden's central arguments were that a black in a high-level position would be better able to ensure that blacks had access to the Secretary and any information he needed to ensure that they received justice. Like many early civil rights leaders, he accepted the reality of segregation but insisted that blacks' contributions to the national economy merited some recognition either through a separate bureau or the appointment of a special assistant to the Secretary.⁵⁵

⁵⁵W. F. Reden to Hon. Henry [A.] Wallace, 25 July 1933, Box 2, Folder: Negroes, 1924-1939, Entry 17 AE, Records of the Secretary of Agriculture, RG 16, NA II.

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Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Rexford Tugwell responded to Reden. Tugwell believed that congressional action was necessary to create the bureau. (This is doubtful since it would have been part of the extension bureaucracy, such as the bureau of extension publications, for example. The particular sub-sectors of the extension bureaucracy were not created by congressional action.) In a subsequent letter to Hildebrandt, Tugwell referred to Reden's letter, which pointed out the existence of race-based bureaucratic sub-sectors in the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Division of Negro Education in the Office of Education, both in the Department of the Interior. [Tugwell insisted that the Division of Negro Education dealt with Negro schools while extension work was a unified enterprise.] Tugwell questioned whether a separate bureau would seem "patronizing and discriminatory. Our services are intended to be provided for all American farmers, and to draw a color line would be to discriminate unduly. We have in our Extension Service carried on some special activities for negroes, and I think that this work is very valuable. Probably that is as far as we should go in drawing the color line in our agriculture work." Secretary Wallace's response to Hildebrandt sounded similar notes. He declared that black extension work was a "special opportunity and responsibility" but insisted that the service was not segregated. Because extension work was carried out jointly with the states, it was unfeasible to separate it, and black farmers had equal access to research results. Wallace also declared that congressional action would be necessary to establish a separate bureau and also suggested that more progressive blacks would oppose the racial separation of the service.⁵⁶ At best, Tugwell and Wallace's

⁵⁶R. G. Tugwell to W. F. Reden, 7 July 1933; R. G. Tugwell to Hon. Fred M. Hildebrandt, M. C., 4 August 1933; H. A. Wallace to Hon. Fred H. Hildebrandt, 19 July 1933, Box 2, Folder: Negroes, 1924-1939, Entry 17 AE, Records of the Secretary of Agriculture, RG 16, NA II.

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arguments were half-correct. As I have demonstrated, federal extension officials pushed for a central administrative partner for extension work in each state. However, federal extension officials tolerated differences in remuneration, working conditions, and opportunities for advancement between whites and blacks. Tugwell and Wallace probably relied on the expertise of the bureaucrats in formulating their responses. With a bureaucracy that was heavily laden with both white southerners and persons who had close and cordial working relationships with them, their opinions should not be surprising.

While Wallace and Tugwell's responses seemed to satisfy Hildebrandt, Reden contacted Tugwell again. His response in this instance probably did little to further his cause. Reden asserted that

Negro Agents can do but very little to help the Share Croppers on account of many Landlords being opposed to the Share Cropper receiving any enlightenment, who go on the theory that if you educate a Negro, you lose a good field hand. This idea has been preached up and down the South by U. S. Senators, Tillman, Hoke Smith, Vardaman, Blease, Heflin and others and it will take time and patience to change this belief.

Reden pointed out the increasing success of communists in organizing southern Negro farmers and their willingness in some areas to respond to white force with violence of their own. While all of these were astute observations, Reden's offer of his services as the liaison between the federal government and southern blacks must have minimized the sincerity of his opinions.⁵⁷

Reden's views regarding southern blacks' plight in agriculture were not off-base. Harvard Sitkoff's discussion of Henry A. Wallace's Department of Agriculture may explain why blacks' issues received so little attention. "No other department was as

⁵⁷W. F. Reden to Prof. R. G. Tugwell, 8 August 1933, Box 2, Folder: Negroes, 1924-1939, Entry 17 AE, Records of the Secretary of Agriculture, RG 16, NA II.

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controlled by white supremacists both in the bureaucracy and in Congress as was the Department of Agriculture,” Sitkoff writes. On a percentage basis, it employed the smallest number of blacks. Sitkoff quotes Will Alexander, who said, “You didn’t dare take a Negro to lunch at Agriculture.” Sitkoff found that Wallace avoided taking action regarding black rights and even complained to Alexander that perhaps the New Deal was doing too much for blacks. Indeed, numerous not-so-young southern-born officials remained features at the Department in 1930—nearly fifteen years after the extension program began.⁵⁸

Sitkoff also argues that the first New Deal did little to benefit blacks. However, by 1936, black government officials had organized themselves into a Federal Council on Negro Affairs—better known as the “Black Cabinet”—to shape the administration’s policies toward blacks. The Cabinet—which consisted of black federal appointees such as Mary McLeod Bethune and Robert Weaver—forged links with interest groups such as the NAACP, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the Colored YMCA to pressure the administration on civil rights.⁵⁹ The Black Cabinet had some success in increasing the number of blacks hired in federal jobs and altering the bureaucratic culture in ways that discouraged the use of racist language in speeches by public officials. However, its influence in the Department of Agriculture remained minimal and southern politicians remained overwhelmingly influential.

Not even long-time special federal agents for black extension work Thomas Campbell and J. B. Pierce could alter southerners’ conservative views toward black

⁵⁸Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue, Volume I: The Depression Decade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 44.

⁵⁹Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 79.

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participation in New Deal programs. For the soil conservation and domestic allotment and crop improvement programs, Campbell and Pierce recommended that the number of black agents be increased in states where the population warranted it; that federal representatives be sent directly to the black colleges to familiarize them with the requirements of the program, and that “intelligent Negro representatives (nominated by the black extension service and approved by white state extension directors) serve on state and district boards to assist in adjusting complaints of blacks and to insure uniform participation of all members.”⁶⁰ According to Lu Ann Jones, the petition was presented to Cully A. Cobb, who directed the Agricultural Adjustment Administration’s cotton section in the lower South. As a result of the petition and northern black political pressure Cobb appointed Claude A. Barnett of the Chicago *Defender* his special assistant and appointed three blacks as special field agents.⁶¹

White Southern Resistance to Pressure Groups

Both southern politicians and southern bureaucrats worked to maintain blacks’ subordination in federal programs. For example, in August 1936 South Carolina Senator James F. Byrnes wrote Secretary Wallace regarding the election of an Agricultural Conservation Program board in Summerton, South Carolina (in predominantly black Clarendon County). Of the 158 farmers invited to the meeting, 126 were black. W. H. Anderson, a resident of the county, had written Byrnes expressing concern that “bringing negroes to vote should be stopped because trouble would follow in elections if an attempt

⁶⁰Attachment to D. W. Watkins to Directors of Extension, Southern States, 10 March 1936, Box 421, Folder: Dir. SC 1-36 [to] 6-36, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁶¹Lu Ann Jones, “In Search of Jennie Booth Moton, Field Agent, AAA,” *Agricultural History* 72, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 452.

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to elect a negro committeeman was made.” Wallace informed Byrnes that the matter would be passed on to the Southern Division of the AAA. Officials there would work with state officials “to insure the harmonious cooperation of all those producers participating in the 1936 program.”⁶² Byrnes, an ardent supporter of FDR’s at the time, could not be ignored when he made such a request. However, Wallace’s bending to racial pressure of southerners does not seem unique to this case. According to historian John Kirby, Will Alexander told W. E. B. Du Bois that blacks could not get elected to local Farm Security Administration committees where discrimination occurred. Alexander accused Wallace of being “terribly afraid of this race issue.”⁶³ Southerners complained loudly about federal agricultural policies that threatened to undermine their control. According to Jack Irby Hayes, South Carolina assemblyman Carroll Nance of Laurens complained that he “had to stand in line behind a free Nigger to get [his] ginning tags.”⁶⁴

Southern frustration with the Agriculture Department was temporary. Interest in the plight of rural southern blacks was expressed by both race- and class-based groups outside the South. For example the American Church Institute for Negroes wrote the Secretary of Agriculture to encourage the use of model farms in black extension work. The Farmer’s Educational Cooperative Union of America wrote to complain about blacks not getting their share of government funds given for crop reduction and to recommend

⁶²Routing Sheet 7193 with Summary of Letter from Byrnes, James F. (USS), 24 July 1936; Henry A. Wallace to Hon. James F. Byrnes, 5 August 1936, Box 2, Folder: Negroes, 1924-1939, Entry 17 AE, Records of the Secretary of Agriculture, RG 16, NA II.

⁶³John B. Kirby, *Black Americans in the Roosevelt Era: Liberalism and Race* (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1980), 52. Kirby points out even Alexander’s racial liberalism was limited.

⁶⁴Jack Irby Hayes, Jr., “South Carolina and the New Deal, 1932-1938” (Ph. D. dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1972), 432.

minimum wages for sugar cane workers.⁶⁵ Despite increased scrutiny of Agriculture Department policy regarding blacks, officials remained conservative under Wallace's two administrations. Federal laws made new monies available for agriculture but little of that money went directly to blacks. For example, the Bankhead-Jones Act of 1935 combined funding for the agricultural work of colleges and appropriations that extended three prior agricultural acts (the Hatch experiment station act, the Smith-Lever Act, and the 1890 Morrill Act) within one bill. The provisions of the Hatch Experiment Station Acts governed the disbursement of funds under Title I. The provisions of the Smith-Lever Act governed the disbursement of funds under Title II Section 21 and the Morrill Act of 1890 and the Nelson Amendment of 1907 governed the disbursement of funds under Title II, Section 22. This last section was the only one which specifically required division of funds between white and black colleges when a state had separate institutions.⁶⁶

D. W. Watkins drafted a resolution for the General Assembly to accept the monies appropriated under the act. He modeled it on the resolution for acceptance of the Smith Lever Act. It empowered Clemson's Trustees to receive the monies appropriated under the Bankhead-Jones Act and authorized the college's Treasurer to receive the funds.⁶⁷

⁶⁵Routing Sheet 4726 with Summary of Letter from American Church Institute for Negroes, 10 November 1938; Meredith L. Wilson (Under Secretary of Agriculture to Dr. Wallace A. Battle, 25 November 1938, Box 2781, Folder: Extension Work; Summary of Letter from Farmer's Educational and Cooperative Union of America, 2 May 1938, Box 2781, Folder: Extension Work 1: County Agent, Entry 17 J, RG 16, NA II.

⁶⁶"An Act to provide for research into basic laws and principles relating to agriculture and to provide for the further development of cooperative agricultural extension work and the more complete endowment and support of land-grant colleges," *The Statutes at Large of the United States of America from January 1935 to June 1936*, volume 49, part 2, Chapter 222, 338 (1935).

⁶⁷D. W. Watkins to C. W. Warburton, 17 January 1936, Box 421, File: Dir[.] SC 1-36 [-] 6-36, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

Federal Director of Extension C. W. Warburton questioned the language of the resolution. He pointed out the requirements of Section 22 and wondered if it was appropriate to designate Clemson's Treasurer alone "in case any of the federal funds authorized to be appropriated under Section 22 of the Act are turned over to the colored college at Spartanburg [sic]."⁶⁸ (Orangeburg is the proper location.)

In the enacted resolution, the legislature designated Clemson to receive the benefits of the act excepting Section 22 of the Bankhead-Jones Act. For that section, the legislature stated that "the grants for the more complete endowment and support of land-grant colleges shall be equally divided between the Clemson Agricultural College and the Colored, Normal, Industrial, and Agricultural College as now provided by law."⁶⁹ While the equal division of the funds may seem to have been a progressive measure, the actual disbursements point out the continued discrimination that black land-grant colleges faced in receiving federal funds. In a statement of expected benefits of the act, Watkins wrote in an explanatory note that state law required equal division of all teaching grants. But this left the majority of the money beyond the reach of South Carolina State College. Of the total funds available for research, extension work, and college development, South Carolina State College would therefore receive half of the \$20,000 provided under section

⁶⁸C. W. Warburton to D. W. Watkins 23 January 1936, Box 421, File: Dir[.] SC 1-36 [-] 6-36, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁶⁹"[A Resolution] PROVIDING FOR THE ASSENT OF THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA TO THE PROVISIONS AND PURPOSES OF AN ACT OF CONGRESS ENTITLED 'AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATIVE AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION WORK AND THE MORE COMPLETE ENDOWMENT AND SUPPORT OF LAND-GRANT COLLEGES', APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT JUNE 29, 1935; AND AUTHORIZING THE TRUSTEES OF CLEMSON AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE TO RECEIVE GRANTS OFFERED FOR THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA," attachment to D. W. Watkins to C. W. Warburton, 3 February 1936, Box 421, File: Dir[.] SC 1-36 [-] 6-36, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

22 but would receive none of the remaining \$245,170 given to the state for other agricultural programs (including \$230,303.79 for extension work). South Carolina State College would receive only about 3.8 percent of the appropriation in fiscal year 1935-1936. Its share of the appropriation for 1936-1937 amounted to \$13,543.97 (4.29 percent) of a total appropriation of \$315,800 of which \$258,979 was for extension work. Watkins projected that by 1939 the state would be receiving about \$390,000 for all these programs with about \$300,000 for extension work. His estimate of the South Carolina State College share of the funds was \$20,000 (or about 5.12 percent of the fund).⁷⁰

The effects of this continued discrimination in extension funding was significant. The extension appropriations for fiscal year 1941 graphically demonstrate this point. That year, \$719,548.02 was available for extension programs. Black extension programs had modest increases over the total amounts spend in 1930—\$2,961 for men’s work and \$2,286 for women’s work. Over the same period, white work had been cut deeply, \$45,208 in the men’s program and \$16,503 in the women’s program. The amount spent for black agricultural agents was \$40,286 (roughly 5.6 percent of the total funds). Black home demonstration work was allotted \$21,316 (2.96 percent of the funds). Perhaps not coincidentally, the total amount cut from the white programs between 1930 and 1941 was \$61,711 while the total spent on black programs was \$61,602. By contrast (white) County agent work accounted for \$234,224 (32.6 percent); and (white) home demonstration work received \$122,034 (17 percent).

When one takes into account the salaries of extension specialists, all of whom were white, the amounts received by white extension workers exclusive of administrators

⁷⁰Re: Proposed Joint Resolution, attachment to D. W. Watkins to C. W. Warburton, 3 February 1936, Box 421, File: Dir[.] SC 1-36 [-] 6-36, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

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climbs to 83 percent of the total extension fund. An additional \$12,864 was spent on home demonstration specialists, which raises the total percentage of funds spent on white home demonstration work to 19.8 percent. When the salaries of agricultural extension specialists of \$151,589 is included, it raises the total percentage spent on white agricultural extension work to 51.23. When administrative salaries are added (the figure of \$23,957 probably represents the salaries of Clemson officials only), the percentage of extension salaries devoted to white men rises to 54.51 percent and the total percentage that was spent on the salaries of white extension workers rises to 74.31 (\$534,708 vs. \$61,602 for black salaries).⁷¹

The situation of the black extension service in South Carolina was not unique. Discrimination against blacks during the New Deal is one of the main characteristics of the period. Harvard Sitkoff's study of the New Deal finds that most of the agricultural and industrial programs enacted during Franklin D. Roosevelt's first administration did little or nothing for blacks. Southern members of Congress managed to secure local control in relief and recovery measures Congress enacted. This permitted whites to siphon off government dollars and divert them to white southerners while providing insufficient assistance to blacks who could not rely on the federal bureaucracy for intervention. Sitkoff points out that Roosevelt would not risk alienating powerful southern Congressmen and Senators who would act quickly to halt any program in which blacks' right to benefits was protected.⁷²

⁷¹Summary of Projects and Source (June 1940), Series 32, Box 26, Folder 12, STICUL.

⁷²Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 45-57.

Sitkoff argues that in the early stages of the first New Deal “Afro-Americans could do nothing to counter the control . . . exercised by Southern Congressmen in alliance with well-financed industrial associations, local unions, and farm lobbies.” Prior to 1933, no organizations existed to monitor black participation in New Deal programs. Sitkoff finds that by 1935 a rising chorus of anger over “rampant discrimination” in New Deal programs was evident. Black leaders and members of the intelligentsia of all stripes along with white radical parties voiced criticism of New Deal programs.⁷³ Blacks associated with agricultural extension must be added to the list of those who protested discrimination in the distribution of federal appropriations.

Seeking a Meaningful Role: The Conference of Presidents of Negro Land-Grant Colleges

In 1935 the executive committee of the Conference of Presidents of Negro Land Grant Colleges wrote Henry A. Wallace and noted the tendency to direct federal monies to white colleges alone in those states which had “1890” black land-grant colleges. Monies from agriculture-related laws passed after 1890 were not consistently shared equally with black colleges. The presidents identified several problems with current disbursement policies: black colleges had difficulty receiving equitable disbursement of funds; blacks had no influence over boards of trustees at white colleges which could lead to programs for white citizens “draw[ing] upon the funds so heavily” that only a small amount was left for “Negro citizens”; that the success of programs for whites might overshadow less than stellar efforts to improve black education. The committee pointed out that while white programs expanded, “the program for Negro citizens lags behind, and at a low level.” The committee provided statistics to bolster its argument: based on

⁷³Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 47-8; 55-7.

rural population, appropriations for black extension work were \$2,800,000 less than they should have been; there should have been 396 more black extension workers than there were; and there were no black agricultural experiment stations in states with 1890 colleges. The presidents asked Secretary Wallace to use his influence to push for a more equitable division of funds in states with segregated extension programs, and to encourage increased cooperation between white and black land-grant colleges. The committee pointed out the legal obligation of white land-grant institutions toward black extension work and promoted “harmonious cooperation” to achieve the best result.⁷⁴

National and local events related to the national crisis suggest a change in blacks’ role in society. The late president Wilkinson’s fight for the jobs of two black agents, the struggle of Wilkinson and blacks in Beaufort county to maintain their agent’s autonomy, and the initiative black college presidents took in mapping out a plan for the Rosenwald Summer schools and later protesting unequal division of federal funds, all signify a decline in the deference that had characterized black extension leadership.

Black land-grant college presidents began actively, if somewhat conservatively, to push for greater participation in New Deal programs that would aid black farmers. For example, Whittaker wrote Secretary Wallace to report a conference regarding the Agricultural Conservation Program the college held in February 1937.⁷⁵ [White extension

⁷⁴Executive Committee of the Conference of Presidents of Negro Land Grant Colleges to Honorable Henry A. Wallace, 19 November 1935, reproduced in *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the Presidents of Negro Land-Grant Colleges*, November 18-20, 1935, Washington, DC, 49-52.

⁷⁵The Agricultural Conservation Program was one of numerous programs run by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. The program included cotton plow under campaigns designed to raise farm income. The AAA was a program that was widely criticized for its discrimination against blacks and for its permissiveness when black sharecroppers and tenants were cheated out of entitlement payments by landlords. The way in which these programs were administered played a significant role in the continuing exodus of blacks from farms. See, Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 52-5.

officials from Washington, DC, Clemson and Winthrop Colleges, and black extension and New Deal officials including J. B. Pierce and Jennie Booth Moton, the wife of Tuskegee's president Robert R. Moton, attended the meeting. Booth Moton was one of the special agents Cobb appointed to the AAA, as were Albon L. Holsley, Tuskegee's director of publicity, and James P. Davis, president of the National Federation of Colored Farmers, who were also at the Orangeburg meeting. According to Lu Ann Jones, Booth Moton's "particular task was 'to contact Negro farm women in the Southern region in order to get their viewpoint on just how the Agricultural Conservation program is working out.'" Booth Moton traveled into communities with black home demonstration agents to meet black farm women. She and her fellow special agents were a visual concession to the rising political power of northern blacks and her presence—and certainly that of Holsley and Davis as well—was inspirational to southern blacks.⁷⁶ These three speakers all gave addresses at the South Carolina State College Conference.

Whittaker reported to Wallace that the state's black agents had been thoroughly familiarized with the work of the program. Whittaker also noted that there were 75,537 farms operated by blacks in the state and 18,294 owned and operated by blacks, yet there were only 30 agents (agricultural and home demonstration) to provide information to black farmers on the AAA program. Whittaker's letter was written on the letterhead of the Conference of Presidents of Negro Land-Grant Colleges and he suggested, in his capacity as President of that organization, that similar conditions existed in ten or twelve other southern states. Whittaker recommended that a conference between "administrators" (Presidents?) of black land-grant colleges and (white) directors of

⁷⁶Jones, "In Search of Jennie Booth Moton, Field Agent, AAA," 452, 454.

agriculture and directors of extension work would enable the (black) land grant colleges to help the Department of Agriculture reach black farmers. Whittaker also suggested that the Secretary should be the one to call such a conference.⁷⁷

Wallace forwarded Whittaker's letter to Warburton for response. He also contacted Clemson President E. W. Sikes to get information on the distribution of funds between Clemson and South Carolina State College. Warburton reported to Sikes that several of the black land-grant college presidents had written Secretary Wallace seeking greater participation of their institutions and black extension workers in AAA programs and more federal funding for black colleges. Warburton noted that some of these presidents even suggested a direct appropriation to black colleges for extension work. He thought that such a division would not help black extension work "but may actually be detrimental and result in less service to them." Warburton reported to Sikes that Whittaker had not written Secretary Wallace regarding the division of funds but that he had written regarding the conference.

Sikes did not take a fully anti-conference stand. If there was a definite objective, he thought a conference was a good idea. He pointed out that South Carolina had held its own conference with black agents—like the one Whittaker mentioned in his letter—since 1933. He also reported that there had been a regional conference in January 1937 at Tuskegee to which presidents of Negro land-grant colleges had been invited. Whittaker had been unable to attend and sent Harry Daniels in his place. According to Sikes, other meetings had been proposed for the week but there was a mix-up in the process of disseminating information. Warburton also made a general request for information on the

⁷⁷Miller F. Whittaker to The Honorable Henry A. Wallace, 6 March 1937; 8 March 1937, Box 486, File: A-G, SC, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

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division of funds between Clemson and South Carolina State Colleges. Sikes enclosed the resolution that provided equal division of Bankhead-Jones funds under Section 22 but did not provide any figures regarding the division of other federal funds for education.

Warburton replied to Sikes that the equal division of the \$20,000 in Section 22 funds was “a very fair arrangement and one regarding which the Negroes have no complaint.” He reported that he recommended to Secretary Wallace that given recent meetings at the regional and state level that a conference “might well be delayed for several months if it is decided to hold one.”⁷⁸

Secretary Wallace wrote Whittaker a very benign reply shaped by the information Warburton had gathered. Wallace informed Whittaker that there had been regional conferences as well as state conference of the nature that Whittaker recommended with black extension agents. These conferences, according to Wallace, had not included Negro land-grant college presidents. Wallace believed that the greatest necessity at the moment was for agents to “stick closely to their jobs during the next few months,” and suggested that conferences might be held later if they were deemed necessary.⁷⁹

The annual proceedings of the November 1937 Negro land-grant college presidents’ conference echoed the themes of Whittaker’s letter. R. B. Atwood, president of Kentucky State Industrial College, prepared a “Report of Study on the Organization and Administration of Cooperative Extension Work Among Negroes with a Recommendation” for the meeting. Atwood’s report included figures which showed that blacks were

⁷⁸C. W. Warburton to Dr. E. W. Sikes, President, 11 March 1937; E. W. Sikes to Mr. C. W. Warburton, 16 March 1937; C. W. Warburton to Dr. E. W. Sikes, President, 22 March 1937, Box 487, File: M-Z, SC, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁷⁹Henry A. Wallace to President M. F. Whittaker, 25 March 1937, Box 486, File: A-G, SC, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

not receiving an equitable share of the federal and state extension funds. In 12 of the sixteen states with "1890" colleges, twelve provided less than full funding for black extension work. Missouri, embroiled in the *Gaines* case, provided no money for black extension work. Six states, South Carolina included, provided between 26 and 50 percent of the funding they should have devoted to black extension work based on the percentage of blacks in the rural population. Three more states provided 51 to 75 percent of the funding they should have, while two provided 76 to 99 percent of the monies that should have been devoted to black extension work. Four states devoted more than 100 percent of what should have been devoted to black extension work. Three of them were on the periphery of the Deep South: Florida's funding ratio was 141 percent, Texas' 150 percent, and Oklahoma's nearly 237 percent of funding based on the number of blacks in the rural population. Only Alabama in the Deep South provided more than would be expected based on black rural population at 126 percent.⁸⁰

Atwood called for the direct administration of extension programs by Negro land-grant colleges in cooperation with the white land-grant colleges "but without [their] official dominance." Atwood cited the lack of participation by Negro land-grant colleges, including in some instances the location of black supervisors at non-land-grant institutions. He noted white fiscal responsibility for the program as well as their control over personnel. "I found no instance in which the president of the Negro land-grant college

⁸⁰R. B. Atwood, "Report of Study on the Organization and Administration of Cooperative Extension Work Among Negroes with a Recommendation," reproduced in *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the Presidents of Negro Land-Grant Colleges*, November 15-17, 1937, p. 69.

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had any authority at all over the Negro extension workers, over their pay, or over them in any way whatsoever.”⁸¹

Atwood recommended that the presidents draw up an alternate plan for equitable division of extension funds to submit to the Secretary of Agriculture. He also recommended that they ask the secretary to invoke his authority under Section 6 of the Smith-Lever Act to “make greater participation in administration by the Negro Land Grant College as a necessary prerequisite for continuing the funds of those states where race-separated schools exist.”⁸² A letter from W. R. Banks of Prairie View A & M, who served as chairman of the executive committee, reiterated the desire of the college presidents for greater participation in extension work. Banks thanked Director of Extension Warburton for permitting state directors of extension to authorize black state supervisors’ attendance at their conference. About half the states sent their black supervisor. Banks’ letter restated the Negro land-grant college presidents’ belief that they must understand the value of extension work if it was “to have its merited place in the educational programs of the Negro Land-Grant Colleges.” He suggested that the limited cooperation black colleges were permitted in some states might hinder that goal.⁸³

The lack of success that black land-grant college presidents had in getting a true hearing of their concerns demonstrates how the conservative nature of some sectors of the federal bureaucracy obscures the significant historical changes that began in this decade.

⁸¹Atwood, “Report of Study on the Organization and Administration of Cooperative Extension Work Among Negroes with a Recommendation,” 70-1.

⁸²Atwood, “Report of Study on the Organization and Administration of Cooperative Extension Work Among Negroes with a Recommendation,” 70-1.

⁸³W. R. Banks to Dr. C. W. Warburton, 24 November 1937, Box 554, Folder: A-G, SC, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

The political necessity of appointing black special assistants and field agents suggests the power of the rising black electorate. That the number of black agents increased in the South at a time when the black rural population continued to fall suggests that even in the more reactionary sectors of the federal government, change was on its way.

A Hostile Bureaucracy: The Federal Extension Service and the NLGC Presidents

There was limited support in the federal bureaucracy for more black participation in extension. The most laudable in this regard was southern-born Erwin H. Shinn, who made black farm problems a special area of interest. Shinn shared his paper, “The Need of an Enlarged Program of Agricultural Extension Services in Negro Land-Grant Colleges,” with South Carolina State College’s Dean of Agriculture, W. M. Buchanan. Buchanan praised the paper for pointing out that “the extension service is not a step-child but is a part of the work that the Negro Land-Grant College is expected to do.” Buchanan suggested that white specialists helped black agents when called upon but argued that black specialists would provide “better and more effective” service than white specialists—a point that Shinn evidently did not argue for in his paper.⁸⁴

However, that change did not come speedily in the Department of Agriculture. The second decade of this middle period of black extension work was marked by increasing pressure from the Negro land-grant colleges and black advocacy organizations for greater participation in extension programs. That pressure was met by southern extension directors who controlled these programs on the ground and whose long association with federal extension officials gave them an inside edge. For its part, the federal bureaucracy contained persons of a myriad of political persuasions: reactionary,

⁸⁴W. M. Buchanan to Dr. E. H. Shinn, 16 March 1939, Box 625, File: A-H, SC, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

pragmatic, and progressive. The political perspective of whites often shaped their response to problems in the black extension service.

If the crisis caused by the Great Depression brought the black program some benefit, World War II did even more. The land-grant college presidents continued to lead efforts to achieve more equitable funding for black extension work. According to a correspondence summary in the Secretary of Agriculture's files, the Conference of Presidents of Negro Land Grant Colleges sent a "detailed memo of discussion in ref[erence] to inequalities" in the distribution of extension funds between blacks and whites in states with segregated extension programs.⁸⁵ As is the case with bureaucracies, generally, federal officials stalled the presidents. Another summary of the Secretary of Agriculture's correspondence done on 18 January 1941, contains the same general summary from the black presidents but also includes a request made by the presidents for an appointment with the secretary.⁸⁶ Claude Wickard had replaced the recalcitrant Henry A. Wallace as Secretary of Agriculture in September 1940⁸⁷ as Wallace stepped down to be FDR's running mate for his third term. Unfortunately for the black presidents, the bureaucrats remained the same. "I think we have something more of a problem today, than, possibly, we had in this respect a few years ago and that we ought to consider all aspects of the problems involved in reaching a decision," wrote Reuben Brigham, federal

⁸⁵Correspondence summary of letter written 23 January 1940 by the Conference of Presidents of Negro Land Grant Colleges, Box 75, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 K, RG 16, NA II.

⁸⁶Correspondence summary 18 January 1941 of letter written 3 January 1941, by the Conference of Presidents of Negro Land Grant Colleges, Box 290, Folder: Extension Work, Jan 1 to May 16, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II.

⁸⁷Cecil Harvey, Past Secretaries of the United States Department of Agriculture, <http://www.usda.gov/history/pastsec.htm>.

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Assistant Director of Extension, to D. W. Watkins.⁸⁸ A few months later this bureaucrat drafted Secretary Wickard's response to the black presidents' second letter seeking more participation in extension programs. In a memorandum to Wickard's assistant Carl Hamilton, Brigham noted that the letter sent by the presidents was essentially the same as one Director of Extension Meredith Wilson had written in March 1940 in response to the presidents' letter of the year before.⁸⁹ Brigham reported to Hamilton that Wilson favored meeting with the presidents but also recommended a pre-emptive strike on their position. "It will be wiser for us to place in their hands the complete statement on which we are now working before your conference is held. . . ." Brigham also advised including the three white directors of extension who composed the southern extension directors' Committee on Extension Work with Negroes in the Secretary's meeting with the black presidents. That committee consisted of extension directors from three states: South Carolina's D. W. Watkins, Alabama's P. O. Davis, and Texas' H. H. Williamson. He suggested that this would offer an opportunity for the directors to offer their views as well as hear the views of the black presidents.⁹⁰ The intimidation factor involved in the attendance of whites should have been obvious.

⁸⁸Reuben Brigham to D. W. Watkins, 4 October 1940, Box 769, File: Dir. SC 7-40 [to] 12-40, 1 of 2, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁸⁹Wilson replaced Warburton as director of extension in 1940. He had moved up the extension ranks from county agent and extension leader in Montana, to organizer of the wheat program of the AAA, before heading the Subsistence Homesteads Division in the Department of the Interior. Between 1934 and 1937 he was an assistant to Secretary Henry A. Wallace, and served as an Undersecretary of Agriculture from 1937 to 1940. Wayne D. Rasmussen, *Taking the University of the People: Seventy-five Years of Cooperative Extension* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1989), 244.

⁹⁰Rueben Brigham, MEMORANDUM TO CARL HAMILTON, 11 January 1941, Box 290, Folder: Extension Work, Jan 1 to May 16, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II.

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Brigham also drafted a response to the black presidents' letter that certainly reflected the view of federal extension officials during the Henry A. Wallace years. The letter contained the features he mentioned to Hamilton. It suggested that the concerns expressed had been answered during the Wallace administration. It also cited a response made to the January 1940 letter by Reuben Brigham, which included an expression of intent to study the black extension service. The letter reported that the survey had been completed and "reviewed in conference with a committee of Southern Extension Directors." The Brigham letter recommended postponement of any meeting until the data could be prepared for the black presidents at which time there could be a discussion of "the present status of extension work with Negroes and what adjustments it may be desirable to make in the interest of giving the fullest possible service to Negro farm families."⁹¹

As one of the members of the southern extension directors' committee on blacks, D. W. Watkins repeatedly attempted to obscure the blatant racial separation of black extension work. In a letter to Reuben Brigham regarding a Department publication for the American Negro Exposition in Chicago that would emphasize blacks' participation in agriculture, Watkins questioned "the wisdom of emphasizing activities on a racial basis." While Watkins was willing to admit that there might be class bias in the administration of some extension programs he insisted that they "ought to avoid the appearance of putting on racial programs." Watkins' correspondence with Brigham later that year, however, makes it clear that the programs were indeed separable by race. Watkins makes reference to letters Reuben Brigham had written to other state extension directors. It is possible to infer that the positions taken in Brigham's letter were at variance with the views of some

⁹¹Claude R. Wickard (written by Reuben Brigham) to President John W. Davis, 18 January 1941, Box 290, Folder: Extension Work, Jan 1 to May 16, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II.

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of the white extension leadership. Echoing Bradford Knapp's suggestion two decades earlier, Watkins insisted that black extension work had been developed as a "supplement" to the extension program "to provide special consideration for the group of people who might otherwise not get attention in proportion to the need. Neither Congress nor the founders of the Negro branch of Extension work have ever thought of making the Negro Extension work a substitute for the general extension program nor has it been regarded as a parallel service along racial lines," which Watkins believed was the black college presidents' intent. Watkins suggested that it would be a "mistake" to separate the services because the problems raised by separation would be greater than those that existed with the present service. Watkins had also suggested that the Committee on Negro Extension Work be incorporated into the national extension directors' association. He thought that the shift of the committee from association with the southern directors alone to the national directors "might strengthen our entire position if the viewpoint set forth above could become the viewpoint of the Land Grant Colleges throughout the country."⁹²

Watkins' failure to see the illogic of his argument that this was not a separate service can only be explained by speculating that he viewed Clemson College's designation as the locus of the state's extension programs as representing a unified service. His letter further points out the hollowness of the idea of *Plessy*, which if followed to its logical conclusion—as black land-grant college presidents demonstrated—would result in separate, parallel institutions along racial lines. Even more intriguing is his attempt to further

⁹²D. W. Watkins to Reuben Brigham, 20 May 1940, 33, Box 696, File: Dir SC 1-40 [to] 6-40; D. W. Watkins to Reuben Brigham, 19 December 1940, Box 769, Folder: Dir. SC, 7-40 [to] 12-40, 1 of 2, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II. The letters Watkins describes were not in the extension service files.

obscure southern racial opinion behind a façade of national extension policy when in all likelihood southern directors would continue to staff the committee and set its agenda.

The other correspondence to which Watkins refers might shed some light on what may have been a discordant view among extension directors. One correspondent was Director Williamson of Texas, who was a member of the southern directors' Committee on Negro Extension Work. The other was L. R. Simons, who was the Director of Extension at Cornell University. In explaining his desire for the inclusion of the Negro committee in the national extension directors' organization, Watkins insisted that he did not intend to "introduce any discordant element" into the discussions. Rather, he argued, "if this matter gets into the realm of national discussion it might be well that this viewpoint is understood throughout the country."⁹³

In February 1941, J. W. Davis received the study report on black extension work that had previously been provided to southern extension directors.⁹⁴ The black presidents responded to the report with one of their own: "Suggestions for the Improvement of Cooperative Extension Work Among Negroes in the Southern States." They took issue with some of the positions supported by the Agricultural Department's "Extension Work With Negroes," which was completed in January 1941. They presented Wickard a copy of the report at a face-to-face meeting on 1 March 1941. The presidents offered their recommendations, which they argued would "close partially acknowledged gaps . . . in Extension work . . . which operate harmfully for Negroes in the Southern States." They

⁹³D. W. Watkins to Reuben Brigham, 19 December 1940, Box 769, Folder: Dir. SC, 7-40 [to] 12-40, 1 of 2, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

⁹⁴Correspondence Summary of letter of 15 February 1941 written by John W. Davis, Box 290, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II.

argued that black extension work had always been considered an integral part of the extension program, citing as evidence the appointment of black agents in 1906. They protested the use of the term “supplement” in reference to black extension agents and declared that they wanted black agents “fully included and integrated” into the overall extension service. They challenged the frequent claim that white agents provided valuable services to black farmers which justified a small black extension force. The departmental report claimed that the time white agents spent on black extension work ranged between three and sixty-five percent of their work time with black farmers. The black presidents’ report rebutted this claim. W. R. Banks of Prairie View A & M suggested that white agents’ service to blacks there was “accidental” rather than “planned service.” He further pointed out that the tradition and culture of the region “would forbid an effective working program of extension service by white people to Negroes.” From Georgia, Benjamin Hubert asserted that much of the service by whites to blacks came through the AAA—a program that was leading increasingly to the displacement of black tenants. “White people it matters not how friendly they may be can never hope to perform for Negroes the necessary services rendered by the Negro county agents.” They cited a “Miss Long” of South Carolina who emphasized personal contact as the best means of reaching farmers and implied black workers were needed for personal contact. They cited a “Mr. Theffield” who declared that “Negro agents can get closer to their people than white agents.”⁹⁵

⁹⁵Memorandum to the Honorable Claude R. Wickard in re: Suggestions for the Improvement of Co-operative Extension Services Among Negroes in Southern States, 1 March 1941, pp. 1-6, Box 290, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II. A citation in Gunnar Myrdal’s *An American Dilemma* suggests that such views were not isolated. Myrdal relates an incident between Richard Sterner of Richard Sterner and Associates, and a white Farm Security supervisor in the “Deep South.” This supervisor believed that black workers were more effective in reaching members of their own race. According to the account, the supervisor complained that he could not have black assistants with whom he could cooperate freely because local white sentiment would not permit it. A black man who had worked for him was forced to leave town because of white resentment (one of the man’s friends reported that a group of whites

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To document the need for more workers, they invoked the words of Committee on Negro Extension member D. W. Watkins, who purportedly suggested that the extension service was short of workers. They also recalled the words of Watkins' fellow committee-man P. O. Davis, who suggested that the proper ratio of extension workers to clients was 1 agent to 3,000 people. According to the presidents, the departmental report suggested that the ratio of black agents to clients was 1 to 1,000 farm families. The presidents turned the words of the southern directors against them. They pointed out that in 1935 the ratio of agents to farmers for white workers was 1 to 1,455 white farmers while the ratio for black workers was 1 to 3,606 farmers. The presidents' statistics not only pointed out the excessive workload of the black agents but that white agents had little time to work with blacks. They pointed out that even when black tenants and sharecroppers were excluded, the workload of a black agent was still 105 percent of that of a white agent. The general conclusion of the presidents was that white agents only worked with blacks "when such activity on their part will not cause them personal or legal embarrassment. . . . We do not look upon these white workers as acceptable substitutes for Negro workers who are needed to satisfy a necessary balance among all workers and to provide a more wholesome integration of Negroes in the total service."⁹⁶

The presidents noted that white southern directors had estimated indirect costs to the black extension service (from white agents' services to blacks) that exceeded actual

entered the office and gave him a limited amount of time to leave town). A black woman still worked under his direction but she worked outside of town and made daily arrangements with her supervisor via telephone which he found inconvenient. Gunnar Myrdal (with the assistance of [Dr.] Richard Sterner and Arnold Rose), *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, twentieth anniversary edition (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), 1265.

⁹⁶Memorandum to the Honorable Claude R. Wickard in re: Suggestions for the Improvement of Co-operative Extension Services Among Negroes in Southern States, 1 March 1941, pp. 1-6, Box 290, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II.

costs for black extension work by \$8,700. These estimates were based on self-reports by white county and home agents and specialists of the amount of their time that they devoted to black extension work. The presidents subtly questioned these figures by pointing out that the departmental report provided no methodology that explained how the estimate was reached.⁹⁷

The presidents also cited scholarly authority to support their case, including Thomas J. Woofter who in 1930 had suggested that “Negro agents are especially effective in reaching Negro farmers.”⁹⁸ They also cited Surgeon General Dr. Thomas Parran who asserted that blacks wanted to be helped to help themselves.⁹⁹ They believed that the use of black personnel would provide “maximum returns on money expended for extension work among Negroes,” and called for increased employment of black agents. They also called for closer association between extension work and black land-grant colleges.

They noted that the departmental report made no mention of the black land-grant colleges. They admitted that the schools were “not considered to be organically connected” with the extension service (since the states probably designated the white land-grant college only to receive the benefits of the Smith-Lever and supplemental acts).

Again, the presidents took the logic of *Plessy* and turned it against its purveyors. “These

⁹⁷Memorandum to the Honorable Claude R. Wickard in re: Suggestions for the Improvement of Co-operative Extension Services Among Negroes in Southern States, 1 March 1941, pp. 1-6, Box 290, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II.

⁹⁸Memorandum to the Honorable Claude R. Wickard in re: Suggestions for the Improvement of Co-operative Extension Services Among Negroes in Southern States, 1 March 1941, p. 6, Box 290, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II, citing T. J. Woofter, Jr. *The Economic Status of the Negro* (Chapel Hill: Institute for Research and Social Science, 1930), 4.

⁹⁹Memorandum to the Honorable Claude R. Wickard in re: Suggestions for the Improvement of Co-operative Extension Services Among Negroes in Southern States, 1 March 1941, 6, Box 290, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II, citing Dr. Thomas Parran, *Survey Graphic* XXVII (April 1938): 201.

17 institutions . . . represent the legal approaches of 17 Southern States to the problems of higher education of Negroes, including work in agriculture, home-economics, mechanic arts, teacher education, etc. Besides these institutions have a firm hold on the people of color who form their particular clientele. . . .” The presidents then pointed out the role that black land-grant colleges played in black extension work: providing headquarters for state agents, providing instruction to agents in the field and staff workers, holding farmers’ institutes and meetings for 4-H work and for men and women’s club work, completing surveys and other studies of black extension work, paying all or part of the salaries of some extension workers, “providing travel and speakers for extension programs, [and] encouraging self-help among Negro rural people.” They pointed out that extension programs brought thousands of people to the campuses of black land-grant colleges yearly and that black agents often convened at their campuses to receive information when they were prohibited from attending required meetings at the white land-grant colleges “because of a State law involving segregation of the races in education or for other reasons.” They effectively argued that these black land-grant colleges were indispensable to the black extension program and that without their existence black extension work in the south “would be greatly curtailed unless more expensively provided.”¹⁰⁰

The presidents called for more money to be devoted to black extension work. Using figures from the President’s Advisory Committee on Education Report #12, they pointed out that if federal monies had been apportioned on the basis of the racial make-up

¹⁰⁰Memorandum to the Honorable Claude R. Wickard in re: Suggestions for the Improvement of Co-operative Extension Services Among Negroes in Southern States, 1 March 1941, pp. 6, 8-9, Box 290, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II.

of the rural population, \$2,066,375 in federal funds alone would have been spent on black extension work rather than the \$1,261,718 in federal, state, and local funds that was actually spent. Although federal funds for extension work had nearly doubled between 1925 and 1937, black extension work funding was not keeping pace. Of the southern states' share of extension revenues in fiscal year 1937 (\$8,538,700), about nine percent (\$804,700) had been spent on black extension work. They contrasted these figures with those of fiscal year 1925 in which the southern states received \$3,322,751 and the amount expended on black work was \$431,000—thirteen percent of the federal appropriation. Given the fact that blacks represented twenty-five percent of the rural population, neither figure was close to equitable.¹⁰¹

The presidents noted, favorably, the general agreement that the black extension service in the South needed to be “more adequately integrated.” To that end, they called for a closing of the gaps in the work of black and white agents. They again cited the report which stated that 400 new workers needed to be hired for agricultural extension work, 190 for home demonstration work, in addition to 14 club workers to meet the current needs *in 1937*. Obviously these needs had not been met. By 1941, the presidents argued that there was a need for 450 agricultural, and 200 home demonstration agents, as well as 50 club agents. They also called for the inclusion of black land-grant colleges in research-oriented extension work, “the recognition of Negro-Land Grant Colleges by delegating, defining and admitting the responsibilities which these institutions are already

¹⁰¹Memorandum to the Honorable Claude R. Wickard in re: Suggestions for the Improvement of Co-operative Extension Services Among Negroes in Southern States, 1 March 1941, 6, Box 290, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II, citing President's Advisory Committee Reports on Education (numbers 12, and 10 respectively), pp. 123, 77 respectively.

performing . . . which the white Land-Grant Colleges cannot assume by law or otherwise,” the transfer of hiring power for extension agents to the presidents of the black land-grant colleges, the equalization of salaries of black and white agents who had “the same training, assignments, experience and effectiveness,” clerical help for the headquarters, the inclusion of black extension leaders in all extension work with blacks in the state, and the location of the headquarters of all extension work to the campuses of black land-grant colleges.¹⁰²

Two things are striking about the presidents’ approach. It is conservative, based heavily in the logic of the *Plessy* decision. Their references to the legal aspects of separation in the black extension service could be read as a threat. In 1938 the Supreme Court had dealt a hard blow to the southern veneer of “separate but equal” in *Missouri ex. rel. Gaines v. Canada*. The court forced the state to open the doors of its law school to blacks since it had not established a separate law school for blacks.¹⁰³ The stridency of the presidents is also an interesting feature of their appeal. It forms a part of the rising chorus of protest among black “leadership” during the 1940s. Before 1940 had ended, there had been demands for integration of the armed forces and training of personnel based on ability rather than race. There were also calls for black appointments as civilian assistants in military departments.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²Memorandum to the Honorable Claude R. Wickard in re: Suggestions for the Improvement of Co-operative Extension Services Among Negroes in Southern States, 1 March 1941, p. 6, Box 290, Folder: Extension Work, 10-2, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II.

¹⁰³David R. Goldfield, *Black, White, and Southern: Race Relations and Southern Culture 1940 to the Present* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 58.

¹⁰⁴Franklin and Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 435.

The 1940s: A Turning Point for Black Extension Work

Compared to the suggestions the black supervisors and agents of the upper South submitted in 1939, the presidents' demand for greater inclusion of blacks in extension programs comes close to an overt challenge to white authority. The agents of the Upper South called the addition of new agents "desirable" and "a safe investment" and called for the appointment of agents specifically in counties with large rural black populations regardless of land ownership status. They recommended better training, annual intrastate meetings with white specialists devoting more time to the training of black agents, leaves of absence to attend colleges for further training, and the promotion of regional conferences.¹⁰⁵

The year 1941 was a propitious moment in many ways for black Americans. As the presidents submitted their letter to Secretary Wickard in January, A. Philip Randolph first began to discuss the idea of a March on Washington. The proposed march may have had a salutatory effect on the black extension program. Throughout 1941, the black extension program received increased attention. The Agriculture Department sought the assistance of F. D. Patterson, President of Tuskegee Institute, and Claude Barnett, who was also Director of the Associated Negro Press Service in addition to publisher of the *Chicago Defender*, regarding a recommendation of suitable blacks to work in the Department's Office of Personnel and Information. The duties of the persons thus employed would be to "facilitate the employment of qualified Negroes in professional positions; to work toward the elimination of discrimination; to help adapt department programs to

¹⁰⁵"Suggestions for Improving Negro Extension Work in the Upper Southern States, (Arkansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, N. Carolina, S. Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and W. Virginia)" from the Training School for Negro Extension Workers Upper Southern States, pp. 10-29 July 1939, attachment to J. B. Pierce to W. Watkins, 5 September 1938, Series 33, Box 160, Folder 6, STICUL.

Negro farmers; and to see to it that Negroes generally have information about Department programs.” The writer expressed the hope that the persons placed in these positions would be employed based on merit rather than on race.¹⁰⁶ Through the efforts of whites in the extension bureaucracy men like Patterson gained increased access to the highest echelons of the federal government. Bledsoe arranged a meeting between Patterson, Barnett, and Vice-President Henry A. Wallace. As Vice President, Wallace seemed far more solicitous of black interests in agriculture than he ever had as Secretary of Agriculture. Patterson reported that Wallace committed himself to supporting the creation of black special assistant positions as well as encouraging the appointment of soundly qualified persons. Early in the week that FDR signed Executive Order 8802 requiring non-discriminatory employment in the defense industry and in the government. Bledsoe also served as a conduit for Barnett, who wrote to the Vice President on 20 June 1941 to explain blacks’ views on the March on Washington. In a sober tone, Barnett documented for Wallace the failure of the revitalized economy to include blacks in the renewed prosperity. He vouched for the character of A. Philip Randolph—separating him from the white communists who were also interested in the march and who criticized the black leaders involved as “bourgeoisie.” He chronicled the administration’s efforts to prevent the march but pointed out that despite a meeting with FDR the black desire for a march had not subsided.¹⁰⁷ By 25 June FDR had signed the order and the march was aborted.

¹⁰⁶Samuel Bledsoe? To Dr. F. D. Patterson, 8 May 1941, Box 355, Folder: Personnel 18, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II.

¹⁰⁷Claude A. Barnett to Mr. S. B. Bledsoe, 20 June 1941; Claude A. Barnett to Honorable Henry Wallace, 20 June 1941, Box 355, Folder: Personnel 18, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II.

Three days later F. D. Patterson wrote to Agriculture Secretary Wickard to thank him for meeting with Barnett and himself regarding issues related to blacks in agriculture. From the tenor of Patterson's letter, it seems that Wickard may have attempted to convince Patterson and Barnett that special black personnel were not needed in his Department to address the needs of blacks. Patterson wrote that "[a]fter carefully reflecting our recommendation it is still our opinion that someone in your office could be of great assistance, who in knowing intimately the problems of his own race, could bring these understandingly to your attention."¹⁰⁸

By August 1941, the Department's black personnel met with the personnel director and created a comprehensive list of recommendations for addressing issues affecting blacks in agriculture. The preamble to the recommendations reads: "Inasmuch as we recognize that Negroes can do for themselves what others cannot do for them, we make the following recommendations with a feeling that through them the program of the Department of Agriculture can more effectively serve Negro farmers." Some of the recommendations included the appointment of assistants to the directors of several federal agricultural programs, the appointment of Washington-based and field personnel in most federal programs, the appointment of information officers, the appointment of an advocate for the interests of tenant farmers, an increase in the number of black supervisors, and the establishment of research stations at black land-grant colleges. Other issues that were addressed included the policy of salary differentials based on race and the use of efficiency ratings and classifications to depress the salaries of black agents, as well as the resistance to using black supervisory and administrative persons in key positions. The

¹⁰⁸F. D. Patterson to The Honorable Claude R. Wickard, 28 June 1941, Box 355, Folder: Personnel 18, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II.

report ended by declaring that it was “the sense of this body that this initial meeting with Negro representatives of the Department called by the Director of Personnel . . . is in fact one of the most democratic steps ever taken by the United States Department of Agriculture. [¶] This action is most heartening and is calculated to immensely strengthen the morale of Negro people throughout the Nation.” In October 1941, Secretary Wickard issued memorandum #936 establishing a non-discrimination policy requiring that employment be open to “all loyal workers regardless of creed, race, or national origin.” In another positive sign, M. L. Wilson addressed the conference of Negro Land-Grant College Presidents in November 1941. Wilson declared to his audience that the major purpose of the extension service was “to preserve democracy and the democratic way of life through education.”¹⁰⁹

However, all was not as the report or Wilson’s appearance at the Negro Land-Grant College President’s meeting would have one believe. By the end of the year, Walter White of the NAACP had sent a letter to the White House regarding the Agriculture Department. White said that while he was “tremendously heartened” when Secretary Wickard had abolished discrimination in the Department, he was concerned about the elevation of Wickard’s assistant T. Roy Reid to Director of Personnel. White quoted a black lawyer who said that when Reid was a Farm Security Administrator in Louisiana his “anti-Negro attitude . . . was a solid wall against relief [programs] justice for Negro tenants.” White expressed the fear that Executive Order 8802 would become “virtually a

¹⁰⁹“Suggestive Negro Employment Needs: United States Department of Agriculture,” 16 August 1941; Summary of Secretary Wickard’s Memorandum of 6 October 1941, Box 355, Folder: Personnel 18, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II; M. L. Wilson, “Agricultural Defense and Negro Extension Work,” *Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of the Presidents of Negro Land Grant Colleges*, November 11, 12, 13, 1941, p. 27.

dead letter” under Reid’s administration.¹¹⁰ White’s letter did not stop Reid’s appointment. However larger historical forces at work may have elevated interest in the plight of rural blacks. Two days after White wrote his letter, the Japanese bombed United States naval forces in port at Pearl Harbor. The nation went into high gear, mobilizing on many fronts including promoting the increased production of food. On 11 February 1942 Secretary Wickard appointed Claude Barnett and F. D. Patterson his special assistants at \$1 per year to survey southern states to figure out ways to increase black farmers’ efficiency.¹¹¹ Such highly visible appointments must have heartened the country’s blacks.

Blacks began to vigorously push federal officials to ensure expansion of opportunities for blacks. In response to an inquiry by a Florida resident regarding the number of blacks on the staff of the Secretary, the Undersecretary and Assistant Secretary, Wickard’s assistant Samuel Bledsoe reported that there were no blacks employed. However, rather than displaying the indifference that characterized departmental responses previously, Bledsoe took great pains to lay out the Department’s affirmative action policies. He told the writer, Willie Mitchell, that “the Department is moving forward in its program of employing a larger number of competent and qualified Negroes in various phases of its activities both in Washington and in the field.” He reported the addition of a black man as special assistant to the director of personnel, the employment of another black man in the Office of Information, and the promotion of another black man to Chief of the Administrative Service Division in the Office of Plant and Operations (probably

¹¹⁰Walter White to Mr. Wayne Coy (at the White House), 5 December 1941, Box 355, Folder: Personnel 18, Entry 17 L, RG 16, NA II.

¹¹¹“Preliminary Report of Inquiries and Field Observations Among the Negro Farmer in the Present Emergency,” 26 June 1942, Box 3, Folder: 1941-1942, Entry 17 AE General Correspondence, Negroes 1940-1955, RG 16, NA II.

the janitorial service), in addition to the employment at the state and county level of blacks in the Farm Security Administration and the Extension Service. “By and large a favorable beginning has been made to integrate a greater number of Negroes into the total program of the Department of Agriculture.”¹¹²

Some whites also became concerned that there be a positive perception of the Agriculture Department’s opportunities for blacks. When J. B. Pierce died in 1942, D. W. Watkins of Clemson saw this an opportunity for the service to demonstrate the equal treatment of its black employees. He recommended that the new field agent be chosen from persons already employed in the service and that a Ph. D. should not be a requirement for the position. While putting in a plug for Harry Daniels as a candidate, his main argument was that appointing an inside candidate “would do better to bolster the morale among this considerable group of Extension employees than anything I can think of. Bring in an outsider to put over them and they will feel that regardless of how good they are there is no upward way open to them.”¹¹³

Agriculture officials also took great pains to ensure that federally employed blacks were treated in a manner befitting their employment. They announced Patterson and Barnett’s visits to various southern states in advance—partially so that local white extension officials could prepare themselves for a good showing—and they asked the white directors when Patterson and Barnett would visit to provide “courtesies” and

¹¹²Samuel B. Bledsoe to Miss Willie M. Mitchell, 26 January 1942, 1942, Box 694, Folder: Personnel 10-4, Entry 17 M, RG 16, NA II.

¹¹³D. W. Watkins to M. L. Wilson, 17 November 1942, Box 912, Folder: Dir SC 7-42 [to] 12-42, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

transportation assistance during their visits “as special representatives of the Secretary.”¹¹⁴

In 1943 the Department of Justice investigated the ejection of Thomas N. Roberts , the black assistant to the Director of Personnel, from a Pullman car to a second class car. Roberts’ case aroused interest at the highest level. Paul H. Appleby, the Acting Secretary of Agriculture, asked the Justice Department to pursue the case and Assistant Attorney General Tom Clark recommended that Roberts be interviewed by G. Maynard Smith in the Civil Rights Section to provide more information and so that Roberts could be informed of the remedies he could seek.¹¹⁵

However, the disjuncture between black aspirations and the realities of what whites were willing to give remained evident. Getting sufficient numbers of workers, particularly at the higher echelons, remained an impossible task. In Barnett and Patterson’s preliminary report of 1942, they argued that the “biracial pattern” of the South made it necessary to hire black extension agents if adequate work with black farmers was to be done. They recommended that each county employ both a black agricultural and black home agent rather than just one black agent (who regardless of gender, might be expected to carry out both agricultural and home economics work) which was the general pattern. They also suggested that the traditional policy of employing black agents only in counties

¹¹⁴Reuben Brigham to D. W. Watkins, 16 July 1942, Box 912, Folder: Dir. SC 7-42 [to] 12-42, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II. See also a memo to C. B. Baldwin of the Farm Security Administration regarding preparations Patterson and Barnett’s planned visits to states where employees were “to be prepared to render asst. required.” Correspondence Reference Form, 15 April 1942, Box 470, Folder: Extension Service, Entry 17 M, RG 16, NA II.

¹¹⁵Tom C. Clark to The Honorable Paul H. Appleby, 30 December 1943, Box 985, Folder: Personnel 10-4, Entry 17 M, RG 16, NA II. Gunnar Myrdal cites a similar instance of positive federal response to black public professionals complaints. In this instance the N.A.A.C.P. planned to file a lawsuit on behalf of James Harold, a War Department draftsman, because he had been physically assaulted when he and other black draftsmen attempted to enter the cafeteria at the Pentagon. The N.A.A.C.P.’s intervention led opening of the cafeteria to all employees. Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, 1266, note 70.

with high black landownership be changed and that the *number* of black farmers (regardless of ownership status) should determine the placement of black agents. They further argued for the autonomy of the agents, noting that parallel duties and responsibilities seemed to be the wisest solution to the problem of efficiency. Barnett and Patterson decried the appointment of whites to state-level leadership posts for black extension work as it “create[d] a situation of remoteness on the part of the Negro personnel when they [were] unable to bring their problems and programs directly to the attention of the state director and the policy making bodies.”¹¹⁶

John W. Mitchell, who replaced J. B. Pierce, wrote to Reuben Brigham regarding the hiring of blacks as emergency agents. While he praised the hiring of new agents, he also made a pitch to add federal field agents for home demonstration work. It appears that Mitchell had offered that suggestion earlier: he declared that he was “still of the opinion” that such federal employees were necessary.¹¹⁷ Substantial credit for the changes that did occur in the era must be attributed to blacks’ ability to tap into the rhetoric of freedom that justified American efforts in World War II and turn it to their own benefit.

At the federal level, one of the best examples of black use of American rhetoric to claim more rights for themselves is Howard University professor Doxey A. Wilkerson’s *Agricultural Extension Services Among Negroes In the South*. The project, commissioned by the Conference of Presidents of Negro Land Grant Colleges, was a methodical

¹¹⁶Preliminary Report of Inquiries and Field Observations Among the Negro Farmer in the Present Emergency, 26 June 1942, Box 3, Folder: 1941-1942, Entry 17 AE, General Correspondence Negroes, 1940-1955, RG 16, NA II.

¹¹⁷John W. Mitchell to Reuben Brigham, 22 May 1944, Box 75, Folder: Personnel 9 . . . 10-7, Entry 5, RG 33, NA II.

southwide study, particularly of the black extension program. From the opening paragraph, Wilkerson invoked the national crisis and the importance to the nation's destiny of resolving the problems of the black citizenry. "The war crisis which confronts America has raised to a new plane of national significance the traditional neglect of agricultural extension work among Negroes. The problem can no longer be viewed solely in terms of its implications for the Negro people. Its immediate solution has now become imperative for the safety as the nation as a whole. . . ."¹¹⁸ Wilkerson's report was the latest in the war of program analysis between the black land-grant college presidents and the white southern extension directors.

Wilkerson's report was a stinging refutation of the claims made by the white directors. He asserted that white directors' claims that cross-racial services were being provided to black clients by white agents were largely unsupported by any hard data. What service could be confirmed, more often than not, consisted of passing out bulletins, speaking at meetings, or signing blacks up for government programs. He argued that black agents provided services to white clients was usually in the form of manual labor, and that access to the services of specialists was on a racial rather than first-come first-served basis. One of Wilkerson's harshest criticisms was for the white extension directors' claims that black sharecroppers were better served by white agents while black agents would only serve black owners. One of his strongest points was that plantation agriculture—like that under slavery—was the dominant form of agriculture in only a few regions of the South, while the general pattern was "relatively independent units on which the tenant or cropper's responsibility is closely compared to that of the independent

¹¹⁸Doxey A. Wilkerson, *Agricultural Extension Services Among Negroes In the South* (Washington, D. C.: Conference of the Presidents of the Negro Land-Grant Colleges, 1942), 1.

renter.” Wilkerson also reported that in only three instances did black agricultural agents cite farm tenure as a reason why blacks could not profit from direct services and in those cases the landlords were hostile to extension work. Equity, Wilkerson argued, would require that these sharecroppers and tenants receive services directly.¹¹⁹ Wilkerson’s well-documented report pointed out the inequality of the extension program. Particularly apparent were the disparities in monies appropriated to black extension work when the amount southern states claimed was based on their rural populations, which were sometimes heavily (an in many cases majority) black.

Wilkerson’s treatment of the federal government’s inaction in the face of obvious discrimination was equally blunt:

The basic premise of American democracy is equality of opportunity. It is on this principle that federal subsidies for education, including the Cooperative Extension Service, find their most fundamental validation. . . . It is the clear responsibility of the Federal Government to accompany its financial assistance for education in the states with such controls as may be required to insure that federal funds are used to promote rather than to negate, equality of educational opportunity.¹²⁰

Wilkerson’s assessment of federal inactivity regarding extension work has been confirmed as a general trend of the period by historians. John B. Kirby argues that “there was little inclination or will on the part of the Roosevelt administration to act on the demands of blacks made in . . . 1942.”¹²¹ The difference between Kirby’s interpretations and those of this author hinge not so much on outcome—as the research on the Department of Agriculture suggests a half-hearted commitment to act, at best. However, what is

¹¹⁹Wilkerson, *Agricultural Extension Services Among Negroes In the South*, 13, 15, 16.

¹²⁰Wilkerson, *Agricultural Extension Services Among Negroes In the South*, 39.

¹²¹Kirby, *Black Americans in the Roosevelt Era*, 225.

notable in the early 1940s is that blacks continued to voice their concerns despite the lack of concrete results and that whites, particularly southern whites and their anti-black sympathizers in the federal bureaucracy, could no longer merely treat those expressions as inconsequential—as southern extension directors did. Accusations of discrimination had to be answered. Perceptions of limited advancement had to be addressed by more institutional opportunity. The force of black agents received increased visibility and their efforts in their programs received public praise, both to encourage them and to suggest that they, too represented part of the fabric of the nation's honored public servants.

As part of the propaganda for World War II the Department of Agriculture produced *Negro Farmers in Wartime Food Production* to publicize blacks' participation in the war effort. Secretary Wickard's foreword declared that 681,000 black farmers working 30 million acres were "making a substantial contribution toward the attainment of our production goals." The brochure points out the productive capacity of black farmers and presents flattering images of rural blacks wearing their rural best in front of fat hogs, filled larders, and abundant crops. One of the most striking images is that of a black man and wife at a table where he signs a 1943 farm plan committing to growing vital crops for the war.¹²² This increased publicity also reflected the increasing sensitivity that whites in federal government began to have toward blacks' interests. Between 1943 and 1949 the Department of Agriculture printed ten publications specifically on black farmers. A count of articles in a bibliographical compilation on blacks in agriculture

¹²²United States Department of Agriculture, *Negro Farmers in Wartime Food Production* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1943). See particularly "Foreword" and page 1 for Wickard's statement and the picture of the farmer signing his farm plan.

reveals that in the years between the end of World War I and the onset of World War II, the Department issued only 6 publications specifically about blacks.¹²³

Blacks' productivity heightened federal promotion of their interests to southern extension directors. To provide visual connection between the southern states' white and black extension programs, federal officials began to encourage the white state directors to attend the conferences for black workers. Reuben Brigham asked P. O. Davis, director of Alabama's extension service, to attend the 1945 conference in the hope that some issues related to the black service that Patterson and Barnett had raised could be discussed. The issues largely reflected the sentiment of the black land-grant college presidents, which had not changed since discussions began in 1941. Brigham told Davis that "real progress" had been made in the discussions with Patterson and Barnett and that conclusions of these discussions "ought not wait too long for deep consideration by the Southern directors." The directors, it seems, did not share that sentiment; neither Davis nor his fellow members of the Negro extension sub-committee, D. W. Watkins and Aubrey Gates, attended the black extension workers' meeting.¹²⁴

The conference was a significant turning point for black agents. Extension Director Meredith Wilson sent the white southern extension directors a memorandum in which he praised the discussions held and the papers presented at the Conference. He also forwarded to these directors a memorandum that the black state and district supervisors sent him regarding the conference. "[N]ever before in the history of the Extension Service

¹²³Joel Schor, comp., "A List of References for the History of Black Americans in Agriculture, 1619-1980" (Davis, CA: United States Department of Agriculture and the Agriculture History Center, cooperating, 1981), 79-110.

¹²⁴Reuben Brigham to P. O. Davis, 29 May 1945; P. O. Davis to Reuben Brigham, (telegram), 30? May 1945, Box 132, Folder: Meetings-Conferences, Negro, Entry 5, RG 33, NA II.

have we been privileged to assemble here [in Washington, D. C.] as a body to hear Department specialists, and to exchange among ourselves valuable experiences to the end that our work program may be further enhanced. . . . We regard this . . . as a recognition on the part of the State Extension Directors of the need for enlarging the services that we are now trying conscientiously and diligently to render," they wrote. They praised the state-of-the-art facilities that they had access to at the conference and the direct contact they had with specialists, and asserted that the experience would fit them for better service. They also expressed the hope that black extension work would be "integrated and unified with the general extension program."¹²⁵

A New Return to Normalcy? Setbacks in the Post-War Years

Predictably, limitations persisted. In 1946 several black newspapers ran stories that pointed out the continued discrimination that blacks received in agricultural programs. The National Negro Press Association (NNPA) distributed a story in March recounting the continued disparity in agricultural program funding. In a meeting with Secretary of Agriculture Claude Anderson, the publishers of black newspapers pointed out that blacks benefitted directly only from about \$1.3 million (3.4 percent) of the \$38,000,000 in federal funds appropriated for agriculture. Frank Stanley, president of the NNPA, presented the Secretary with a statement that read: "we find glaring inequalities and flagrant violation of federal provisions in the distribution of funds to Negro Land Grant work in the 17 states maintaining separate schools for the races." The persons in attendance at the meeting also pointed out the discrimination in salaries, and laid the

¹²⁵Memorandum to Mr. M. L. Wilson from Committee Representing Negro State and District Supervisors in Attendance at the South-Wide Conference, 28 June 1945, Box 159, Folder: Meetings-Conferences, Negro, Entry 5, RG 33, NA II.

blame squarely on state legislatures that excluded black colleges from their legislative acts accepting federal funds. However, they also argued that the Secretary had wide discretionary powers to withhold funds whenever inequity was involved. The failure of holders of the office to do so had resulted in the diversion of more than \$3,000,000 from black to white extension programs and black colleges receiving none of the \$7,001,207 appropriated in 1944 for experiment stations. In addition to more equitable funding, they called for more agents, direct participation of black land-grant colleges in experiment station research and the appointment of a committee of black land-grant college presidents who would consult directly with the Secretary regarding matters pertinent to blacks in extension.¹²⁶

The personnel of the Agriculture Department developed a weak response to the issues raised by the NNPA. They assembled a study paper on the role of blacks in experiment station research and extension which—despite their intent—demonstrated the continuation of a limited scope of black participation in agriculture at the state level. In a list of 14 questions the paper discussed the prospects for blacks' participation in agriculturally-related programs. The issue of participation in experiment station research and extension funding were addressed in two of the questions. In answer to the question whether the Secretary of Agriculture's authority extended to the disbursement of extension monies, the writer concluded that the Secretary had no authority under current federal law to address disparities in the distribution of funds for experiment station research or extension work. The writer stated that funds could only be distributed to colleges designated by states' legislatures. To the question "Have the legislatures of any

¹²⁶"Land-Grant Colleges Gyped, Survey Shows," *Norfolk (VA) Journal and Guide*, 9 March 1946, 4, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A., RG 33, NA II

state designated the Negro land-grant colleges to receive such Federal funds?" the answer was "No." This was a marked departure from prior practice in which the Secretary did have actual authority over Smith-Lever funds. The answers made clear that it was within the states' power to exclude black land-grant colleges from receiving certain federal disbursements. A third question asked for the legal authority under which extension work operated. The remaining eleven questions dealt with a new extension appropriation, the Bankhead-Flannagan Act of 6 June 1945. According to the report, twenty percent of the appropriation (\$463,810) would be devoted to black extension work. This amount increased the federal appropriation for black extension work to \$1,395,565. Interestingly, this amount exceeded the entire southern states' appropriations (\$437,408) from state and county funds for black extension work in 1945. The document noted an increase in the total number of black extension workers from 339 in 1932, to 570 in 1942, to 778 in 1945, and that an additional 50 agricultural agents and 80 home agents would be hired in the fiscal year if the Bankhead-Flannagan appropriations were made. The writer also stated that all counties with 450 or more black (owned?) farms would have both an agricultural and home agent. The NNPA countered these numbers by proving that there were 3,700 county agents, 2,300 home demonstration agents, 350 club agents, 1,650 specialists, and 650 supervisors; 90.5 percent of all these workers were white.¹²⁷

The disparity in white and black agents salaries was addressed as well. The average salaries for white and black county agents was \$3,420 and \$1,969 respectively, while those of white and black home agents was \$2,586 and \$1,752 respectively. The

¹²⁷"Negro Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Work: Questions and Answers," (3 May 1946?), Box 165, Folder: Programs-Projects 1 Extension, Entry 5, RG 33, NA II; "Land-Grant Colleges Gyped [sic], Survey Shows," *Norfolk (VA) Journal and Guide*, 9 March 1946, 4.

document asserted that the federal director of extension was working with state directors to address salary inequities and to provide travel funds, clerical assistance, equipment, and supplies for black agents.¹²⁸ The promises of federal officials to work toward equity and the concessions they had made to the presidents of the black land-grant colleges appear to have satisfied those in the upper echelons of black leadership. However, it would soon become clear that blacks at large were not as satisfied with the good will of slow systemic change.

Resisting the Expansion of Institutional Racism: Segregated Camping and 4-H

As national rhetoric began to emphasize a color blind equality in public spaces, it became obvious that intersections of political rights and what some perceived as social wrongs would heighten conflicts. Most blacks seemed to have taken their nation's leaders at face value when they spoke of democracy, freedom, and equality. As the federal government began to offer more and more programs that crossed into a gray area between federal and state domains—while also transgressing racial lines—conflict was inevitable. During the Depression years, federal authorities usually deferred to states' judgements. With the exception of the protests of black leaders and some left-leaning white sympathizers, federal officials were usually able to contain disgruntlement over its racial policies. An example of this argument in agriculture comes from the explosion over the national 4-H youth camp-out in Washington, DC in 1946. Questions probably arose about the racial composition of the camp-out participants because a black camp-out was being planned to be held at Tuskegee Institute. The Negro Committee of the Southern Extension Directors had met with F. D. Patterson, Claude Barnett, and black federal district

¹²⁸“Negro Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Work: Questions and Answers,” (3 May 1946?), Box 165, Folder: Programs-Projects 1 Extension, Entry 5, RG 33, NA II.

agents John Mitchell and Thomas Campbell and in April 1946 and concluded that a “‘southwide’ meeting for Negroes would be the equivalent of a national camp.”¹²⁹

According to the federal officials who found themselves embroiled in the controversy, the Department of Agriculture reported that since 1927 they had provided facilities for states to bring 4-H participants to the nation’s capital for a national camp-out. The states selected their own delegations and paid their way to Washington. For nearly twenty years this had been a non-black affair with little public notice despite the fact that there was no national camp-out for black youth. Matters came to a head when James L. Hicks, a reporter with the NNPA asked Gertrude Warren, the federal Director of 4-H Work (and founder of 4-H), whether there would be any blacks at the 1946 camp-out. Hicks attributed several comments on the matter to Warren. She allegedly denied that the structure of the camp-out was the result of discrimination but “just grew up that way.” Warren supposedly stated that she was New England born and “did not believe in discrimination[,]” but that “our Southern leaders [directors] . . .are very strong about that sort of thing. If we invited our colored 4-H workers to attend the convention with the white, we wouldn’t get a delegation of white Southerners.” Hicks also reported that Warren asked him to suppress the story, “You know the South as well as I do. If you run a story about the convention and play up discrimination, you are going to anger some of the very people who will help your people if you let them alone. . . . I hope you will sacrifice a headline in order to help the people who are trying to help you!” The article also

¹²⁹“Meet US Plan, Youths Claim,” *Chicago Defender*, 29 June 1946, n. p., Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

referred to the NNPA's recent meeting with Secretary Clinton Anderson over inequitable division of funds.¹³⁰

Obviously the headline was not sacrificed and the encampment itself would generate more heat on federal officials. An editorial piece in the *Chicago Defender* at the time of the camp focused on the 4-H citizenship oath, which it called a mockery.

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. [¶]Twenty-five young 4-H club members, taking the oath of citizenship stood at the foot of Lincoln Memorial and murmured these words. There was not a Negro among them. They were excluded by the Department of Agriculture[,] state director[s] of extension[,] and the national extension service. [¶]Twenty-five young people became U.S. citizens but their Negro fellow members, citizens for more than 300 years, were barred from the convention by their own government.¹³¹

The response to these reports was extraordinary. It put the Department of Agriculture on the defensive and pushed some of the more moderate leaders in agricultural change toward obsolescence. It is to be expected that some high-ranking black leaders would have problems with such an encampment. The material gathered by the Extension Service documents the protest of one individual in particular, Mary McLeod Bethune. As much as she detested the racial separation of the Washington encampment, she had been unable to prevent it. She turned her fight to a new front—one which, like many of the new civil rights strategies, seemed destined to frontally assault Jim Crow. “I will fight to

¹³⁰James L. Hicks, “Negro 4-H Club Members Barred From Convention: Government Adopts Separate Pattern to Appease Southerners,” typed excerpt of article that appeared in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, 18 May 1946, n. p. Versions of the article also appeared in the *Minneapolis Spokesman*, and the *Chicago Defender*. Typescripts or clippings from these papers are included in this folder. According to extension director M. L. Wilson, Warren admitted that Hicks had called her but that she had not seen or authorized the quotations attributed to her. M. L. Wilson to “The Secretary,” 3 June 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

¹³¹“4-H Citizenship Oath Mockery At Jim Crow Meet,” *Chicago Defender*, 29 June 1946, n. p., Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

the last ditch any attempt on the part of the Extension Service to hold a separate national encampment program for Negroes. We will not have it," she declared.¹³²

Outrage against the encampment reached outside the usual circles of protest. The grass-roots interest in the issue of discrimination was heartening. One E. B. Henderson wrote letters to the editors of the Washington (DC) *Star* and the Washington (DC) *News*. In the letter to the *Star* he suggested that the 4-H program was "fascist." "History will record the failure of responsible weak-kneed officials to inculcate habits and attitudes of tolerance among 4-H clubs. . . . Isn't this incident enough to justify other Nations scoffing at our kind of democracy when a Government agency permits discrimination on account of race? To me and many others, the whole 4-H program is no more valuable in its citizenship training than any one of Hitler's or Benito's Fascist youth projects."¹³³

Richard A. Lowe, a Philadelphia entrepreneur and minister who listed a mixture of fourteen professions and affiliations on his stationery, wrote Gertrude Warren a scathing letter. "Negroes do not desire the aid of any people who are angry because we resent their un-american [sic] principles and practices. I shall urge that Negroes boycott this set-up in the near future. . . ."¹³⁴ LuLu Thompson, a black woman from North Minneapolis, sent a letter to Larry Haeg, the farm service director of radio station WCCO in which she asks "Don't you think the Negro 4-H boy will be very disheartened after working hard to know

¹³²"Meet US Plan, Youths Claim," *Chicago Defender*, 29 June 1946, n. p., Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

¹³³"Four-H Program Fascist," Letter to the Editor of the Washington (DC) *Star*, 19 June 1946, n. p., Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II. Henderson's letter to the *News* published 17 June, (taped to the same sheet) was heavily edited and contained only the observation that black boys would be excluded from the encampment because of fear of offending southern boys.

¹³⁴Richard A. Lowe to Miss Gertrude L. Warren, 4 June 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

he cannot attend the meeting[?]"¹³⁵ The outrage was not only expressed by blacks.

Catherine de Hueck Doherty, Director of the Marathon, Wisconsin Friendship House and a crusader for social and racial justice, expressed "the most strong protest possible" against the segregated encampment. "We feel very strongly that if Southern white youth is not ready to meet their brother farmers and Negroes at a convention, a federal organization should not pander to such unamerican [sic] sentiments, but should stand firmly not only on the letter but on the spirit of the Constitution and admit Negroes and let the rest of those who call themselves Americans, but are not, stay away if they wish."¹³⁶

Blacks also tapped into the political arena to register their dissent. Deotis Hardeman of Indiana wrote her Senator, Louis Ludlow, regarding the camp. Hardeman enclosed a copy of the Chicago *Defender's* version of Hicks' article and expressed concern over the statements attributed to Warren. "Not only is such a statement un-American, but it is blasphemy on all those democratic ideals which all citizens black and white, fought for in the war just ended. . . . Any action that you may take to prevent such Un-American activities as these from happening will be highly appreciated." Hardeman began her letter congratulating the Senator on being re-nominated and expressed her support for him. She indicated that she had written to him previously and had always

¹³⁵Lulu Thompson to Mr. Haegg [sic], 25 May 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II. Haeg forwarded the letter to P. E. Miller the extension director for Minnesota who sent the letter on to M. L. Wilson, federal Director of Extension, P. E. Wilson to M. L. Wilson, 21 June 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

¹³⁶Catherine de Hueck Doherty to "Dear Sirs:" 29 July 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II. The life of Doherty, a noble refugee from the Russian Revolution of 1917, is interesting for the intersections of her racial and class activism. In addition the establishment of the Marathon Friendship house, she also opened one in Harlem New York. Her life and work have been the subject of a dissertation and brief biographical sketches are also available over the Internet at Madonna House Apostolate, "Who is Catherine Doherty?," <http://www.madonnahouse.org/doherty.index.html>; Elizabeth Louise Sharum, "A Strange Fire Burning: A History of the Modern Friendship House Movement," (Ph. D. dissertation abstract), *Dissertation Abstracts International*, Volume 38 no. 06 A, (1977): 3657-A.

received a response.¹³⁷ Hardeman invoked the reciprocity that many blacks who were becoming practiced in the art of democracy had come to expect. In July, Senator Ludlow wrote Secretary Anderson to report that he had no record of a reply to his letter and requested a response so that he could “respond to my constituent.”¹³⁸

Interest in the issue of racial discrimination reached the highest level of government. Philo Nash, who worked in President Truman’s office, called Director Wilson about the camp.¹³⁹ One surprising sector of support for black campers was some of the southern white campers themselves. “I can’t understand why the colored boys and girls aren’t here. I’m a delegate but I was never questioned on the matter of colored people attending our camp. If I had been I never would have objected because I wouldn’t have missed this trip for the world,” said Delmas Rushing, Jr. of Georgia. “It’s not right, . . . I never was asked but I never would have objected,” said Lauree Jones of Oklahoma.¹⁴⁰

Extension officials again found themselves in a reactive position, lacking even the vociferous support of those for whom the camp was intended. The policy raised intense questions in a period when the rhetoric of American democracy was being so loudly trumpeted. Charles R. Lawrence, Jr., associate editor of Fisk’s *Monthly Summary of Events and Trends in Race Relations*, wrote Gertrude Warren to ascertain the facts of the situation for his publication. Warren’s reply reflected the Extension Service’s traditional

¹³⁷Deotis Hardeman to “Dear Senator Ludlow,” 16 May 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

¹³⁸Louis Ludlow to Hon. Clinton P. Anderson, 20 July 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

¹³⁹Memorandum from M. L. Wilson to Mr. Philo Nash, 10 June 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁴⁰“Meet US Plan, Youths Claim,” *Chicago Defender*, 29 June 1946, E Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

manner of dealing with tough questions—to assert that there was no federally-sanctioned discrimination: that the states selected their own delegations using whatever measures they thought were appropriate. Warren insisted that the quotations attributed to her were the result of a telephone conversation and “were not seen or authorized by me in any way.” However, she did not specifically deny their accuracy.¹⁴¹

Ludlow’s forwarding of Hardeman’s letter to Secretary Anderson pushed him into the center of what had been an Extension Division affair. Federal extension director Wilson argued to the Secretary that the article was based on “an erroneous interpretation of 4-H Club operation and of the National 4-H Club Camp.” He skirted the central issue by declaring that the 4-H *organization* was open to all boys and girls regardless of race and that it was “neither fair nor accurate to infer that 4-H Club work barred boys and girls of the Negro race.” Wilson also pointed out that the program was cooperative and that “the major share of the program is carried on where it should be, namely in the states and in the counties among the farm families and in rural neighborhoods.” Wilson emphasized the strong local control of the bureaucracy of extension work as well and asserted that it was the local organization that selected national campers. He emphasized that the Extension service provided some assistance with planning the program but that no federal monies whatsoever were used for the encampment.¹⁴² This stock response, ignoring state-level discrimination while tacitly sanctioning it by federal passivity, informed the logic of

¹⁴¹Charles R. Lawrence, Jr. to Miss Gertrude L. Warren, 28 May 1946; Gertrude L. Warren to Mr. Charles R. Lawrence, Jr., 4 June 1946, Entry 3-A, 1946-1947, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁴²Memorandum M. L. Wilson to “The Secretary,” 3 June 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

extension officials and became the basis of their response to all the persons who wrote to challenge their policies.¹⁴³

Extension officials also found themselves engaging the black press again. Ralph Fulghum, Chief of the Information Section, gave an interview to the same James Hicks who first broke the story. Hicks reported that he extended his hand to Fulghum who “completely ignored the gesture leaving the reporter leaning across his desk with an outstretched palm.” Following the party line, Fulghum insisted that the selection of extension campers was within the purview of the states and expressed doubt that states would select black campers. When asked why no northern states had ever sent black campers, Fulghum had no reply. Hicks reported that another official, whom he did not name, suggested that there had never been a black 4-H participant whose record merited inclusion at the camp-out. To counter this hypothesis, Hicks included a discussion of Louis Simmons, Jr. of Tewannea, Indiana in his article. Simmons had won numerous prizes and a scholarship to Purdue University through his 4-H work.¹⁴⁴

Such answers deflected the underlying truth that the federal service refused to exert the influence of the power of its purse. To Hicks’ observation that federal funds were allocated for 4-H, Fulghum’s response was that “this still did not put the organization under federal control.” In a meeting with Vernice Spraggs, Washington representative of the *Chicago Defender*, Fulghum and other extension officials continued to deny they had any control over the appropriation of federal dollars at the state level. When

¹⁴³In addition to Warren’s response to Lawrence, see M. L. Wilson to Miss Lulu Thompson, 28 June 1946, M. L. Wilson to Mrs. Catherine de Heuck Doherty, 16 August 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II, for example.

¹⁴⁴“Thomas M. Campbell Reported Advising: ‘Keep Races Apart,’” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 June 1946, n. p., Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

Spraggs suggested that the Extension Service could use “influence,” “leadership,” or “compulsion” to require states to consider black campers, Fulghum and Assistant Director of Extension H. H. Williamson insisted that the only way this could be done was for the federal officials to refuse to cooperate with the camp on any basis.¹⁴⁵

Federal extension officials also began a publicity campaign to demonstrate what was being done for black campers. They requested that extension directors in southern states send information that could be used to publicize the National 4-H encampment. They asked for information on “negro 4-H camps, other negro events, scheduled [in] your State next six months. Include white conferences to which negroes [are] invited.”¹⁴⁶ Fulghum’s behavior with Hicks and Spraggs was less than above board as a letter he sent to Guy L. Noble, the Managing Director of the National Committee on Boys and Girls Clubs, suggests. Fulghum warned Noble that Hicks wanted a membership list for Noble’s committee. Fulghum informed Noble that he planned to provide the information because it was in the public record. However, believing that Hicks was an unfair reporter, Fulghum would only provide him with information that was public knowledge. Fulghum’s purpose was “to allay any suspicion we can and at the same time continu[e] our efforts to strengthen negro extension, including 4-H work and continue progress on the race problems remaining.” Fulghum asserted to Noble that the extension service did not exclude blacks from the camp but that they had never turned down any delegate from a

¹⁴⁵Highlights of conference between Mrs. Vernice Spraggs, Washington representative of the *Chicago Defender*, one of the leading newspapers; Sherman Briscoe, Department Negro press relations representative; Assistant Director Williamson and Ralph Fulghum of the Extension Service—2:30 p. m. to 5:00 p. m., Thursday, June 20, 1946, (hereafter referred to as Spraggs conference), Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁴⁶Straight Wire, R. M. Fulghum to “[Southern?] Extension Directors on the attached list,” 21 June 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

state, nor could the service, in his view, force any state to send a particular delegate, “even if that were wise. We’ll have to make progress slowly in a sound, cooperative way.”¹⁴⁷

The extension service response was not to examine their policy but to work with southern extension officials and to try to manipulate the black press’s response to get favorable coverage of its initiatives. Extension officials meeting with Spraggs did not see her report that some 4-H campers favored black attendance worthy of commentary in their synopsis. They seemed to have persuaded her during the course of the conversation that a national 4-H camp for blacks might be best. They noted that Spraggs fully opposed segregated encampments at first but then said it might be acceptable if the extension service could demonstrate that it was trying to solve the problem of holding camps “on a non-segregation basis, at least in a few years.” They reported that a national black 4-H camp had not been held in 1946 on the recommendation of Patterson, Barnett, Campbell, and Mitchell to give time to fully organized a camp by 1947.¹⁴⁸ The actions of federal officials in this regard point to the problematic concept of black leadership. While federal and state extension officials seemingly anointed any black who displayed a modicum of tolerance for localism as the true voice of black opinion, the black population did not blindly follow their lead.

By far the most severely scathed of those who promoted segregated encampments were the black “leaders who supported it.” One newspaper article noted that Patterson,

¹⁴⁷Ralph M. Fulghum to Guy L. Noble, 19 July 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁴⁸Spraggs conference, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

Barnett, Campbell, and Mitchell had received as much criticism as white southern officials for their failure to register any complaint against the conference. The Washington Bureau of the NNPA wrote both Campbell and Mitchell for a response. Campbell did not reply and according to the article, Mitchell “avoided answering the question” while suggesting that the inquisitor misunderstood the issues and requested a conference.¹⁴⁹ In his letter to Gertrude Warren, Richard Lowe viciously criticized conservative black leaders. “There is absolutely too much of this type of activity on the part of so-called leaders who have the responsibility of moulding [sic] youth and influencing [sic] their thought processes.”¹⁵⁰ This dichotomy between those blacks closely associated with extension programs and those outside it suggests the cleavage between blacks of the Booker T. Washington stripe who squeezed as much as they could out of segregation, and the New Negroes who rejected even well-funded exclusion.

Toward a New Type of Leadership

However, the accommodationist blacks were not down for the count. “I am not agitated over the article as it only goes to show the price that a group leader has to pay. This is no new experience for those who have been in responsible positions for the leadership of their race, working with the white race. It is ‘H’ if you do and ‘H’ if you don’t. . . . I hope we will be able to work out something in the near future that will, in a

¹⁴⁹“Meet US Plan, Youths Claim,” *Chicago Defender*, 29 June 1946; “Thomas M. Campbell Reported Advising: ‘Keep Races Apart,’” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 June 1946, n. p., Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁵⁰Richard A. Lowe to Gertrude L. Warren, 4 June 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

measure, turn the attack,” declared field agent for the upper South John Mitchell.¹⁵¹ All the black “leaders” in extension work had been stung by the criticism. However, during the brief span of World War II, it seems that the general populace may have surpassed the agents in overt racial progressiveness. No longer did the black public seem willing to accept an improved separate equality; they wanted full American citizenship without qualification.

Patterson and Barnett continued their work as special envoys of the Secretaries of Agriculture on racial issues. Barnett even offered to send a letter to black extension agents to explain that his and Patterson’s position had always been to push for expansion of the black program to include a full program of 4-H for black youth and to ascertain the agents’ thoughts on a separate black 4-H conference at Washington.¹⁵² Barnett was probably already aware that the state supervisors for black work had, of their own accord, voted for such a conference. Mitchell reported on the supervisors’ decision in a letter to Williamson in which he stated that the supervisors felt “that the question of meeting with the white group was immaterial with the Negro supervisors but opportunities for Negro youths being commensurate with those given the white group was of paramount importance for the good of 4-H Club Work among Negroes. . . .” Mitchell also reported that Sherman Briscoe, the black liaison to the black press in the Extension Service’s Office of Information, advised him that the proposed camp would be acceptable to members of the

¹⁵¹John W. Mitchell to Mr. H. H. Williamson, 13 June 1946; F. D. Patterson to Mr. M. L. Wilson, 26 June 1946; Claude Barnett to Mr. H. H. Williamson, 18 December 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁵²John W. Mitchell to Mr. H. H. Williamson, 13 June 1946; F. D. Patterson to Mr. M. L. Wilson, 26 June 1946; Claude Barnett to Mr. H. H. Williamson, 18 December 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

black press as well.¹⁵³ H. H. Williamson discouraged Barnett's idea. The issue of a national encampment was solely within the discretion of the [white] southern directors, and particularly with their black extension subcommittee, led by P. O. Davis of Auburn. Davis may have already been annoyed about Patterson's and Barnett's role in the affair. Williamson's remarks to Louisiana's Director of Extension, H. C. Sanders, that Davis had misinterpreted their comments suggested as much. In his letter to Barnett, Williamson speculated that a letter by Barnett to black extension agents might be perceived by the directors as "indirect pressure" (for a D. C. encampment). Williamson recommended that Barnett go through the black subcommittee rather than around them to determine what black agents wanted.¹⁵⁴ Federal officials reacted negatively to the recommendations that they do more for black farmers. Lester A. Schlup, Director of Extension Information, transmitted some recommendations Fulghum made for the southern extension directors to deal with black extension service as a public relations issue to Williamson. Schlup said that Fulghum suggested that there was a "need for getting off the defensive on negro [sic] extension work with an aggressive positive public relations policy. Fulghum suggested that the negative press had its roots in the fact that the black press was "largely a protest press" that had been after an integrated camp. "We have stalled, countered with a negro camp, put that off, fussed about where to hold it. In doing so we've made lots of ammunition that can be shot back at us." Fulghum suggested that the extension service create "an aggressive program that would help *our own* [my emphasis] negro leaders decide with us

¹⁵³John W. Mitchell to Mr. H. H. Williamson, 2 December 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁵⁴H. H. Williamson to Claude A. Barnett, 30 December 1946; H. H. Williamson to H. C. Sanders, 5 December 1946, Box 9, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

what they wanted.” Afterward, the service would go on the offensive with both the black and mainstream press.¹⁵⁵

Conclusion

No longer did white extension directors rely on the conservative judgement of black accommodationists to cover their prejudice. The events of 1947 showed that the Federal Extension Service was disingenuous when it asserted its limited role in the national 4-H encampment and that southern extension directors were not willing to bend to the demands of the rising black polity. The announcement for the national encampment for 1947 shows the depth of federal-level planning for the national encampment. The federal office established a theme of “Serving as Citizens in our Representative Government”—ironic given the conflicts over citizenship in 1946. The program included various activities including visitors from England and Palestine. Most telling, given the federal extension officials’ denial that they had any significant role in the conduct of the program, was the notice about “All States” day in which the “leaders will have charge of *their own* [my emphasis] delegation.”¹⁵⁶

While this national encampment was being planned at the federal level, a national encampment of black youth was left within the purview of the southern extension directors. A statement by the group emphasized the point. The southern directors made it clear that they—not pressure groups—controlled black extension work. They established a black consultancy group that included what one might refer to as “safe Negroes:”

¹⁵⁵Lester A. Schlup to H. H. Williamson, 1 March 1948, Series 32, Box 154, Folder 2, STICUL.

¹⁵⁶Memorandum “TO ALL STATE AND ASSISTANT STATE CLUB LEADERS,” 29 May 1947, John W. Mitchell to Mr. H. H. Williamson, 13 June 1946; F. D. Patterson to Mr. M. L. Wilson, 26 June 1946; Claude Barnett to Mr. H. H. Williamson, 18 December 1946, Box 18, Folder: 4-H Clubs, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

Campbell and Mitchell, along with two black state leaders: one for agriculture and one for home economics, a white southern extension director, L. I. Jones of Mississippi, and the white federal extension service field agent for the South, Charles A. Sheffield. The directors decided that it would be best for the camp to meet at a southern black college “where working out mechanics and training leaders” for a larger camp to be held in Washington or “some other city” could be made. They ended the statement with a comment that each state would choose its own delegates for the National 4-H conference.¹⁵⁷

The events of the conference are not as important as its significance in the changing racial landscape of the United States. The black camp was developed during the era of early legal challenges to segregation in which southern whites were forced either to provide true separate equality in public spaces or to submit to racial integration of their institutions. By the time the camp controversy arose, the range of the southern directors’ response had been narrowed by these external events. The first camp had well-organized and publicized activities and included a fly-over by black Air Force pilots—ironic because these pilots had transgressed the limitations of service that whites had previously imposed on black people. As the discussion below demonstrates, even a good segregated camp would soon cease to be satisfactory. As time passed from the Great Depression toward the second Truman administration, the federal extension service remained staffed with the same people as before.

¹⁵⁷“Colored 4-H Camp,” [a statement by the Negro Extension Committee of the Southern Directors of Extension], 30 April 1947, John W. Mitchell to Mr. H. H. Williamson, 13 June 1946; F. D. Patterson to Mr. M. L. Wilson, 26 June 1946; Claude Barnett to Mr. H. H. Williamson, 18 December 1946, Box 4, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

As the political landscape and the mentalité of almost all blacks and a some white Americans shifted toward equality, the extension service's position regarding blacks the federal extension service moved from conservative to reactionary. This shift occurred without great alterations with policy. The extension bureaucracy had moved at a snail's pace and society passed it by. The reactionary bureaucracy had a greater effect on the experience of black agents and their clients than pressure by liberalizing political interests. By the end of the middle years, however, it was more difficult for reactionary bureaucrats to enact policies without public scrutiny. They had to answer to public opinion, but they greatly resented it.

CHAPTER SIX

A STABILIZING INFLUENCE AND A CONTENTED PEOPLE: THE LIFE OF THE AGENTS AND THEIR CLIENTS IN THE MIDDLE YEARS, (1931-1949)

The Negro agent's influence in stabilizing social conditions among Negroes in general is far-reaching. The services of the Negro agent tend to make Negroes more prosperous, happy, and contented because they work in close cooperation with all other progressive movements to improve farming, and farm home making, and rural life in general.—*Report of Special Summer Schools for Negro Extension Agents Under the Direction of the Office of Cooperative Extension Work USDA in Cooperation with Federal and State Extension Services in the Southern States* (1930)

The great majority of the people with whom we work . . . are a people forgotten by many. Nevertheless, they are individual beings with hopes and longings. It is true that many of these people have accepted the dreary existence that seems to be the lot of the Negro sharecropper, perhaps because that seems to be the simplest and easiest solution to an almost useless struggle.—Marian B. Paul, 1939

Although the farm people work harder now than ever before, they seem happier, for now they see a ray of hope for liberation from economic slavery, from tenancy, from ignorance—they have hope for the “four freedoms.”—Marian B. Paul, 1945

Chapter 5 focused on the effects of national events and such as the Great Depression and the rising power of a national black political voice on local black extension service. This chapter returns to the local level to examine what it meant to be a black agent in the context of South Carolina history and to determine the effect that shifting national forces had on the relationship between the state's black extension agents and their clients. The Julius Rosenwald schools provided an opportunity for many agents to better fit themselves for the service they provided. However, improved credentials and ambition did not open any new vistas of opportunity for black extension agents. Nor did long, loyal, and productive service increase rewards either for individual agents or for the black extension program. Yet, the agents' influence was felt in the communities they

served and it sometimes extended well beyond those counties with agents and into the public arena.

A Rare and Fragile Breed: Black Public Professionals in South Carolina

Indeed, the agents, as public professionals, were in a rare category of employment for blacks in the state. Idus Newby asserts, “Instances of discrimination perpetuated by the state government were glaring. Apparently no black policemen, social workers, probation officers, or similar personnel were employed by the state during this period.”¹ To be a black public professional still meant living a precarious and marginal existence. E. D. Jenkins’ situation, again, provides an apt example of the state’s disregard for its black public professionals. By 1932 the settlement he received from Clemson College’s insurance carrier was certainly exhausted and his family was suffering from the ravages of the Great Depression. One of the state’s United States Senators, Ellison D. “Cotton Ed” Smith, wrote C. W. Warburton to find out whether Jenkins was receiving retirement pay—he was not. Warburton reported that Jenkins was employed under a civil service rule that excluded certain workers from retirement plans. Warburton’s letter seemed to suggest that all extension workers were excluded from the federal retirement plan because they received a portion of their salaries from their states.² Although the disbursement of an insurance settlement suggests that Jenkins suffered his stroke while at work, there was

¹Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 240. There were a few other public professionals the federal government employed. Marian Paul’s 1939 annual report notes that the Farm Security Administration appointed 3 black Home Supervisors on her recommendation. Mary McLeod Bethune’s National Youth Administration had hired one of Paul’s agents as director of a training camp. Paul, “Annual Report for 1938-1939,” 19-20, Series 33, Box 33, Folder 914, STICUL.

²E. D. Smith to Dr. C. W. Warburton, 27 October 1932; C. W. Warburton to Honorable E. D. Smith, 31 October 1932, Box 215, File: Misc. SC 1932-33, Entry 1002 RG 33, NA II.

no state compensation for work-related illness. Fishback and Kantor's study of Workmen's Compensation reports that South Carolina had no workmen's compensation before 1935. Nor was Jenkins eligible for a pension under the state's limited pension program that covered only faithful slaves, Confederate veterans and their widows. After a referendum in 1936 to amend the state's constitution passed by a 10 to 1 margin, the aged, blind, and dependent children all became eligible for public assistance.³

The new federal social security programs offered no relief for public professionals. They were among the categories of public workers that were excluded from the program. The exclusion of farm workers and domestics from southern social security roles is well known. However, in South Carolina the exemptions from social security included: "government employees, which include[d] public-school teachers and public-welfare workers; . . .and employees of private institutions not conducted for profit, which embrace[d] social welfare workers." The result, according to George Croft Williams was that "the lowest paid laborers in South Carolina, as well as clergymen, teachers and social workers are slighted. Only commercial and industrial employees were favored, which

³Fishback and Kantor, "The Durable Experiment: State Insurance of Workers' Compensation Risk in the Early Twentieth Century," 814, note 10; Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 499-500. An on-line review of the current laws on workmen's compensation contains a reference to July 17, 1936 which may be the date on which laws related to workmen's compensation went into effect. This section of the laws also makes reference to the repeal of sections of prior years' codes which include the year 1936. South Carolina Code of Laws, "Title 42 - Workers' Compensation, Chapter 1, General Provisions, Article 3, Application and Effect of Title," Section 42-1-460, Section 42-1-510. According to Newby, the state created a welfare department in 1937 to "enable [it] to take better advantage of federal funds and to provide coordination and direction to various welfare endeavors." Newby also reports that the welfare program's benefits were low and few qualified for relief unless their poverty was "abject." The needy had to seek out "suspicious social workers" for assistance rather than the social workers seeking out the poor. Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 250.

shows something of our social philosophy.”⁴ These realities led J. E. Dickson to complain in 1939 that “the problem of insecurity is facing the Extension worker after he has spent his life in the service. This matter should receive the attention of the Agricultural Colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture.”⁵

Nor did South Carolina provide a public retirement plan for state employees. No history of the retirement system has been written nor has it been discussed in detail in any state histories. The state’s retirement system was not established until 1945. The plan restricted immediate disbursements to those employees who were aged 70 or older, with those aged 65 or older becoming eligible in 1947 if they were certified mentally or physically incapacitated. The act ultimately phased in retirement at the age of sixty, set a standard retirement age of 65, and attempted to retire those who had reached age 70 as quickly as possible without being disruptive.⁶ On the positive side, it included extension workers as state employees under the theory that federal funds, having been disbursed to state institutions first, became state funds before extension workers were paid. The late age at which retirement could be collected accounts, in part, for the long service of black agents. When the retirement system went into effect, Marian Paul declared that it gave agents “a feeling of security in old age.”⁷

⁴G. Croft Williams, “Public Welfare,” in W. H. Callcott, ed. *South Carolina: Economic and Social Conditions in 1944* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1945, repr. ed., Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, Publishers, 1975), 208.

⁵J. E. Dickson, “Historical Appraisal of Extension Work in Richland County [1939],” p. 2, Dickson Collection, SCL.

⁶*Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina* (Regular Session of 1945) First Part of the Forty-Fourth Volume of Statutes at Large, (Columbia:), 212-3, 215.

⁷Paul, “South Carolina, Narrative Annual Report, 1946,” p. 8, Series 33, Box 107, Folder 2330, STICUL.

Inclusion in the state retirement plan under the same conditions as whites was where parity ended. Salary inequities between white and black workers continued in the middle years. The data collected regarding salaries, while incomplete, shows that black agents continued to earn far less than whites earned. Throughout the 1930s, black home agents earned between 43 and 44 percent of what white home agents earned. Both black and white women's salaries in the 1930s varied greatly depending on the county in which they worked. From available data, direct salary comparisons can be made for only two counties. In Richland County, the black agent earned between 39.03 percent and 47.64 percent of what the white agent earned. The latter ratio reflected the salary difference in 1930 while the former ratio represented the salary differences in 1936. In Greenville County, the black agent earned between 34.76 percent and 50.42 percent of what the white agent earned. Again, the latter and higher ratio was from the year 1930. Even more interesting, when black home demonstration work was discontinued in the county in 1934 for fiscal reasons, the white agent was paid \$1,961. The next year there was no black home agent but the white home agent was paid \$1,950. In 1936 the black home demonstration program was renewed. For a partial year's work the black home agent received \$826 and \$780 for 1937. In those years, the white home agent received \$2,283 and \$2,244 respectively. (Black home demonstration agents in other counties were receiving an annual salary in the \$1,000-\$1,100 range by 1936.) Black home demonstration agents received better pay after 1936. The highest ratio of black to white home agent salary in the 1930s was 46 to 47 percent, which was achieved in 1939. In the 1940s both white and black home agents' salaries increased with black home agents' increasing at a somewhat faster pace. By 1944, some black home agents were earning 50 percent of what white

home agents earned annually. In at least one case, by 1945, the black agent earned 73 percent of what the white agent earned.⁸

Men's salary data show similar trends. For those men for whom intra-county comparisons can be made, the data indicate that black agricultural agents earned about 51.35 percent of what white agricultural agents earned. With the exception of the high salary of the Orangeburg County black agricultural agent (which declined as a percentage of the white agent's salary in the early 1930s) the salary percentages held steady for most of the middle years. The salary ratios for the 1940s range from the high forty percent to the low fifty percent of whites' salaries. As in the case of black home agents, the salaries of all black agricultural agents were almost the same dollar amount—and after 1940 were exactly the same amount—regardless of county of service. A comparison of the standard annual salary figure for black agricultural agents with the most complete salary schedule of a white agricultural agent shows that the general pattern in the 1940s was a rise in black agricultural agents' salaries to about 57 percent of white agents' salaries.⁹

⁸The accuracy of the amount listed on the salary sheets is unclear. Other evidence discussed in this chapter suggests that the actual dollars received was lower than listed on the earnings sheets. Analysis of annual salaries of Frances Thomas, Susie Gertrude Thompson, Box 15 Folder 24; Eleanor Carson, Box 14, Folder 1; Bertha B. Sawyer, Anabella E. Spann, Box 15, Folder 23; Julia W. Stebbins, Box 15, Folder 2; Marian B. Paul, Box 7, Folder 17; Toynetta McGraw, Leona Bing McMillian, Box 15, Folder 17; Louisa Mae Kemlin Adams, Delphina Wilkerson Arnold, Erma Anderson, Box 15, Folder 7; Ophelia C. Williams, and Virginia Whittington, Box 15, Folder 25; Gwendolyn Chisholm, Box 15, Folder 9; Mattie E. Overstreet, Box 15, Folder 20; Minnie E. Gandy, Box 15, Folder 12; Gladys Hurley, Janie Rucker Howard, Box 15, Folder 13; Marie A. Burch Blakemon, Susie L. Bivens Boykin, Fannie M. Brown, and Lillian Watts Brown, Helen T. Barnwell, Box 15, Folder 8; Sara Zeline Daniels, Box 15, Folder 10; Martha O. Reid, Box 15, Folder 22; Hallie Queen Bacote Perry, and Mary Lula Pratt, Box 15, Folder 21, Series 65, STICUL. Because some of these agents may still be alive, I have tried to conceal individual salaries to respect privacy.

⁹Analysis of annual salaries of G. W. Daniels, J. E. Dickson, and Spencer Disher, Box 13, Folder 7; J. M. Napier, Box 12, Folder 13; Jason Maloney, Box 13, Folder 14; F. M. Rast, Box 12, Folder 17; William Thompson, Box 13, Folder 19; Larkin V. Walker, Box 13, Folder 20; Benjamin Barnwell, W. C. Bunch, Box 13, Folder 5; J. W. McLendon, Box 12, Folder 12; Ernest, Guess?, and F.? N.? Kolb, Box 12, Folder 5, Series 65, STICUL.

One interesting departure from this pattern occurred in 1944 when the black agricultural agent in Clarendon County earned 79 percent of what the white agent earned. In three of the four counties discussed above, the black farm population exceeded 50 percent of the total farm population in the 1930 and 1940 census reports. Two of these counties had total populations that were at least sixty percent Black.¹⁰

Home agents' salary inequities offer more interesting data than those of men because of the availability of partial salary data for Marian B. Paul. She supervised 15 black home demonstration agents statewide by 1935 and personally provided home demonstration services in several counties and yet earned only 58.45 percent of what the white home demonstration agent for *Charleston County* earned. In the years 1936 and 1946, the last year for which Paul's salary numbers were available, she earned between 58 percent and 82.56 percent respectively of what the white home agent for *Greenville County* earned. The rate of increase is mostly attributable to a decline in the annual salary of the white home demonstration agent in Greenville. Paul's salary increased by \$780 over the same period that the Greenville county agent suffered a net loss of almost \$250

¹⁰Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, United States Historical Census Browser, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/>, Clarendon County's total black farm population was 73.2% in 1930 and 65.7% in 1940; Richland County, despite being predominantly white had a farm population that was 56% black in 1930 and 53% black in 1940, Orangeburg County's total farm population was 64% black in 1930 and 56% black in 1940. Clarendon's total population remained around 71% black for both decades while Orangeburg's total population was 63% black in 1930 and 62% black in 1940. In 1930 Greenville County's total percentage of black farmers was 28% while the black population was 23%. By 1940 the total percentage of black farmers in Greenville had declined to 22% while the total percentage of blacks in the county's population was 21%. 1930 County Level Census Data--Sorted by State/County Name; 1940 County Level Census Data--Sorted by State/County Name, variables selected: 1930: "Agriculture: Total No. Farms of White Farmers," "Agriculture: Total No. Farms of Colored Farmers," "Population: No. Negro Males," "Population: No of Negro Females," "Population: Total Population;" 1940: "Population: Total Population," "Race and Citizenship: No. Negroes," "Agriculture: No. of Farms of White Operators, 1940," "Agriculture: No. of Farms of Non-White Operators, 1940." The number of "other races" in South Carolina was infinitesimal as late as 1940 (0.07%) and is therefore not accounted for in demographic calculations.

including a \$500 reduction between 1944 and 1945. While the Greenville agent managed the white families in her county, Paul supervised a growing force of agents that was 17 in number in 1936 and 26 by 1946.

Considering the other responsibilities she held as late as 1946, the salary inequities are glaring.

I . . . frequently act as home agent in one or more of the twenty counties without an agent, giving demonstrations or lecturing, or conducting training schools—or whatever may be necessary. Because we have no specialist, I must serve as any one of four or five specialists as the occasion demands, and am frequently a judge of fairs, contests, or a leader of recreation at a 4-H meeting. I assist agents with program planning, write circulars and news letters and radio scripts.¹¹

Paul's salary not only lagged behind those of white home demonstration agents, it did not compare favorably to those of black home demonstration agents. I conservatively estimate that for the middle years, each black home agents' annual salary *on average* was at least 75 percent of what Paul earned. For the 1930s, the salaries of four home agents averaged 83.15 percent of Paul's salary. The agent from Orangeburg County—where Paul's headquarters were located —earned about 85 percent of what Paul did in the 1930s. In 1934 four black home agents each earned 91 percent of what Paul was paid. Paul's salary dropped by \$400 between 1932 and 1934. In 1938 the Orangeburg County home demonstration agent earned 90 percent of what Paul earned. For the first three years of the 1940s, most agents earned between 76 and 79 percent of Paul's salary. By the middle of the 1940s, salary schedules show that eight agents earned at least 80 percent and, in one case over 90 percent, of what Paul earned. However, there is only one instance in which an agent who worked the entire year earned less than 70 percent of what

¹¹Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1946," p. 29.

Paul earned. When Paul's salary is compared to that of the black home demonstration agents the resulting percentages show even more forcefully the racial disparity in the pay rates of black and white public professionals in South Carolina. These numbers make clear that it was not qualification—for Paul had a bachelor's degree from a northern white school and post-baccalaureate courses from several prominent white land-grant colleges—but rather race that determined the distribution of extension resources.¹²

While the salaries of white county and home demonstration agents were regionally comparable to those of other white agents, those of South Carolina's black extension home demonstration agents fell significantly below those of other black home demonstration workers. In 1943, federal extension officials sent D. W. Watkins a list of average annual salaries for South Carolina and nearby southern states at Watkins' request. The average salary of black home demonstration agents, \$838.12, was \$300 to \$500 below the average salaries of black home demonstration agents in Georgia, Kentucky, and North Carolina. Some black home demonstration agents in these states were paid as much as \$1,500 while the South Carolina maximum was \$900. The lowest salary black home demonstration agents received in Kentucky and North Carolina was around \$1,200. Salaries for black agricultural agents were competitive and in some cases exceeded the pay of black agricultural agents in other states. Indeed, in Kentucky, black *home* demonstration agents earned more than that state's black agricultural agents did. It is important to note that Georgia, another state with a significant number of blacks in its

¹²Analysis of annual salaries of Frances Thomas, Box 15, Folder 24; Marian B. Paul, Box 7, Folder 17; Delphina Wilkerson Arnold, Box 15, Folder 7; Ophelia C. Williams, Virginia Whittington, Box 15, Folder 25; Gwendolyn Chisholm, Box 15, Folder 9; Marie A. Burch Blakemon, Fannie M. Brown, Lillian Watts Brown, Susie L. Bivens Boykin, Box 15, Folder 8; Mattie E. Overstreet, Box 15, Folder 20; Minnie E. Gandy, Box 15, Folder 12; Janie Rucker Howard, ToyNETTA McGraw, Box 15 Folder 13, Bertha B. Sawyer, Box 15, Folder 23; and Sara Zeline Daniels, Box 15 Folder 10, Series 65, STICUL.

population, did not provide travel allowances for any of its agents so the actual pay Georgia agents realized after expenses was lower than that of South Carolina.¹³

Salary disparities did not diminish during the middle years. An agents' average salary scale the Agriculture Department produced for Congressman Olin E. Teague of Texas showed that white county agents in South Carolina and white assistant county agents earned \$1,600 and almost \$800 more respectively than black agricultural agents' \$2,253 salary. White home demonstration agents earned \$700 more than black home demonstration agents but assistant white home demonstration agents earned only \$31 more than black home demonstration agents did.¹⁴ The closeness of the salaries of the white assistant and black home demonstration agents perhaps reflected the philosophy of the women's program that black women were "assistant" agents. Marian Paul recommended increased salaries for black home demonstration agents as early as 1939. A decade later she declared that recent increases were insufficient and that she "must have higher salaries in 1950 in order to retain some of our workers."¹⁵

Equitable pay was not the only issue of the middle years. The black program remained understaffed as Table 2 (Appendix B) shows. The table demonstrates an overall increase in black agents; however, the number of agents employed never reached the level

¹³Unsigned memorandum to D. W. Watkins, 9 February 1943, Box 912, Folder: Dir SC 1-43 [to] 6-43, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁴N. E. Dodd (acting Secretary) to Hon. Olin E. Teague, 22 April 1948, Box 1580, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 170, RG 33, NA II; see also D. W. Watkins to Mr. W. H. Conway, 15 September 1947, Series 32, Box 154, Folder 1, STICUL. Watkins provided this information to submit to Congressman Clifford R. Hope.

¹⁵Marian Paul, "South Carolina: Narrative Annual Report, 1938-1939 of Marian B. Paul," p. 120; "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1949 of Marian Paul," p. 2, Series 33, Box 173, Folder 3295, STICUL.

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federal officials recommended or black extension leadership desired. As early as 1937 Marian Paul reported having to turn down county matching funds because there were no extension funds to expand the work and as late as 1948 available county matching funds exceeded federal and state extension appropriations.¹⁶ In September 1939, J. B. Pierce submitted recommendations to D. W. Watkins that had been formulated by a committee during an agent training session at Hampton Institute. Their first recommendation was that more black workers be hired. The committee declared black agents "carriers of inspiration to adults and youth of the beauties and advantages of living a full and well rounded life." They recommended the addition of workers in counties with high rural black populations, regardless of the level of land ownership.¹⁷ Cora Black, a former New Deal emergency home agent in Calhoun County (which was 77 percent Black) wrote Eleanor Roosevelt seeking her support in locating funds to re-employ a black home demonstration agent in that county.¹⁸ In 1941 John W. Davis collected statements related to the black extension program in every state in anticipation of a meeting with Secretary of Agriculture Wickard and the southern directors of extension work. South Carolina State College President, Miller F. Whittaker entered the fray along with the other presidents of black land-grant colleges. The annual reports of their meetings show the keen attention these presidents paid to the issue of equity in extension funding.

¹⁶Paul, "Annual Report, Negro Home Demonstration Work, 1937," p. 6, Series 33, Box 25, Folder 718; Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Report, 1948," 5, Series 33, Box 150, Folder 2935, STICUL.

¹⁷"Training school for Negro Extension Workers, Upper Southern States, Held at Hampton Institute, Hampton Virginia, July 10 to 29, 1939," p. 1 attachment of J. B. Pierce to D. W. Watkins, 5 September 1939, Series 32, Box 160, Folder 6, STICUL.

¹⁸Cora Black to Mr. Eleanor Roosevelt, 9 January 1942, Box 3, Folder: Appropriations, Entry 17AE, General Correspondence Negroes, Records of the Secretary of Agriculture, Record Group 16, NA II.

Given the limited role of South Carolina State College's presidents in extension work after 1915, President Whittaker's bold push for increased staffing is somewhat unexpected. Whittaker reported that the amount spent on white extension work in South Carolina was 12 times the \$50,661 spent for black extension work. In his statement for Davis's report, Whittaker listed the changes he wanted for the black extension program, including a black agricultural and home agent for each county. This would require an additional \$85,000 to be diverted from white work to black work to hire 27 men and 31 women. According to a handwritten note on one of the copies of Whittaker's statement, 48 percent of the rural population was black yet only 21 percent of extension funds was spent on black extension work. Whittaker also wanted to affiliate "a few Negroes" with the experiment station to study problems of special concern to blacks. The problems of Afro-South Carolinians were not being ignored. Many whites, from graduate students to experiment stations researchers were broadening their research resumes with studies of the problems of blacks. An examination of Newby's bibliographical essay and examination of the on-line catalogs of the University of South Carolina and Clemson University finds that by 1941 there were at least 13 master's theses on subjects related to blacks, at least 15 experiment station bulletins, 11 publications from various state agencies and journals, and a focus that included the state in three public health journals.¹⁹

¹⁹Miller F. Whittaker to President John W. Davis, 18 February 1941 with "Summary of Facts Concerning Agricultural Extension Work in South Carolina as taken from 'Special Problems in Negro Education' Bulletin No. 12, and Clemson College (S. C.) Catalogue," General Files, 1934-1941, SCSUHC. Only publications between the 1920s and early 1940s were considered in the count of articles relevant to blacks. See Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 366-7, 369-70, 373-4, 375, 377, 379. Women earned master's degrees from the University of South Carolina with studies of black education in South Carolina. Thomas Woofter and Guy Benton Johnson both completed cultural studies of the Gullah.

Such calls for equity in the distribution of funds were not acted upon in South Carolina. D. W. Watkins' notoriety in the higher echelons of the federal extension service enabled him to mute criticism of the state's black extension organization even as the Agriculture Department supported the highly publicized fact-finding mission of F. D. Patterson and Claude Barnett. After their visit to South Carolina in July 1942, Watkins wrote Reuben Brigham, the Assistant Director of Extension, to brief him on meetings Watkins held with Patterson and Barnett. Watkins took issue with one of Patterson's and Barnett's assertions that since there were nearly as many blacks as whites in the state that more black extension workers were needed. "I'm afraid that this point sounds more authoritative outside the cotton belt than it does inside the cotton belt," Watkins declared. He continued his argument that the state's extension program was "color blind" by emphasizing the results of the state's programs. He pointed to improvements in the quality of the cotton crop that benefitted all farmers, regardless of race. "Negro agents have helped with this program, however, where they are located." Watkins asserted that in marketing, poultry and hogs, the livestock were loaded into train cars with "no discrimination . . . made as to race, all receiving the same price for the same quality of livestock." He also pointed out that a black farmer won a prize for a ton litter of pigs contest in a county without a black agent. Eggs, Watkins claimed, were marketed in the same manner with black agents assisting where they were located and black local leaders assisting in counties without agents. Watkins insisted that he was not opposed to the increase in the number of black agents "provided they are available under the same type of organization and setup which has proven so effective in this State." However, he asserted that positive results could be acquired even without black agents.

Watkins continued to adhere to the 1910s conception of the black extension program: that the agents were supplemental to the program and that the number of black farm owners should dictate the number of agents rather than the total number of black farmers. Watkins pointed out to Brigham that the majority of the state's black farmers (44,194, of 61,278) were not landowners. Watkins further argued that the number of landowners was still not a significant measure of the efficacy of agents because most of the landowners lived in Georgetown and Charleston Counties and they did "little or no farming whatever." Watkins argued that the sharecroppers (22,061 of black farmers) could not be reached without the consent of white landowners. He also insisted that the same was true for many of the 22,133 share and cash tenants "who occupy every shade of dependence or independence and who participate in every shade of degree in the planning of the farm work they do. Negro farm owners represent a group with whom Negro agents can work independent of white people because these owners make their own plans. However, most Negro farm owners are receptive to suggestions of white agents."

Watkins made his position on the expansion of the black service unequivocal. There would be no diversion of funds and there would be no "new Negroes" hired in his service. While Watkins did not specifically oppose some of the suggestions put forth by the black land-grant college presidents, he said he made it clear to Patterson and Barnett that "I would like to have more Negro agents in this State of the same *type* [my emphasis] and fitted into the same organization that we now have if means could be developed by which that could be done without diminishing work already under way in other lines. I am not ready to say, however, that that is the most important need of Extension work."

Watkins also encouraged the continuation of limited federal participation in the oversight

of the program by recommending that “. . . before any radical step is taken with respect to the Extension Work with Negro people, it would be well for the administration to receive advice and suggestions from someone in this cotton belt whose experience makes them familiar with all of the problems involved.”²⁰

Appeals from the black presidents *en masse* did not lead to significant increases in levels of staffing. There were some staff increases during the middle years but mostly because the nation needed the labor of black farmers in the national defense interest. South Carolina's efforts to increase the number of black extension workers during the wartime emergency received positive recognition. John W. Mitchell, who succeeded J. B. Pierce as the black federal agent in the Upper South, wrote D. W. Watkins to compliment him on the addition of 22 black emergency workers, and the possible addition of black assistant state supervisors in South Carolina. Mitchell informed Watkins that the state ranked third among those states with segregated black extension programs. Perhaps hoping to encourage Watkins to further action, Mitchell praised his efforts. “I think you, as Director, are justified in making additions to the Negro personnel when it is taken into consideration that in order to meet the 1944 food goals, much of the farming must be done by women and children. These people will need both leadership and information in order to do their best.”²¹ The South Carolina emergency agents represented less than ten percent of the 272 black extension workers appointed. North Carolina had the greatest increase of black workers, a total of seventy-one. While only twenty-three of these

²⁰D. W. Watkins to Mr. Reuben Brigham, 4 August 1942, Box 912, Folder: Dir SC 7-42 [to] 12-42, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

²¹John W. Mitchell to Mr. D. W. Watkins, 27 March 1944, Box 160, Folder 1, Series 32, STICUL.

persons were agents, the state also added forty-six clerks and two state-level supervisors. Arkansas added more extension agents than either of the Carolinas.²² The number of emergency workers appointed was greatest in those states where the black extension program was poorly developed before World War II.

Only eight of South Carolina's emergency agents, two men and six women, were retained after the war emergency passed. Willie Mabel Price, a former county home demonstration agent, had served as the state's Negro Emergency War Food Preservation Assistant from June 1944 until the end of August 1945 and supervised sixteen agents. In her final report, she had recommended the continuation of all the emergency agents and improved salaries. Price also recommended the hiring an Assistant State Supervisor of Negro Home Demonstration Work, a position that Watkins created and Price filled.²³ These new appointments were the result of monies from the Bankhead-Flanagan Act. However, as was usual, Paul was required to secure a county appropriation before the agents could be hired permanently.²⁴ While her efforts were successful, this funding method demonstrated whites' limited commitment to the growth of the black extension work, despite blacks' support in the war. Paul pointed out that if a legislator became "disinterested or the funds in the county are limited, then the program and people suffer" as county funds would not be appropriated without local approval.²⁵

²²272 Negro Farm Aides appointed to Push Wartime Food Production, [March 1944], Series 32, Box 160, Folder 1, STICUL.

²³W. Mabel Price, "South Carolina, Narrative Annual Narrative Report of Negro Emergency State War Food Preservation Assistant, 1945," 2, 6, Series 33, Box 93, Folder 2077, STICUL.

²⁴Paul, "South Carolina, Narrative Annual Report, 1946," 3-4.

²⁵Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1949," 5.

Direct appeals for greater increases failed. A letter from State Director of Extension D. W. Watkins to President Whittaker in 1946 shows that white perceptions of black progress and black perceptions differed greatly. Watkins expressed sympathy with Whittaker's desire to increase the number of agents but recommended that it would be better to balance the number of agents with the money available for salaries. Watkins made clear that he was not interested in shifting resources from white programs to increase funding for black extension work. Rather, he planned to add agents only as the funding for black extension work expanded through increased grants by the federal and state governments. Watkins noted that since 1935 when he became state director, the number of black agricultural agents had increased from 17 to 29 and the number of black home agents had increased from 14 to 19. To his credit, Watkins admitted that 8 of the seventeen new agents had been added in 1945. (The net growth was five home agents since 6 were appointed in 1945 and the total number of agents was 19 instead of 20.) Watkins took no consideration of how those numbers might have appeared to Whittaker²⁶

Watkins' views of the non-essential nature of black extension workers is demonstrated by a 1947 letter he wrote to acting federal director of extension W. H. Conway. The letter contained information on salaries, personnel, and club enrollment, broken down by race, as well as by the division of agents' time between club work and extension work. This data was collected for Congressman Clifford R. Hope, the incoming chairman of the Committee on Agriculture. Of note, Watkins referred to the black agents

²⁶D. W. Watkins to President Miller F. Whittaker, 4 March 1946, SCSUHC. For a list of agents in the extension service in the middle years see Appendix B.

as “assistant Negro agricultural and home demonstration agents.”²⁷ In the five years since Patterson’s and Barnett’s visit to the state, the statistics regarding black farmers had inverted. The number of black landowners had increased over 2.5 times to 45,336 and there were an additional 4,399 part owners. The number of tenants and day laborers had declined from 44,194 to 19,401.²⁸ Yet, there was no commensurate increase in the number of black agents for the increased level of farm ownership.

Conway expressed “regret” that the South Carolina budget made “no provision for expansion in Negro extension work.” Conway pointed out that 45 of the state’s 46 counties had 450 or more black families and expressed the federal position that “every possible effort should be made to place Negro extension agents in each of these counties.” However, rather than using the power extension legislation gave federal officials to mandate such expansion, Conway merely encouraged Watkins to “make every possible effort” to place agents in those counties. The main intent of Conway’s letter was to transmit approval of the state’s extension budget and Conway’s gentle prodding gave Watkins no reason to modify the distribution of the state’s extension funds.²⁹

Federal interest in expanding black extension work continued. It was one of the issues that field agent for the southern states, Mena Hogan, suggested that the southern state directors should discuss at their 1948 annual conference. Hogan asserted that there was a need for black agents in many states—although not one for each southern county.

²⁷D. W. Watkins to Mr. W. H. Conway, 15 September 1947, Series 32, Box 154, Folder 1, STICUL; Representative Clifford Ragsdale Hope, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=H000768>.

²⁸Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Report, 1948,” 5, Series 33, Box 150, Folder 2935, STICUL.

²⁹W. H. Conway to D. W. Watkins, 15 August 1947, Series 32, Box 154, Folder 1, STICUL.

She also recommended the discussion of black agents' salaries, which despite recent improvement, "still need[ed] study."³⁰ Federal concerns had no more effect on Watkins' hiring decisions than local requests. In 1949, he recommended staffing increases nearly three times greater for whites than for blacks. Watkins recommended that for 1950 new hires include: "5 [white] assistant county agents and 5 [white] assistant home agents, two Negro home demonstration agents, two Negro farm agents and one state worker [white] in landscape and gardening." While Marian Paul continued to push for the hiring of a black home demonstration specialist because "the problems of my people are best understood by us, and some how through tact or a kindred spirit, we can confront and solve these more efficiently," that request went unfulfilled.³¹

One might expect that the disregard given to the black program might be discouraging for those who left the service. What is more interesting is that through the early 1940s blacks with professional training continued to pursue employment in the service and those who were agents continued to work diligently, sought out, and took advantage of opportunities to improve themselves. Like Cora Black, Mildred Utsey pursued employment in the service. An unemployed teacher from Grover, South Carolina, she wrote the Agricultural Department in 1941 seeking appointment as a black home

³⁰Memorandum from Mena Hogan to H. H. Williamson, (assistant director of extension), 26 February 1948, Series 32, Box 154, Folder 2, STICUL.

³¹D. W. Watkins to President M. F. Whittaker, 4 March 1946, General Files, 1946-1947, SCSUHC; - "Clemson College Extension Service," by D. Watkins, in R. F. Poole, President to the Budget Commission, [1949]; Series 32, Box 126, Folder 10; Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941," p. 3, Series 33, Box 53, Folder 1290, STICUL.

demonstration agent in Dorchester County, near Charleston. Utsey lived in the north-central part of the state.³² As one of the few opportunities open to black professionals, extension work remained an attractive possibility.

By the mid-1940s, however, the extension service lost some of its ability to attract seasoned teachers and recent college graduates because of a civil rights victory by South Carolina's black public school teachers. Black school teachers had been winning salary equalization cases in the South since the late 1930s. South Carolina's equalization cases began in 1938 but a final ruling was not issued until 1944. It required a single salary scale but permitted the use of the National Teachers Exam (NTE) to determine individual teachers' pay.³³ In her 1946 annual report, Marian Paul complained that the extension service had done little to retain black workers and attract new ones. The teachers' victory in the salary cases had given them "a tremendous raise in their salaries." The supplemental costs of doing extension work, such as maintaining a car made extension work a less attractive prospect. Paul reported that she had asked for a \$25 raise for her agents and had secured \$15 and added, "It is hoped that in the near future we too, in the Extension Service, may receive equal salaries."³⁴

³²Mildred Utsey to United States Department of Agriculture, 30 September 1941, Utsey's letter was forwarded to Lonnie I. Landrum, the white State Home Demonstration agent at Winthrop, (Mrs.) Ola Powell Malcom, Field Agent, Home Demonstration Work, Southern States, 17 October 1941, Box 839, Folder: P-Z, SC, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

³³Stephen Lowe, "'The Magnificent Fight': Civil Rights Litigation in South Carolina Federal Courts, 1940-1970" (Ph. D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1999), 58-66.

³⁴Paul, "South Carolina, Narrative Annual Report, 1946," 8. Idus Newby points out that while the use of the NTE as a measure enabled black teachers to triple their salaries between 1945 and 1952, they earned only about 75 percent of white teachers earned. Because of their educational preparation, black teachers' scores on the NTE continued to remain below those of white teachers. Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 304-305.

Learning the Ropes: Professionalizing Black Extension Workers

While many black professionals selected teaching over extension work, the agents who devoted themselves to rural blacks demonstrated a zeal for their profession. Persons who lacked a college degree but possessed other experience that would elevate them in the black community—work as a community activist, or as a public school teacher, for example—were hired as extension workers. During the Great Depression, at least five workers were hired as home demonstration agents without college degrees and four more were hired during World War II. These agents spent several summers working to complete the baccalaureate degree or, in some instances, took leaves of absence to attend college more systematically with financial support from benefactors like the Rosenwald fund.³⁵

In 1931 the home demonstration agents wrote the ailing R. S. Wilkinson a get-well letter thanking him for permitting them to attend a Rosenwald Summer School at Virginia State College. They pledged themselves “to return to our respective counties determined to do a greater work with the rural people . . . thus maintaining the high standards we have always set with your leader-ship.”³⁶ In 1932, J. E. Dickson wrote E. H. Shinn to request that he be one of the persons selected to study at a Rosenwald Summer School at Howard University. There may have been other reasons for his request: it came

³⁵See for example, Paul, “Annual Report: Cooperative Extension Work South Carolina, 1936, Negro Home Demonstration Division,” p. 6; D. W. Watkins to E. W. Sikes, President, 14 June 1939, Series 32, Box 138, Folder 15; monthly narrative report of Marian B. Paul for February 1944, p. 4, South Carolina State University Historical Collections,. Some of these agents still had not earned a degree by 1949, but their years of service certainly offset the lack of the degree. See Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1949,” p. 6.

³⁶Alberta V. De Veaux, J. Isabel Miller, Marie A. Burch, Virginia W. Whittington, Rosa R. Gadson, Delphena Wilkerson, Frances P. Thomas, and Marian B. Paul to Dr. R. S. Wilkinson, 24 August 1931, Folder 92 .

at the height of the state's budget crisis and Dickson might have been on unpaid leave for the summer. (The Rosenwald schools included a stipend.)³⁷

The annual agents' conferences held at South Carolina State College were an integral part of the agents' continued preparation and training. When the Clemson Extension Service declined to fund the annual conference in 1932 because of state budget cuts, black home agents took it upon themselves to meet at South Carolina State College anyway. The one-day meeting was conducted almost totally by the women agents. Conferences in later years were longer and extension personnel from Clemson, and sometimes from the U. S. D. A., not only attended but also played an active role in the program.³⁸

Agents also took advantage of opportunities for graduate training. Beginning in 1936, Marian Paul's annual narratives include reports of agents pursuing advanced training at Hampton and Tuskegee, and pursuing training and degrees at racially integrated land-grant universities outside the South. In most cases, the agents who took advantage of these opportunities were women. Summer school attendance required the agents to take leave without pay, so it should not be surprising that most of the agricultural agents, the principal providers for their families, opted for in-service training. The State Agent for Negro Agricultural Extension Work's narrative report for 1947 noted that three of twenty-nine agricultural agents attended a ten-week summer workshop on

³⁷J. E. Dickson to E. H. Shinn, 3 May 1932. Dickson was ineligible to attend the school because it was only for supervisors, E. H. Shinn to J. E. Dickson, 10 May 1932, Box 209, Folder: Misc. SC 1931-32, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

³⁸Paul, "South Carolina, 1932-1933 Narrative Annual Report," pp. 14-15, Box 7; Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940," pp. 21-25, Series 33, Box 43, Folder 1082, STICUL; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report 1949."

“the family built home,” but most of the professional training for agents appears to have been provided through three-day in-service trainings at South Carolina State College in January and October. However, at least one agricultural agent, David G. Belton who worked in Fairfield County, attended a school for extension workers at Ohio University in 1948.³⁹

There was no visible connection between professional development and increased financial reward. The uncontested local control of black extension work meant that the program suffered a stunted development. The expectations regarding blacks’ personal demeanor had not changed. Violating racial protocol remained grounds for immediate dismissal without reprieve. In 1938 H. C. Miller was summarily terminated from the extension service after Director Watkins heard that Miller had attended a [whites only?] dance where the only person who had “knowledge of his race” was the person who had brought him. Watkins reported to Clemson President E. W. Sikes that word of Miller’s conduct had spread across the lower state including in Colleton County where Miller worked. “Without investigating the matter with a view of allocating blame, I am convinced that he rendered himself unacceptable for public service in the capacity of Negro Agricultural Agent.” Not only was Miller terminated, Watkins shifted black agricultural extension work from Colleton County to Greenville County in the upstate.⁴⁰

³⁹See for example, Marian B. Paul, “Annual Report, Negro Home Demonstration Work, 1937,” p. 8; Series 33, Box 25, Folder 718; Box 8; Marian B. Paul, “South Carolina, Annual Narrative Report, 1949,” p. 15; E. N. Williams “Annual Report, District Agent Work, 1947,” p. 2, Series 33, Box 113, Folder 2402; D. W. Watkins to Dr. R. F. Poole, President, 10 August 1948, Series 32, Box 126, Folder 10, STICUL.

⁴⁰D. W. Watkins to Dr. E. W. Sikes, President, 28 February 1938; Series 32, Box 138, Folder 13, STICUL. Miller was not mentioned by name in this letter but in a letter from C. M. Hall, the Chief Clerk and Accountant at Clemson, there is a mention of Miller’s removal on 28 February 1938 from Colleton County, in the southwestern part of the state, and the shifting of funds to Greenville. C. M. Hall to Mr. M. M. Thayer, 21 March 1938, Box 553, Folder: Dir SC 1-38 [to] 6-38, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II. There is no

Violating the canon of white supremacy was not the only grounds for termination; personal failings were as well. Another agricultural agent was fired near the end of the middle years for “chronic alcoholism” at the request of Ernest N. (E. N.) Williams, who had succeeded Harry Daniels as State Agent for Negro Agricultural Work.⁴¹

Personal shortcomings had always been grounds for dismissal. However, professional shortcomings became grounds for termination in this era as well. Jason Maloney’s firing suggests that observations of social rules no longer guaranteed lifetime work. The fusion of submission to white supremacy and professional competence as bases of employment certainly worked to his disadvantage. In 1930, R. S. Wilkinson sent Maloney laudatory letters in reply to Maloney’s submission of news articles complimentary of his work from *The Sumter Daily Item*. One article declared, “if all the farmers of Sumter county had farmed as successfully and profitably as these demonstration crops proved possible, farming would not be a decadent and losing industry.” A news brief regarding the article noted that Maloney’s results had been verified by a [white] member of the newspaper’s staff. It also made clear that Maloney’s program was for blacks. Part of the news brief stated, “it is to be hoped that more negro farmers each year will adopt his methods and profit from his advice and supervision.” Maloney wrote an article in which he announced a meeting of the Sumter Negro 4-H council and stated the organization’s mission. In a third article, Maloney announced a county farmer’s conference. R. S. Wilkinson was “well satisfied with Maloney’s efforts [and those of the

mention of the reason for the shift. The termination of the agent also raises the issue of race identification.

⁴¹C. S. Tenley to D. W. Watkins, 15 July 1947; D. W. Watkins to Mr. C. S. Tenley, 18 July 1947, Series 32, Box 154, Folder 1, STICUL.

home agent Ophelia Williams as well] and called them “ideal types of workers.” The only criticism that Wilkinson made of Maloney’s articles was that he did not mention that he was an alumnus of State College where he “received this brand of special training for agricultural development. . . . That will not only help you in one way but will bring larger support to the institution and eventually greater opportunities to widen and create a progressive program.”⁴²

For years, Maloney submitted reports that federal extension officials found substandard. This issue had first been raised in 1931 and Wilkinson protected Maloney (see chapter 3). The level of praise that Maloney received certainly granted him some time for improvement. However, the terrain of the black extension program shifted beneath him. In 1931, the particular criticisms were that Maloney’s 1930 report was not indexed and was “very brief,” with the exception of some detailed statements of results in some instances. Meredith Wilson, who was then in charge of extension studies and teaching complained to Maloney that he had no narrative explanation of the methodology he used to implement his program or how he reached his clients. Wilson recommended that Maloney seek help from his state leader in writing his next year’s report.⁴³ Wilkinson promised Maloney’s compliance, but Wilkinson died in 1932. Apparently nothing of significance had been done to address the structure of Maloney’s reports for a decade.

⁴²“Profitable Farming: J. C. Maloney, Negro County Farm Agent, Reports on Year’s Work—Highly Profitable Results Demonstration Crops;” “Local News,” *The Sumter Daily Item*, 16 January 1930; Negro Four[-H] Council Meeting, *The Sumter Daily Item*, n. d.; Negro Farm Conference, *The Sumter Daily Item*, n. d.; R. S. Wilkinson to Mr. J. C. Maloney 31 January 1930; R. S. Wilkinson to “My dear Maloney;,” 16 July 1930, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

⁴³M. C. Wilson to J. C. Maloney, 28 March 1931, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

In 1942, D. W. Watkins told Maloney that he would not be continued after 30 June 1942. Watkins told Maloney that his operation of the agricultural program had been unsatisfactory “for some time. . . . Your cooperation and attitude towards the college authorities at Orangeburg towards cooperating generally leaves too much to be desired for us to continue your services.”⁴⁴ Maloney wrote President Whittaker to ask him to intervene with Watkins. “I have been doing extension work in Sumter county for over 20 years and it hurt my heart to be turn [sic] off.” Maloney informed Whittaker that he had sent a letter to Watkins asking for another chance to improve his work and asked Whittaker to seek a six-month continuance of his employment. Maloney noted that he had organized 25 communities for “Better Farm Living and Food for Victory” with community leaders in each, and had 402 boys involved in 4-H work. Maloney ends “So help me out for you know what a hard time I had in getting an education.”⁴⁵ What Maloney meant by this sentence is not known. If he had graduated from State College by the time he was hired on 8 August 1921, he probably only held a two-year degree.⁴⁶ Given Sumter County’s prior agents, R. W. Westberry and H. A. Woodard, whites there may have preferred a less academically-trained black if he were more compliant, as the articles regarding whites’ perception of Maloney and his work seem to suggest.

Extension leaders believed that agents needed to be familiar with their communities to provide useful service. Both agricultural and home agents used local information

⁴⁴D. W. Watkins to Jason Maloney, 13 June 1942, General Files: 1942-1943, Folder: Home [sic] Demonstration Agents, SCSUHC.

⁴⁵Jason Maloney to Dr. Whittaker, 15 June 1942, General Files: 1942-1943, Folder: Home Demonstration Agents, SCSUHC.

⁴⁶Salary schedule for Jason Maloney, Box 13, Folder 14, Series 65, STICUL.

to develop their annual programs. The community survey was part of the method home agents used to plan their annual programs. A questionnaire used at the 1937-1938 home agents' training conference surveyed the agents' knowledge of their county's demographics, political representatives, number of schools, cooperation with outside agencies, problems, plans to resolve them, and significant accomplishments from the prior year's work. There were commonalities and differences in the agents' approach to extension work. Both the agricultural and home agents emphasized cooperation, training of local leadership, planning the program, and working with others. Personal demeanor did not seem to be as much of an issue in women's work and no incidents that would have indicated problems in this area for women have been uncovered for the middle years. Gender expectations and the types of women that Paul selected as agents seemed to have contributed to a lack of conflict in the women's program. She said that she sought women with personal attributes of "culture, skill, training, experience, tact, a pleasing personality, and physical soundness."⁴⁷ The home agents received advice in methodological approaches from Lonny I. Landrum and Harriette B. Layton, the white state supervisor and assistant supervisor of home demonstration work. Layton and Landrum offered tips on agents' demeanor, some aspects of which could be described as a stereotypically "female" approach to extension work. Among the recommendations they made were that the agents adopt a "We, not I" approach, that they "Be Lovable," and "Not dominate."⁴⁸

⁴⁷Paul, "Annual Report, Negro Home Demonstration Work, 1937," p. 4.

⁴⁸Harry E. Daniels, "Extension Program of Work, 1941," 7, Series 33, Box 56, Folder 1369; Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1937-1938," 24-26, Series 33, Box 28, Folder 777, STICUL.

“Municipal Buildings . . . Were Not Open to Us”: Professionals without Offices

One of the most important claims that this project makes is that the men and women who worked as extension workers in this state did so under arduous circumstances, many of which have already been documented. The inequitable salaries they received and the indignity of being required to identify themselves by race as part of their professional title were merely the tip of a proverbial iceberg of discriminatory treatment agents endured from the years of development through the middle years.

Another way in which the general lack of commitment to an equal extension program was manifested by the state extension service’s failure to provide a professional atmosphere for agents. In 1930 only one of the agents, Willie Mabel Price, had a private office. It was provided by the Penn School. Three other home agents shared office space with their black county agents. The Greenville agent’s office space was provided by the Phillis Wheatley Center. Three of the home agents used space in their homes for offices. Two used their bedrooms and one used the corner of a hall. Marian Paul graphically described the situation in her 1940 report:

Nothing is more conducive to good work than clean, comfortable, convenient surroundings in which to work. This has been denied to our agents. For years and years the agents used their bed rooms or a part of their houses as offices. Often her lap was her desk, card board boxes her filing cabinets, an orange crate her bulletin rack and the trunk of her car her supply cabinet. These conditions not only handicapped the agents from properly preparing her work, but was most inconvenient and embarrassing to callers. . . .We wanted offices in public buildings, easily accessible to our rural clubsters and our city friends. . . .[but] municipal buildings such as Agricultural buildings, Court Houses, Post Offices, etc. were not opened to us.

Paul also pointed out that public schools were too crowded to provide suitable office space. Office space remained a problem throughout the middle years and the problem

began to be resolved only when the agents took it upon themselves. By 1949 only one home agent, from Charleston County, did not have an office in a public building. Agents had offices in public schools and libraries. State College provided facilities for one agent, the black Palmetto State Teacher's Association provided space for another. Only Anderson County gave its black agents space in the agricultural building. Despite the varied conditions of their office environments, the agents strove to make the best of their situations. In one case, an agent used the shelves to display both photographs and actual projects her clients completed. The displays included small items like clothes baskets and larger ones like kitchen cabinets. In Allendale County, Rosa Reed put a container made out of a gourd outside her door which contained a pencil and writing paper and the message "Leave a Note." written on the outside.⁴⁹

Space was not the only problem. None of the home agents had filing cabinets for their records; most used boxes or crates to hold filed papers but three made shelves for that purpose. Only two of the agents had typewriters but reports were to be typed. There was a lack of support staff and office equipment as well. While the Reconstruction Finance Corporation provided financial support that permitted agents in Orangeburg, Beaufort, Spartanburg, and Richland Counties to have secretarial help in 1932-1933, that arrangement was short-lived. Paul had no stenographic help in her office. Home demonstration agents, at least, benefitted from the New Deal's National Youth Administration program. In 1935-1936, all thirteen the black home demonstration agents had office help provided to them through the NYA. The NYA continued to supply office

⁴⁹Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940," 8-9, Paul, "Narrative Annual Report for 1949," 7.

workers in at least some offices as late as 1941. By 1937 a part-time stenographer was employed in Paul's office, and by 1939 the stenographer, Henrietta Boozer, had been promoted to full-time stenographer. In all likelihood, Boozer served both the agricultural and home demonstration agents. According to Paul's 1939-1940 report, the secretary typed all the home agents' annual reports and did other work for the agents as well. By 1949, there were three full-time secretaries in the state office serving both agricultural and home demonstration programs. These secretaries were as integral to the extension program as the agents.⁵⁰

Standing Up for the Race: Extension Agents Combat Racial Discrimination

Despite the challenges the agents faced, they worked diligently to accomplish the betterment of South Carolina blacks. This commitment is evident throughout the middle years. J. E. Dickson declared that "the life of an Extension Agent as a profession is the biggest job in any County. His job puts him closer to the farm people than anyone else. He is their friend and adviser and understands the many problems facing them as well as some of the possibilities of meeting these problems."⁵¹ Extension agents alerted R. S. Wilkinson to discrimination against blacks in one of the Hoover administration's direct relief programs, the seed loan program. When it became apparent that black farmers intended to avail themselves of opportunities to benefit from this program, white agents

⁵⁰Kenner, "South Carolina 1930 Narrative Annual Report of Nettie L. Kenner," 7, Folder 92; Paul, "South Carolina 1932-1933 Narrative Annual Report," 6, 74; Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1936," 22; Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1938-1939," 9, 20; Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940 of Marian B. Paul," 7-8, 9, 18; Paul, "Annual Report, Negro Home Demonstration Work, 1937," 4; Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1940-1941," 15; Paul, "Narrative Annual Report for 1949," 7.

⁵¹Dickson, "Historical Appraisal of Extension Work in Richland County," p. 2, Dickson Collection, SCL.

hampered black farmers' ability to participate in it. Wilkinson wrote W. W. Long that in counties both with and without black extension agents, black farmers reported that they were unable to receive applications for farm loans. The few who had succeeded in getting applications represented a "negligible" percentage of all the applications distributed. Wilkinson observed that white agents had been placed in charge of distributing the forms and that whites had "naturally taken care of white farmers first."

Wilkinson cited a case in Aiken County in which the white agricultural agent said he did not have enough applications for everyone but promised to distribute them equally. The agent then sent the black farmers downstairs. After the white farmers departed, the agent distributed forms to blacks: "It is needless to suggest that the portion to the latter was very small."⁵² The situation was similar everywhere. From Richland County J. E. Dickson reported that he had sent black farmers to request applications as soon as he heard of their arrival. Twelve received loans amounting to a total of \$1,075. After those twelve had received their forms, Dickson reported that black farmers were told that there were no more forms. Dickson spoke with J. R. Clark, the white agricultural agent, who promised to give Dickson some of the applications when they arrived but never called Dickson to receive any.⁵³

Director Long assured Wilkinson that he would "see that no discrimination was made." Long usually deflected Wilkinson's concerns by asserting that white farmers were also dissatisfied with the distribution of applications, and some whites who applied late did not receive applications, thus implying that despite the fact that the majority of

⁵²R. S. Wilkinson to W. W. Long, 27 March 1931, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

⁵³"Questionnaire regarding seed loan to farmers, (completed by J. E. Dickson), Folder 91, SCSUHC.

applications went to whites, there was really no discrimination in distribution.⁵⁴ Long included a memorandum he distributed to the all extension staff. “It seems that little attention is being made to the needs of our colored farmers. I sincerely trust that such a situation does not prevail. [¶] Every farmer should be given an opportunity to make application . . . regardless of color, or for any other reason. . . . *It must not be said that we are discriminating against any class of farmers* [my emphasis].” Long’s memorandum probably did little discourage discrimination but perhaps discouraged the reporting of it. Wilkinson responded to Long’s memorandum diplomatically. He thanked Long for his attention and expressed “appreciation for [Long’s] interest . . . and realize[d] fully [Long’s] wish that *as far as possible* [my emphasis] equal opportunity will be given to all.”⁵⁵ The fact that accusations of discrimination must be suppressed, while no concrete policies were established to prevent discrimination, suggests that there was no commitment to equal participation in the farm loan program.

The response of federal officials was equally unsatisfying and subsequent correspondence suggests that they took great pains to obscure their failure to enact concrete anti-discrimination policies. On 25 March 1931, Wilkinson telegraphed federal Director of Extension C. W. Warburton regarding the discrimination in loan application distribution. Warburton assured him that the county agricultural committees had been instructed to give applications to those who were most needy and deserving. “Generally,” he claimed, “[the] committees [were] quite as ready to look after the need of negro

⁵⁴W. W. Long to R. S. Wilkinson, 28 March 1931, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

⁵⁵W. W. Long to All County Agents, 28 March 1931; R. S. Wilkinson to W. W. Long, 30 March 1931, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

farmers as they are to give assistance to white farmers.” Warburton promised Wilkinson that a circular letter would be sent to the South Carolina’s county committees “suggesting that attention be given to the needs of negro farmers and that in those counties where a negro extension agent [was] employed, he be called into consultation.”⁵⁶ The willingness of non-southern extension officials to overlook obvious discrimination reflected the general Washington attitude of bending to southern mores for the greater good. Richard Polenberg suggests that compromisers, like FDR, were “gradualists and pragmatists” on racial matters. They were more than willing to fold in the face of pressure such as they received from South Carolina Senator James F. Byrnes in 1940. Byrnes prevented the appointment of “a Negro to the state FSA [Farm Security Administration] committee . . . [because it] would disturb the friendly relationships between the races.”⁵⁷

It should not be surprising that the historical view of rural South Carolina blacks presents a dismal picture of an oppressed people. In his 1930 sociological study of the state, *Social Problems of South Carolina*, University of South Carolina sociologist G. Croft Williams attributed the state’s low level of farm ownership to the presence of a “large number of Negroes [sic] in the country.”⁵⁸ Similar sentiments were echoed in a report of the South Carolina Council. A draft of the report included several statements that attributed the state’s agricultural difficulties to the presence of blacks. The first three

⁵⁶C. W. Warburton to R. S. Wilkinson, 28 March 1931, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

⁵⁷Richard Polenberg, *One Nation Divisible: Class, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States Since 1938* (New York: Penguin Books, 1980), 31-3. See also Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, pp. 73-4 for a discussion of the FSA under the leadership of Will Alexander whose insistence on non-discrimination and equitable distribution of FSA resources raised the ire of white southerners.

⁵⁸G. Croft Williams, *Social Problems of South Carolina* (Columbia, S. C.: The State Company, 1928), 41.

of the 14 problems the Council identified all related to the presence of blacks: “(a) Inheritance of a slave produced money crop from pre Civil War times; (b) The necessity for absorbing into our agriculture vast numbers of freed slaves with a low standard of living and little or no agricultural training except in cotton production; (c) The competition of the negro agricultural worker with the white agricultural worker and small farmer, which has kept wages and living standards for all at a low level.”⁵⁹ Even white extension agents who, according to Watkins’ claim, offered their services without discrimination held blacks in little regard. In his 1938 program of work under the heading “Problems to be met” one white extension agent, F. M. Rast of Clarendon County declared that

Undoubtedly the greatest single factor which will act detrimentally to our long time program is the large percent of tenants on farms in the county, and also that approximately 69% of the farming population is of the colored race. This latter fact will hinder the attainment of a higher standard of living since the colored race will *submit* [my emphasis] to a standard of living which the white race will not tolerate.⁶⁰

White South Carolinians’ argument that the black presence partially caused the poor state of South Carolina’s agricultural economy also was widely used to explain the region’s agricultural backwardness. No better example points this out than the response to *The Report on Economic Conditions of the South*. This report was the product of a charge FDR gave to a group that consisted of notable white southerners from the business sector and academia including James Hammond, an attorney and past president of the South

⁵⁹“The Report of Committee on Agriculture,” attachment to W. W. Long to Mr. David R. Coker, [Chairman of the South Carolina Council], 17 October 1931, Series 32, Box 106, Folder 10, STICUL. Coker sent Long a copy of the report for his comment.

⁶⁰F. M. Rast, “The 1938 County Agricultural Program for Clarendon County,” p. 6, Series 33, Box 27, Folder 740, STICUL.

Carolina Chamber of Commerce. In his instructions to the group, Roosevelt declared the South “the Nation’s No. 1 economic problem.” The final report, submitted to FDR in July 1938, pointed out the South’s dismal showing when compared to other regions.⁶¹ The body of the report is one that analyzes the southern situation in class terms rather than racial terms.

Faced with their region’s inadequacy, some white southerners’ responses were mixed. According to David L. Carlton and Peter A. Coclanis, there was great public interest in the document. Some southerners saw it as an attack on southern anti-New Dealers by FDR. Others applauded the report’s recognition that the South had been a client economy of the industrial North. In some states, South Carolina included, supplemental reports were issued that attempted to explain or rebut the information on the particular situation in their state. Carlton and Coclanis observe the irony of the response by some white southerners. Because the report did not take account of race, some critics argued that the report was unfair to whites.⁶²

One of the most vocal critics was Fitzgerald Hall, who was associated with the Southern States Industrial Council in Nashville, Tennessee. He wrote a rejoinder to the report that was published in some southern newspapers. Hall admitted the accuracy of the report’s data but claimed that the report was inaccurate because it omitted certain important issues. The first of Hall’s nine points of complaint against the report was that it “does not point out [that] the standard of living and income of Negroes everywhere in the

⁶¹David L. Carlton and Peter A. Coclanis, eds., *Confronting Southern Poverty in the Great Depression: “The Report on Economic Conditions of the South” with Related Documents* (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 42-80.

⁶²Carlton and Coclanis, 22-3. The authors ably discuss the position of white southerners who used blacks as scapegoats in their defense of the region. See page 24-6.

United States . . . is lower than that of the white population; nor does it say that with such a large concentration of Negroes in the South average figures for that section are greatly affected thereby.”⁶³ Of course, Hall omitted the galling reality that blacks lived under such conditions because whites enforced a caste system that restricted blacks to the least desirable jobs and depressed their wages as well.

Surprisingly, no mention of South Carolina’s response to the *Report on Economic Conditions of the South* appears in the general histories of the state. This document is significant because it highlights the state’s sensitivity to external criticism. The authors of the South Carolina report attributed part of the state’s poor showing to its black population. The national report criticized the small, uneconomical size of southern farms, which encouraged the “destructive practice” of cash crop agriculture rather than a balanced program that would save the region’s soil. The South Carolina report blamed cash crop agriculture on farm tenancy where farm size was dictated by the amount of acreage a man and his family could cultivate and asserted that usually the tenant made the decision to plant only cash crops because staple crops provided a low return. The language of South Carolina’s response was contradictory. The report also attributed part of the difficulty to the decision-making blacks inability to farm: “Negro farm hands require constant supervision, so land owning farmers are [also] limited in the number of hands they can afford to pay and personally supervise, or by the number of supervisors they have capital to hire.”⁶⁴ When taken in conjunction with other comments regarding

⁶³Carlton and Coclanis, “Fitzgerald Hall and Lowell Mellett, *Attack and Response: Hall’s Comments and Mellett’s Response*,” 139-40.

⁶⁴University of South Carolina, Extension Division, “Discussion of Economic Conditions of South Carolina: Annotations and Comments relating to the Report Prepared for the President of the United States by the National Emergency Council,” *Bulletin of the University of South Carolina Extension Division*

black farmers, for example D. W. Watkins 1942 claim to Reuben Brigham that landowners decided what to plant therefore black agents were not necessary for black tenants, it becomes clear that black autonomy varied according the situation.

The national report recommended improved agricultural methods including crop rotation, land terracing, and different methods of plowing. It criticized the region's low level of spending on agricultural education, asserting that more money was spent for fertilizer than on education. The state report offered a general defense, recounting the state's long history of agricultural interest and writing by planter elites, and the development of agricultural education in the late nineteenth century. According to the report, there were 191 teachers of agriculture in the state's 200 accredited white rural schools. It also reported 125 teachers of agriculture in black rural schools (the number of black schools was omitted). It claimed a *total* of 6,831 boys enrolled in agriculture programs in the schools. It also asserted that adults received agricultural instruction from county agents and the experiment stations and extension divisions of Clemson and South Carolina State Colleges.⁶⁵ The response on the issue of agricultural education obscured the disproportionate share of agricultural education that whites received. It conveniently omitted the fact that there were no experiment stations or extension divisions at the black school.

Blacks, as usual, were made the scapegoat for nearly all of the negative indicators related to social conditions. The national report noted the region's high birth rate, the

(Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1938?), 17-8. This document is a reproduction of the national report and with inserts regarding South Carolina in red. The page citations include the commentary from the national report and the South Carolina response.

⁶⁵"Discussion of Economic Conditions of South Carolina," 17-8.

emigration of many of its best and brightest to other regions and low economic standards caused by the low number of adult workers with higher numbers of dependents and the region's "failure . . . to provide adequate opportunities for its people." The South Carolina report noted that the birth rates per thousand were highest in Berkeley (30.6) and Williamsburg (30.4) counties where "Negroes compose about two-thirds of the population." The report noted slightly more than 319,000 native-born blacks lived elsewhere while slightly more than 69,000 whites did. To the criticism of low economic standards, the commentary asserted "poverty breeds poverty . . . The birth rate is higher in apparently direct proportion to the poverty and the low intellectual status of the State's bottom class. Each year this element adds more people to its already overcrowded communities to compete for the already too few low-paid jobs." It also noted that each year, 1,000 more blacks than whites were born in the state despite the population majority of whites.⁶⁶

The national report also noted an increasing gap between the white and black unemployment rates caused by mechanization that led to displacement of rural blacks as whites actively sought jobs in occupations formerly considered "Negro work," including domestic service. The South Carolina annotations noted that [white] employers preferred "Negro servants, because orders can be issued impersonally to a Negro, whereas by tradition the employer would feel reluctant to demand the more menial tasks of a white person." However, in other service occupations and some skilled trades white laborers replaced black laborers because whites refused to work alongside blacks. These occupations were increasingly dominated by whites "even in the face of the under-bidding by

⁶⁶"Discussion of Economic Conditions of South Carolina," 27-9.

Negro workers.” The lowered economic standards were not caused by southern practices, the rebuttal asserted, but rather because

the over-supply of cheap Negro labor in competition with white labor has lowered wage levels in every bracket with the accompanying loss of taxable wealth which in turn directly affects appropriation that might be made for education, public health, and the general welfare of the State. . . . The population of South Carolina is one of the State’s principal problems. It is apparently impossible to raise the economic level of the white race without raising the level of the Negro at the same time, and the Negroes themselves defeat this end by increasing in population faster than it will ever be possible to absorb them into the economic needs of the State. *Many studies made by various labor authorities prove the very presence of Negroes tends to depress the labor market* [my emphasis]. In this connection South Carolina’s problem is the Nation’s problem because the thousands, who are unable to find employment here, leave for the crowded industrial centers of other states to add their unwanted competition. Would it not be better for the Nation as a whole, and for the Negro race in particular, to check the excess increase at the source?⁶⁷

The national report noted that some southerners lived in worse conditions than those of European peasants with earnings of about ten cents per day. The state report argued that the low standard of living was not as significant a problem as it might have seemed. The South Carolina report concluded that there were thousands of farmers in South Carolina whose annual income ranged from “nothing” to the region’s average rural per capita income of \$112. “An interesting feature of this poverty is that a great many of the people, especially the Negroes, have become accustomed to it and seem not to mind it. Apparently they are happy about the whole thing.”⁶⁸

Afro South Carolinians had few vehicles for responding to such attacks on their collective character with a platform that had national attention. This reality makes any

⁶⁷“Discussion of Economic Conditions of South Carolina,” 30-3.

⁶⁸“Discussion of Economic Conditions of South Carolina,” 35-6.

refutations that reached beyond the state's boundaries valuable. Marian Paul's annual reports provide such a window into the sentiment of rural blacks from the middle years. While her early reports follow the traditional bureaucratic template for annual reports, her reports after 1936 begin with preambles that offer a perspective on the state's black community from a sympathetic vantage. Paul's reports for the fiscal years that ended in June 1937 and June 1938 both refer to the ignorance of the state's black population. "If the State is to rank economically and intellectually with the other States of the union, more must be done for the ignorant negro [sic]," Paul wrote in 1937.⁶⁹ What Paul meant by "ignorant" is unclear. However in her subsequent statements regarding her fellow Afro-South Carolinians, her message is unambiguous.

In her 1938 report, she pointed out the negative traits assigned to blacks and implicated white South Carolinians as the cause of these problems. "The rural Negroes of South Carolina," she conceded, "for the most part are ignorant, timid, unambitious, uncultured and poor."

Ignorant because of the deficient facilities of rural education, timid because of the brow-beating methods of his financial and intellectual superiors, unambitious because of his discouragements and discriminations, uncultured because of his lack of opportunity, his meager contacts and limited advantages, because of his illiteracy, his economic inefficiency and his confined benefits.⁷⁰

She concluded, "The rural Negro is not shiftless as is claimed so often as the propaganda of those wishing to exploit him. He has demonstrated his ability in all of the agricultural

⁶⁹Marian B. Paul, "Annual Report of Negro Home Demonstration Work, 1937," p. 105.

⁷⁰Paul, "Annual Narrative Report . . . Negro Home Demonstration Work 1937-8," p. 1.

activities and industries of the South. He has been, however, a victim of circumstances.⁷¹

Paul's assessment of the situation directly counters the representations made in the "Discussion of Economic Conditions of South Carolina."

Paul's reports were not merely reactive. She went beyond the aspersions that had been cast and pointed out the human dignity of Afro-South Carolinians. Paul reported that many blacks bought their shoes by numbers rather than by fit, [social conventions prevented blacks from trying on merchandise purchased at white stores]. "That may account for the many seen walking barefooted on highways with their shoes accross [sic] their shoulders." Her solution was to "encourage them to buy shoes only where they can be fitted."⁷² This was a minor protest when compared to the more direct action "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaign that was in progress, especially in urban areas outside the South. Nonetheless, the point to be made by such actions was similar. Blacks should not spend their dollars with businessmen who denied them dignity.

Paul's report for the fiscal year ending in June 1939 certainly showed the impact that the *Report on Economic Conditions of the South* had had on the state's white leadership. Paul stated that in anticipation of the census public blame had been placed on blacks for the state's high illiteracy rate.⁷³ The "Discussion of Economic Conditions of South Carolina" foreshadowed the likely attack. The national report had cited poor funding of education in the South. Again, the state report pointed out the shortcomings of blacks without noting the role state action played in their situation. The state response noted that

⁷¹Paul, "Annual Narrative Report . . . Negro Home Demonstration Work 1937-8," p. 1.

⁷²Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1938-1939," pp. 100-1.

⁷³Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1938-1939," p. 1.

white illiteracy rates (5.1 percent) compared favorably with national averages, but that the black illiteracy rate was 26.9 percent. “This burden of illiteracy, chiefly among Negroes, seriously retards the progress of the state. Of necessity these disadvantaged folk produce little and prove to be a great expense to the state.”⁷⁴ Paul took issue with such attributions and laid the blame on discrimination in South Carolina’s institutions. She reported that “the Negro is considered South Carolina’s economic, intellectual, and cultural problem.”

No. I. The Negro is not the problem, but rather the problem is the white man’s attitude toward him. The great majority of Negroes live in rural sections of the State and are tenants and sharecroppers. Some, due to ignorance and circumstances are held almost in peonage. The poor, inadequate school facilities, plus the land lords’ attitude toward education are partly responsible for the illiteracy among Negroes. The great majority of the people with whom we work are sharecroppers, and are a people forgotten by many. Nevertheless, they are individual beings with hopes and longings. It is true that many of these people have accepted the dreary existence that seems to be the lot of the Negro sharecropper, perhaps because that seems to be the simplest and easiest solution to an almost useless struggle.⁷⁵

Paul was adept at using such declarations to her program’s advantage. These statements always preceded a statement about the importance of Negro Home Demonstration agents’ work.

Her preambles appear to have had no effect on Paul’s employment situation and for the remainder of the middle years she continued to make assertive statements that highlighted whites’ role in creating the dismal conditions in which many Afro-South Carolinians lived. As the second decade of the middle years approached, little had

⁷⁴“Discussion of Economic Conditions of South Carolina,” 44-7.

⁷⁵Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1938-1939,” p. 1. The first sentence of this excerpt is almost verbatim from, Thomas Pearce Bailey, *Race Orthodoxy in the South and Other Aspects of the Negro Question* (New York: The Neale Publishing Co., 1914, repr. ed., New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 37. This work will be discussed further below.

changed in white South Carolinian's attitudes toward blacks. If anything, whites resented their continued dependence on black labor and, as the political and social terrain shifted to permit Afro-South Carolinians to acquire more rights, whites sought ways to maintain a position of dominance. The emerging wartime economy pointed out the usual paradox for whites in racial matters: the cash nexus outstripped racial concerns.

The "Possibilities of . . . my People": Home Demonstration Agents in the Community

Despite ambiguous support at the federal level, black agents continued to work diligently on behalf of their race. In her 1940 report Marian Paul declared that the agents were "all intensely interested in their work, . . . working tirelessly and never complaining." Her report also captures her own missionary zeal for extension. She prefaces requests for increased funding for black home demonstration work thusly:

With the rededication of my whole life to my work which has grown out of profound interest and love for the work, pride in the possibilities of advancement for my people, and hope for the betterment of my state and country . . .⁷⁶

In Paul's last report from the middle years she suggested that the agents "seem to have dedicated their lives to the uplift, advancement and progress of their [p]eople."⁷⁷

Home agents discovered that the key to a successful program was familiarity with the community and successfully inserting themselves into the local leadership hierarchy. The methods agents used in the early years of the program—visiting churches, schools, and securing the cooperation of local community leaders—remained important mechanisms of implementing the program. However, in the middle years, such approaches

⁷⁶Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940," p. 115.

⁷⁷Paul, "Annual Narrative Report, 1949," p. 42.

became more systematic both locally and statewide. For example, in home extension work, home agents' contacts with black teachers and Paul's contacts with the Palmetto State Teachers' Association led to teachers' providing hot lunches at schools, increased cooperation between extension agents and Jeanes rural teachers, and agents securing access to schools during the school day for club meetings. A three-day conference with black ministers led to "Greater publicity . . . [c]ooperation of 102 ministers who reach approximately 80,000 rural persons, . . . [m]ethods of better farming practices and better nutrition preached to congregations." Agricultural extension work also relied on cooperation with "action groups, [and] educational groups."⁷⁸

These were not one-way exchanges but mutually beneficial collaborations. When a Sumter county community began a campaign to build a school, because the school's teacher was also a local leader in extension work, the extension agent helped with fund-raising activities that netted \$62.30. In another Sumter community, the agent and club members presented programs that raised \$36.15 that was split evenly between three churches that needed repair. In Georgetown County, a 4-H club prepared a Thanksgiving dinner for the needy that included a program and games. "Everyone left feeling thankful for everything, but more especially for Extension Work."⁷⁹ In 1937, Sumter County held a contest for 4-H girls to make rag dolls that were given to underprivileged children along with other toys.⁸⁰

⁷⁸Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1940-1941," pp. 17, 22; Daniels, "Extension Program of Work, 1941," p. 6. Unfortunately, Daniels' reports are not as copious as Paul's so the particular groups that cooperated with the agricultural agents is unknown. However, it is almost certain that the agricultural agents would have participated in any efforts involving the ministers and the teachers.

⁷⁹Paul, "South Carolina 1932-1933 Narrative Annual Report," p. 66-7.

⁸⁰Paul, "Annual Report, Negro Home Demonstration Work, 1937," p. 59.

Since the state employed no other black public professionals for much of this period except for public schools teachers and extension workers, agents played an important role in delivering services to the black community. Since teachers had limited opportunities to make direct contact with federal agencies and private organizations that could provide services to the black community. Here, Marian Paul's work was extremely important to black advancement in the state. She developed cooperative relationships with federal, state, and private organizations that enhanced the ability of the agents to have successful programs.

Paul's 1941 report serves as an example of the range of public roles extension agents played. Paul cooperated with federal agencies, such as the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA), the NYA (Paul was a member of the South Carolina board), the Farm Security Administration (FSA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Soil Conservation Administration, the Surplus Commodity Corporation, and the Rural Electrification Administration. The contacts she made with these agencies were instrumental in securing information on programs and ensuring rural blacks a modicum of participation in the program. Cooperation with the AAA led to a visit by national and state representatives of the program, and participation in the cotton mattress project (where participants produced mattresses for their home use with surplus cotton). The NYA cooperation led to reciprocal relationships, office assistants for agents from the NYA, agents training NYA girls to assist them as local leaders, the use of NYA centers for mattress projects, and the placement of 172 girls, perhaps 4-Hers, on NYA projects. Black agents in counties without FSA workers helped black clients in those counties. FSA workers worked with agents on short courses. Home demonstration agents and FSA

workers established joint centers to work on the mattress projects. Home agents' clients were directed toward the FSA programs. The home management supervisor of the FSA consulted with home agents before making appointments, and all FSA clients were permitted to participate in extension programs. Four-H boys and girls attended conservation camps as a result of cooperation with the conservation programs. The agents acquired food to use in demonstrations, at black 4-H Camps, and at 573 rural schools where hot lunches were served to 27,894 children from the Surplus Commodity Corporation. A small number of homes, (157) were wired through cooperation with the REA, 303 appliances were purchased, and churches and schools began to wire their buildings.

Paul cooperated with [colored] women's federated programs, which promoted racial uplift, charity, rural home improvement, and child welfare. Interest group cooperation was also beneficial, Paul's participation with white-dominated groups such as the South Carolina Interracial Commission—along with Modjeska Montieth Simkins—contributed, in Paul's view, to better race relations, "better educational opportunities and facilities for Negroes, [and] contact with 'key' whites who can aid our program." Paul also had connections with the State Nutrition Commission and the South Carolina Public Health Service. As a result, she received help with a state-wide nutrition conference and held a two-day conference for ministers on nutrition. Through the South Carolina Public Health Service, agents received assistance and supplies from the state nutritionist, increased the number of sanitary toilets and the number of homes screened, and received assistance in holding prenatal, baby, and venereal disease clinics in their counties. The agents taught first aid classes, and referred 11 persons to the state's

tuberculosis sanitarium. Through the South Carolina Social Welfare Society where she aided in cases of juvenile delinquency and foster care and the South Carolina Congress for Democracy which promoted better race relations and improved educational facilities. These service memberships offered her numerous opportunities to serve as a voice of rural blacks. Paul also served on the State Board of Directors of the United States Organization (USO) and one result was the provision of more recreational facilities for black soldiers. Paul also made valuable contacts with commercial firms that provided money for prizes and supplies ranging from mason jars to live animals for extension projects.⁸¹

Working with a broad range of social improvement agencies was not a new experience. Agents had cooperated locally with black organizations as well as with the Hoover administration's Reconstruction Finance Cooperation. During the early years of the Depression, the agents also worked with the Red Cross to distribute relief to rural blacks. With the results of Paul's cooperation filtering down to the local level, it is no wonder that home agents were held in such high esteem. In her 1932 report, Paul noted that "[t]he Home Demonstration Agent is looked upon by the County as a sort of 'Fairy God Mother' or 'Magician.' She is often called upon to do the impossible, such as to prescribe for those who are ill, to patch up family quarrels, to find employment for the idle, to aid in building churches and school houses—and . . . to bury the dead. . . . [I]t shows that the Agent has gained the confidence and love of her people and her County."⁸² Such accolades were not undeserved. Paul stated that the agents "serve the rural clubsters

⁸¹Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1940-1941," pp. 15-9.

⁸²Paul, "1932-33 Narrative Annual Report of Marian B. Paul," p. 4.

in the capacity of teacher, nurse, friend, counselor and guardian. She is expected to attend weddings and funerals, to give advice in domestic differences, to help lift the mortgage and be god-mother for all babies born of club women.”⁸³ Such high praises were not for women only. In his 1939 historical appraisal of extension work in Richland County, J. E. Dickson declared that “extension teaching through negro [sic] leadership has grown to the point where the Negro Agricultural Agent is looked upon as the guiding influence for negro [sic] farm people throughout the county.”⁸⁴

The agents kept the welfare of their clients in mind in ways that greatly benefitted the community. In August 1938, Frances Thomas, the Richland County agent, happened to be at the court house and noticed a commotion at the Sheriff's office. When she asked about it, she found out that numerous homes were to be sold for failure to pay taxes. She recognized the names of at least 15 of her clients and asked for a list of their names, which she received. According to Thomas, she traveled over 600 miles to alert the people, many of whom were not aware that they owed taxes or that their homes would be sold. Some paid their taxes right away. Others, with Thomas's assistance, wrote letters of appeal and eventually they all paid their taxes and saved their homes.⁸⁵

⁸³Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940,” p. 16.

⁸⁴J. E. Dickson, “Historical Appraisal of Extension Work in Richland County, [1939],” p. 1, Dickson Collection, SCL.

⁸⁵Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1937-1938,” p. 102.

A New Era of Freedom: World War II and the Transformation of Rural South Carolina

Whites' distaste for use of black labor except in the most menial employments had already been foreshadowed in the "Discussion of Economic Conditions in South Carolina," in which the authors praised the displacement of black workers in the building trades despite the higher cost of white labor. However, in correspondence from the records of the Secretary of Agriculture, it becomes clear that as blacks were the most immediately available supply of labor, white South Carolinians sought to maintain their stranglehold on black labor despite protestations of its supposed inefficiency.

In 1943 the state of South Carolina asked the federal government to supply prisoners of war to be used as farm laborers. Increased opportunities for farm workers in war industries in Beaufort and Charleston counties had led to a rise in the wages for farm labor to a level that, state officials claimed, farmers were unable to pay. It noted that fewer "colored" women and children—traditional sources of cheap labor in industrializing societies—were available to harvest bean crops in those two counties. Many of the women, the report stated, had gone into domestic service in the cities of Beaufort and Charleston. The report also noted that the family incomes of the persons who would normally pick beans had increased because some family members were in the military or worked in war industries.

With larger incomes, the women and children of many of these families do not find it necessary and consequently do not engage in farm employment to the degree that they would during normal times. Hundreds of colored men who have heretofore been farm workers are now living on farms of Beaufort and Charleston counties but are working in the cities of Beaufort and Charleston. These men now have sufficiently high incomes to permit it and are insisting that their respective wives stay at home and have hot meals for them when they return from work. Therefore, many colored

women who ordinarily would be available for snap bean harvest will not be available this fall.⁸⁶

Whites certainly saw no irony in their belief that the family obligations they expected for their wives and children should not be enjoyed by blacks. Indeed, as in the era of Reconstruction when ex-slaves asserted control over their family lives and economies, whites reacted negatively to blacks' growing independence and, as in that earlier time, attempted to avoid negotiating reasonable wage rates with the subordinate class by seeking alternative sources of labor. To attract black laborers back to the farm, the state hired blacks to work as labor recruiters in the cities of Charleston and Beaufort and ultimately hired a total of 50 black labor agents state-wide to encourage blacks to return to full-time work on the farms. In their requests for agricultural workers, state officials noted that the position met federal non-discrimination guidelines—somewhat ironic given the extended focus on securing black labor in the correspondence.⁸⁷

In April 1944, South Carolina extension director D. W. Watkins sent a letter to federal extension director Meredith Wilson enclosing a statement from the Florence County farm labor board regarding the farm labor situation there. The board members complained that male farm workers who had been classified as 4-F felt “little or no responsibility toward continuing farm work, and readily yield to the lure of high wages in

⁸⁶“Request for Prison Labor,” 29 September, 1943, [to Mr. Meredith C. Wilson, Director of Extension], 3-4, Box 057, Folder: Farm labor, SC, Entry 5, RG 33, NA II. The difficulty of the state's situation made it into print the following year in Callcott's edited volume, *South Carolina: Economic and Social Conditions, 1944*, 108-11. The writer of the chapter on Agriculture, Alfred G. Smith, Sr., adds to the list of reasons farm laborers of both races left the farm the increase in the level of education. Literacy and radios led to an awareness of the possibilities of different lifestyles beyond the farm which many young people selected. He also recommended a study of successful managers of farm labor to help [white] farmers learn how to manage white as well as black labor.

⁸⁷“Request for Prison Labor,” 29 September, 1943, [to Mr. Meredith C. [sic] Wilson, Director of Extension], 5, Box 057, Folder: Farm labor, SC, Entry 5, RG 33, NA II.

non-agricultural industry, and leave essential farm work for duties *for which they spend a considerable period in training*, [my emphasis] before becoming effective.” The board also complained that many persons received dependent checks from the military and refused to work on farms because the stipends met the family needs. They requested that farm workers not be given a 4-F designation but given a new one created for those who are still able to farm. They asked that these men be encouraged to return to the farms rather than pursue non-agricultural employment; and that farm labor deferments not be changed during planting, growing, or harvesting seasons unless the farmer reports that the labor is no longer needed. The board members also requested that farm laborers be required to secure a release from the farm before they could pursue non-agricultural employment, and that no releases could be issued without the consultation of the war board in the county that would be affected. While whites wanted a release of price controls on farm products so that they could offer more competitive wages, they also asked for other measures that would effectively make blacks peons. If the laws they sought were successful, they would have had no incentive to offer more competitive wages. Board members encouraged a close examination of those claiming to be dependents of military personnel to prevent improper payments. The board called for meetings that would lead to a “flexible national law . . . to insure the proper distribution of labor,” and other resources related to agricultural need.⁸⁸ In essence, Watkins wanted the federal government to work on behalf of southern white interests in a fashion reminiscent of that of Freedman’s Bureau agent Charles Soule, for example, who

⁸⁸W. E. Powell, and six others constituting the Florence County farm labor board, to Mr. M. L. Wilson, 18 April 1944, Box 057, Folder: Farm labor, Entry 5, RG 33, NA II.

believed that because blacks lacked property that had to work for whites “ . . . because they are rich.” Soule also told the ex-slaves that whites had the right to control the freedmen’s mobility and their time.⁸⁹ Given his staunch resistance to governmental intervention in the interests of blacks his position seems ironic.

Discriminatory treatment of people of color added an interesting turn to the South Carolina story. In June 1944, O. M. Clark, a South Carolina extension economist, wrote to Barnard Joy in the federal extension service’s emergency farm labor office. Clark reported that a Beaufort farmer had a Japanese worker from a western state on his farm. The worker reported that he had several friends who would be interested in working in Beaufort as well. “Can you tell me how he might proceed if there are any possibilities of his obtaining some of these Japanese people?” Certainly, the Japanese cannot be faulted for seeking opportunities to escape western concentration camps. However, the request certainly demonstrates the state’s continued commitment to acquiring the most unprotected source of labor that existed. Joy provided Clark with the employment conditions, which stressed that any employment must be voluntary and that Japanese workers had to be employed on the same “basis as other free labor.” Clark questioned whether the Japanese workers would be willing to migrate to South Carolina for the wages offered in the state since they were more familiar with west coast wages.⁹⁰

⁸⁹Hine, et. al., *African American Odyssey*, 262.

⁹⁰O. M. Clark to Mr. Barnard Joy, 10 June 1944; Barnard Joy to Mr. O. M. Clark, 17 June 1944, Box 057, Folder: Farm labor, SC, Entry 5, RG 33, NA II. Other farmers in the South took similar actions. For example in the Mississippi Delta, planters hired Hispanic migrant laborers to lower the cost of wages to black farm laborers. See Nan Elizabeth Woodruff, “Mississippi Delta Planters and Debates Over Mechanization, Labor, and Civil Rights in the 1940s,” *The Journal of Southern History* 60, no. 2 (May 1994): 266.

Becoming Political: Rural South Carolina Blacks in the Middle Years

By the end of the war, white planters in South Carolina had taken drastic measures to secure their labor supply. By 1946 South Carolina had a law in place that permitted the arrest of private individuals for labor recruitment. While Watkins claimed not to favor the policy, he noted that it was one that was not unique to South Carolina and he committed himself to improving the labor stream between North and South.⁹¹ Some blacks and whites worked together to develop new forms of economic cooperation, such as milk sharecropping in Fairfield County. Here farmer James O. Coleman supplemented cotton sharecropping with cash payments to farmers from milk production. Coleman owned the cows but croppers cared for and milked them with the profits being split equally after all costs were deducted. The collaborative effort reduced credit advances against the crop. The sharecroppers also produced their own food on the farm as well. However, it would seem that Coleman's solution was the exception, not the rule.⁹² It seems that both whites and blacks recognized that the balance of power in South Carolina was shifting because of global circumstances. Rural blacks made their feelings known regarding their treatment by emigrating to areas where financial opportunities were better and by taking greater control of their family organization.

Just how political their sentiments were by traditional usages of that term would require a process of extensive personal interviews. Ralph Bunche's *The Political Status of*

⁹¹D. W. Watkins to Mr. M. C. Wilson, 13 May 1946 Box 153, Folder: Farm labor, SC, Entry 5, RG 33, NA II.

⁹²"Milk Sharecropping: Success in Fairfield," August 11, 1945, Clemson Newsletter 7452-1945, Box 165, Folder: Programs-Projects 1-2, (states by) Oregon-South Dakota, Entry 5, RG 33. NA II.

the Negro in the Age of FDR provides some examples of an incipient political consciousness and action among rural blacks in the South. Bunche's discussion of Afro-South Carolinian voting in the 1930s suggests that despite their exclusion from the political process, there were efforts by some blacks to secure their rights, regardless of the consequences. While only 1,500 blacks, mostly well-educated, were registered to vote in the state, Bunche's evidence suggests that even those without education became politically aware in the 1930s. His research in South Carolina was conducted by Wilhelmina Jackson, a Howard University student who traveled widely in the South interviewing blacks and whites about social and political issues. The excerpts from the interviews Bunche used shows that rural blacks were capable of forming decisions in their own best interest.

On a 2,500 acre plantation near Columbia owned by a white doctor, Jackson found one man who had never voted but admitted that he "wouldn't mind it, cordin to what it 'tis." The man had never read a newspaper or listened to a radio but identified FDR as the "Negro fren" because of Roosevelt's agricultural policies. When asked for his opinion on South Carolina's race-baiting Senator Ellison D. "Cotton Ed" Smith who had stormed out of the 1936 Democratic presidential convention when a black minister offered an invocation, the farmer said "Don' like him a little bit. If'n I recollects correctly, he said niggers kin live off'n twenty-five cents and fifty cents a day." The farmer also believed that having the vote would improve his situation. "Folks in Nort[h] has privilege to vote, reason they's so far ahead of our colored folks in the country and 'specially in Sous Carolina." Another farmer called Smith "a mean white man to us colored folks." He said that he and many others "wouldn't vote for any one else but

Mistuh Roosevelt” despite his own minister’s statements that Smith was “a fine man.” Another said that “Negroes should vote for Mistuh Roosevelt if they kin.” The solid Democratic Party in South Carolina had effectively been extinguished whatever the Republican Party had once meant to blacks. The last farmer had never heard of the party. Of the respondents from the Columbia plantation, only two of the five Bunche cited believed that blacks should not vote. Yet, all were aware of FDR’s programs and had high praise for them and the president. The New Deal, it seems, awakened the political consciousness of rural blacks. “They’s talked more politics since Mistuh Roosevelt been in than ever before. I have been here twenty years but since WPA, the Negro has started talking about politics.”⁹³

By contrast, the workers on Senator Smith’s farm had no knowledge of the WPA. One woman who worked on his farm and earned between \$1 and \$1.50 per week didn’t want to vote because no “good come of it.” Smith’s overseer said that the workers on his plantation voted for the farm parity payment (probably in the manner that Smith dictated). Perhaps this woman had voted, and learned that voting under Smith’s orders brought her no benefits. Smith’s workers had no political information. They did not even know he was a Senator.⁹⁴

Much of the focus on the history of the civil rights era in South Carolina emphasizes the era that begins with the Clarendon County suit, *Briggs v. Elliott*. However, Afro-South Carolinians have their own “forgotten years” of struggle for racial justice that have

⁹³Ralph Bunche, *The Political Status of the Negro in the Age of FDR*, edited and with an introduction by Dewey W. Grantham (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 427-429.

⁹⁴Bunche, *The Political Status of the Negro in the Age of FDR*, 429.

yet to become part of the larger historiography of the movement. In 1959 the *Journal of Negro History* published Edwin Hoffman's "The Genesis of the Modern Movement for Equal Rights in South Carolina, 1930-1939." Hoffman's article was partly based on interviews he conducted with Afro-South Carolinian leaders who lived through the decade.

When interviewed in 1957, [they] first recalled the Thirties as a dreary period of lethargy and inaction. They thought of the modern movement for equal rights as born in the years of World War II, with the twin victories of equal teacher pay and entry into the Democratic primaries . . . But upon reflection they remembered enough incidents of organization and struggle in the pre-war decade to suggest that the seeds of revolt were germinating and sometimes sprouting in the earlier years. . . . The days of depression and the New Deal were ones of primary schooling for the present-day movement and a considerable portion of the modern leadership entered the arena at that time.⁹⁵

Hoffman's article focuses primarily on the clear manifestations of challenges to the racial *status quo*. However, by looking for sites of contest only in the traditional political arena, it is possible to overlook other forms of political action that show that some blacks at the grassroots level were beginning to stretch their political muscles. For example, in Beaufort County, blacks elected one of their own as a cotton committeeman and elected two others alternated. The white assistant county agent said that he used them as little as possible and that they had been able to elect blacks because of their numerical majority. Blacks also voted in cotton elections in Saluda County despite white objections. Their participation led some whites to conclude that blacks were "getting restless."⁹⁶ Equally important were activities blacks did primarily for racial uplift, but which had the unin-

⁹⁵Edwin D. Hoffman, "The Genesis of the Modern Movement for Equal Rights in South Carolina, 1930-1939," *Journal of Negro History* 44(4) (October, 1959): 353.

⁹⁶Bunche, *The Political Status of the Negro in the Age of FDR*, 514.

tended effect of subverting the state's structure of white supremacy. It can be argued that the black "leadership's" rhetoric reflected the hearts and minds of those rural blacks whose actions clearly indicated their dissatisfaction with the status quo.

Marian Paul was among those in the black leadership who gave voice to the aspirations of the masses. In 1938, she became a member of the reinvigorated South Carolina Council on Human Relations (affiliated with the CIC). Paul was one of two blacks, both women, who served as officers of the organization. She was its secretary. She and Modjeska Simkins, who served as first vice chair, believed that the organization was too conservative, particularly on issues such as suffrage.⁹⁷ While her annual home demonstration reports from the second half of the 1930s emphasized the quest for human dignity of Afro-South Carolinians, her reports for the 1940s made clear their desire for full citizenship.

Few reports exist from the war years. However, those that are available suggest that Afro-South Carolinians were aware of the intersections of the fight against totalitarianism abroad and their plight at home as they were of the difference between FDR and "Cotton Ed." Marian Paul's reports make it clear that "Double V" was not merely an urban phenomenon but reached rural environs as well. On the eve of World War II, Paul wrote, "In this year of uncertainty and foreign wars echoing in our ears, The Negro stands ready, as always, to serve his country. The Negro Home Demonstration agents of South Carolina have pledged themselves to wage war against ignorance, hatred, poverty, and indolence." When the United States entered World War II Paul used the occasion to demonstrate the contradiction between fighting to secure the nation's freedom while

⁹⁷South Carolina Council on Human Relations, <http://www.usca.sc.edu/aasc/scchr.htm>.

denying that same freedom to blacks. Paul couched her statements in nationalist language but the irony is clear. “With most of the world in chaos and America summoning all of its strength and power to defend itself against *denials of its rights and privileges* [my emphasis], our officials and leaders fail to recognize fully the fact that ‘a nation is not stronger than its people.’” World War II was an important moment for home demonstration agents and their clients. In her report for 1940 she pointed out that blacks were ready to wage war for their country and that her agents, too, were ready “to wage war against ignorance, hatred, poverty, and indolence.” Paul pointed out that southern blacks had toiled for generations to contribute to the wealth of the region while receiving little in return. “He is still standing ready and willing to put forth all his strength and power toward unifying his nation against molestation. ¶ But as he has been through the years, the Negro is still faced with ignorance, struggle, discouragements, and hardships, which all tend to weaken his morale and render him incapable of contributing his share to a nation which must be strong.” For example, she reported that many of the Afro-South Carolinians who had been turned down by draft boards were illiterate or suffering from nutritional diseases.⁹⁸

The end of the war marked a new day for South Carolina blacks. In her plan of work for 1945 Paul wrote that blacks “see a ray of hope for liberation from economic slavery, from tenancy, from ignorance—they have hope for the ‘four freedoms.’”⁹⁹ These freedoms, first articulated in FDR’s 1941 state of the union address were the freedom of

⁹⁸Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940,” pp. 1, 2; Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1940-1941,” p. 1.

⁹⁹Marian B. Paul, “Plan of Work, 1945,” p. 2, Series 33, Box 93, Folder 2067, STICUL.

speech, of expression, of worship and from want. As they were articulated in Roosevelt's speech, the freedoms were general enough not to raise concern that it was a call for systemic change. However, like most revolutions, historical accident intervened and FDR's rhetoric captured the minds of disfranchised blacks. The four freedoms were also the foundation of the Atlantic Charter issued in August 1941. In that iteration, the four freedoms are objectives that, if fulfilled in the American South particularly, would undermine white supremacy itself. The third of the charter's eight points declared the right of all peoples to choose their government and the restoration of that right to those persons who had been deprived of it. The fifth point advocated closer economic cooperation to bring about "for all, improved labor standards, economic advancement and social security." The sixth point called for national security for all nations so that all peoples could live in conditions free "from fear and want."¹⁰⁰

The attention blacks received during the war and the political gains they made are reflected in Paul's 1946 annual report. Here is the most striking evidence that even in the South, blacks recognized that a new day had dawned. The following excerpt from that report is somewhat extended, however, a paraphrase would fail to capture the power of what blacks of the 1940s thought of the world in which they lived:

In 1946 we have observed many significant changes among Negroes in South Carolina, due primarily to the influences created during World War II. There are three distinct attitudes or schools of thought found among the rural Negroes of South Carolina. First, there are those who through years of exploitation, toil, poverty and ignorance, have become discouraged and self satisfied and are resigned to their plight. Second, there are those who have served in the armed forces of our country or have had their loved ones fighting for democracy. Now they are frustrated by intolerance, injustices and intimidations, and we find hatred and rebellion within their

¹⁰⁰The Atlantic Charter, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/wwii/atlantic.htm>.

minds. Third, there are those who are ambitious, tenacious, and determined, yet are thwarted by poor and inadequate educational facilities and the denial of their rights of full citizenship. These three groups, comprising about fifty per-cent of the population of South Carolina, if given opportunities for proper educational advantages, suitable housing conditions, economical security, and full participation as citizens, could pull South Carolina out of its undesirable and deplorable position as the State at the bottom of all States of the United States in illiteracy, housing and health. It is with these three groups the home demonstration agents must work, not only to disseminate information, but to motivate within the minds of all rural families the desire for a fuller and more abundant life. The agents must also exert every effort to have South Carolina regiment all forces which will grant to all of its people social, economic, and political freedom.¹⁰¹

Paul's wise selection of the term "freedom" rather than "equality" suggests that she was fully aware of the context in which she wrote. It was one in which black voting rights, for example were being adjudicated in the courts a mere two years after the General Assembly privatized the Democratic Party to preserve the white primary and white supremacy, even as the "chips f[e]ll where they may."¹⁰²

In her annual report for 1947, Paul directly attacked "the dual systems" segregation required and declared that they made "the Negroes' plight deplorable. In that same report she declared that she and her agents "must strive to instill within the minds of the rural people to *battle* [my emphasis] poverty, injustices, barriers, and to infuse them with an ambition for higher standards of life." "Education, the recent war where many of our boys gave their lives, and the plea for democracy and world peace, have made the Negro dissatisfied with the status quo," she declared in her plan of work for 1948. "For eighty-two years," she wrote, "he [the Negro] has 'with the crumbs from the table' patiently

¹⁰¹Paul, "South Carolina: Narrative Annual Report, 1946," p. 1.

¹⁰²Lowe, "The Magnificent Fight," chapter 1.

waited for a better opportunity, for justice, for citizenship . . . Now, with recent court actions a new era is approaching.”¹⁰³

Paul’s rhetoric shows an intimacy with the ideological foundations of white supremacy. She refers to an item in a list in Thomas Bailey’s examination of racial attitudes in the white South which reads:

1. “Blood will tell.”
2. The white race must dominate.
3. The Teutonic peoples stand for race purity.
4. The negro [sic] is inferior and will remain so.
5. “This is a white man’s country.”
6. No social equality
7. No political equality
8. In matters of civil rights and legal adjustments given the white man, as opposed to the colored man, the benefit of the doubt; and under no circumstances interfere with the prestige of the white man.
- 9. In educational policy let the negro [sic] have the crumbs that fall from the white man’s table [my emphasis].**
10. Let there be such industrial education of the negro [sic] as will best fit him to serve the white man.
11. Only [white] Southerners understand the negro [sic] question.
12. Let the [white] South settle the negro [sic] question.
13. The status of peasantry is all the negro [sic] may hope for, if the races are to live together in peace.
14. Let the lowest white man count for more than the highest negro.
15. The above statements indicate the leadings of Providence.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³Marian B. Paul, “South Carolina: Annual Narrative Report, 1947,” 4; Marian B. Paul, “Plan of Work, 1948,” pp. 7, 9-10, 13, Series 33, Box 149, Folder 2928, STICUL.

¹⁰⁴Bailey, *Race Orthodoxy in the South*, 93. Bailey graduated from the University of South Carolina and earned a Ph. D. by writing a fifteen page dissertation entitled “The Development of Character,” http://www.sc.edu/bicentennial/Pages/timeline_pages/1891-1.html. Bailey was a native of Georgetown, South Carolina, yet he was fairly progressive on racial matters. He was an Episcopalian. Marian Paul was from the same county and was an Episcopalian also which probably accounts for her familiarity with Bailey’s work. Bailey’s book is a compilation of his articles, speeches, and reviews on race-related issues. In a chapter, also entitled “Race Orthodoxy in the South” which was originally published in “Neale’s Monthly Magazine, Bailey offers what he suggests is “a creed of a people,—a part of their morality and religion.” He explains each item of the creed in this chapter, (92-115). He concludes the chapter by suggesting that the South would maintain its creed until it could be convinced that it was “unworthy and unpractical.” He suggested that whites across the nation made it possible to hold on to the creed by their “consent, and . . . more and more . . . active aid. The cleavage is now not between North and South, but between race and race.” He predicted that whites outside the south would either “show the South a better

The strident statements Paul made in her annual reports stand in stark contrast to the reports of Harry Daniels, the State Agent for Negro Agricultural Work. His reports are mute on the social issues of the day. What led Paul to make such statements when neither citizenship nor the mistreatment of blacks ever discussed by Harry Daniels remains to be explored. Gender expectations offer one possibility for understanding the difference. More likely, the difference can be accounted for in how each understood their professional responsibility. Stephanie J. Shaw's work offers a hint on the emergence of gender difference in the focus on black men and women in the years after the Civil War. Shaw does not clearly demarcate the line between men's and women's interest, however her reference to Reconstruction-era uplift shows a community-oriented focus while the later discussion of women's club work is centered social improvement.¹⁰⁵ Paul's language certainly suggests that she felt it was a burden of leadership for enlightened and better-educated blacks to speak on behalf of the masses. She assumed that burden in her own way. Yet, unlike Septima Poinsette Clark and Modjeska Simkins, Marian Paul is largely unknown.

The apolitical restrictions on black extension agents has led to their near invisibility in the literature of the civil rights movement and none are presented as its leaders. In the histories of black extension work, these workers are presented as working under

racial creed (and I doubt their ability and willingness to do so) or will adopt for themselves the creed of the South." Bailey, *Race Orthodoxy in the South*, 115.

¹⁰⁵Stephanie J. Shaw, "The Creation of the National Association of Colored Women," in Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King, and Linda Reed, eds., *"We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible": A Reader in Black Women's History* (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1995), 435-442.

extreme conditions, cowered into passivity in a white dominated bureaucracy, or generally of a conservative mind set and supportive of the status quo.¹⁰⁶ These silences exist because of extension policy that proscribed the activities of all extension workers.

Agriculture Department guidelines on political activity prevented its employees from participating any way in a political meeting except as a spectator, from playing any part in a political march or parade, and defined political activity to include “[a]ny group of persons which opposes another group in matters of governmental principles or policies” at the state, county, or municipal level. It left open to interpretation what could be called a political party. South Carolina’s statement, although shorter, may have served as the model for revisions to the department’s policy. The 1940 extension statement on political activity D. W. Watkins distributed required agents to “abstain from [partisan] political activity” which would be “sufficient grounds for” termination. Among prohibited activities was “addressing political meetings, or helping to arrange or manage such gatherings.”¹⁰⁷ This statement was general enough to stifle overt agent activism.

¹⁰⁶Regarding the temperament of extension workers, see Mary Amanda Waalkes who suggests that while Tuskegee Institute’s black extension agents had more autonomy than most, it “guaranteed through its emphasis on accommodation to the white dominant culture, that black extension agents would remain well within the racial boundaries set by southern extension whites.” While she finds that black agents enjoyed their jobs they “remained within the constraints of the racial accommodationism required for them to keep their jobs.” The abstract of Waalkes’ dissertation, “Working in the Shadow of Racism and Poverty: Alabama’s Black Home Demonstration Agents, 1915-1939,” (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1998) in *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 59, no. 03A, (1998): 0936, Jeannie M. Wayne and Earl William Crosby reach similar conclusions in their work. Wayne’s work comes closest to my own conclusions. She also presents Alabama’s extension workers as “fettered by social, economic, and political constraints, which made it difficult for them to function effectively.” While she suggests that they were “harbingers of change,” her work does not examine the changes in rural black life inspired by extension programs. Without the institutional dimension, she fails to locate the politicization of the agents and her clients. Jeannie M. Wayne, “Black Farmers and the Agricultural Cooperative Extension Service: The Alabama Experience, 1945-1965” *Agricultural History* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 551.

¹⁰⁷D. W. Watkins “TO ALL EXTENSION WORKERS, Re: Political Activity, 19 June 1940, attachment to D. W. Watkins to Mr. M. L. Wilson, 2 August 1940, Box 769, Folder: Dir SC 7-40 [to] 12-40 2 of 2, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II; Personnel Circular No. 84 (Revision I), 12 February 1942, 3, 6, Box 986, Folder Personnel 17, Political Activities, Box 821, Folder: Extension Work, Entry 17 M, RG 16, NA II.

Marian Paul's actions defy that assertion. In her 1946 annual narrative report, Marian Paul states what the record of black extension work shows: that extension workers were leaders of the black community. In introductory remarks on her program Paul writes: "I feel there is no group in South Carolina more respected and better received than the Negro home demonstration agents. Although many obstacles arise to thwart Negro leadership of any kind, everyone is cognizant that the Negro agents are working to give rural families of South Carolina economic security, educational advantage and social stability."¹⁰⁸

Paul carried that mantle of leadership into her end-of-the-year report in 1948. She expressed hope that the situation for blacks was changing:

Increasingly as the world, and South Carolina in particular, becomes aware of the inequalities of the races in the South, of the burden of the dual systems of education, recreation, economics, health facilities, employment, justice and citizenry, we feel that the plight of the Negroes will be recognized and an all-out effort will be manifested to bring those unfortunate opportunities and assistance which will raise their standard of living. . . . Due to the constant changes and the varied demands of this Atomic age, the Extension program must now effect fundamental changes in (1) knowledge, and (2) skills and attitudes.

The changes that Paul thought were necessary had little to do with for-profit agriculture, and everything to do with improving the quality of life for Afro-South Carolinians. Her program would improve family life, job skills, citizenship, recreation, and ethical and moral behavior, none of which would be of particular benefit to a white landlord.¹⁰⁹

While Paul seemed willing to challenge the creed that informed white race-thinking for most of the early twentieth century, southern white leadership continued to

¹⁰⁸Paul, "South Carolina: Narrative Annual Report, 1946," p. 2.

¹⁰⁹Paul, "South Carolina: Annual Narrative Report, 1948," pp. 4-5.

adhere to this creed. With a shift in national context, where many outside the region had begun to question stringent federal laissez-faire policies on southern race relations, her remarks were probably seen as threatening to her white bosses. Paul's tone softened by 1949. This is not surprising given the unresolved situation in the courts where blacks were challenging various aspects of Jim Crow in South Carolina. More importantly, white hostility probably influenced Paul's more mild tone. Truman's executive orders 9980 and 9981 which created a seven member review board to review cases of alleged discrimination in federal employment and desegregation of the armed forces respectively caused a strong public backlash in the South which would ultimately contribute to former South Carolina Governor Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrat campaign of 1948. Paul did not retreat from her assertion that exploitation, low wages, and poor educational facilities hindered the progress of South Carolina blacks. However, she observed that because of these factors blacks had "not made the strides that we desire, but a new era is approaching and we are hopeful and optimistic that [they] will soon assume a role which will make [them] assets instead of liabilities in South Carolina."¹¹⁰

Black Life and Extension Work in the Middle Years

What made Afro-South Carolinians liabilities to their state were the economic conditions in which they lived. Idus Newby reports that in 1930, 87.5 percent of South

¹¹⁰Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1949," p. 5, Clemson; For a discussion on the meaning of various aspects of the case see, William C. Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1970), 118-9, 132-5. The backlash continued into Truman's considered re-election campaign of 1952 where the James F. Byrnes of South Carolina—who was formerly a member of Truman's cabinet—was one of several prominent southerners who came out against Truman and his policies. This included his decision to veto a house bill, H. R. 5411 which would have required schools on military bases located in states which practiced segregation "to conform 'to the laws of the states in which such installations are located.'" Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration*, 191-2.

Carolina blacks lived in unpainted houses. Only 107 of 77,425 farm homes (slightly less than 0.14 percent) had telephones, 239 (0.31 percent) had electric lights, 136 (0.18 percent) had indoor running water, 69 (0.089 percent) had indoor bathrooms, and (nearly 400) 0.5 percent had radios. Several studies of black life were done by Clemson College in the 1930s.¹¹¹ One survey of 294 black homes found that the occupants lacked a sufficient number of sheets and pillowcases for sanitary living. Another one found that black children lived in crowded conditions. In one study, all of the children slept with at least one other person and all the children shared their rooms with at least one other person. Forty percent of the children shared their rooms with three or more persons. It also found that among renters, tenants, and sharecroppers, “two-thirds owned no tablecloths; more than two-thirds had no draperies or curtains; they only owned 0.7 bedspreads per bed.”¹¹² Several studies of the diets of whites and blacks found that blacks’ diets were far from balanced in the nutrition they provided and lower in calories than those of whites. Families lacked the livestock or regularly-cultivated gardens that would permit them to diversify their diets. “The result was a general ‘loss of energy, vague signs of ill health, lack of resistance to disease, and an occasional outbreak of manifest deficiency states’.”¹¹³ The study of children also found that over half lived in houses without window panes. Sixty-five percent of the children bathed once a week in cold weather, and 40

¹¹¹Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 207-8. How significant these numbers are is an open question. For example, Walter Edgar states that only 2 percent of the state’s farms had electricity in 1934. Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 503.

¹¹²Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 207-8.

¹¹³Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 208-9.

percent bathed once a week in warm weather. Seventy-five percent did not have tooth-brushes, and slightly over one third had cavities. Only Twenty-nine percent ate three meals a day at regular intervals, and 22 percent regularly ate fewer than three meals per day. The study also found that seventy-one percent of the children's diets were vitamin deficient.¹¹⁴

A study of recreation documented the continued absence of recreational facilities for blacks. Newby documents the limited contact Afro-South Carolinians had with modern commercial entertainment and attributes that fact, in part, to the influence of churches and parents who frowned upon such activities. Indeed Newby notes that in 1926 a black minister wrote an article in the *Palmetto Leader*, in which he criticized the lack of control that black parents had over their children and attributed it to “‘the commercial version of life’.” Instead, black youth engaged in sociables at various homes, although only “40 percent of the sons and 18 percent of the daughters in families who did not own their homes” participated. Black youth also spent their time “‘hunting, fishing, and swimming, though ‘very few of the negro girls . . . knew how to swim.’ Picnicking and ‘big dinners’ at church, especially during the revival season were popular with both sexes as were ‘just visiting’ and ‘just riding’ and ‘just going to town’ on Saturday afternoons.”¹¹⁵ One could take issue with Newby on whether it was essential to black progress to have attended a movie, have played cards, or had regular access to a radio. Newby suggests that engaging in popular culture might indicate that the “youths were not always

¹¹⁴Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 209.

¹¹⁵Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 210-1.

defeated by the repressive, impoverished social milieu in which they grew up.”¹¹⁶ Newby’s attachment of political importance to these activities is, I believe, off the mark. What is more important for understanding the situation of rural blacks in the early stages of the middle years is the lack of a life of the mind. Newby writes, “Rural youths had little to stimulate them intellectually, and few had either the encouragement or opportunity to develop their intellectual capacities beyond rudimentary levels.” He quotes the Clemson study of recreation that notes a lack of reading matter other than school books in homes. “‘The home and community environments of the negroes, . . . did not ordinarily offer opportunities to stimulate the use of the meagre [sic] beginnings of formal education which these young negroes have acquired in some instances.’”¹¹⁷ Yet, the Bunche work shows that even those with rudiments of education had the ability to formulate political action upon which they would act if given the opportunity.

Similar conditions existed in the adult rural black community according to Newby. He reviews a study of leisure time in rural areas that found that among adult rural blacks, many were too exhausted to engage in organized leisurely pursuits. Religious restrictions prevented their participation in activities such as card playing. Much of their leisure time, like that of their youth was spent in low-cost activities like visiting, gossiping, or “‘just sitting.’” Newby suggests that the lack of an organized social life “contributed to the *ennui*” felt by many rural blacks. He suggested that it might also have caused “lethargy, apathy, and social disorganization and fostered some of the antisocial activity which plagued black Carolina.” He argues that the lack of an organized secular social life

¹¹⁶Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 212.

¹¹⁷Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 212.

indicates “the extent to which genuine community was still missing from rural black Carolina. . . . Except for church related endeavors, these things were insufficiently developed in areas where the overwhelming majority of black Carolinians lived. *Without the benefits of organized social life, the society remained atomized and fragmented and thus undirected and powerless* [my emphasis].”¹¹⁸ Newby’s assessment follows that of E. Franklin Frazier and Daniel Patrick Moynihan who frame social order and power in a middle class European model. The interesting twist is that Newby applies what had been an explanation of urban social decay to rural areas as well. In his treatment of the black family as an institution, Frazier argues that where slaves assimilated western mores the most, “the organization of family life approached most closely the pattern of white civilization.” However, Frazier also saw slavery primarily as a matriarchy in which familial relationships were inverted with the mother being the dominant social and economic force. Frazier sees in the lives of antebellum free black families and post-bellum families, attempts to reassert male dominance. These efforts succeed where families were able to acquire real property. This trend toward patriarchy was disrupted by the Great Migration, Frazier argues, which removed rural blacks from a milieu in which they had worked led to increased social disorganization—particularly in urban black communities. Frazier’s ideas intersect with those of Newby in the area of institutional life. Frazier identified the lack of a well-organized institutional community life as the central reason that black communities in urban areas were faltering.¹¹⁹ By that measure,

¹¹⁸Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 213. One could also question whether life for rural whites’ lives were any less gloomy given the state’s usual placing at the bottom of most social measures.

¹¹⁹E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States*, revised and abridged edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 32, 140, 188, 224, 243-4, 252-4, chapter XVIII. Daniel Patrick Moynihan echoes Frazier’s dim assessment of urban black life in what has become known as the

rural blacks' culture is identified as disorganized and in need of improvement, at best, and abhorrent, at worst. By establishing particular cultural conventions as normative and designating others as abhorrent, it becomes difficult to gauge the "quality" of the "abhorrent" culture.

Although he probably did not intend to impugn the importance of the black church, Newby does precisely that when he suggests that black youth engaged in church activity, in part, "because nothing else was available. . . . The absence of secular social organizations made the church the most important, often the only, functioning social agency in the community." According to Newby, black youth participated in church because it provided their most reliable form of social interaction with other youth. He notes that at some point black youth would become members of the church but asserts, without evidence, "these seem to have been routine social steps rather than acts of religious or intellectual transformation."¹²⁰ Newby does not consider the depth of African American spirituality and the important role organized black churches had played as both sacred *and* secular institutions since the end of the Civil War. I have already shown the vital role that the churches played in gaining black extension agents access to black farmers and the importance of black ministers as local leaders in extension as evidenced

"Moynihan Report." Moynihan notes that urban blacks of the 1960s shared "almost no community life with whites." One could infer that Moynihan sees social organization flowing from white-institutions. He makes reference to a report Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc. which suggested that institutions in black urban areas were breaking down and suggested that what was found in Harlem was likely the case generally. He declared the Negro Christian church had lost touch with urban black men. This as well as the lack of economic opportunities similar to those Frazier described had led a "tangle" of pathology to develop in the black community. *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, 4, 19, 29-30, 44-5.

¹²⁰Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 212-3.

by the ministers' conference held at South Carolina State College. In her 1936 narrative report, Marian Paul referred to ministers as "our chief medium of publicity."¹²¹

In 1940, the black extension service began holding ministers' institutes at State College to train ministers as adjuncts of a sort in extension work. Agricultural and home extension agents and some members of the college's faculty gave lectures and demonstrations on "Health, Livestock, Dairying, Field crops, and Nutrition." The conference lasted three days and the ministers became converts to extension work. All the ministers promised to share information with their congregations and asked the agents to hold more conferences, including some in the counties. Ministers' institutes were held in nine counties as a result. In Newberry County, two black farm agents, the county home demonstration agent, and specialists from Clemson lectured ministers on improved farm practices. "It was surprising to see how the ministers cooperated with our program," the home agent wrote. "It is true that they do almost as much home visiting as a county agent, and because he is considered the leader of the flock, whatever he tells them is considered doctrine."¹²² The ministers shared their knowledge in home visits and from their pulpits on Sundays. She declared some ministers became so interested in extension work that they stopped by her office to read the latest extension literature.

The agents' observations demonstrate the symbiosis between ministers and extension agents. Their cooperation represents part of the interlocking support system that the black community developed to diffuse scant resources broadly. The agent further wrote: "We feel now that the ministers are well in sympathy with our program and they

¹²¹Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1936," p. 19.

¹²²Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941," 26-8, 78.

gladly give their time to help the rural people better their living conditions. In return for their cooperation I help them in some of their drives and we work smoothly for the good of our county.” Through 31 sermons on Better Farm Living, the ministers reached 2,233 persons during the 1941 reporting year.¹²³ The ministers’ conferences continued at least through 1946 and many ministers continued to act as extension leaders, to publicize extension programs, and to open their churches for extension programs.¹²⁴

One of the best examples of the benefits of this type of cooperation comes from Marian Wright Edelman, a native of Bennetsville in Marlboro County. She discusses the community activities of her parents, Reverend Arthur Jerome Wright, a Baptist minister, and Maggie Leola Bowen Wright. Marlboro County had an active home demonstration program from 1934 until 1952 under the leadership of Minnie Gandy. Her parents’ activities, as Edelman describes them, bear the mark of extension influence although Edelman does not mention Gandy in her narrative. Maggie Wright’s leadership of Mothers’ Clubs, her organization of youth activities and contests, and the delivery of bags of Christmas cheer to those who could not make it to church bear the mark of extension work. Together her parents built a playground and skating rink for the black youth of her community and opened a canteen where they could get a drink without suffering the indignities of discrimination.¹²⁵

The agents’ use of ministers was recognized at the federal level. Miriam Birds-eye, an extension nutritionist, wrote Paul after she received a summary on extension work

¹²³Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” 78-9.

¹²⁴Paul, “South Carolina, Narrative Annual Report, 1946,” 2-3.

¹²⁵Marian Wright Edelman, *Lanterns: A Memoir of Mentors* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1999) 2-3, 9.

with blacks from the state's white nutritionist Martha Buttrill. Presuming that Paul wrote the report, she called Paul's institutes an "excellent one. It is certainly important to get the understanding and help of such influential groups as the Negro ministers." Birdseye estimated that each minister that attended the institute was "the equivalent of several dozen [local] leaders."¹²⁶ In 1943 Erwin H. Shinn, a senior agriculturist with the U. S. D. A., visited South Carolina, and the institute. He observed that on the afternoon of his arrival he heard discussions related to "land and home ownership and the farm labor situation." The next day, Shinn spoke to the ministers and he emphasized "the responsibilities of the negro [sic] rural ministers in an all-out war effort. I stressed the importance of negro ministers exerting their fullest influence in getting negro farm families to produce and conserve food for home use and to take an active part in all other wartime activities. Negro rural pastors are a very influential group of leaders in negro life and are valuable aids to extension work with negroes."¹²⁷

Records from the extension service show that the service played a significant and role in the social lives of rural blacks. While the state extension service churned out research reports in the early 1930s that documented a lack of leisure activities among rural blacks, black extension agents were taking action to broaden the types of leisure activities in their programs. In 1930 Walter P. Jackson, a "Recreational Specialist from New York City," made a tour of several southern states including South Carolina to discuss the value of play and he made a stop at the annual conference for South Caro-

¹²⁶Miriam Birdseye to Mrs. Marian B. Paul, 6 June 1942, Box 839, Folder D-Z SC, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

¹²⁷Erwin H. Shinn, "Field Trip Report, [June 16-21, 1943], Series 33, Box 159, Folder 10, STICUL.

lina's Negro Extension Agents in January 1930. Each day from January 14 until January 17, from 8:00 am until 9:30 in the morning, Jackson and Dan Lewis, the white state agent for Boys' Club Work, instructed the agents in new games. They "brought . . . many interesting games and other recreational features that will add mentally and physically to . . . club girls and boys [work]."¹²⁸

The handbook Paul wrote in 1931 to help 4-H girls plan their activities to receive a four-year diploma included several items under "recreation." Club members had to learn "at least two songs, 'Club Work,' [and] 'The more we get together';" two poems, "Wanted-A girl" and "As a man Thinketh;" and "at least two games 'Dodge Ball' [and] Volley Ball.'" The agents immediately implemented the program.¹²⁹ In Paul's 1932 annual report she stated that agents taught club members both group and individual games, and how to make games from "raw and inexpensive materials on hand." She stated that "no meeting is ended without some form of recreation."

Despite the hardships of the "depression" our people can sing and play. I think that the gift of song which has been bestowed upon us has kept up the morale of our people throughout the many years of bondage and deprivation. Games are played at every meeting by young and old. All meetings adjourned by singing "The more we get together, the happier we are" and they sing it with all zeal and sincerity.¹³⁰

Clubs continued to be the most important vehicle for association among rural blacks who were active in extension work. During the early 1930s, local clubs began to organize county-wide events to bring community-based clubs together. In 1933 Sumter

¹²⁸Kenner, "South Carolina, 1930, Narrative Annual Report, 8-10, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

¹²⁹Marian Paul, "Requirements for 4-H Club Girls," p. 2, Folder 92, SCSUHC.

¹³⁰Paul, "South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report," p. 2.

County clubsters held a two-day camp. Over 310 ten club members and 31 leaders attended. Agricultural agent William Thompson of nearby Clarendon County brought 16 children and 2 local leaders to the Sumter County camp. Most of the food at the camp was provided by club members and prepared by leaders. Each club had to present a stunt, sing a club song and give a club yell. Dan Lewis, the state's extension agent for club work, attended as well and led the group in creating a "Wheel of Progress." "The State Agents, County agents and local leaders . . . formed the hub of a wheel, and the clubsters the spokes and rim. Each person was given a candle which obtain[ed] light from another." While Paul observed that it provided a stunning visual display, perhaps it also showed, indirectly, the results of cooperation. Other agents also held camps, although not as vividly described in the report. Orangeburg and Bamberg county agents cooperated to host a two-day camp for 525 youths. The Charleston County home agent held a small camp for 40 girls.¹³¹

A state camp soon overshadowed these local camps. While a state camp had been opened for white children in 1933, no facilities had been provided for black children. Marian Paul was instrumental in securing the permanent camp for black children. According to Wayman Johnson, who wrote a history of black 4-H, Paul discussed the need for a black camp with a Miss Davis who was the state's WPA administrator for women. Davis told Paul that she could provide WPA laborers, but Paul would have to find a suitable location and money for materials. In 1935 black agents raised the money needed for the camp. The Columbia Chamber of Commerce and the Richland County delegation gave funds as well. Paul, Harry Daniels, and Richland County Agent J. E.

¹³¹Paul, "South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report," p. 45-8.

Dickson concluded a 99-year lease with the Progressive Club for a camp site where black agents erected Camp Dickson. According to Wayman Johnson, Camp Dickson was the first 4-H camp for blacks in the United States. The camp lasted until 1940, when Fort Jackson expanded and took over the property.¹³²

The state camp operated like county camps with clubsters bringing foodstuffs from home to supply the larder. Each camper also had to pay a 35¢ fee that defrayed the cost of supplies that could not be brought from home. The camps gave many clubsters their first view of the world outside their home counties. They visited the capitol building, the mental hospital, the penitentiary, the veterans' hospital, the various black colleges, the Township auditorium and the city market. Staff at the camp included workers provided by the National Youth Administration who worked as counselors. One of the NYA workers, Esther Simmons, wrote that the camp "has stimulated much interest throughout the State and neighboring States. . . . The principle of leadership was taught through the presentation of programs formulated by clubsters themselves. . . . The boys and girls are encouraged to do more to make their camp bigger and better."¹³³ According to Paul, the camps also promoted educational progress, "which includes lectures, demonstrations, and motion pictures," increased club membership, and led to project completion because only those who completed their projects were eligible to attend.¹³⁴

¹³²Johnson, "History, Growth, and Transition," 56-8; according to Marian Paul it was the only State camp for black boys and girls in the United States as late as 1937. Paul includes in her report an article she wrote for the *Agricultural Leaders' Digest* on the camp. Paul, "Annual Report, Negro Home Demonstration Work, 1937," pp. 40-40b.

¹³³Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1936," pp. 30-3.

¹³⁴Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941," pp. 50-1. For a discussion of several regional camps, see pages 51-3.

In 1937 the camp reached into the lives of children who did not participate in club work. Children from the Wilkinson Orphanage (founded by Marian Bernice Wilkinson, R. S. Wilkinson's widow, and supported in part by the Women's Federated Clubs) spent time at the camp. Camp Dickson was also opened to underprivileged children from Richland County through the cooperative efforts of the agents and the Social Welfare Society. According to Paul, local "colored women" raised \$120 to purchase food for that event.¹³⁵

After Camp Dickson closed, the agents reinvigorated the county camps, with counties sometimes cooperating to create regional camps, using churches, schools, and community centers as places for sleepovers.¹³⁶ The agents were instrumental in constructing a new state camp, this time in Calhoun County, adjacent to Orangeburg County, where State College was located. Agents, club members, and others raised \$13,777.92 and purchased 267 acres on Lake Marion, built four barracks, a dining hall, a kitchen, and developed their own lake. They requested another \$12,500 from the State Budget and Control Board for two additional barracks, toilets, an office, and equipment. They actually received \$15,000 with D. W. Watkins' help. The dedication of Camp Harry Daniels, named for the man who served as State Agent for Negro Agricultural Extension Work until he died in 1944, was attended by 4,000 persons including numerous white dignitaries, white state extension officials, and Calhoun County Senator Marion Gres-

¹³⁵Paul, "Annual Report, Negro Home Demonstration Work, 1937," p. 42.

¹³⁶Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941," p. 50.

sette, who would lead a pro-segregation committee in the General Assembly in the 1950s.¹³⁷

Adult clubs were organized as well. However, efforts to reach rural adults often went beyond clubs to the community at large to increase the range of the agents' influence. One way the agents reached adults was through fairs where the work of adult club members was on display. Typically, each county held its own colored fair and there was a state colored fair as well. According to Paul, the fairs were of great importance to rural black women because they could publicly display their accomplishments and could develop new ideas and inspiration for improvements in their homes. Agents and club members demonstrated the possibility for improving the home environment without great expense. For example, women exhibited "a model bed room, dining room, kitchen and pantry" at a 1933 fair. Club women made "all furniture, labor saving devices and furnishings" at a cost of about \$7.85. The kitchen was stocked with sufficient home produce to feed a family for nearly six months. According to Paul, the display "caused much comment." Over 60,000 people saw exhibits at the Spartanburg County fair. At the Beaufort County fair, group pride was on display. Five different types of clubs: Garden, Peanut, Corn, Progressive Young Farmers, and Home Makers, were represented and each had their own colors. The fair included a parade and an agricultural program "in which the boys and girls were able to demonstrate their ability as public speakers, and community leaders." Robert Russa Moton was guest speaker.¹³⁸

¹³⁷Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1949," pp. 10-1; H. W. Hochbaum to D. W. Watkins, 15 May 1947, Box 4, Folder: Camps-Camping 2-1, Entry 3-A, RG 33, NA II.

¹³⁸Paul, "South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report," pp. 41-2.

Achievement days for youth and adult clubs also reached a significant portion of the black population. In 1932-1933, agents held thirty-nine achievement days in the various counties and reached 8,264 persons. At an achievement day for 4-H girls in Richland County, girls displayed "towels, laundry bags, slips and bloomers" they had made. Miller Whittaker, the President of South Carolina State College, lectured club members on the value of team work. The Georgetown County achievement day program included a procession by club women who sang "I'll Grow My Home Supplies." The white county home agent lectured club members on the value of milk in the diet, Harry Daniels lectured on the value of club work, a county health worker spoke on tuberculosis prevention, and Marian Paul discussed the live-at-home program. Each club gave a report before the group had dinner and played games.¹³⁹

Through camps, fairs and achievement days, black extension agents helped to fill social voids in rural blacks' lives and to strengthen their sense of community. At the Oswego community achievement day in Sumter County, the winners of the black division of the State Garden Contest and the South Carolina Corn Club Contest received their certificates. In addition, a play written by Julia Moses, a member of the 4-H club, was presented. In Spartanburg County, a spectacular program was put on at a Wellford Church. There were 466 club members and 1,200 visitors at the event.

All girls were dressed in their green uniform dresses, trimmed with white, and the boys in white trousers and shirts. The church was decorated in American Flags and 4-H colors. . . . The clubsters marched into the church and took their places by community. The Local Club Leaders were distinguished by a 4-H apron, began [sic], or stole of green and white with the 4-H emblem. The program began by singing America. . . . Visitors present:

¹³⁹Paul, "South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report," pp. 42-3.

Professor C. G. Woodson, presented the boys and girls the certificates and prizes for outstanding work.¹⁴⁰

“Eager to Serve”: Local Leaders in the Middle Years

Local leadership made it possible to develop community building activities. Leaders in extension work had to be able to lead the masses by example. Having extension leaders learn by doing then pass that knowledge along was one of the most significant features of extension work. Local leaders were invited to participate in agents’ demonstrations and to develop and present their own demonstrations. The leaders were also encouraged to visit rival clubs to develop a spirit of competitiveness. In the 1938 reporting year, forty-two meetings were held for local leaders of women’s clubs and 103 meetings were held for 4-H club leaders. Some women enthusiastically sought leadership roles in the extension program. In one Orangeburg community when agent Marie Blakemon opened up elections for a clubs officers, “Hattie Jones got up and said ‘Well I just generally bes (am) the president of everything, my sister Kate, over there the vice president, my daughter here the Secretary so that[‘s] that.’”¹⁴¹ In men’s work, the selection of leaders seems a bit more formal. For example, in the early 1930s, J. E. Dickson appears to have chosen the most prominent farmers in his communities to serve as leaders. It was their responsibility to “visit their Community Schools and Churches and speak to the people about the progress the Agricultural Extension Program is making.” They were also expected to contact ministers and businessmen as well. In addition he

¹⁴⁰Paul, “South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report,” pp. 43-4.

¹⁴¹Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1937-1938,” p. 17.

established a county advisory board with fourteen men and one woman who were elected by their communities to assist with planning the program.¹⁴²

It was somewhat surprising to read that Paul had difficulty finding local leaders at the end of the 1930s. She expressed difficulty finding “intelligent, interested local leaders,” asserting that although many were eager to serve, they were “not capable from an intellectual standpoint.” Yet in the next paragraph she described an episode of phenomenal local leadership. When the Sumter County agent became ill “for several months[,] the local leaders came to her bedside, received instructions, returned home and conducted meetings. When a new agent replaced the sick agent and was bitten by a dog, the county council of farm women and the local leaders held a scheduled rally day for her. In Allendale County a leadership school was held for local leaders. They were taught rules of parliamentary procedure and demonstrations. The agents provided support for the local leaders giving them continual reinforcement of the “duties of leadership.”¹⁴³ In subsequent reports for the middle years, Paul criticized the lack of “intelligence” of the potential local leaders but always spoke of their willingness to learn about extension. These paradoxes in her messages suggest that a lack of “information” might be a more appropriate interpretation of her use of the term “intelligent” than intellectual inferiority.

Local leadership was essential in all extension work, but more so in black extension work because the state never had a full complement of permanent black workers. For example, in the better homes campaign, each distinctive community within a

¹⁴²J. E. Dickson, “Status of County Extension Organization,” p. 1, Dickson Collection, SCL.

¹⁴³Paul, “Annual Report for 1938-1939,” pp. 59-59A, Series 33, Box 33, Folder 914, STICUL.

county had its own chairman. It was the chairperson's responsibility to organize committees, which in turn were responsible for the community's campaign.

The campaign in each community ended by a program given at the church or school, which consisted of lectures, demonstrations, and a report of all the homes in the community and whether any improvement had been made or not. The people were told that such a report would be made at the meeting, so every family made some improvement in some way. Many of them gave the house and its [sic] surroundings a good, general cleaning. Even this general cleaning improved the appearance of the community.¹⁴⁴

Whatever shortcomings leaders may have had did not prevent them from positively affecting their communities. The Sumter County Council of Farm Women actually planned several events for 1941 and they had community members as key speakers at some of their programs.¹⁴⁵ The Greenville County Council of Farm Women “adopted” two underweight children to demonstrate the “Health and Child Improvement” program. When the Newberry County agent organized her county farm women's council she expected an attendance of about 40 but 89 showed up to discuss their projects.¹⁴⁶

It must be emphasized that these programs were not top-down, imposing an ethos on the black community in which they had no interest. Paul reported in 1946 that among the important changes that had occurred in the program was “the rural families, leaders and agents work out a county program instead of having a fixed program handed to them.”¹⁴⁷ While Paul points out that the agents formulated their programs first, once they had done so they submitted the reports to their communities “through the local churches,

¹⁴⁴Paul, “South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report,” pp 38-9.

¹⁴⁵Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” p. 48.

¹⁴⁶Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” p. 49.

¹⁴⁷Paul, “South Carolina, Narrative Annual Report, 1946,” p. 1.

schools, and [leading] individuals” who worked with the agents to make the programs a success. A similar trend was evident in men’s work. In his 1941 plan of work, Harry Daniels lists “Coordination with action groups, educational groups and extension service,” as means of delivering the agricultural program. For example, noted the significant change from the early years when he had developed and presented his annual program to the community to 1940 when “the County and Community program is built on the County and Community needs and is build in the County by the farm people themselves under directions and guidance of the agent.”¹⁴⁸

Clubs remained central to both agricultural and home demonstration work offering opportunities for comradery and leadership. According to Paul, clubs brought women and girls together “in a social as well as a business assembly.” The agents selected women and girls whom she believed could be effective local leaders to serve as officers, but the final selection of officeholders was up to the members. Rural blacks took positions of leadership very seriously. A Mrs. Atkins was asked to serve as chairman of better homes in her community and she declined. According to Paul, “She stated that she would have to begin at home to do home-improvement work before she [could] be eligible to encourage others.” Her home, which had been knocked off its foundation by a storm six years earlier, was reset, the windows, roof, and porch were repaired, and the yard was cleaned. She removed an old car and used its windshield for glass in her front door, and its seats to make sofas for her living room.

¹⁴⁸J. E. Dickson, “Historical Appraisal of Extension Work in Richland County, [1939],” p. 1, Dickson Collection, SCL.

The results for the leaders and for the communities were significant. Paul stated that leaders became “more interested as their responsibilities increase[d] and as opportunities occur[red] for them to display their abilities. Local leaders attended a training session and subsequently held 355 adult meetings attended by 3,900 persons and the 4-H leaders held 258 meetings attended by 4,869. In 1936, Paul reported that 2,552 local leaders cooperated “in all projects of our work in the state” and they gave 7,354 days of service. The number of rural blacks involved in leadership was substantial. The 1946 state extension report states that 1,999 farm men and women assisted black extension agents as leaders.¹⁴⁹

The number of women on the state council had increased to 63 by 1947. Local councils were enlarged also. By 1941 there were eight county advisory boards with a total membership of 258. There were also fourteen councils of farm women with a membership of 628 and eleven 4-H councils with 307 members.¹⁵⁰ In Williamsburg County, the home and agricultural agent established a “County Over All Committee” of 44 men and women. At the annual meeting of the Beaufort county council, community representatives provided statistics on home ownership and other achievements. 4-H club leaders in Spartanburg committed themselves to monthly meetings “for the purpose of receiving better and more concentrated training along the lines of leadership.” Sixty-two constituted a community council for Georgetown County. In Marlboro County the agent secured the

¹⁴⁹Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1936,” pp. 48-9; Clemson Extension Report, 1946, n. p. s. v. “Voluntary Farm and Home Leadership.”

¹⁵⁰Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” p. 13.

assistance of ministers and their wives as an informal council in a home garden beautification competition. The organization of the district councils in 1942 gave more women the opportunity to hold state-level office. Each district council had at least five officers: president, vice president, secretary, treasure and chaplain. Two had assistant secretaries and reporters as well.¹⁵¹

Leadership, even in the apolitical extension service, required club members to think organizationally and to act politically to accomplish their objectives. The council system continued the practice of learning about the process of participatory democracy that had begun in the 1920s. Leadership activities prepared the lower strata of Afro-South Carolinians to understand concepts of rights, to identify as themselves within their clubs, councils, and communities as citizen-participants, and to understand that they had responsibilities as well. These were lessons that white southerners had fought hard to prevent blacks from learning. However, even as they defended the voting booth against legal challenges, the black masses overcame their ignorance of politics, in part, through club organizations.

Achieving Success: The Activities of Black Rural Women

The clubs, countywide activities and local leader-organized community events all had positive effects. Club meetings were held in farm homes and, according to Paul, women competed to improve the appearance of their homes to host club meetings. A tangible outcome of these activities was that four black women in South Carolina were recognized in 1933 in a national better homes campaign. Mrs. J. E. Blanton, the wife of a

¹⁵¹“Activities Among Negro Agents, Box 1946-1947 Faculty and Itinerant, Folder Mrs. Marian Paul; “District Councils of Farm Women,” SCSUHC.

former agent, received a “high merit,” Willie Mabel Price, a home agent, won a “merit,” home agent Ophelia C. Williams and Mrs. Susie Lawson received “honorable mention.”¹⁵² The Better Homes program received significant discussion in Paul’s report. Most of the projects undertaken were renovations that greatly improved the livability of the homes. One woman made over a room in her house into a model for her community. In Spartanburg, 73-year-old Mrs. Angie Coleman used \$2.25 she earned working for the Superintendent of the Arcadia Mill to buy wall and furniture paint and linoleum to refurbish a room in her home. Mrs. Alma Gilmore, another Arcadia resident, remodeled a room in her home for \$3.25. “White friends” from Arcadia Mill visited the demonstration and offered the black community the use of the Arcadia Community house for another year.¹⁵³

Activities related solely to the Better Homes campaign demonstrate the broad reach of extension programs. In a campaign that only covered five communities across the state, agents reached 1,100 families. They conducted two community tours, put on eight programs, held eight conferences on baby care, showed six health-related movies and held six clinics, cleaned and beautified the grounds of ten churches, remodeled ten bedrooms and eight kitchens, made fourteen screens for bedrooms, made eighteen rugs

¹⁵²Paul, “South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report,” pp. 33-4; Katherine F. Liston, Better Homes in America to Mrs. Marian B. Paul, 22 August, 1933. The text of the award letter was reproduced in Paul’s report. She had also served as the state chairman (black?) for better homes. Liston praised Paul and the committee she chaired for “the excellent progress in home Improvement [sic] inspiration and guidance which have been made available to the County and local chairman through your untiring efforts.”

¹⁵³Paul, “South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report,” pp. 35, 37.

and 97 pairs of curtains, planted 82 vegetable gardens, and prepared 82 steps, white-washed 296 rooms, and planted 556 flower gardens. Ministers also preached fifteen sermons on health.¹⁵⁴

Modeling positive outcomes inspired rural blacks to improve themselves. They would select one or more homes in the community for improvement. The usual approach was to pick one room as a theme. In the late 1930s, the twenty-eight women in Greenville County remodeled their kitchens for a competition. Sixty-eight persons toured the kitchens and enjoyed the picnic that followed. One man expressed gratitude that the contest was over: “now I might be able to receive some attention from my wife,” he said. Others were inspired to improve themselves. A woman on the tour remarked as she entered one home, “This kitchen used to be as black and dirty as mine.”¹⁵⁵ The improvements women made to their homes brought them immense pride. Paul wrote, “It would be pathetic to you, the readers of this report, if you could witness with me the pride and joy these club women manifest in showing the improvements they have made in their humble huts. They possess the same desire and love for beauty, even as you and I.”¹⁵⁶

The “Better Farm Living” Campaign

Usually, there was not widespread attention to or concern for the plight of rural blacks unless some crisis shined a light on their condition. The emergency of World War I broke down strong resistance to expansion of the black extension program in South Carolina. The Depression years and the awareness caused by the release of *The Economic*

¹⁵⁴Paul, “South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report,” pp. 36-7.

¹⁵⁵Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1937-1938,” pp. 39-41.

¹⁵⁶Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940,” p. 98.

Conditions of the South certainly encouraged an expansion of social services. During the 1930s, the state promoted a campaign in which farm families were encouraged to grow seventy-five percent of their own food. However, this program had never been encouraged among the poorest “deficient” farm families. One the eve of the United States’ entry into World War II, white extension officials brought black agents into their plans to improve “deficient” families’ lots and included them in the seventy-five percent campaign. This “Better Farm Living” campaign had significant results, enabling some of the poorest families to become self-sufficient.¹⁵⁷ The program, like all other extension services, was clearly segregated. Thomas Morgan, the assistant director of extension work for South Carolina, sent a memorandum to county agricultural and home demonstration agents giving specific instructions for the preparation of recognition lists. The memorandum provided specific instructions for listing award-winning families. Within each category of award the names of “White Families” were listed first followed by the names of “Negro Families.” The list from S. C. Stribling, the white agent for Cherokee County, provides an apt example. White families such as “Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Young” were honored with titles of respect while black families, like that of “J. P. Norris,” my grandfather, were not. The list of families who received certificates in this county also point out the interest of blacks in extension programs. While the county had neither a black agricultural or home agent, thirty-one black families in this upstate county where blacks constituted only 30 percent of the population, received certificates for completing the 75 percent program. Only 28 white families who received certificates (two of these were

¹⁵⁷Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” pp. 34-9.

from outside the county). State extension officials made no specific provision for a joint ceremony for awarding certificates but left it up to the local extension agents.¹⁵⁸

Despite such slights, the black agents and their clients imbibed the propaganda of Americanism and showed their patriotism. At a conservation camp held in July 1940 the campers were shown the movies "Planes, Plows and Peace," and "The Heritage We Guard." One of the more interesting ones shown was entitled "The Negro Farmer" which provided a positive celebratory image of black farm achievements to encourage them to do more for the impending war effort.¹⁵⁹ One of the white district agents, A. H. Ward, spoke to the group on the subject of "Democracy in America," which he simplistically—and inaccurately—described as "the rule of the majority." Since South Carolina was, by then, a majority white state, such a definition could be used to legitimize the misrule of the majority. At the end of the camp, they recited the pledge of allegiance.¹⁶⁰ Perhaps the pledge had always been recited, its mention in this report points out the consciousness of the time. At a meeting of the Orangeburg County local leaders the song "America" was added to the usual "The More We Get Together." The local leaders were probably as surprised as Marian Paul when the federal director of extension, M. L. Wilson, showed up at the meeting to relay "'information concerning the Defense program. You could not spend your time in a more valuable way'."¹⁶¹ Rural Afro-South

¹⁵⁸Thomas W. Morgan "TO ALL COUNTY AGENTS AND HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENTS," 1 December 1941; S. C. Stribling to Mr. Thos. W. Morgan, 13 December 1941; D. W. Watkins "TO COUNTY AGENTS AND HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENTS," 22 January 1942, Series 32, Box 22, Folder 14, STICUL.

¹⁵⁹Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941," p. 131.

¹⁶⁰Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941," pp. 29, 30.

¹⁶¹Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941," pp. 56-7.

Carolínians participated in a variety of initiatives that supported the war. Among these was a drive to collect scrap aluminum. The Newberry County agent reported that when her clients found out that the aluminum was for the war effort, “everyone was anxious to contribute a piece toward the defense of his country.”¹⁶²

One of the most singular accomplishments that touches on the transformation of rural life was the development of county councils. These councils not only provided agents with assistance on their program, but also gave more blacks opportunities to learn political and organizational skills. The county councils were composed of the local leaders of clubs. The councils helped plan the annual program by organizing “County-wide Activities, such as Fairs, Camps, Short Courses, Rally Days, Tours, and Pageants.” A black state council of farm women was organized in 1936. The council’s purpose was “to bring about closer friendship, to exchange ideas, to learn State and National policies and to receive renewed inspiration for larger service.” The council consisted of forty-four women. At their 1936 conference held in Columbia, they considered means of raising standards for home demonstration work, women’s roles in new farm programs, and their roles in establishing a model community.¹⁶³ The women received information on tuberculosis prevention from a state tuberculosis agent. Black home demonstration agents gave demonstrations to the group such as how to make kitchen sinks from automobile gas tanks. The women went on a tour of the sites of the capital city, and spent the night at Camp Dickson.¹⁶⁴ They took up a \$6.60 collection “so that they might have the honor of

¹⁶²Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” pp. 76-7,

¹⁶³Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1936,” p. 28.

¹⁶⁴Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1936,” pp. 28-9.

being the first to buy equipment for the Camp,” and pledged \$120 more. The money pledged by the council of farm women bought “kitchen utensils, dishes, silver ware, table covers, wash basins, pails, clock, vases, brooms and mops. Each home demonstration agent gave a dozen dish towels [and] the local library gave 100 books.”¹⁶⁵ At the next year’s meeting, held over 3 days at Camp Dickson, the women held an interesting discussion. A Mrs. Roper, the new director of women’s projects for the WPA, spoke to the group. According to Paul, Roper “gave a very inspiring talk in which she expressed the desire to have the farm women go back to their homes and train their children *not to feel inferior to anyone, regardless of race, creed or color* [my emphasis].”¹⁶⁶ At the end of the meeting, the women pledged \$5 per county for the upkeep of the camp and another \$5 per county to establish a student loan fund that could be drawn upon by home economics majors at South Carolina State College who needed financial assistance during their junior or senior years.¹⁶⁷ At the annual meetings of the state council of farm women, the agents continued to encourage expanding the horizons for the black community. In 1940, the agents organized a four-day driving tour of the state. They toured homes in Orangeburg, Allendale, and Beaufort counties. Paul noted that there had been improvement in all the homes of women who made the tour. One woman said that she intended to go on the tour again the next year whether or not she was elected to the state farm women’s council. White extension officials became more supportive; the white state agent for home

¹⁶⁵Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1936,” pp. 28-9; 30-3.

¹⁶⁶Paul, “Annual Report, Negro Home Demonstration Work, 1937,” pp. 37-8.

¹⁶⁷Paul, “Annual Report, Negro Home Demonstration Work, 1937,” pp. 38-9.

demonstration work and the assistant state agent for home demonstration work went on the tour as well.¹⁶⁸

Home improvement had always been part of the extension program. By the late 1930s, home ownership had taken its place as a program of central emphasis. "Everyone is well acquainted with the poor shanties built for colored people in the south," Paul declared in 1941.¹⁶⁹ Paul boldly asserted the main aspect of the problem some years later. "Tenancy only tends to tear down whatever good our program of work can build for the evils which accompany it are numerous. . . . The extortiate [sic] rents which are extracted from tenants have, in many instances, more than doubly paid for the houses they live in. The landlords cannot be persuaded to make necessary repairs until the houses have all but caved in." Home ownership was "the surest and best solution for housing problems. . . . In county-wide, community, clubs and church meetings we have explained the plans of the various Federal Agencies and other local agencies which make home loans to farmers for the purpose of buying farms." Although only fourteen farmers applied for home ownership loans in the 1936-1937 operating year, by 1938 92 families received loans through the Farm Security Administration.¹⁷⁰ The agents contacted World War I veterans who would receive the promised bonus to encourage them to invest it in buying a home.

¹⁶⁸Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940," pp. 26-31. Tours were also important in agricultural extension work where the objective was to show the "advantage of practical diversified farming, soil improvement and live-at-home" activities. Farmers typically toured their community but in some cases the tours traversed the county. See H. E. Daniels, "Extension Program of Work, 1941," pp. 7, 8.

¹⁶⁹Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941," p. 89.

¹⁷⁰Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1937-1938," pp. 71-2; Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941," p. 89.

Black youth continued to contribute to their families' prosperity by turning over wages from NYA or WPA jobs to their parents to help build homes.¹⁷¹

In Charleston County a family of twelve pooled its resources: the mother had inherited two acres of land, a daughter earned \$16 per month at an NYA job, and the father gave his labor, to become independent. Their annual rent for a two room house on two acres was \$16 per year. The daughter contributed half her monthly income to a house fund. The family built a two-room home on their own land with rooms in the rafters for the children. "The thrill of ownership is becoming intense and from all evidences the outlook for the future is bright. All are working together. They realize how much easier it is to pay \$4.75 a year in taxes, than to pay \$16.00 for a poorly built house, plus the taxes."

The Wragg family of 14 owned their home, described in the annual report as a four-room shanty in Georgetown County. The agent's persistence encouraged them to construct a two-story house with ten rooms.¹⁷² By the end of the middle years in 1949, slightly over 500 families had fully remodeled their homes, over 6,300 rooms were improved, nearly 4,500 yards were improved and over 4,700 pieces of furniture were prepared. "Every club member has become 'House Conscious', and takes pride in improvements—both exterior and interior. There is a decided increase in home ownership."¹⁷³

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¹⁷¹ Paul, "Annual Report, Negro Home Demonstration Work, 1937," pp. 74-5.

¹⁷² Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1937-1938," pp. 72-3.

¹⁷³ Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1949," p. 4.

I broke down strong resistance to expansion of the black extension program in South Carolina. The Depression years and the awareness caused by the release of *The Economic Conditions of the South* certainly encouraged an expansion of social services. During the 1930s, the state promoted a campaign in which farm families were encouraged to grow seventy-five percent of their own food. However, this program had never been encouraged among the poorest “deficient” farm families. On the eve of the United States’ entry into World War II, white extension officials brought black agents into their plans to improve “deficient” families’ lots and included them in the seventy-five percent campaign. This “Better Farm Living” campaign had significant results, enabling some of the poorest families to become self-sufficient.¹⁷⁴ The program, like all other extension services, was clearly segregated. Thomas Morgan, the assistant director of extension work for South Carolina, sent a memorandum to county agricultural and home demonstration agents giving specific instructions for the preparation of recognition lists. The memorandum provided specific instructions for listing award-winning families. Within each category of award the names of “White Families” were listed first followed by the names of “Negro Families.” The list from S. C. Stribling, the white agent for Cherokee County, provides an apt example. White families such as “Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Young” were honored with titles of respect while black families, like that of “J. P. Norris,” my grandfather, were not. The list of families who received certificates in this county also point out the interest of blacks in extension programs. While the county had neither a black agricultural or home agent, thirty-one black families in this upstate county where blacks constituted only 30 percent of the population, received certificates for completing the 75

¹⁷⁴Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” pp. 34-9.

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¹⁷⁶Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941," p. 131.

¹⁷⁷Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941," pp. 29, 30.

Wilson, showed up at the meeting to relay “‘information concerning the Defense program. You could not spend your time in a more valuable way’.”¹⁷⁸ Rural Afro-South Carolinians participated in a variety of initiatives that supported the war. Among these was a drive to collect scrap aluminum. The Newberry County agent reported that when her clients found out that the aluminum was for the war effort, “everyone was anxious to contribute a piece toward the defense of his country.”¹⁷⁹

During World War II, the federal government undertook a project that had a profound effect on many rural southern homes, the mattress demonstration project. Many rural residents lacked modern bedding. This project gave rural residents cotton-filled mattresses. The mattress demonstration project also offered another opportunity for community bonding.

School houses, halls, houses and farms were converted into centers. One cold day in Florence county I saw the women tacking mattresses out of doors. While the government provided the raw materials, it was up to rural residents to create the mattresses themselves. Agents gave demonstrations at many of these centers which increased the interest of women in extension programs. More importantly, this activity, like so many others, created greater community cohesion. Each work day at the center took the form of a day of pleasure, enlightenment and friendly companionship (sometimes interracial in nature). Often there was a person who was physically unable to make a mattress. Those able would gladly spend their time in making it. In many instances the small fee charged for equipment was found difficult to secure. A group of women would sell vegetables or eggs and donate the amount to such cases.¹⁸⁰

The mattress project is a good example of the coordinating abilities of rural blacks. Teachers, ministers, and community leaders—including volunteer local extension

¹⁷⁸Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” pp. 56-7.

¹⁷⁹Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” pp. 76-7,

¹⁸⁰Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940,” pp. 31-2.

leaders—all played a role in organizing the mattress projects. They assisted rural residents in applying for mattresses. The agents trained people to supervise the mattress centers. Paul noted “the unselfish cooperation and interest manifested by the people and volunteer leaders.” One agent kept the best two workers from each mattress working group to work with the next day’s groups.¹⁸¹ Women sometimes traded labor, and in one profound example of the cooperation that the project engendered, a woman with one arm from Newberry County made mattresses for her family. The agent wrote: “I was somewhat doubtful about her ability to make a mattress and so offered to do as much as I could to help her. She accepted but assured me that she could make it—and she did. With one hand and the nub of an arm, she turned out a product better in many instances than some made by people with two hands. When it was time to tie the tufts, she did not ask anyone to tie them while she stood idly by, but instead, she exchanged service with someone else.”¹⁸²

The reaction of rural blacks to the mattress project shows how profoundly appreciated the small services the extension service provided to them were. In Spartanburg County, one family put its three new mattresses on the guest bed believing that they were too comfortable for family use. The agent prevailed upon them to use them on their own beds rather than use the pea-vine mattresses they had. The Spartanburg agent declared, “The majority of mattress owners voice a happy well pleased sentiment, and feel that a better blessing has never fallen upon a group of farm people themselves.” The Sumter County agent quoted a woman who said, “Gracious god, every morning will be

¹⁸¹Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940,” pp. 32-4.

¹⁸²Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” p. 41.

Christmas morning with me from now on. This is the first good mattress I have had in my life. Thank you Miss Rucker and Thank God.” Another woman said, “now I am 65 years old. I am glad I have a good mattress to sleep on, and when I die I want to die on this mattress.”¹⁸³

Trading skills and abilities extended beyond mattress construction and enriched many people’s lives. A club member in Newberry County taught a blind woman how to bottom chairs and the woman became self-supporting as a result. In Marlboro County members of a club spent eight years caring for a man who was bed-ridden because of a stroke, cleaning his home, preparing his meals, and they even planned to make a cotton mattress for him. Club members also made a mattress for one of the members who had been ill and sent canned foods to her as well.¹⁸⁴

Of great importance to black mortality was the issue of sanitation health. During the 1932 National Negro Health week in Spartanburg County, 270 people attended a movie on reproduction shown by the county sanitary inspector; 654 women and girls from the county took a treatment for typhoid. The agents enlisted the aid of ministers whom they asked to preach sermons on cleanliness. They put on four plays “depicting . . . the evils of a dirty dish cloth, the fly, the mosquito, careless sneezing and drinking behind others.” Four doctors and two nurses gave talks and twenty-two church yards and ten school yards were cleaned. The lessons on sanitation had the greatest influence when it inspired community members to do more for themselves as a letter from Lima Milhous to her county agent demonstrates:

¹⁸³Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” pp. 41-2.

¹⁸⁴Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940,” pp. 109-10.

Dear Miss Burch, Agent:

I wish to express my thanks for the many helpful demonstrations which you have given us, but the one most helpful to my family in general, I must confess was the sanitary toilet.

I have 7 in family and 11 of these years we have used the nearest woods and fields, with no thought of the danger to our health. Then you brought the model sanitary toilet to our meeting and told of it's [sic] good. My mind went back to my two children who died with typhoid fever, and to the various diseases which had affected us, and I vowed then and there, I would have a toilet.

I have told others of the joy of having a toilet, and how to build them. Now we can boast of 21 sanitary toilets in our community. 17 landlords gladly furnished us with the materials for building.¹⁸⁵

Improving Everyday Life: Health and Happiness among Afro-South Carolinians

Such improvements were not sufficient to solve all the ills that plagued rural blacks and adequate medical care often remained financially out of reach. Paul wrote, "When socialized medicine has become universal a new day shall dawn upon the economic and social horizon of the south, for who can work or be very cheerful when sick."¹⁸⁶ She expressed the expectation that "socialized medicines [would] become universal" and "a new economic and social day will dawn for Negroes."¹⁸⁷ That day did not dawn during Paul's lifetime or since. However, during the middle years, home demonstration agents continued to be instrumental in bringing health services to rural blacks. The agent in one county cooperated with the black school to hold an immunization clinic where children received vaccinations for diphtheria and smallpox. Some communities had black health nurses, like Georgetown County, for example, where the

¹⁸⁵Paul, "South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report," pp. 59-60.

¹⁸⁶Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940," p. 103.

¹⁸⁷Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941," p. 125.

Episcopal church had hired a black nurse. Black nurses, hired through these cooperative ventures, held clinics for expectant mothers and children.¹⁸⁸

The agents helped to ease the abject poverty that their clients found themselves in through innovative strategies. Women were encouraged to build wardrobes and closets and to refurbish old clothes to fill them. The 210 members of one girls' 4-H club decided that they needed closets and raised the money for materials; boys in the vocational agriculture program built the closets.¹⁸⁹ In Charleston County the agent "found that many children were almost nude," using "crocus" (burlap) sacks, "with holes cut for arms and head." The agent dyed some of the sacks and made an attractive dress. "Now the native islanders are making the sacks into garments." A 4-H girl who could not afford cloth used flour, meal, and sugar sacks to make "3 hats, 5 dresses, 3 slips, 10 towels, 27 handkerchiefs, 5 brassieres, 3 aprons, 5 pairs of pillow cases, 3 spreads, 3 sheets, 3 luncheon sets, 5 runners, 1 shoe back, 2 pairs of curtains and 3 pairs of bloomers."¹⁹⁰

Many women were taught to create clothing ensembles for literally pennies (the sacks purchased by the 4-H girl cost 2.5¢ each. In one community the women held a five-day clothing clinic "at which all worn out 'dejected' garments would be rejuvenated. Club members and friends gathered and brought every imaginable kind of clothing and hats. The doctor (agent) and nurses (local leaders) examined these garments and prescribed the necessary treatment." The women made "101 boys suits . . . from men's old clothing, 337

¹⁸⁸Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941," p. 69.

¹⁸⁹Paul, "South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report," pp. 35, 37.

¹⁹⁰Paul, "South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report," pp. 57-9.

dressess were remodeled, 122 [were] dyed or tinted, 19 hats remodeled, 141 slips made from old night gowns or thin dresses.”¹⁹¹

The clothing programs also benefitted men as well. In her 1940 report, Paul noted that women had not only made clothes for themselves but were also making them for their husbands and sons as well. “Many men are able to have sufficient changes of underwear and socks in particular, and shirts and ties in general, not only to look better and possess a higher personal morale, but to be, by far, more desirable under all conditions of neatness and temperatures.”¹⁹² Later reports show that clothing programs evolved as rural women gained access to mechanical sewing machines. Agents held machine clinics to teach the proper care of the machines. In one community where there was only one sewing machine, a woman offered a room in her home to set up the machine for community use “day or night.”¹⁹³ The agents wove their program’s objective of increasing family income into their goal of providing better clothing. Increased family income would mean that money would be available for “careful purchasing” of clothes.¹⁹⁴

Another way in which extension work made black life better in South Carolina was the promotion of improved nutrition. Agents held 339 demonstrations on how to select and prepare healthy foods; 4,963 women and girls participated in food and nutrition classes. These classes encouraged the live-at-home idea of growing food for the family table. The agents also emphasized hot lunches. The agents recognized the connection

¹⁹¹Paul “South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report,” pp. 57-9.

¹⁹²Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” p. 121.

¹⁹³Paul, “South Carolina: Annual Narrative Report, 1947,” pp. 25-6.

¹⁹⁴Paul, “South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report,” pp. 15-9.

between inadequate nutrition and underachievement. In one Orangeburg County community, the agent found that the children's average diet was unbalanced and unhealthful. The typical diet was

Breakfast	School Lunch	Supper
Fried bacon	Cold potatoes	Fried collards
Biscuits	Fried bacon	Fried meat
Molasses	Cold biscuit	Potatoes or biscuits
Coffee		

The results of this type of consumption were obvious. "Most of the children were dull and unresponsive in school. In November a study was made of these 255 children, 229 were found to be under weight and two percent had bad tonsils."

The situation here was typical of conditions in most—if not all—rural black schools. The agents enlisted the aid of teachers, PTAs, and mothers by "showing them the necessity of proper school lunches. In Orangeburg, the agent gave the mothers a sample healthful menu that included

Breakfast	School Lunch	Dinner
Fruit	Soup	Two green vegetables
Cereal	Meat and lettuce sandwich	1 starch vegetable
Whole wheat toast or bread	Sliced raw carrots	Corn muffin
Cocoa or milk	Apples, cookies, milk	Sausage
		Beets
		Peach pie and warm milk

Through the agent's efforts, 5,023 black children in South Carolina ate hot lunches regularly at a time when the most rural black schools lacked a cafeteria. By 1938, that number had risen to 32,265.¹⁹⁵ Agents offered their services to undernourished children in their communities as well. Among the cases they tackled was one in which a two-year-old

¹⁹⁵Paul, "South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report," pp. 49-50; Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1937-1938," p. 94.

Spartanburg County child was unable to walk. The child's diet was changed, and she spent time in the sun, and was encouraged to walk. In less than a month, the child became active. In another county, nineteen-month old twins weighed 10 and 10½ pounds. These children were put on a special diet using foods the WPA distributed to the family through the agent.¹⁹⁶

The agents' efforts to improve nutrition went beyond modifying diets to include food preservation. Instructing rural blacks in the process of canning had far-reaching benefits. Nearly 6,000 women and girls took canning classes and the agents gave 459 demonstrations. Among the accomplishments in this area, girls canned 98,661 containers of food. Women canned 106,771 containers of vegetables, 189,866 containers of fruit, and "cured, pickled and dried 79,061 pounds of meat." Of the women involved in canning, 456 taught others to can. The personal accomplishments of women and girls recounted in this report are too numerous to mention. In every community, those who engaged in canning had an easier time feeding themselves. In addition, many had enough surplus food to sell for a small money income.¹⁹⁷ In 1949, 1,679,333 quarts of fruits and vegetables were canned by club members, although it seems that meat preservation was no longer a necessity.¹⁹⁸ In agriculture, progress was made as well. A sweet potato growers co-op formed by twenty-four farmers in Union County received statewide attention for producing 836 bushels of potatoes that they sold for \$1,500.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940," pp. 92-3.

¹⁹⁷Paul "South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report," pp. 55-7.

¹⁹⁸Paul "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1949," p. 4.

¹⁹⁹Newswire from the Clemson Agricultural College Extension Service, attachment to A. B. Bryan, Agricultural Editor to Mr. Reuben Brigham, 26 April 1941, Box 707, File: SC A-C, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

After the war, these efforts continued. Of note is the agents' continued promotion of improved diets for Afro-South Carolinians. With the agents' help, 223 schools—a small percentage to be sure—were supplied with hot lunches although that number had declined to 183 by 1949.²⁰⁰ They also “assisted 16 schools with libraries [and helped beautify] 131 school grounds.”²⁰¹ Paul's work with federal agencies led to increased home ownership, access to credit, and electrification of rural blacks' homes. The agents' work with health departments led to decreases in tuberculosis, infant mortality, and pellagra among rural blacks. The agents also became a vital link between farmers in need of laborers and those who constituted the pool of farm labor.²⁰² Paul also worked with landlords to secure better living conditions for black laborers and tenants' participation in the extension program.²⁰³

White control of the labor of all members of rural black families was the historical tradition in the southern states. Paul asserted that “farm women were compeled [sic] to leave their homes in the early morning to work until noon on the farm; the children too small to do farm work would be left to care for themselves. The mother returned late at night, tired and worn out. She was in no attitude to care for the children. . . . The mother in small towns or cities who are employed in domestic services had to leave their children at home also.” Recognizing the negative effects that the economic necessity of black

²⁰⁰Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1949,” p. 3. Idus Newby puts the number of black schools at 2,075 in 1950, which would put the percentage of schools with hot lunches certainly at less than 10 percent when the war ended. Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 308.

²⁰¹Paul, “South Carolina, Narrative Annual Report, 1946,” p. 28.

²⁰²Paul, “South Carolina, Narrative Annual Report, 1946,” pp. 28-9,

²⁰³Paul, “South Carolina, Narrative Annual Report, 1946,” p. 3.

women working outside the home had on their family lives, agents and communities seized the opportunity to do something about it. According to Paul, new agricultural programs gave farm women more time with their children. Perhaps for many whites a stay-at-home black mother conjured up pre-1960s images of undeserving “welfare queens,” which may explain why white political leaders fought so hard to keep occupations dominated by blacks outside the New Deal programs. Relief programs in urban areas permitted the establishment of nursery schools for black children, which permitted their mothers to continue to work. The WPA sponsored a summer nursery school in rural, and heavily black, Allendale County where most blacks worked on land they did not own. This school freed more mothers for field work.²⁰⁴

Agents promoted other activities designed to decrease rural blacks’ reliance on the subsistence “live-at-home” and to increase their autonomy by bringing them into the money economy. They encouraged the erection of roadside markets in all counties, the development of “high standards of production” for goods sold, improved advertising, and record-keeping to track net profits.²⁰⁵ What is striking about all these activities is that they embrace the typical middle class aspirations that inform the American ideal. Such emphasis influenced rural blacks to desire what most white Americans expected—a good quality of life.²⁰⁶ Agents promoted thrift clubs, which had been organized in fourteen communities by 1936. Participants developed long-range goals: one woman deposited funds she made from selling peas and tomatoes toward the purchase of a mule. One

²⁰⁴Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1936,” pp. 69-71.

²⁰⁵Paul, “South Carolina, 1932-1933, Narrative Annual Report,” pp. 20-1.

²⁰⁶Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1936,” pp. 60-1.

tenant farmer saved the profits of egg sales to pay her rent. In another case, a brother and sister used savings to pay their taxes. A thrift club on James Island, the James Island Promoters, bought a grist mill that they operated as a for-profit venture with the proceeds being placed in a treasury.²⁰⁷ Residents on St. Helena Island created the St. Helena Cooperative Credit Union.

The purpose of the organization [was] to make the business of farming more efficient, attractive and profitable, and to bring about a fraternal union between the members of this corporation, and to promote thrift, honesty and integrity among its members. The credit union offered a full range of services, holding deposits, making loans, investing savings, granting credit "under proper restrictions to members who wish to borrow."

In 1936 and 1937, the credit union was able to loan \$100 to every farmer who needed it. In other communities of Beaufort County, Frogmore and Lands End, the adult club members established Christmas savings accounts. Part of the money was used for home improvement.²⁰⁸ The situation of an Allendale woman who saved the most in her country's thrift club demonstrates how these clubs helped clients see that they could have some measure of control over their material future. "I needed a coat for two years and was not able to get one, so I decided at the end of the year I would have enough by putting all my little pennies, nickels and dimes in a bank and I was one proud soul when I drew out my \$15.00. I went right on and got my coat." Young people also were able to enter the commercial economy. Agents encouraged the youth who were receiving money wages from NYA programs to use their money wisely. For example, one NYA worker used her money to buy lumber that her father used to complete the construction of the first home

²⁰⁷Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1936," pp. 79-80.

²⁰⁸Paul, "Annual Report, Negro Home Demonstration Work, 1937," pp. 101-2.

they ever owned.²⁰⁹ A thirteen-year-old boy who earned \$49 from selling vegetables gave his mother two-thirds of his proceeds and put his share in the club “so that at Christmas time, his wish for a new suit of clothes which will be his first, might be realized.”²¹⁰ A few bought radios, one girl bought a piano.²¹¹

While extension programs enabled blacks to have more control over their lives and labor, whites also continued to benefit from the knowledge black extension agents offered. One white woman met the members of the Greenville kitchen tour and said to those assembled ““Don’t come to my kitchen today, for I have not cleaned up. I told my cook Phoebe to go around and get ideas then come back and help me fix my kitchen.”” Hattie Levister took a part-time job cooking for a white woman and used the knowledge she had gained of recipes in club work to do the work.

One day the lady said to her, ‘Hattie, I really like the way you save my food and the way you prepare it.’ She thanked her and told her Home Demonstration Agent taught her to always measure accurately and follow the recipe and success would always be [hers]. The lady was paying her \$3.50 per week. She did not ask her for more that day. She waited about two weeks and asked her for a raise. The lady told her she had never paid more than that for her help and she was not able to pay her what she was worth, but she would give her 50¢ more.²¹²

In Kershaw County Tom Boykin “compelled all of his tenants to attend . . . meetings. He and his wife attended when we organized.”²¹³ Each of these instances shows that whites were able to benefit from segregated extension work as well. It perhaps seems cynical to

²⁰⁹Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1936,” pp. 60-1.

²¹⁰Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1936,” pp. 79-80.

²¹¹Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940,” p. 107.

²¹²Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1937-1938,” pp. 39, 87-8.

²¹³Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940,” p. 16.

suggest that whites' interest in black extension work was greatest when it intersected with their own self-interest, but the history of the South Carolina extension service suggests that whites desired extension service to work primarily in their interest rather than for blacks' independence.

Like the other objectives of black home demonstration work, social goals had both individual and community aspects. The agents wanted to "install into the girls and women pride in their community." To do this they continued activities that agents used in the formative years including beautifying public spaces, developing playgrounds and establishing community centers "where recreation is supervised" to and raising the general standard of living throughout the community. They continued to promote hot lunches for school children by the conventional wisdom preferred hot lunches because in all likelihood they would be more balanced than cold ones. They also encouraged prenatal care for "young mothers [and gave] lectures and literature upon the care of infants to them" as well as securing medical services through county nurses. They taught better methods of discipline to parents as well.

Educating for the Future: Home Demonstration Agents and Black Women

While acquiring material wealth could provide a modicum of independence, education was the key to long-term autonomy. The extension program was essential in elevating the long-term educational aspirations of many rural youths. The home demonstration agent for Allendale County and the local Jeanes teacher held an achievement day on March 18, 1937. A Mr. Hugey, the educational director of the NYA, and a Mr. Schiffley, the assistant state agent for black schools, spoke at the event and encouraged pursuit of higher education and pride in school buildings and grounds. The Allendale

agent also began a lending library with ten books in 1937 for her 4-H clubsters. The agent, Rosa Reed Odum, wrote book companies to request books that were “shelf worn.” She received 400 books and made her office into a lending library.²¹⁴ When she moved to Orangeburg as the county home demonstration agent, the library went with her. There, books were distributed to private homes in several communities where the “librarian” could circulate them. “This project stimulates growth in a community.” In addition to books, home-oriented magazines and extension publications were available.²¹⁵

The programs of the extension service permitted many rural youth to continue their education. In Aiken County, with the agent’s help, forty-seven young people attended high school, and the county council gave one child \$13 for fees at Schoefield Institute. Agents were instrumental in finding homes for club girls who had to migrate to urban areas to attend high school. The girls worked for reputable families for their upkeep and to earn spending money.²¹⁶ Local women’s clubs participated in the promotion of education as well. The Marlboro County farm women’s council paid the tuition for one of their county’s residents to attend South Carolina State College. Agents took pride in the achievements of their former charges. When Minnie Gandy, the Marlboro County agent presented her county’s scholarship student at the home agents’ annual conference at South Carolina State College, Rosa Gadson of Charleston summoned a former club girl from her county who was an instructor at South Carolina State College.²¹⁷ By 1946, the

²¹⁴Paul, “Annual Report for 1938-1939,” p. 112.

²¹⁵Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” pp. 130-1.

²¹⁶Paul, “Annual Report, Negro Home Demonstration Work, 1937,” pp. 52, 89; Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1937-1938,” pp. 94-5; Paul, “Annual Report for 1938-1939,” p. 96.

²¹⁷Paul, “Annual Report for 1938-1939,” p. 96-7.

State Council of Farm women was supporting young women through scholarships and Marlboro County's Council of Farm Women had established a student loan fund to assist 4-H boys and girls who wanted to attend college.²¹⁸ Clubsters also took the initiative to support their own educational aspirations and put the knowledge they acquired to use for themselves and their families. Sarah Williams of Graham Community in Dorchester County raised chickens to earn money. "I am looking forward to my education," she wrote. "I will need to go to high school and college and I am doing what I can to make the best of poultry. I live on a small farm with few advantages, but we are striving to make our farm count."²¹⁹

The agents put on a 4-H queen contest. Each county crowned a queen and state queen was selected from the county that raised the most money for the State 4-H camp. Such activities, Paul asserted, were of great benefit to the extension program. The program had a profound effect on some young women, as their mothers attested. At a Florence county women's club meeting of 106 women where they discussed their children, twenty-three

mothers stated that since their daughters had been in 4-H work, their attitude towards life has been greatly changed. 67 stated that through faith and confidence in the agent, their daughters have been able to remain in school. One of this number stated that with 4-H work as a foundation, her daughter, Wilmur Bristow, had made an "A" average in high school after leaving the rural school and has now entered college with the hopes of becoming an agent some day.¶ Madie Staten's mother stated that her daughter, encouraged by the agent, was able to find little odd jobs to keep herself in school for her first college year.¶ Vernitta Robinson's mother stated that her daughter was able to attend high school without room or

²¹⁸Paul, "South Carolina, Narrative Annual Report, 1946," p. 27.

²¹⁹Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1937-1938," pp. 109-10.

board charges through the arrangements of the agent. This Clubster maintains [a] "B" average.²²⁰

Club members also received public accolades for their accomplishments. Clyde Bristow, a 4-H club girl from Florence County was picked to read an essay she wrote about her accomplishments in 4-H on the National Farm and Home Hour from Washington D. C. Her talk centered on what activities she had undertaken as a club girl and how she had used that knowledge: planning and budgeting, and preparation of food to help her family. She had no money to make the trip. The local Sears, Roebuck and Company store and several local organizations gave her financial assistance.²²¹ Vandie Lee Livingston, a 4-H boy from Aiken County participated in three encampments by 1940. He made profits on all his demonstration projects (\$83.99 over three years). Earnest Schofield, also from Aiken County, received recognition for sharing what he learned at meetings and camps he attended with his club members. 4-H teams from South Carolina went to the American Negro Exposition in Chicago in 1940 where they demonstrated "table service and table etiquette," and "slaughtering, dressing hogs, cutting and curing meats."²²² Of greater interest is the effect that extension work had on blacks' outlook on themselves as black South Carolinians. "Our 4-H girls and boys are becoming dissatisfied with the drab life on the farm, with exploitation by landlords; with ignorance prevalent among the older

²²⁰Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940," p. 91.

²²¹Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941," pp. 136-8.

²²²Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941," p. 131; H. E. Daniels to Mr. Ralph Fulgham, (attachments) 17 July 1940, Box 770, Folder SC D-G, Entry 3, RG 33, NA II.

heads, and now they seek, *not to leave these responsibilities, but to erase the unpleasant ones and to improve the others* [my emphasis].”²²³

The Economic and Social Impact of Black Extension Work

During World War II, Afro-South Carolinians contributed significantly to the state’s agricultural economy. John W. Mitchell’s report of black extension work in the 1945 fiscal year shows that 6 farmers grew 46,450 pounds of seed cotton and 16,040 pounds of lint cotton valued at \$4,152 (\$40,904.27). Eighteen farmers averaged 36 bushels of corn per acre when the statewide average was only 12 bushels per acre. Six farmers raised beef cattle valued at \$8,442 (\$83,168.07). Others generated a monthly income of \$420 (\$4,137.72) from the sale of milk. Nine farmers in one county grew 284 tons of hay. The value of black 4-H boys’ projects in pork, beef, poultry, and various garden crops was estimated at \$262,345 (\$2,584,545). Women and girls’ programs emphasized “Triple-E’s, Education, Energy, Effort.” Over 17,500 women and girls participated in food production and conservation projects. Home agents and local leaders enrolled 16,387 rural and 3,138 urban families in home garden projects. The focus of women’s work was primarily to produce food for their families, but they produced for market as well. Farm women’s poultry and egg sales were valued at \$92,459 (\$910,878.60); dairy projects were valued \$32,424 (\$319,431.60). Black club women and club girls sold \$118,812 (\$1,170,501) worth of farm products and invested \$45,000 (\$443,326.60) of the proceeds in war bonds.²²⁴

²²³Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” p. 131.

²²⁴John W. Mitchell, comp., “Extension Work Among Negroes in the South, 1944-1945” (Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Agriculture, 1946), 10-1. The numbers in parentheses are the values of these products in current dollars.

Home demonstration reports for the immediate post war years reveal that the aims of the black extension program contained numerous long-term objectives that challenged white hegemony. At the top of the list was universal home and farm ownership for farm families. Home ownership, as shown in the discussion above, threatened to remove blacks' abject dependence on whites and the economic power whites used to control other aspects of blacks' lives. They also called for high schools in all communities and the expectation that all rural children would complete high school even if that meant finding homes in cities for 4-H club members to attend high school. The list also included the objective that "all persons [should] enjoy the right of citizenship." This objective was to be met by a "good behavior campaign" and efforts to "seek to secure full citizenship."²²⁵ Paul stated that the "dual system of life in the South . . . denied [one-half of the population] the rights of full citizenship" and made it difficult for her to meet the needs of her clients. She declared that they needed "better educational facilities, higher wages, roads which will enable them to market their products, better housing conditions, hospitalization and medical attention and recreational advantages."

We can not demand high schools and school buses for our children; we are too poor to build hospitals and educate many of our children to become doctors; we cannot even demand salaries and wages commensurate to the work we do. However, with these facts in the minds of the agents, and all of the agents conscientiously striving to lift our people out of the depths of ignorance and poverty, we plan our program to include all farm families, day laborers, share croppers, tenants and land owners; they all need help. *Every Negro is underprivileged and, therefore, needs assistance* [my emphasis].²²⁶

²²⁵Paul, "South Carolina, Narrative Annual Report, 1946," pp. 11-2.

²²⁶Paul, "South Carolina, Narrative Annual Report, 1946," p. 15.

The plans outlined for meeting the needs of Afro-South Carolinians show communities that were not in disarray but ones that intensely focused on creating a strong sense of community. District councils contributed to the dialog on improving extension work and the black community. During discussions on the topic of “How Home Demonstration Work can be Strengthened,” the women suggested that a stronger program could be developed if they assumed responsibilities rather than relying on the agent. The women decided that they should cooperate, that should not be discouraged . . . should “love one another, [and] shun gossip.” Among the objectives of the farm women for 1947 they included home ownership, creation of recreational facilities, and that blacks “register and encourage all Negroes to register and vote in the general election.”²²⁷

Conclusion

Such ideas were the fruit of black extension workers’ efforts on behalf of their clients. Marian Paul continued to promote the central role the agents played in rural blacks’ lives. She declared that agents must have “vision, courage, perseverance, initiative and unfaltering faith in [their] work and [their] people to meet the varied demands on [their] time.”²²⁸ The role agents played in the life of rural blacks in the post-war years became increasingly important. Home agents often served as sources of information on government programs and took over increased responsibilities for disseminating information on some of those programs when black employees who had been hired for programs such as the Farm Security Administration or the AAA, for example, were discontinued.

²²⁷“District Councils of Farm Women,” SCSUHC.

²²⁸Paul, “South Carolina, Narrative Annual Report, 1946,” p. 27.

Agents solicited funds for various bond drives, served on the interracial commission, joined women's clubs, and helped veterans and their families adjust to post-war life.²²⁹

While the number of black farm operators had dwindled to 69,136 from 109,010 in 1920, almost 72 percent of black farmers were farm owners by 1948.²³⁰ Marian Paul reported that 142,938 blacks were either members of extension clubs or attended extension-sponsored events in 1949. Twenty-nine agents directly influenced 18,418 black families. While black agents' direct "sphere of influence" was constricted by the state's unwillingness to commit to a full compliment of black agents, this chapter demonstrates that their work positively influenced rural blacks' lives. Marian Paul not only celebrated her agents and their accomplishments. She also expressed the idealistic hope that once "the world, and South Carolina in particular, *becomes aware* [my emphasis] of the inequalities of the races in the South, of the burden of dual systems of education, recreation, economics, health facilities, employment, justice and citizenry, we feel that the plight of the Negroes will be recognized and an all-out effort will be manifested to bring these unfortunate opportunities and assistance which will raise their standards of living."²³¹ However, the realization of black's plight did not come soon enough. Idus Newby asserted that

As black Carolinians became healthier, better educated, more independent in their person and secure in their property, they became increasingly dissatisfied with white supremacy and racial discrimination. . . . To whatever extent white paternalists befriended black Carolinians—and this became an increasingly important factor in the progress made in education,

²²⁹Paul, "South Carolina, Narrative Annual Report, 1946," p. 29.

²³⁰Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Report, 1948," p. 4.

²³¹Paul, "South Carolina Narrative Report, 1948," pp. 4-5.

health, and living conditions—they helped undermine white supremacy. . . . Social progress in black Carolina was incompatible with the racial status quo.²³²

While Newby rightly suggests that some whites helped to destroy segregation by making it more secure, I believe that it is equally important to emphasize that Afro-South Carolinians not only were dissatisfied with the status quo, but that they took the lead in undermining it. Whatever the actions of white paternalists, they were responding to blacks' demonstrated restiveness, not mere "dissatisfaction." If one examines the actions of the State Director of Extension Work, D. W. Watkins, it becomes clear that paternalists attempted to combine improvements for blacks with greater controls. According to Marian Paul, at the 1949 agents' outlook meeting D. W. Watkins stated that the main objective of the extension program was "to teach the farm people to live according to the high standards set in the United States by other groups. Secure for these families rural electricity (comfort, leisure, culture), schools, roads, and radios, etc." His materialistic emphasis contradicts much of the general extension literature I have read in the course of my research in which citizenship and profitable farming are accorded equal weight.

This chapter reveals that black agents and their clients played a significant role in improving health, living conditions, and education in black own communities. "Through the years of ignorance, discouragements, hardships he has borne his burdens uncomplainingly, awaiting the day of opportunity, education and enlightenment. When this day comes, the Negro *can be trusted to save himself* [my emphasis]. The dawn of that day is approaching with the advent of many governmental agencies." According to Marian Paul, "The rural people are more alert and more eager to better their conditions and respond in

²³²Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 202.

every way to our program.” With the help and encouragement of black extension agents, Afro-South Carolinians improved their homes, pooled their resources to build community centers, establish local markets, and improve their schools long before white paternalists became interested in their plight.

Women became proud to be connected with the Extension program and have done much to spread the work in their counties. A superior type of leadership was developed. . . . No longer do the women hesitate to contribute their mites to the State Camp, nor appear reluctant to allow their children to attend the camp. The contact with persons from the various parts of the State gave each one a broader view on life.²³³

A woman in Dorchester County expressed these sentiments as well.

We had organized in our community the Home Demonstration club work four years, but I did not join until two years ago. I wanted to learn to sew. I have 9 in family; 7 children, my husband and myself. . . . I visited one of the Council meetings and saw where some one had made dish towels from flour sacks. . . . I joined the club and the agent showed me how to make many articles. Now I can make all of my clothes and those for my children. I am very proud to be connected with Home Demonstration work. I never miss a club meeting. Through my influence, 6 women have joined. I send two of my children to the 4-H club meetings.²³⁴

These successes heightened the demand for home demonstration agents, exceeding the funds to hire agents. Some rural Afro-South Carolinians went to extraordinary lengths to gain access to extension services. In Williamsburg County South Carolina, one man built a road to his house from the main highway to permit the agent to visit. Nola Syphus in Beaufort County dug a half-mile-long ditch “to build a road to her home.”²³⁵

²³³Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1937-1938,” p. 30.

²³⁴Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940,” p. 96.

²³⁵“Activities Among Negro Agents, Box 1946-1947 Faculty and Itinerant, Folder Mrs. Marian Paul, SCSUHC.

The middle years had indeed altered the face of rural South Carolina. And black extension agents were there “work[ing] unceasingly, tirelessly, never complaining, endeavoring always with a personal feeling to liberate from economic, social and intellectual bondage, the people with whom they work.”²³⁶ At the end of the middle years, Paul declared that “a new era is approaching and we are hopeful and optimistic that [the Negro] will soon assume a role which will make him an asset instead of a liability in South Carolina.”²³⁷

What the terms “asset” and “liability” meant varied for blacks and whites. Indeed when some flashpoints of the civil rights era occurred in communities that had long had the services of extension agents, local whites probably concluded that blacks with rising expectations were distinct liabilities. But during these incipient struggles for civil, social and economic equality, white South Carolinians made it clear that they would not relinquish control without their own struggle. In 1940, white and black agents began to meet at the county level to coordinate their programs. Also in that year, black supervisors began to meet with the entire extension staff, but these arrangements must have been of short duration.²³⁸ Paul recorded in her last report of the middle years that Watkins began to require black state agents’ attendance at monthly meetings. Watkins also asked white and black county agents to meet informally to discuss their problems.²³⁹ This process would become formalized and more restrictive for black agents as will be shown in the

²³⁶Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1939-1940,” p. 1; Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” p. 139.

²³⁷Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1949,” p. 5.

²³⁸Paul, “South Carolina Narrative Annual Report, 1940-1941,” p. 139.

²³⁹Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1949,” p. 8.

next chapter. South Carolina whites probably believed that with material improvements granted by the state through extension programs must have created the satisfied rural black populace they sought.

However, there were portents that the position of blacks in American life, as Marian Paul had recognized during the 1940s, was about to change. When Harry Truman vetoed the bill that would have required schools on military bases in the South to segregate students, he called it a “backward step”—one that could not be taken in light of the United States’ new position in world affairs:

We have assumed a role of world leadership in seeking to unite people of great cultural and racial diversity for the purpose of resisting aggression, protecting their mutual security and advancing their own economic and political development. We should not impair our moral position by enacting a law that requires a discrimination based on race. Step by Step we are discarding old discriminations; we must not adopt new ones.²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration*, 191.

CHAPTER SEVEN

“THE CRUSHING OF INITIATIVE AND PERSONALITY”: THE DEMISE OF BLACK EXTENSION WORK, 1950-1964

Frequently that segment of an organization being subjected to changes will diagnose the organization's proposals quite differently from the way they are diagnosed by those suggesting the changes.—Negro agricultural agents, 1955

To not be considered is the crushing of initiative and personality.—Marian Paul, 1958

Issues involving black extension work moved to the periphery of the nation's racial discussion in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The nation's attention was focused on the fallout from Truman's executive order desegregating the military, the publication of *To Secure These Rights*, the impact of college desegregation cases, and a South Carolina challenge to unequal treatment in K-12 education which was then in the court system.¹ Southern black agricultural and home agents remained under the immediate jurisdiction of state extension agencies and continued to experience blatant discrimination. Bureaucrats from the U. S. D. A. continued to honor—and to defend—an organizational structure that left state power over black workers unfettered.² During the Truman administration, U. S. D. A. bureaucrats used the force of their expert opinion to overcome blacks' challenges to discrimination in the extension service. With volatile racial issues coming to the fore, as Eisenhower came to power, these bureaucrats took a leading role in shaping an administration policy that supported continued segregation.

¹United States President's Committee on Civil Rights, *To Secure These Rights: the Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights* (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1947); Executive Order 9981, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/9981a.htm>; *McLaurin v. Oklahoma*, <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=339&invol=637>; *Sweatt v. Painter*, <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=339&invol=629>; *Briggs, et. al. v. Elliott, et. al.*, <http://brownvboard.org/research/opinions/briggs2.htm>.

²Schor, “The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service,” 267.

Challenging 4-H Segregation in the *Brown* Era

Joel Schor reports that by the 1950s, 4-H had become one of the United States' major exports and was significant for its emphasis on citizenship responsibility.³ Despite the protests of some black leaders in the 1940s, racially segregated youth camping had been established. It remained one of the most visible examples of the application of a "gentlemen's agreement" in extension policy that permitted blacks' exclusion from the mainstream. After the third black regional camp in 1950, Thomas Campbell—still with the Federal Extension Service after 44 years of service as a regional field supervisor—wrote D. W. Watkins complimenting him on the support that federal and state extension officials had given to the regional camp for blacks held in Petersburg, Virginia. (Presumably, Watkins was the chair of the southern directors' Committee on Negro Affairs, which organized the camp.) Campbell declared that the camps "have passed the experimental stage" and that "the entire colored extension service personnel can now look upon these important annual events as an integral part of the overall extension system." Campbell gently suggested that copies of the camp report be made available to the presidents and staff of all the southern black colleges so "that they might become more thoroughly imbued with the whole idea [of regional camping]." Campbell apparently followed this letter a couple of months later with a recommendation to federal officials for a national encampment at Washington D. C. Federal extension officials turned that recommendation down, citing security concerns since the Korean War was underway. They opted to hold a regional camp in Pine Bluff, Arkansas instead.⁴ Campbell's

³Schor, "The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service," 265.

⁴Thomas M. Campbell to Director D. W. Watkins, 13 October 1950, Box 78, Folder: July 1, [1950] to March 31, 1951, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

diplomatic suggestion was one that reflected the strong sentiment of blacks for a national encampment that had not been fulfilled in the 1940s.

The exclusion of black 4-H campers from the seat of democracy raised the issue of white America's hypocrisy. Segregated youth camping received negative headlines in the Negro press. An article in the *Pittsburgh Courier* highlighted the continued discrimination at national 4-H camps. The author, Revella Clay, declared, "From its bottom to its top the National 4-H Club, which is allegedly dedicated to making better citizens of its nearly 3,000,000 youthful members is polluted with outright and obvious discrimination . . ." In a list of eight grievances, Clay pointed out that a national camp for whites had been held in Washington, D. C. for twenty-seven years, while there had been a regional black camp for only four years. Black youth—even those from outside the South—were excluded from National 4-H camps. While white youth were able to see the President, Secretary of Agriculture, and other high government officials, Clay complained, state extension directors staunchly resisted holding a camp in the nation's capital for black youth, who were also excluded from the 4-H congress and therefore could not receive the small scholarships available to those 4-H members who attended it. Black youth were not permitted to participate in international exchange programs. No black youth had ever won the \$1,200 national 4-H scholarship although they had asked to be considered.⁵

In December 1951 the *Courier* carried another story on Georgia 4-H'ers who were not permitted to participate in state competitions that would lead to prize awards and trips to the National 4-H Congress. Georgia's State Director of Extension, P. H. Stone, openly

⁵Revella Clay, "Investigation Discloses National 4-H Clubs With Discrimination from Top to Bottom," *Pittsburgh Courier*, n. d. 1951, 5.

admitted that the prohibition followed the Georgia pattern “of not inviting Negroes to participate.” Stone stated that he and the white state home agent were “pushing for a state program to prepare Negro youth for overall competition.” In the meantime, black youth were eligible for cash awards comparable to those of the national camp that they were unable to attend.⁶ The Georgia story demonstrated that whites were acclimating themselves to the legal reality that if segregation were to be approved as a permissible policy, it must offer a “separate [but more] equal opportunity.” Actions such as creating regional camps, or state camps with comparable prize money fit into the spirit of the then-established legal precedent, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, (1896) which had asserted that segregation was not unconstitutional *if* equal facilities existed. The Supreme Court also stated in the *Plessy* case that social interaction could not be forced. To keep *Plessy* secure, public officials had to make equal treatment in public spaces and in public services more than a pronouncement.

Federal extension officials’ response to the exposure of their hypocrisy suggests that the values of the outside world had progressed past those of the extension service. Federal officials had become so accustomed to the *laissez-faire* relationship they had with the states on race matters, that they chose to dissemble and to develop strategies to justify their support of southern policies rather than question the policies. One strategy federal officials undertook was to contact the lone civil service black among the bureaucrats in the Washington office to seek an explanation of blacks’ hostility toward segregated camping (or perhaps to seek approbation of that policy).

⁶William A. Fowlkes, Jr. “4-H Club Bias demoralizing Ga.: 46,000 Race Youngsters Jim Crowed,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 22 December 1951, 1, 5. This article was in a clippings file. Interestingly, there was also a front-page story on the attack of Rev. J. A. Delaine who was leading the *Briggs* case.

Sherman Briscoe, a black employee in the U. S. D. A.'s Office of Information wrote a frank memorandum to Wesley McCune, assistant to Truman's Secretary of Agriculture Charles Franklin Brannan. Briscoe suggested that the *Courier's* attacks on segregated camps had their foundation in its publisher's Republican leanings. But he also suggested that the U. S. D. A.'s poor record on providing camps for black children was "unfortunate" given the fact that there had been national camps in Washington for white youth since 1927 (with the exception of the years of World War II). Briscoe faulted the southern extension directors who had "forced" black extension officials to hold the camps at black land-grant colleges despite black officials' "vigorous protest" rather than offering a Washington, D. C. camp where black youth would "have the same advantages as the whites for understanding the operation of *their* [my emphasis] government and for the building of citizenship pride." "For the last year or two, the encampments have had the grandiose theme: 'Working together for world understanding.' How difficult of achievement when one doesn't understand his neighbor who lives next door!" Briscoe recommended that Secretary Brannan send a memorandum to extension director M. L. Wilson "deploring the 4-H discriminatory policy, and urging him in the strongest terms to take definite steps leading to equalization of opportunities for Negro 4-Hers." He suggested that the black regional camp be held in Washington and that a regional delegation of black youth be sent to the 4-H Congress in Chicago.⁷ Despite Briscoe's memorandum, nothing was done to end segregated camping and it remained a hot-button issue for the Federal Extension Service.

⁷Sherman Briscoe to Mr. Wesley McCune, 14 January 1952, Box 136, Folder: Cooperation 3, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II. Use of the term "regional" delegation seems to be a misnomer. Since black youth from states without segregation would only be able to attend the regional camp, it would seem that the term "Negro" rather than "regional" should have been used.

Nearly two years after Clay's article, in late 1953, the Baltimore *Afro-American* ran a story on black 4-Hers' exclusion from the international livestock show in Chicago. The article discussed the forced segregation of black 4-H participants in the South and flatly blamed "southern state directors of the Extension Service [who] are primarily responsible for this blatant discrimination." The article also pointed out that black [extension] workers were segregated unless they could "perform some specialized skilled service for white plantation owners or farmers." A constituent of Congresswoman France Bolton of Ohio sent her the *Afro-American* article. Her press secretary, Gene Cohen, wrote to Maxwell W. Rabb at the White House suggesting that the administration make a statement against the practice and requested that Congresswoman Bolton receive mention if such a statement was made. In Cohen's letter, he said he had spoken with C. C. Lang who was associate leader in the national 4-H office who told him that the national camp accepted "whatever the states send." Lang admitted that no blacks had attended the national camp for four or five years and none had ever attended the National 4-H Club Congress in Chicago. In the latter case, the congress was run by "The National Committee on Boys and Girls Club Work," a private organization. (As such, they would not have to abide by any federal non-discrimination legislation). Lang told Bolton that no federal regulations prohibited states from sending black 4-Her's to camps and but that the power to make that decision was in the hands of state extension directors. Lang mentioned the southern directors specifically in references to the black regional camp. It would not explain why no black campers had been sent to the national camp from non-southern states. Given the traditional racial liberalism of the Republican Party, Bolton's request does not seem unusual. However, the response to it was. Rabb consulted extension

officials regarding the issues raised in the article. An extension official informed him that the event was “a cooperative affair, voluntarily participated in by the respective State Extension Services.”⁸ The writer declared that the Department of Agriculture had no jurisdiction over criteria set out by states in deciding who they would send to the camp or to deny admittance to campers who were selected. The writer also pledged that the department was working on a solution to the problem.⁹ Dwight Eisenhower came to power at a time when both international and domestic crises probably made conservative action more appropriate than bold changes. Federal extension officials took advantage of this and influenced the administration’s policies in a way that appealed to southern whites. Perhaps, without intent, federal extension officials’ desire to keep faith in their partnership with southern extension directors helped to move the South toward the Republican party since the policies that came out of the Eisenhower administration promoted only a slow rate of change in the *status quo*. Within a month, the overturning of *Plessy* by *Brown v. Board of Education* made that solution more complex.

The youth camping controversy emerged contemporaneously with the *Brown* and *Briggs* cases. These cases tested the limits between established extension practices and blacks’ struggle against inequality. *Brown* made the “cooperative” explanation more

⁸Albert Anderson, “National 4-H Club Group Holds Fast to Racial Ban,” *The Baltimore Afro-American*, 12 December 1953; Gene Cohen to Mr. Maxwell W. Rabb, 20 April 1954; unsigned letter to Maxwell W. Rabb, n. d., Box 201, Folder 4-H Clubs 8-11, Entry 1002. According to Robert Frederick Burk, Rabb was president Eisenhower’s “informal adviser on minority problems. . . . Rabb—a Jew, a lawyer and former volunteer assistant to Henry Cabot Lodge—became known by colleagues on the White House staff as the resident ‘liberal’ on racial issues, and E. Frederic Morrow—a black man who worked in the Eisenhower White House, praised Rabb as the sole staffer who took racial problems seriously.” Burk argues that Rabb had been chosen deliberately rather than a black adviser because of the “administration’s fear of appearing too fervent an advocate of minority interests.” Robert Frederick Burk, *The Eisenhower Administration and Black Civil Rights* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 70.

⁹Gene Cohen to Mr. Maxwell W. Rabb, 20 April 1954; C. C. Lang to Hon. Frances Bolton, 23 April 1954, Box 201, Folder 4-H Clubs 8-11, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

difficult to sustain so federal extension officials worked harder to make their case. E. W. Aiton, national 4-H director, wrote P. V. Kepner offering suggestions for discussing the issue of camping with Eisenhower's Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson. Aiton's suggestions seem framed to shift administration opinion toward opposition to desegregated camping. He theorized that states would send all white or all "Colored" delegations to the camps, if "Negroes from 17 Southern States must compete against White 4-H Club members." "Emotions and commitments are such that the State workers would send an all Colored delegation rather than face their own [white] people after sending a mixed delegation." He stated that black 4-H work in most states "could not be considered superior to all work with whites." Why superiority rather than equality was the established standard for black youth is unclear. Aiton proposed a period of gradual transition to integrated camps. He also recommended another possibility—one that would soon become the cornerstone of the southern strategy of "massive resistance" to school desegregation. "Perhaps the only acceptable (to the Southern States) alternative is dropping National 4-H Camps out of the picture. This would be only a palliative that evades the basic problem and prolongs the status quo."¹⁰

Secretary Benson accepted Aiton's scenario and in a letter to President Eisenhower, supported the continuation of segregated camping for the foreseeable future. The Secretary told the President that the *Brown* outcome had caused the southern directors to reconsider their decision on holding the black encampment. Benson wrote that a committee composed of eight extension leaders, four black and four white, recommended holding a segregated event in 1955. There was unanimous agreement among the group

¹⁰E. W. Aiton to P. V. Kepner, 8 November 1954, Box 241, Folder Camps-Camping 2-1, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

[only equal in racial composition] that it would take several years for black 4-H members to qualify to compete with whites and it would be unfair to have black 4-Hers compete with whites for spots at the national convention. "Hence if this special event for Negro 4-H boys and girls should be abandoned because of the racial issue, they would, in effect, be denied the privilege of this type of educational experience and recognition."¹¹

The failure to end segregated camping represents the intersection of political and civil service administration. Given their short-lived role compared to those of career bureaucrats like the men who occupied the office of federal extension director, political appointees at the highest level often accepted career bureaucrats' judgement on administrative issues as expert compared to their own. If expert opinion were to be ignored, there had to be a significant political gain. The Republicans had more to gain by permitting continued southern control of the desegregation process than broadening the scope of *Brown*. The logic expressed in these memoranda is astounding. There was a subtle admission that segregated programs had created inequality. However, the remedy, that segregation must be perpetuated to protect those whom the service had failed by abrogating the extension mission, while the privileges those who did not fully carry out that mission continued was self-serving at best. The proposal did not demonstrate any intent system for assessing the planned equalization process. Benson's decision to permit segregated camping to continue fit well into Eisenhower administration policy in the

¹¹P. V. Kepner to C. M. Ferguson, 25 October 1954; Secretary Benson? to The President, 30 November 1954, Box 241, Folder Camps-Camping 2-1, Entry 1002, RG 33 NA II. In a separate meeting, the directors also committed themselves to screening invited speakers after one "took advantage of the opportunity to inject politics into his address." "Report: Southern Directors' Administrative Conference," 13-16 November 1954, 2; Series, 32 Box 20, Folder 6, STICUL.

USDA as described by Burk. He asserted that the administration “project[ed] a color-blind image in personnel policies [that] concealed a constant pattern of discrimination and segregation in federal agencies and offices throughout the country.”¹²

Segregation as Federal Policy

When Benson made his decision, he did so even though it was known both at the White House and at the USDA that blacks were dissatisfied with how the Department’s programs were operated. Constance E. H. Daniel, formerly an employee in the Information Division of the Farmers Home Administration, wrote Maxwell Rabb about the matter. Daniel told Rabb that the administration’s farm policy was “making us no friends.” She reported that former Tuskegee President, F. D. Patterson, (who was then employed by the Phelps-Stokes Fund) was “bitter” about the effects of the Department’s policies on small farmers of which almost all black farmers were. According to Daniel, Patterson believed that the USDA was not addressing the “peculiar racial-complex land and credit problems in the South where 9.7/10 of them are.” She noted that she had recently seen “a page of pictures of the Department’s top 35 administrative officers”—all of whom were white. Daniel suggested that the racial make-up of staff was problematic in light of the fact that there were “half a million Negroes in the ‘farming business’.” She also told Rabb that Patterson, whom she described as not an “alarmist,” as one who would give his opinion when asked but not “volunteer information,” thought that racial preference for whites was re-emerging in the USDA. Patterson’s perception was an accurate one. In a memorandum to MacHenry Schafer and L. N. Hoopes, USDA employee Max P. Reid reported Daniel’s former employment with the FHA and her transfer

¹²Burk, *The Eisenhower Administration and Black Civil Rights*, 71.

to another agency before being released by reductions in force in 1945. Reid told Schafer and Hoopes that Daniel had contacted an extension service employee about salaries. Reid reported that recently five blacks who had held professional positions in the FHA had lost (or would soon lose) their jobs under reduction in force policies. Reid described the separations as “entirely in order as [they] are casualties of the retrenchment program which has been followed by that agency.”¹³

In the aftermath of *Brown* the extension service faced increasing public questions regarding its 4-H policy. In late 1954 black newspapers reported that future regional camps would be held in the nation’s capital. The southern directors issued a statement saying that nothing would be decided until their November meeting. At that meeting the southern directors relented and announced that the annual regional encampment for black boys and girls in 1955 would be held at Howard University in Washington, D. C.¹⁴ The directors still insisted on calling the camp a “regional” affair and on keeping the camp’s scale similar to what had been done at the black colleges rather than add a 4-H congress.¹⁵ The members of the subcommittee were concerned that their restrictions would cause negative publicity and suggested that the decision be approved by the Eisenhower administration. The camps were decidedly a level below those of whites. While Clay’s 1951 article reported that white youth met the President and Secretary of Agriculture, the

¹³Constance E. H. Daniel to The Honorable Maxwell Rabb, 30 October 1954; Max P. Reid to MacHenry Schafer and L. N. Hoopes, 24 November 1954, Entry 17 Q, Box 2468E, Folder Personnel, 19-2, NA II.

¹⁴“Report: Southern Directors’ Administrative Conference,” 13-16 November 1954, 2; W. H. Daughtrey, “Report: Eighth Regional 4-H Club Camp for Negro Boys and Girls, Howard University, Washington, D. C., August 15-22, 1955,” Series 32, Box 20, Folder 6, STICUL.

¹⁵P. V. Kepner to C. M. Ferguson, 25 October 1954, Box 241, Folder Camps-Camping 2-1, Entry 1002, RG 33 NAIL.

visitors to the 1955 and 1956 black camps included Aiton, *Assistant Secretary of Agriculture* Earl Butz, *Undersecretary of Agriculture*, True D. Morse, and Nannie Helen Burroughs, President of the National Trade and Professional Schools for Women and Girls. Also at the 1956 camp was E. Frederick Morrow, Administrative Assistant at the White House.¹⁶

Brown's wake forced southern extension directors to take more positive steps for black youth involved in 4-H programs. At a 1957 meeting the directors considered a report that suggested that they "emphasize, magnify, and make more important Negro 4-H scholarships." The recommendations made included offering state scholarships, expanding scholarships for the regional camp, creating state 4-H committees and including black leaders in planning "before too much progress had been made."¹⁷ Federal support of continued segregation in 4-H gave southern extension officials options that whites who managed public schools did not have. Given a choice, they elected to improve their black programs rather than resort to "massive resistance."

Clearly, integration of 4-H could have been used as a stepping stone to argue for desegregation of schools, which was out of the question for the majority of southern whites. Most whites viewed segregation as essential to preserving their race and black children were not immune to whites' most negative racial stereotypes. For example, white South Carolinians insisted that racial differences and black children's inferiority were immutable facts that made equal social interaction impossible. In their fight against the

¹⁶Paul, "Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1955," 32 Series 33, Box 281, Folder 4459; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1956," 35, Series 33, Box 309, Folder 5104, STICUL. The italics are mine; 1956 is the last year Paul gave extended coverage to national camping in her narrative.

¹⁷"Minutes of the Southern Extension and Experiment Station Directors Meeting," 16-18 April 1957, 13, Series 32, Box 20, Folder 7, STICUL.

enforcement of *Brown*, whites ignored the reality that black and white children often played together outside the school setting. Rather, they embraced their own new racial science. The state's governor in 1955, George Bell Timmerman, Jr., declared that forcing the two "biologically different races" to mix socially was "against the divine order of things." Thomas Waring, the editor of the *Charleston News and Courier*, lamented that white parents were concerned that black underachievement would negatively affect white children's performance. However, more telling are Waring's statements that "there's no use to tell them [white parents] that it is unlikely that anyone will catch venereal disease from a toilet seat. They just don't want to take risks of any kind with their children."¹⁸ Such statements reflect the continued belief in black "depravity" that perpetuated the state's system of white privilege.

The "Color Blind" Philosophy of the Extension Service

Obvious racism only invaded the public transcript of the "massive resisters." The more insidious racism, which often rested on a supposedly rational explanation, was equally damaging to the black equality. In addition to criticizing the extension camping policy, Clay attacked the rank discrimination in the Federal Extension Service. There were no blacks at the policy-making level headquartered at the U. S. D. A. Nor were there state directors of extension who were black. Clay pointed out the salary inequities and the lack of assistant county black agents.¹⁹ There were efforts taken by some blacks to improve the system from within. In addition to the efforts of Campbell and Briscoe, Ernest Neal, the director of extension work at Tuskegee Institute, tried to address the

¹⁸Lowe, "The Magnificent Fight," 212.

¹⁹Revella Clay, "Investigation Discloses National 4-H Clubs With Discrimination from Top to Bottom," *Pittsburgh Courier*, n. d. 1951, 5.

issue of funding equity. He wrote Secretary Charles Brannan seeking a more equitable distribution of extension funds—a request that probably came to naught.²⁰

The most logical reason for the failure of such requests is that regardless of segregation, federal officials continued to contend that there were not two separate extension services. Indeed, one federal official argued against recognizing the special status of black programs. In 1951 P. V. Kepner, assistant to the extension director, wrote H. W. Adams, the editor of the U. S. D. A.'s annual report, with comments regarding extension sections of the report. Among the three items Kepner selected for specific comment was a section of the report entitled "Working with Negro Families." "Why should we accentuate the idea of segregation by devoting 51 pages to Extension work in general and 2½ pages, largely of a statistical nature, to work with Negroes? This may follow previous patterns, but personally it seems to me we are laying ourselves quite vulnerable [when we] segregate Extension work with Negroes as a separate type of thing and give the subject casual treatment."²¹ President Truman's statement of the moral necessity of the United States granting equal opportunity without discrimination failed to do anything more than offer a possible vision of the future. At the end of the Truman years, the Federal Extension Service remained one of several branches of the federal bureaucracy that continued segregation policies. However, the absence of blacks in the higher echelons of federal policy-makers was not merely a problem of the Department of

²⁰United States Department of Agriculture, Correspondence Reference Form, Secretary Charles Brannan to Ernest E. Neal, 10 February 1950, Box 3 1940-1955, Folder: Appropriations, Entry 17AE, General Correspondence Negroes, NA II.

²¹P. V. Kepner to H. W. Adams, 21 August 1951, Box 185, Folder Reports 1-1, Entry 1002, RG 33 NA II.

Agriculture in the 1950s. Walter White, the executive secretary of the NAACP, excoriated high officials in Eisenhower's administration for being indifferent or actively obstructing the President's promise to appoint blacks to public offices. According to White, Cabinet members had been instrumental in preventing desegregation of schools on army bases, and the Secretary of the Navy, Robert Anderson, refused to desegregate the naval yards at Norfolk, V. A. and Charleston, S. C.²²

Questions regarding the structure of the extension service continued to confront extension officials. In 1954 John W. Mitchell, the black field director for the upper South, wrote C. M. Ferguson to recommend a political appointment of a black with agricultural background as special assistant to the Secretary. That person could discuss federal policies with blacks that civil service employees could not. (Presumably, the issue that this person could discuss was how to seek redress for discriminatory treatment in federal programs). "The absence of such a person prevents the Nation's 580,000 Negro farmers, and millions of colored citizens, who now live in towns and in cities, North and South, from being fully informed on agricultural matters." The result, Mitchell asserted, was uncertainty of the effect of farm legislation on their lives and a "neutraliz[ation of] a segment of the population that might be active in helping to promote a sound agriculture." The special assistant Mitchell envisioned also would act as a liaison to black land-grant colleges and the public, and would serve a symbolic role. "His very presence on the Secretary's staff would indicate a recognition of Negro farmers in line with that given Negroes" by high level appointments in the departments of Commerce, Labor, Defense, Health, Education and Welfare, and the Housing and Home Finance agency. Mitchell

²²Peter Wyden, "Cabinet Stalling Seen on Negro Issue: NAACP Charges," *Christian Science Monitor*, 29 June 1953, n. p.

assured Ferguson that this was a “propitious” time for the appointment and it would be widely welcomed in the black community.²³

Assistant extension director P. V. Kepner weighed in against John Mitchell’s recommendations. “This represents a type of pressure which has been prevalent for a long time and which will probably never subside, *at least as long as most of us around here will be concerned about it* [my emphasis].” Kepner suggested that Mitchell’s letter was suggesting a political action that had nothing to do with disseminating information to black farmers. If it was true that black agents were not getting needed information to black farmers, “we should fire all our Negro extension workers plus some of the whites.” Kepner argued that “those pressuring John” were after “recognition.” After challenging the necessity of such an appointment, Kepner said that he could not judge at the “higher policy level of whether or not such an appointment is either essential, feasible, or politically wise.” Kepner did not think the extension service ought to recommend such an appointment. He recommended that Ferguson discuss the matter so that he could “truthfully say that [he] had gotten the suggestion in the channels.” Beyond that, Kepner recommended they do nothing.²⁴ Early in January 1955, President Eisenhower issued Executive Order 10590 establishing the President’s Committee on Government Employment Policy, which prohibited discrimination against qualified applicants and federal employees on the basis of “race, color, religion, or national origin.” According to Robert Burk, the committee, which replaced former President Truman’s more aggressive

²³John W. Mitchell to C. M. Ferguson, 11 February 1954, Box 264 Folder Programs-Projects-1, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

²⁴P. V. Kepner to C. M. Ferguson, 18 February 1954, Box 264, Folder Programs-Projects-1, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II; Burk, *The Eisenhower Administration and Black Civil Rights*, 71.

committee had almost no real authority. It could not use Civil Service Staff to investigate claims of discrimination; it could not bypass agency heads to complain directly to the President. Agencies acquired the power to police themselves. During that year, the Department of Agriculture accepted Kepner's recommendation and no longer used race as a category in its statistical collections. This decision obscured the problem of discrimination in policy and in outcomes, and provided leeway for department officials to argue, as the southern states had done traditionally, that the extension service did not administer programs on a racial basis. This problem was not unique to the extension service as Burk points out, collection of racial data was phased out throughout the federal system. The end result was an increasing difficulty for blacks to prove charges of racial discrimination rather than positive change.²⁵

The Committee on Government Employment Policy was toothless. It was charged with advising the president on practices in civilian employment, advise agency heads and the Civil Service Commission on fair employment policies, and review cases and offer *advisory* opinions on how the cases should be handled. Federal departments were able to select their own equal employment officers, which meant that the level of enforcement of any statute or executive order regarding racial discrimination in federal employment depended on the commitment of the enforcement officer. The enforcement officer could only make recommendations on how the matter should be handled. Yet, the existence of laws couched in the language of equality—in the *Brown* era—was certainly enough to

²⁵Executive Order 10590, *Federal Register*, volume 20, number 13, 19 January 1955, 409-11; Burk, *The Eisenhower Administration and Black Civil Rights*, 73.

cause concern that white control of the extension service could be weakened by federal edicts.²⁶

The discussion of the Federal Extension Service's response to blacks' demands to end segregation is essential to understanding how, during the 1950s, southern extension officials were able to successfully undermine what little programmatic autonomy black extension agents had. Historian Joel Schor offers an explanation of why this was possible. He writes that because there was no litigation on behalf of black agents between 1943 and 1953 (critical years of the civil rights litigation) the programs black agents could offer were limited, their salaries lower than those of whites, and their clients' outcomes were unequal to those of whites.²⁷ To the lack of litigation must be added federal extension officials' reluctance to assert their authority in the states. Secretaries Brannan and Benson followed the tradition of their predecessors of not invoking powers they held under sections 2 and 6 of the Smith-Lever Act, relying on the expertise of bureaucrats whose professional philosophy required irreproachable conduct. The Secretaries' passivity gave state officials the power to mold an extension policy related to blacks that erased all but the veneer of a segregated program. Burk's conclusions regarding the subversion of equality by reliance on "objective" bureaucrats confirm my own. He states that research on complaints was done in the Washington offices of federal agencies rather than in the field. Investigators often relied on the opinions of those charged with discrimination to

²⁶Executive Order 10590, 409-11.

²⁷Schor, "The Black Presence in the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service," 267-8. See also, Burk, *The Eisenhower Administration and Black Civil Rights*, 76. According to Burk, there were only 12 blacks among 238 Federal Extension Service Employees, and only 700 blacks out of 15,000 cooperative employees in the field.

gather information regarding the charges. Plaintiffs were not allowed to see the information gathered in reports and they were denied access to records that might help them make their case.²⁸

Extension Work and the Early Civil Rights Struggles in South Carolina

Throughout the 1940s southern whites, including white South Carolinians, witnessed challenges to their absolute authority over their black populations. In South Carolina, black teachers successfully sued for equal salaries and black citizens successfully sued for the right to vote. John Wrihten sued, unsuccessfully, for admission to the state's law school but forced the creation of a segregated law school at South Carolina State College. The South Carolina cases were part of a national litigation civil rights movement in which more and more blacks were victorious in their legal challenges to white supremacy. White South Carolinians began to concede that blacks had the right to a better quality of life but resisted the idea that they were entitled to absolute equality. South Carolina's governor, J. Strom Thurmond even forced a trial of whites accused of lynching a black man to demonstrate the state's commitment to the rule of law. However, the state's whites made the extent of their willingness to compromise clear in 1948 when Thurmond ran for President as a spoiler on the States' Rights Democrat ticket.²⁹ Thurmond's main objective was to preserve state [white] control over southern affairs. Although his supporters held out a small hope of winning, they hoped that Thurmond's candidacy would prevent Truman's clear Electoral College victory. The southern block

²⁸Burk, *The Eisenhower Administration and Black Civil Rights*, 73 citing William Peters, *The Southern Temper* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1959), 244.

²⁹Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 515-6, 518-522. These pages address all but the higher education cases. For a discussion of the higher education cases, see Lowe, "The Magnificent Fight," chapter 3.

could then act as “king maker” in the contested election, trading electoral supporters for southern autonomy as had happened in the Compromise of 1877.³⁰

Pressure to conform to a benign segregation had begun to fall on black extension agents in the 1940s even as South Carolina blacks asserted their autonomy. In her 1949 narrative report, Marian Paul reported that a Clarendon County state senator had vetoed the appropriation for and forbidden the continuation of black home demonstration work [but not black agricultural extension work] because he “was annoyed by political trends.”³¹ The “trend” was likely the legal suit *Pearson v. [Clarendon] County Board of Education* that had been filed in the waning days of the fiscal year that ended June 30, 1948. [This suit was ultimately dismissed on the technicality that the plaintiff lived in a different district than the one where his children attended school.]³² The firing of the home agent signifies the continuation of the local stranglehold over black extension program development.

By the 1950s, white South Carolinians were concerned enough about black insolence being inspired by black “leaders” that state officials began to curtail the autonomy of public professionals. It is evident that the racial terrain had become more dangerous in South Carolina during the 1950s. Roy Wilkins captured the spirit of the times in a letter to Modjeska Simkins when he wrote, “the opposition does not understand

³⁰Nadine Cohodas, *Strom Thurmond and the Politics of Southern Change* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 133; Joseph C. Ellers, *Strom Thurmond: The Public Man* (Orangeburg, S. C.: Sandlapper Publishing Company, Inc., 1993), 121.

³¹Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1948,” p. 6. Interestingly, the agricultural agent, William Thompson, a twenty-six year veteran of extension work, continued to work as agricultural agent in Clarendon County. E. N. Williams, Annual Report, 1951, p. 3, Series 33, Box 215, Folder 3903, STICUL.

³²Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 17-8.

the Negro of this age. . . . They have little or no conception of the determination of Negroes of today to have that to which they are entitled.”³³ As some of the best educated members of Afro-South Carolina, black public professionals traditionally offered perspective on community affairs yet many became passive. The exertion of state pressure against them occurred in two ways. While salaries and working conditions were improved modestly, they could be used as leverage against public professionals. In the most extreme cases, the state resorted to curtailing civil liberties of public professionals.

South Carolina’s extension service, like those of other states, tightened its grip on black programs during the 1950s. Extension officials employed the same tactic that the state had found useful in forestalling meaningful salary equalization between black teachers with decades of experience and whites with fewer years in rank—testing. In 1949, a controversy related to testing erupted in the state. According to historian Stephen Lowe, 5,000 teachers took the National Teachers Exam (NTE), the test the state decided would measure teacher qualification. A pre-test had suggested that 90 percent of white teachers but only 27 percent of black teachers would receive an A or B on the exam. This result should not have been surprising given the limited resources devoted to black education in the state. About 25 percent (600) of the 2,400 black teachers who took the exam were accused of cheating.³⁴ At least two black agricultural extension agents were

³³Roy Wilkins to Mrs. [Modjeska] Simkins, 26 November 1956, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Papers of the NAACP (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 1996), microfilm, part 20, reel 11, frame 242 (hereafter these papers will be cited as NAACP papers).

³⁴Lowe, “The Magnificent Fight,” 66-72 discusses the cheating scandal and a lawsuit by one teacher that followed the scandal.

accused of cheating in the scandal and were not recommended for reappointment.³⁵ While this case is more complex than is presented here, this example demonstrates the ability of white officials to turn their losses into gains that maintained the status quo to such an extent that some blacks opted to find other means to level the playing field.

White control of the state's black extension service was evident in other ways as well. One of the most valuable artifacts for this project has been the annual reports of Marian Paul, whose analyses of South Carolina race relations gave voice to the injustice of segregation and to the longings of Afro-South Carolinians for full citizenship. It is through these reports that we can discern the state's response to blacks' pursuit of more equal treatment and the effect of the civil rights movement on black public professionals. What Paul wrote in her reports was "always" read at the federal level. In 1953, Mena Hogan, a Field Agent for the Southern States, wrote Paul to compliment her on the reports. Hogan said she selected "special items for all my associates to see."³⁶

While Paul's remarks on race relations during the middle years were often critical of whites' treatment of blacks, there was a decided shift in the 1950s. Paul began to compliment state officials for their racial progressiveness, demonstrated through their financial generosity. In 1951, nine county legislative delegations paid for facilities that were used for roadside markets. Paul reported that the delegations were "anxious to see that all peoples are touched and benefitted [by extension work]." The legislators "realize that all of the people of the state must be given adequate opportunities for advancement if

³⁵Correspondence Reference Form, C. T. Forster, Office of Personnel to C. S. Tenley, 30 October 1950; Correspondence Reference Form, C. S. Tenley to C. T. Forster, Office of Personnel, 20 February 1951, Box 80, Folder: Criticism, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

³⁶Mena Hogan to Mrs. Marian B. Paul, 20 November 1953, Box 227, Folder: Reports, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

the nation is to survive the present chaos and assume leadership for the future.” In her 1952 report, Paul stated that legislative delegations were aware of extension programs’ benefits and that they “realize that all of the citizens of the state are entitled to the same opportunities and privileges. They are now willing to make financial county appropriations which will enable us to employ [more] Negro home demonstration agents.” They made these contributions, according to Paul, because she had convinced them, because she had shown them “that, an enlightened people can be trusted to save themselves and those considered the *economic problem #1* [my emphasis], could become an asset rather than a liability.”³⁷

Paul’s shifting expressions on racial matters must be viewed within the context of the times. Paul may have been informed to stop making challenging statements by her supervisors. However, no documents have been uncovered that prove that Paul’s superiors told her to quell her activist rhetoric. What happened to the home agent in Clarendon County in 1948 was an object lesson for all extension workers—a lesson of which even the state supervisor would have taken heed. Federal and state regulations also made it possible to terminate agents who attacked institutional authority. The rules in Personnel Circular 84 curtailed the free speech rights of Agriculture Department employees and gave administrative officials broad latitude in determining what constituted unprofessional behavior. Item 16 of the Agriculture Department’s prohibition on political activity might well have applied to Paul’s annual reports. It prohibited writing for publication or publishing letters or articles taking a position on political parties, factions, and measures. The circular broadly defined “political party” to include “any group of persons which

³⁷Paul, “Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1954,” p. 5, Series 33, Box 261, Folder 4459, STICUL.

opposes another group in matters of governmental principles or policies.” The restriction extended to U. S. D. A. employees who worked in state and local offices as well as those in Washington. South Carolina also had its own political activity regulations dating to 1936. It prohibited “participation in political activities aimed to benefit certain individuals to the possible detriment of others.” Extension employees were prohibited from “addressing political meetings, or helping to arrange or manage political gatherings.” The consequence of such actions was termination.³⁸ The federal regulations broadened the scope of what was perceived as unacceptable conduct in a manner that would have included Marian Paul’s reports.

It is alternatively possible that Paul assessed the political terrain and decided to censor herself. In 1949, she was 52 years old and with less than twenty years on the job, she had much to lose. Her only other employment had been as a public school teacher and they had no more security than extension agents did. Paul probably had knowledge of what had happened to a black agent in Alabama when he got out of “his place” and that would have been instructive as well. Jeannie Whayne’s work on extension work in Alabama from 1945 to 1965 discusses the removal of an agent from Washington County in 1945 after whites there protested their presence. Most relevant for understanding the Paul situation however is what happened to Arlingia Hicks, the president of the Association of Alabama Negro County and Home Demonstration Agents. In 1948 Hicks wrote a letter to J. R. Otis, the State Leader for Negro work, to ask for equalization of black

³⁸Personnel Circular No. 84 (Revision I), 4, 6, 12 February 1942, Box 986, Folder Personnel 17, Political Activities, Entry 17 M, RG 16, NA II; D. W. Watkins to Mr. M. L. Wilson, 2 August 1940 with attachment, D. W. Watkins “TO ALL COUNTY EXTENSION WORKERS,” 19 June 1940, Box 769, Folder Dir SC 7-40 [to] [12-40] 2 of 2; Mena Hogan to Mrs. Marian B. Paul, 20 November 1953, Box 227, Folder: Reports 4, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

agents' salaries. According to Whayne, Otis sent Hicks' letter to the state's director of extension, P. O. Davis. Davis objected to its contents. He insisted that black agents' salaries under his leadership had increased more rapidly than white agents' salaries. Davis also objected to Hicks' approach. According to Whayne, Davis "complained that he did not like having to address 'racial matters.' He considered 'other parts' of Hicks' letter 'very objectionable,' especially Hicks' presumption 'to engage in administrative matters,' far afield 'from his duties'." Hicks' job performance suddenly took a turn for the worst and he was fired in June 1949, about 14 months after he sent the letter. No agent replaced him. Similar firings continued after 1950 in Alabama. Willie A. Brown was dismissed in 1953 for appearing before a board of education to request a lunch room for a junior high school. Another agent was nearly removed from his job in 1954 when it was rumored that he had encouraged blacks to register to vote.³⁹

Resistance and Accommodation: South Carolina and Civil Rights in the 1950s

Pro-black activism—perceived or real—in South Carolina led to the firing of public professionals as well. After the *Pearson* case was filed, the principal of the Scott's Branch school that Pearson's children attended was fired after 18 years of service because whites thought he had played some role in encouraging the lawsuit.⁴⁰ With annual contracts for employment, black public professionals were indeed subject to the whims of white officials. One of the South Carolina's most well-respected politicians, James F. Byrnes, re-entered politics to preserve segregation but also to make clear the resolve of white South Carolinians on matters of racial equality. Byrnes, who had represented his

³⁹Whayne, "Black Farmers and the Agricultural Cooperative Extension Service: The Alabama Experience, 1945-1965," 538-40.

⁴⁰Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 18-9.

state in Congress, served on the Supreme Court, and who had served as Secretary of State under Truman from 1945 to 1947, was elected governor in 1950. The comment Byrnes made on the House floor in 1919 bears repeating in this chapter. “The South can provide employment for every law-abiding negro [sic] who wishes to return. But for any negro [sic] who has become inoculated with the desire for political equality or social equality there is no employment in the South, nor is there any room for him in the South.”⁴¹ His attitudes had not changed by 1950. Byrnes’ ascension signaled the South Carolina position on segregation. Segregation would approximate equality more than it had heretofore, but would continue within a framework of white supremacy. To that end, Byrnes secured the passage of a sales tax, the majority of which went to construct improved black schools. However, as Richard Kluger points out, “Segregation came before education.” Byrnes said that he would close the state’s schools if necessary to maintain segregation.⁴²

The challenges to segregation forced whites to address some glaring inequities between the white and black services. The South Carolina extension service and the county legislative delegations followed Byrnes’ lead in school improvement by upgrading black extension agents’ offices. In 1946 nineteen of the twenty-six home agents had offices in commercial buildings owned or rented by black business persons. Altamese B. Pough recalled the cramped conditions in her Berkeley County office. “I guess it was probably not as wide as from the curtain to the wall [approximately 8 feet] and there were . . . two big hefty people. The county agent was a big hefty man and then I was there. . . .

⁴¹Newby, *The Development of Segregationist Thought*, 121.

⁴²Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 522-523; Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 334-335.

then we had all these other supplies.” The agricultural agent in Clarendon County was housed in a “quaint little building, tar papered” that according to Dr. Barbara Williams Jenkins, former Dean of the Miller F. Whittaker Library at South Carolina State College, was still in use in 1988.⁴³

Marian Paul noted that since the agents could not pay for offices outright they had “devised various means of securing appropriate office space.” Three agents had offices in schools, and three agents still used their homes. Sara Aiken Waymer,⁴⁴ who began work in 1947, said that there was no office for her when she began work six weeks after graduating from South Carolina State College. “I had to go into the office with the black county agent and have a little—it wasn’t even a desk—it was really a little table that I worked on until such time as they set me up.” According to Waymer, in the seven years she worked as a home demonstration agent, she was never provided an office. She secured her own room “about as big as a closet” in the same office as the agent. The black dentist permitted Waymer to use his storage space. “The dentist was between the county agent and me and that was what I had for an office.” By 1949 only one agent was without an office, three had offices in schools, and one agent in a public library. Twenty-five home agents had offices in public buildings with the rent paid by the county legislative

⁴³Transcript of oral interview with Mrs. Rosa Odum, Mrs. Altamese B. Pough, Mrs. Sara A. Waymer, **BLACK HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENTS IN THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**, Dr. Barbara Williams Jenkins, Librarian Miller F. Whittaker Library, South Carolina State College, Dr. William Hine, Professor of History, South Carolina State College by Carmen Harris, Master of Arts in History Candidate, Clemson University. Conducted at Miller F. Whittaker Library, South Carolina State College, Orangeburg, South Carolina, July 1988, (hereafter referred to as Odum, Pough, Waymer interview), p. 18-19.

⁴⁴Sara Aiken Waymer was not married until 1959 or 1960, however, she will be identified in the text as Sara Aiken Waymer throughout for consistency. References in citations will use the name used in the source and may refer to her as Sara Aiken or Sara Aiken Waymer.

delegations. The black agricultural and home agents in Anderson County had offices in the county agricultural building.⁴⁵

By 1952, all agents had offices outside their homes but only two agents had offices in public buildings. In counties where there were both black agricultural and home agents, they were housed in the same office—a practice put in place in 1951. Two agents still had offices in schools and the other twenty-five had offices in business districts. The two in municipal buildings, in Barnwell and Anderson counties, had access to auditorium facilities for large meetings but no other agents had access to venues that could accommodate large groups. The Beaufort County agent had no office at all. She had been promised one in a new municipal building that was under construction. Despite the legislative delegation's assumption of rent and utility bills, Paul noted that "some of these offices are in undesirable locations or dilapidated buildings" and "certainly below a minimum standard." By 1956 only six agents had offices in public buildings. Office conditions continued to vary as late as 1958. Two more agents had offices in county buildings by then. In three counties, offices were built specifically for black agents but, according to Paul, their locations were remote. One agent continued to work out of a school and eighteen agents still had offices in business districts.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Paul, "South Carolina, Narrative Annual Report, 1946," p. 17; Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1949," p. 2; Paul, "Annual Report County Home Demonstration Work, 1951", p. 2, Series 33, Box 210, Folder 3835, STICUL; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1955," p. 6; Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, p. 19; Paul, "Annual Report Cooperative Extension Work in South Carolina, 1958: "Home Demonstration," p. 1. The 1958 report has been misplaced. I have given the archivist a copy of mine but no location has been established for the report yet.

⁴⁶Paul, "Annual Report County Home Demonstration Work, 1952", p. 7, Series 33, Box 224, Folder 4015, STICUL; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1954," pp. 2, 6, 7; "Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1956," pp. 2-3; Paul, "Annual Report: Cooperative Extension Work South Carolina, 1958," p. 10.

Paul singled out the working conditions in several counties for particular criticism. In Florence County, six black agents shared one room; four agents shared one room in Horry and Chesterfield counties. (The additional black agents in these counties were hired to do rural development work, a joint farm and home program designed to meet the needs of farmers with less than \$1,000 (\$6,121.72 in annual income.) “Darlington’s office is too dark and groggy, with no ventilation and poorly lighted.” When Sara Waymer replaced Paul, she the Allendale County home demonstration agent’s office was still in a public school. She also found crowded conditions in four counties: “Cherokee, Clarendon, Dorchester, and Fairfield.” Cramped conditions remained only in two of the counties, Cherokee and Dorchester by the next year.⁴⁷

The Politics and Black Extension Work

The fact that legislative delegations could decide how much money to put toward offices was one method of maintaining local control over black agents. The other means by which local whites could—and did—exert their power was through funding for agent hires. Because financial support depended on county legislative delegations, state extension officials essentially gave the delegations the final decision on whether an agent would be hired in their county. A self-assessment of the South Carolina extension service shows that state extension officials knew that the state’s extension staff was insufficient to serve farmers adequately. The report stated that agents could work most productively with 400 to 500 families, yet there were counties with more than one white agent where the client to agent ratio was lower than the optimum. (For example, in Edgefield County,

⁴⁷Paul, “Annual Report: Cooperative Extension Work South Carolina, 1958,” p. 11; Waymer, “Annual Report: Cooperative Extension Work South Carolina, 1960,” p. 3, Series 33, Box 384, Folder: (MR), Sara A. Waymer; Waymer, “Annual Report: Cooperative Extension Work South Carolina, 1961,” p. 2, Series 33, Box 299, Folder, “Home Demonstration, Mrs. Sara A. Waymer,” STICUL.

the overall ratio was one agent per 107 white farm families; one agricultural extension agent per 150 white farm families, and one home demonstration agent per 376 white farm families). When Congress made additional appropriations to remedy this situation in the 1950s, the legislative delegations in several counties with majority black populations did not seek the services of an agent. In Greenville and Marlboro Counties, black extension agents “were discontinued due to financial difficulty.”⁴⁸ Legislative delegations, or in some instances leading white citizens, could play a significant role in securing the employment of an agent. In 1951 Kershaw County paid \$3,000 (\$20,497.90 in current dollars) to employ a black home demonstration agent, an appointment that had been supported by the white home demonstration agent. In Greenwood County an appeal to a state senator for a state appropriation prevented the resignation of the black home demonstration agent there for at least a year.⁴⁹

In many counties where the black farm population was sufficient to merit the employment of black extension agents, legislative delegations made no appropriations for them. Paul documented eight counties where the number of black farmers constituted more than 50 percent of the farming population that had no black home agent. In six of these counties the black farm population exceeded 60 percent. Two of these, Laurens and Marlboro, counties had a black agricultural agent and one can conclude from that fact that the legislative delegations in those counties made a conscious decision not to fund a black home demonstration agent. There was no increase in the number of counties with black county and home demonstration agents after 1955 although Paul and her successor Sara

⁴⁸“Basis for the employment and distribution of county extension workers in South Carolina Counties,” [1956?] pp. 2, 3, Series 32, Box 80, Folder 5, STICUL; E. N. Williams, “Annual Report, 1951” p. 1.

⁴⁹Paul, “Annual Report County Home Demonstration Work, 1951” pp. 8, 22.

Waymer made annual requests for appointments. However, eight assistant agents were hired in the black agricultural service and six in the black home demonstration service for rural development programs by 1957. A late 1950s program assessment makes clear the reason that no agents were assigned to counties without agents. In the review of the distribution of agents, the report states that “Negro agricultural and Negro home agents have been placed in counties having the largest number of Negro farm families, except in cases where the location of a Negro agent in a county was not approved locally.” As a result, five counties with black farm populations ranging from 61 to almost 71 percent of all farmers—Calhoun, Edgefield, Lee, McCormick, and Jasper—had no black agents. Four of the counties had two or three white extension workers but in Edgefield County, there were seven white agents (five agricultural and two home demonstration). Edgefield had 752 white farmers and 1,213 black farmers.⁵⁰

In another instance, an agricultural agent resigned rather than be transferred and demoted. Julius A. Amaker was informed that he was being transferred from Charleston County to York County “for the good of the service” to serve as Associate Negro Agent. The agent from Union County was being sent to Charleston as “Negro Agricultural Agent,” while the “Assistant Negro Agricultural Agent” from York was being transferred to Union as “Negro Agricultural Agent.” Amaker was told that he would receive no reduction in pay despite his demotion to “Associate Negro Agricultural Agent,” but he stated that he had no interest in working in York County. An article that appeared in the

⁵⁰Paul, “Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1954,” pp. 6, 18, 45; Paul, “Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes In South Carolina 1955,” p. 2; “Annual Report: Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina, 1957,” p. 2; “Basis for the employment and distribution of county extension workers in South Carolina Counties,” [1956?] pp. 1-2.

Greenville News, reported that Amaker claimed he was being fired for being a member of the NAACP, a charge that his district agent, J. T. Lazar denied. Amaker publicly denied membership in the NAACP. According to him, he was being transferred “based on the fact that I am accused of being a member of an organization that is trying to disturb the thinking of colored citizens of Charleston County.” The article reported that the state extension officials believed he “had served his purpose in Charleston County” and therefore he would go to Union County (the official correspondence and news article differ on the final employment destination of the agent), receive the same salary and have his moving expenses paid. Amaker refused the transfer and was fired because no other vacancies existed.⁵¹

An Unknown Connection: *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Black Extension Service

As the *Brown* decision approached, white South Carolinians seemed optimistic that their state’s position would be upheld. The case had been re-argued before the U. S. Supreme Court in December 1953 and the state’s lawyers felt confident of victory. In January 1954, after the black home agent’s salary had been cut off six years earlier because of “political trends,” Clarendon County appropriated \$3,400 (\$22,434.87) to hire a home demonstration agent. In July 1954, Chesterfield County also appropriated \$3,400, and Chester County appropriated \$1,740 to hire a home demonstration agent.⁵² *Brown*

⁵¹G. H. Bonnette to E. N. Williams, 5 March 1957; “Personnel Actions Taken in the Amaker Case,” [1957], “Actions of the Board of Trustees on March 15, 1957,” 22 March 1957, Series 32, Box 25, Folder 7; “Officials Deny Negro Farm Agent Transfer Due to NAACP Activity,” *The Greenville (S. C.) News*, n. d., 9, Series 65, Box 2, Folder 8, STICUL.

⁵²Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 581, 678; Paul et. al., , “Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work among Negroes in South Carolina: ” pp. 6, 18, 45; Paul, “Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1955,” p. 2, Series 33, Box 93; Paul, “Annual Report: Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina, 1957,” p. 2, Series 33, Box 333, Folder, “Mrs. Marian B. Paul, State Supervisor, Mrs. Mabel P. Washington, Asst. State Supervisor, Miss Sara K. Aiken, Negro Girls 4-H Agent, STICUL;” “Basis for the employment and distribution of county extension workers in

changed the situation for black public professionals. The agents received no pay raises at all in 1954 or 1955, salary equalization decisions notwithstanding. Marian Paul complained that it was difficult to attract and to keep well-qualified personnel on that account. In 1956 agents received small raises ranging from \$5 to \$25 and somewhat more substantial raises the next year ranging from \$120 to \$240.⁵³

The number of black agents remained unchanged as the civil rights movement seemed to influence extension officials to improve salaries rather than expand the program. Dillon County offered \$1,200 for salary and \$600 for office expenses for an agent in 1957 but was unable to secure one.⁵⁴ An analysis of the 1961 budget lines for black agricultural and home demonstration work shows a net increase of \$71,046 (almost 48 percent) in the former and \$45,205 almost (40 percent) in the latter over the budget for 1953. In 1953 both services received sizeable cash infusions of \$40,390 and \$31,116 respectively (at least on the books) without appreciable increases in the number of agents. Comparison of the budgets for black and white agents' salaries is also informative. At no point did the dollar amount budgeted for black agricultural agents reach 25 percent of that for white agricultural agents. It was highest at 24.28 percent in 1955. The budget for black agricultural agents was about a third of the budget for white *women's* home demonstration work and it peaked at 40 percent in 1957. Black home demonstration agents' budget reached 31 percent of the white home agents' budget in 1958. As a

South Carolina Counties," [1956?] pp. 1-2.

⁵³ Paul, "Annual Report County Home Demonstration Work, 1951", p. 7; E. N. Williams, "Annual Report, 1951" pp. 1-2; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work among Negroes in South Carolina, 1954," p. 2; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1955," pp. 2, 12, 13, 15; Paul, "Annual Report: Cooperative Extension Work South Carolina, 1957," p. 2.

⁵⁴Paul "Annual Report: Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina, 1957," p. 2.

percentage of the total extension budget, black agricultural agents salaries reached 9.24 percent in 1956 and black home agents salaries reached 7.05 percent in 1957. The appropriations increased, reaching their maximums of \$221,734.63 and \$171,771.38 for agricultural and home work respectively in 1959. However, black extension agents' salaries as a percentage of total salaries peaked in 1957 at 16.2 percent. By 1961 the black agents salaries as a percentage of total salaries (14.1 percent) was lower than it had been in 1953 (14.4 percent). In the final two years of racially segregated reporting of extension expenditures, the black agricultural program's total budget dropped \$2,636 and the black home program's total budget dropped \$12,795—an indication that as black agents retired or quit the service, they were not being replaced.⁵⁵ Marian Paul observed in 1958 that although some counties continued to put up monies for black work, she had been told there were no state or federal matching funds for the work. Budget increases went into salaries of current agents instead of expanding the number of agents.⁵⁶

These trends in overall salary distribution are reflected also in the salary rates available for agents of differing ranks. After narrowing in the early 1950s, the average salary gap between white and black agents' salaries began to widen after 1955. Regardless of years of experience and education, including in some cases post-baccalaureate education at some of the finest white land-grant colleges in the North and Midwest, black agents did not receive salaries equal to those of white agents at any rank. For example, in 1956-1957 the difference between the average salaries (total budget divided by number in

⁵⁵These figures were computed using the "Records of Sources and Disbursements of Extension Funds" that appear in the published reports from the annual reports of the South Carolina extension service for the fiscal years 1952-1953 to the years 1960-1961. These reports include category breakdown including for black agricultural and home demonstration work.

⁵⁶Marian B. Paul, "Annual Report, Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina, 1958," p. 10.

rank) of white *assistant* county agents and black agricultural agents was \$370 more for the white agent. In the budget for 1957-1958 and the proposed budget for 1958-1959, the amounts were \$566 and \$747 more for the white agents respectively each year. In the case of white *assistant* home agents and black home demonstration agents, the margin between white agents' average salaries was \$62 in favor of the white agents. In the 1957-1958 budget and the proposed budget 1958-1959 the salary differences between black home demonstration agents and white assistant home demonstration agents were \$204 and \$470 more for the white agents respectively each year. The state ranked fifth out of six southern states in salaries of black agents.⁵⁷

The changing social and economic climate of the 1950s also affected the potential black extension agent employee pool. Throughout the middle years, the staff of the black home demonstration service had been fairly stable. However, that changed in the 1950s. In 1951 there was a turnover of seven black home demonstration agents in the service. Of those, one agent was fired "for lack of interest and cooperation" and one agent requested leave to study at Cornell University, then accepted a job elsewhere when she completed her degree. Another went into teaching. Agricultural extension work in Greenville and Marlboro Counties was discontinued in 1951 because of "financial difficulty." In 1955 Paul hired, but soon lost the services of, Georgia Poinsette, a woman with a Master's degree from Columbia University who had been the Dean of Home Economics at a Georgia college for fourteen years. Less than three months after she was hired, Poinsette left her job to accept a Fulbright appointment to teach in Iraq. Poinsette's decision was probably influenced in part by the low salaries that agents received. Despite the low

⁵⁷ "Minutes of the Meeting of Southern Extension and Experiment Station Directors, 5-7 September 1962," 10, Series 33, Box 21, Folder 2, STICUL.

salaries, the requirement that a potential agent have a car meant that the extension service was not truly an entry-level position.

While low salaries probably did not inspire agents to improve their credentials, many nevertheless continued to pursue educational opportunities. Cornell University remained the destination for many black agents who sought graduate degrees including Assistant State Home Agent Willie Price and agricultural agent M. M. Sitton. Agents also attended summer institutes at South Carolina State College or other black colleges, or took classes at the school to complete their degrees. In 1961, Alberta DeVeaux, the home agent for Charleston County since the 1930s, finally completed her B. S. degree. E. D. Dean, the county agent at-large, completed a master's degree at South Carolina State College in 1958. Ten (11.5%) of the 87 black workers in 1960 held master's degrees. Sixteen percent of whites held advanced degrees (50 out of 308 workers; 2 had doctoral degrees).⁵⁸

The Integration of the South Carolina Extension Service

Increased financial support, in itself, carried dangers for the workers because they had more money to lose if they were fired. However, the more pressing concern for was the loss of their autonomy. In 1953 Director Watkins issued a memorandum in the form of a resolution on the "closer degree of coordination among the several branches of Extension work." Watkins declared that the increasing interest in extension work in the state among white and "colored" made "it necessary to have closer coordination among

⁵⁸Paul, "Annual Report County Home Demonstration Work, 1951", p. 7; E. N. Williams, "Annual Report, 1951" p. 2; Williams, "Annual Report District Agent Work, South Carolina, 1958," 3; Series 33, Box 357; George Nutt to J. K. Williams, c. 1961, Series 32, Box 117, Folder 4, STICUL; Waymer, "Annual Report: Cooperative Extension Work South Carolina, 1961: Home Demonstration Division," p. 13.

the white and colored extension workers in the counties and in the state in the interests of furthering the soundest possible program among all farm people.”⁵⁹

Black state supervisors were retained and studies of the needs and the facilities available for both blacks and whites were to be undertaken. Black agricultural and home agents were required to see their respective white counterparts at least once a week. Black agents’ reports were to be submitted to their white county “leaders” to be initialed before being forwarded to state black supervisors. To have leave approved, black agents had to submit their requests to the white county leader, then to the Negro State agent, then to the District agent, and then to the state extension director. For black women this was a five step process as their request had to be approved by both the white home agent (the assistant county leader) and the white agricultural agent in her county. White county agents were to ensure that black agents got specialist help and were consulted on county needs, on school “buses,” for example. Paul stated that county personnel, white and black, decided on the county’s needs then sent their requests to the district level—which included both state black agents. The requests went to the director, who made the final decision and sent the requests to the legislative delegations. New job descriptions were to be written for black agents. As part of the unification process, Watkins announced a self-study and conference meetings.⁶⁰

This new structure formalized the relationship as it existed in the early 1950s. White agents began to attend black agents’ county-wide meetings and served as judges at

⁵⁹D. W. Watkins, “Memo to Extension Workers,” 1 August 1953, Series 32, Box 25, Folder 3, STICUL.

⁶⁰D. W. Watkins, “Memo to Extension Workers,” 1 August 1953, Series 32, Box 25, Folder 3, STICUL; Paul, “Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1955,” pp. 6, 8.

black agents' events. Paul saw the earlier arrangement as a positive collaborative relationship between persons of equal professional stature and one that benefitted black agents and their clients because white agents had access to more supplies than black agents did. She concluded that the monthly agent meetings led to better understanding of and more uniformity in the program, "greater harmony and better relations between the races." In her 1953 report, she stated that "truly there exists harmony" among white and black state personnel and that the white state agents were "anxious" to provide assistance and were "sympathetic" to black agents' problems.⁶¹

However, manner in which the black service was maintained raises questions about the accuracy of those claims. In both Georgetown and Allendale, counties with greater than 50 percent total black population in 1950, the home agents also offered agricultural instruction because there was no agricultural agent as late as 1961.⁶² What happened to the agents in Georgetown and Allendale counties points out the reality that the black program continued to receive only limited material and personnel support. Nineteen agents received reconditioned typewriters.⁶³ Eleven agents had part time secretaries in 1951. By 1955 twenty-two of the agents had part-time stenographic help. The number of black stenographers peaked at 30 in 1958 before declining to 27 by

⁶¹Marian B. Paul, "Annual Report County Home Demonstration Work, 1951," p. 22; Marian Paul, "Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1952," p. 14; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1954," p. 16.

⁶²Paul, "Annual Narrative Report, Extension work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1956," p. 15; Waymer, "Annual Report: Cooperative Extension Work South Carolina, 1961: Home Demonstration Division," p. 15.

⁶³Paul, "South Carolina, Narrative Annual Report, 1946," p. 17; Paul, "South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1949," p. 2; Paul, "Annual Report County Home Demonstration Work, 1951," p. 2; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1955," p. 6; Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, pp. 27-28; Paul, "Annual Report Cooperative Extension Work in South Carolina, 1958: Home Demonstration," p. 1; Waymer, "Annual Report Cooperative Extension Work in South Carolina, 1960: Home Demonstration," p. 1.

1960.⁶⁴ For several years, Marian Paul had requested more state-level administrative staff. In 1954 extension officials approved a position for a second assistant supervisor. When Paul also tried to get a 4-H club leader, rather than hire another person, extension officials changed the second assistant supervisor's title to Negro Girl's 4-H leader.⁶⁵ Paul's request for a black specialist was not fulfilled, however in the face of pressure from the agents, white extension officials made some accommodations to help black agents with their programs. According to Sara Aiken Waymer, in many instances black agents were more highly educated than the white home demonstration agent was but the specialists must tell [the white agents] "and then they tell us." Altamese Pough recalls that an agent asked about getting help from specialists and the state agent referred her to the white home demonstration agent in her county. Pough said that the black home agent said to the state agent " . . . go to her? . . . I have a daughter the age of that girl and I don't feel like I need to go to her for information when we have specialists trained to do this." Pough said the agent's remarks "caused a stir" because it was before 1964; however, black home agents got specialists' help after that incident. Five women and one man offered several training sessions to agents—and in some instances to local leaders—at county or regional clinics. These clinics were held when the white specialists visited counties primarily to meet with the white agents. In the agricultural program, specialized help was provided in schools for agents conducted by various program faculty in Clemson College's Department of

⁶⁴Paul, "Annual Report County Home Demonstration Work, 1951," p. 2; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1955," p. 6; Paul, "Annual Report Cooperative Extension Work in South Carolina, 1958: Home Demonstration," p. 1; Waymer "Annual Report Cooperative Extension Work in South Carolina, 1960: Home Demonstration," p. 1.

⁶⁵Paul, "Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1954," pp. 6, 18, 45; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1955," p. 2; Paul, "Annual Report: Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina, 1957," p. 2.

Agriculture. For example, in 1951 the Agronomy Department held a two-day grasslands school, and the Forestry department held four one-day schools for black agricultural agents. It is unclear whether the agents went to Clemson, or one of its off-site locations where there would be experimental fields that could be used, or whether these were purely informational sessions held at South Carolina State College.⁶⁶

Reactionaries or Prophets? Black Agents' Response to Massive Resistance

Also in 1955, *Brown II* made clear that integration would go forward “with all deliberate speed.” That same year, D. W. Watkins retired and George Nutt became state extension director. The reins on black extension work were tightened. Nutt quickly offered a plan to solidify Watkins’ memorandum. Nutt recommended changing the titles of black agents, which would effectively de-racialize the black service. While the titles used of white extension agents and supervisors to be maintained, the titles that had been used by black extension agents and supervisors would be dropped. (Job applications from the era make no mention of race but ask for hair color, blonde or brunette. The applicant also had to attach a photo.) Nutt justified keeping the titles “County Agent” and “County Home Demonstration Agent”—titles used by the white agricultural and home agents—because they were “long-standing and familiar to the public.” The new supervisory titles for white agents, “County Director of Extension” and “Associate County Director of Extension” would be used only in official correspondence. Nutt proposed changing black agents’ titles to “Assistant County Agent” and “Assistant Home Demonstration Agent,” the title that white assistant agents in the counties already held. The new order prevented agents’ contact with public agencies on behalf of their clients, and restricted agents’

⁶⁶Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, p. 29; Paul, “Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1951,” p. 27a; E. N. Williams, “Annual Report, 1951,” p. 2.

ability to tailor their programs to clients' needs. No consideration was given to the fact that a race-specific title had been imposed on black agents and used at least since 1923 (see chapter 3).⁶⁷

Paul's view of the post-1955 organization not positive. She referred to the "radical change" in the county organization of extension work:

The white county farm agent has been designated "County Leader", [sic] and all of the extension workers, white and Negro, including assistant agents are subjected to him. He calls meetings, initials reports, expense accounts and leave blanks. He determines the amount of mileage necessary, attends county wide meetings, and presides over the weekly staff conferences. In other words, he is held responsible for the extension work in the county. As a result there is a more uniform program in the county as each worker knows what the other worker plans, common problems can be aired and future plans laid. On the other hand this system has a tendency to crush initiative, and certainly considerable time is spent running back and forth to his office.⁶⁸

Although Harvard Sitkoff asserts that the New Deal and World War II "had corroded the doctrines of localism and decentralization,"⁶⁹ that new mood failed to reach into the extension service. The reorganization that occurred seemed calculated to avoid any meaningful desegregation or prohibition of discrimination by presenting the façade of a unified extension. Centralization of extension work in the counties eroded the professional ethos of South Carolina's black home demonstration agents as they took on a more accommodationist stance. Paul's annual reports offer a way to gauge these changes. In her 1952 report, Paul lists seven items on which black home extension agents were rated:

⁶⁷"Supplement to clarify County memorandum regarding organization of County offices," c. 1955, Series 33 Box 83, Folder 2; Letter signed by T. A. Hammond and thirty other Negro Agricultural Agents to George B. Nutt, Director of Extension Work, 9 October 1955, Series 32, Box 25, Folder 5, STICUL.

⁶⁸Marian B. Paul, "Annual Narrative Report, Extension work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1956," pp. 6, 8, 20.

⁶⁹Harvard Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality, 1954-1980* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1981), 15.

“Promptness and Accuracy, Attitude, Professional Behavior and Competence, Dependability, Leadership Ability, Initiative, and Personal Appearance.” However in subsequent years’ reports it is clear that traits that had been formerly valued in an earlier era were back in vogue. For example in her 1956 annual report, Paul stated that “the agents are taught to be polite, courteous and humble”—traits that would not threaten whites. These traits, Paul claimed, enabled the agents to “demand the respect and cooperation of everyone.”⁷⁰

The situation for black public professionals who encouraged assertion of citizenship rights became worse under Byrnes’ successor as governor, George Bell Timmerman, Jr. Black school teachers from many communities were fired because they refused to disclose their membership in the N. A. A. C. P. Twenty teachers were fired in the Ellore community of Orangeburg County alone. Timmerman forced South Carolina State College to fire any faculty members who opposed the state’s attempt to force public employees to affirm by oath that they were not members of the N. A. A. C. P. This event pointed out the insecurity of black public professionals. Although the court ultimately ruled in the teachers’ favor in *Bryan v. Austin*, it was a hollow victory. Timmerman even used his political muscle to force Benedict College, a private black college, to fire three white professors “whose outspoken integrationist views made them ‘subversive’ in Timmerman’s eyes.”⁷¹ Black public professionals paid the price of the civil rights movement and white officials made it abundantly clear that they were willing to use

⁷⁰Paul, “Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1952,” p. 34; Paul, “Annual Narrative Report, Extension work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1956,” p. 22.

⁷¹Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 528. The petition was not so much a pro-NAACP one as much as it was an affirmation of basic constitutional rights. NAACP papers, part 20, reel 11, frames 200-204, 209, 219, 240, 269-72.

bureaucratic means, if necessary, to remove them from the public space. The most vocal public leadership voices regarding matters of segregation in South Carolina during the last half of the 1950s were those of white politicians. In 1956 the state's legislature branded the NAACP a subversive organization and fired any public professional who was an acknowledged member of the organization or who refused to deny they were members. Some blacks, Reverend E. E. Richburg of Orangeburg for example, challenged the policy. Septima Poinsette Clark lost job and her retirement pension because of her activism and membership in the N. A. A. C. P.⁷²

These new expectations of demeanor extended to Marian Paul as well. The most evident modification was that Paul's rhetoric challenging black disfranchisement, ill-treatment, and her prophesies of the coming of a new era became milder. In her 1955 report she wrote, "A person who has worked in the same Agency for twenty-six years must be happy and satisfied, therefore it is not difficult for me to imbue others with the same spirit of loyalty and service." She also noted that if she needed to make a direct appeal to a legislator for an appropriation, she was "granted that privilege." Paul reported that the three white district agents had "relieved" her of many responsibilities but were "most kind and helpful" with black work. Paul's reports also show the paradox of being a black extension agent in this volatile era. Although she tried to be diplomatic, she could not contain her frustration over the decline in her authority. In her 1958 report she recalled that "in the thirty-three Counties staffed with Negro home demonstration agents it was *my privilege and responsibility* [my emphasis] to contact Senators and members of

⁷²"Teachers Reject Anti-NAACP Oath: Association Pledges Full Support," NAACP press release, 17 May 1956, NAACP papers, part 20, reel 11, frame 194; Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 310; Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 528; Aldon D. Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: Free Press, 1984), 139.

the legislative delegations to secure appropriations.” Yet in that same report she would declare that it was “a pleasure to execute [the] commands” of the State Agent for Home Demonstration Work, Sally P. Musser.⁷³

The records from the black state agricultural agent lack the social commentary of Paul’s reports. The state agent was not involved in the one protest action agricultural agents took against Nutt’s new regulations. It is interesting that black agricultural agents took collective action against the diminution of their status George Nutt’s 1955 reorganization scheme required. They shared Marian Paul’s concerns that the new rules were detrimental to the black extension service. One could argue that because they did not leave a long “protest record” in public documents, the agricultural agents were docile in the face of oppression. More likely, the different styles of approach raise questions about the possibility of gendered methods of resistance in a society in which suppression of black manhood was a key component of white supremacy.

Thirty of the thirty-seven black Agricultural agents signed a joint statement of protest. Calling Nutt’s proposed changes a “moral defeat for both the Negro Agricultural Agent and Negro farmer,” the agents argued forcefully against the reorganization. They claimed that they would lose the flexibility they needed to structure their programs to their clients’ needs unless they could respond to their clients’ “social, economical and cultural differences” without the approval of a supervisor if they were to offer “effective leadership.” The agents suggested that if their work were part of a county-based program,

⁷³Marian B. Paul, “Annual Narrative Report, Extension work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1956,” pp. 6, 8, 20, Series 33, Box 309, Folder 5104; Paul, “Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1955,” pp. 6, 8; “Annual Report, Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina, 1958,” pp. 10, 23. Sara Aiken Waymer would have disagreed with Paul on the efficacy of going to the senators in person. “That shouldn’t have been when no white agent had ever had to do that. . . . we were working for the same program, the same people.” See. Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, p. 21.

the practice of prioritization could mean that their programs might lose out causing “dissatisfactions, frustrations, and anxieties.” They asserted that the new arrangement “destroy[ed] the original intent” of the black service which had flourished because the agents understood their people. As a result, the black agents argued, black farmers would have no representation at the county level because the agents were “rendered powerless . . . a mere ‘boy scout’ or messenger for the . . . County Agent.”

In their petition, the agents argued that they would not “be able to procure free spirited discussion in farmer’s meetings; and consequently, no longer [will we] be able to inspire and command the respect and confidence of those whom [they are] expected to lead.” They identified respect as a specific issue when it came to the recruitment of the local leaders who assisted the agents in their programs. The agents predicted that it would be difficult to secure local cooperation if agents’ decisions had to be approved by the [white] county agent. “These voluntary leaders must be made to feel the importance of their contributions; they must be encouraged to make as many decisions as possible, but this must be done in a friendly, warm atmosphere where their efforts are obviously needed and appreciated.” The agents predicted a decline in the local leadership commitment because they will not give their “charitable services” when they “have no assurance of being treated in a cordial and dignified manner, of being respectfully and politely addressed, or being free from constraint and tension.” These leaders would not participate if they felt that changes in the program will “subject them to a lower sphere.”⁷⁴

The agents also objected to the proposed change in title, “Assistant Agent to work with Negroes” which they perceived as a “step down.” In addition to the status issues, the

⁷⁴Letter signed by T. A. Hammond and thirty other Negro Agricultural Agents to George B. Nutt, Director of Extension Work, 9 October 1955, Series 32, Box 25, Folder 5.

agents argued that Nutt's changes prevented them from supervising their office personnel and "send[ing] out communications without censorship." They questioned the organizational wisdom of a structure in which rewards and privileges accrued to a few persons. They suggested that employees laboring under such conditions would "soon lose the sparkle and inspiration" necessary to be effective. They implied that the workload of the county agents would also increase as black farmers recognized that the black agents had no power. The agents did not oppose centralization *per se* but believed that centralization at the county level robbed black agents of the security to "change an attitude or technique without jeopardizing his position." They declared that if agents were forced to do what the county agent wanted despite their own best judgement, the agents no longer had "professional responsibility." The agents argued that efficiency in reorganization could not be accomplished by "undue red tape." They predicted that the changes could "endanger" the whole structure of Negro extension work.⁷⁵

Finally, the agents asserted that the reorganized plan was not geared to a *segregated* society or the problems associated with it. They noted that the lack of black membership on the committee that proposed the changes or even informal consultation of blacks was problematic because "frequently that segment of an organization being *subjected* [my emphasis] to changes will diagnose the organization's proposals quite differently from the way they are diagnosed by those suggesting the changes." They noted that the plan called for major changes in the way black extension work was done but none in the way the white program operated. "Plans for change," they argued, "should not require certain segments to deviate greatly from established customs while allowing

⁷⁵Letter signed by T. A. Hammond and thirty other Negro Agricultural Agents to George B. Nutt, Director of Extension Work, 9 October 1955, Series 32, Box 25, Folder 5.

others to act as they have in the past. Double standards of this kind produce needless tensions and frustrations.”⁷⁶

This seven page-letter is historically significant for a variety of reasons: it inverts the central arguments of civil rights leadership and uses them to accomplish a result favorable to the agents and their clients. By arguing for a fair enforcement of segregation, they also called into question whites’ commitment to a separate equality. The agents used a petition to confront an injustice to their clients and themselves and in that manner challenged one of the most important privileges of white supremacy, whites’ expectation that their decision-making as it related to blacks would be uncontested. While arguing for a segregated system, the agents’ letter also points out how racial discrimination had established an autonomous space in which blacks had assumed control of their own destinies. In an ironic way, the argument for continued segregation at the county level suggested that the agents perhaps perceived autonomy in designing their extension programs—even though they were segregated—as some measure of programmatic equality. Marian Paul echoed the sentiments of the agricultural agents in her 1958 annual report. While she noted the common sympathy that had emerged from the county-based administration, she questioned its efficiency, particularly since black and white agents’ offices were not usually near each other and there were time considerations involved—namely black agents had to go to the white agents’ offices. “To not be

⁷⁶Letter signed by T. A. Hammond and thirty other Negro Agricultural Agents to George B. Nutt, Director of Extension Work, 9 October 1955, Series 32, Box 25, Folder .

considered is the crushing of initiative and personality,” she wrote. She also stated that the new structure would likely lead to “resentment.”⁷⁷

White extension officials thought the agents were overreacting. M. D. Farrar, the Dean of the College of Agriculture at Clemson, wrote in response to a telephone call by Clemson president R. F. Poole that the agents were “unnecessarily alarmed.” He apparently did not view the requirement that black agents’ work pass through white agents at the county level as a change in authority. He argued to Poole that the reorganization plan only dealt with structure and not extension programs. “I, personally, see no reason why the organization, as proposed, would not provide the same degree of prestige that has formerly been enjoyed by the Negro workers within the county units.”⁷⁸ Farrar’s response illustrates one of the main points of the agents’ arguments—that those outside the black community might not recognize the consequences of the proposed actions on black opinion of the program. Part of the luxury of white supremacy was that whites did not have to concern themselves with the sensibilities of the blacks their policy affected. The changes Nutt proposed demonstrated the type of double standards about which the black agents complained. Although Nutt’s recommendation of changes to black agent’s titles did not go through, it suggests that the South Carolina extension service was following the lead of the Federal Extension Service, which had addressed race by “de-racing” the nomenclature without altering the structure of the racial hierarchy of the service. Theoretically, it was possible that black agents could rise to rank of county agent. However, in all cases the county leaders and assistant county leaders were the white

⁷⁷Marian Paul, “Annual Report Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina, 1958,” p. 22; Paul, “Annual Report Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina, 1957,” p. 19.

⁷⁸Milton D. Farrar to R. F. Poole, 14 October 1955, Series 32 Box 25, Folder 5, STICUL.

agricultural and home demonstration agents respectively. In South Carolina this would remain the case for both men and women for at least a decade longer.

What occurred during this period of extension work reorganization was *desegregation*, not integration of the service. By bringing black Agricultural and Home Demonstration agents under the supervision of the white County Agent, the personnel of the extension services were no longer administered separately at the state level. However, the high wall of racial separation remained in the way services were provided. The 1956 county plan of work submitted by J. C. McComb of Orangeburg County provides an apt example. In his cover letter to District Agricultural Agent A. H. Ward, he writes that the plan is for “white men Extension Agents.” The plan itself is labeled “COUNTY AGENT’S OFFICE- Men Agents (White).” There are no specified duties for the black agent. Yet, item 27 of the 30-item plan states that the document “is the guide for all” men and women, white and colored.⁷⁹ The plan of work shows that in actual service to clients, the racial hierarchy remained. The plan did not include time for white specialists to visit black clients’ farms and homes. That proved Bradford Knapp’s 1915 assertion that there were some things whites could [would] not do for blacks still held true.⁸⁰

Black agents likely recognized the long-term implications of the proposed changes. By rendering the agents powerless to make decisions, it might reduce their client base to levels that would not justify the employment of black extension agents. Black agents still could only serve black clients. This restriction suggested a dismal future for black extension work. In the plans for further reorganizing the extension service, Nutt,

⁷⁹J. C. McComb to A. H. Ward, 10 January 1956 with attachments, Series 32, Box 83, Folder 1, STICUL.

⁸⁰Bradford Knapp to Walter M. Riggs, 27 January 1915, Folder 110, Riggs Presidential Records.

proposed that the supervisory staff for the extension program be reduced from 15 to 13. He planned to eliminate the Assistant State Home Demonstration Agent position and to eliminate Assistant State Supervisor of Negro Agricultural Extension Work and the Assistant State Supervisor of Negro Home Demonstration Work Division. Nutt proposed moving these supervisors to vacancies of black club agents on the 4-H staff and eliminating the assistant supervisory positions. These changes did not result in loss of employment but the removal of two blacks from the administrative ranks. Waymon Johnson and Sara Waymer, each of whom held their respective titles above in 1955 were re-titled as "Negro Boys' 4-H Club Agent" and "Negro Girls' 4-H Club" agent respectively in 1956. Marian Paul retired at the end of 1959, stating that she had "decided that [she] had worked long enough and wished to have peace and quiet for the rest of [her] life." Willie Mable Price Washington returned to county home demonstration agent work that year. Sara Aiken replaced Paul as State Supervisor, and Martha Reid served as 4-H agent. Washington's retirement returned the black home demonstration program to the post-World War II administrative staffing level.⁸¹ The downsizing of black agents continued in 1960. Despite the fact that the black agents constituted only about 22 percent of all extension personnel, they accounted for 46 percent of the reductions in force for that year. Fifteen positions were eliminated and four positions, which given the rules of segregation, could only be filled by whites, were added. Nutt speculated that despite their dedication, black workers might have to be eliminated "because their work is restricted to

⁸¹Resignation Form of Marian Paul, 10 November 1959, Series 65, Box 7, Folder 17, "Information on the Activities of the Agricultural Extension Service Prepared for the Spring 1956 Meeting of the Board of Trustees," Series 32, Box 25, Folder 6; STICUL. The black agricultural extension program had a county agent at large who was made a livestock specialist when the services formally integrated but he was never counted as administrative staff. See "Annual Report of Director, Cooperative Extension work, South Carolina" (Clemson, S.C. : Clemson Agricultural College cooperating with United States Dept. of Agriculture, Extension Service, 1960), 36-7.

Negro farm families, [and] in some counties their work-load may become too small to justify them.”⁸²

Black Extension Workers And The Rising Civil Rights Struggle

The request for the continuation of a segregated autonomy by black agricultural agents might lead to the conclusion that the extension workers, like the service they served, were behind the times, a relic of the more conservative, rural-focused age. However, there were some events that suggest a repressed radicalism among black agents. In 1957 Minnie Gandy, a home agent who retired in 1952 after eighteen years as black home demonstration agent in Marlboro County after the delegation stopped funding the position, requested back pay representing a special appropriation of \$480 she received from her county in the 1949. George Nutt asked lawyer William Watkins to look into the matter. Watkins concluded that the college had no right to reduce Gandy’s salary. Watkins said that the college could defend itself by asserting the expiration of the statute of limitations but barring that, he recommended settlement. In the end, Director Nutt decided to settle the case confidentially.⁸³ The fact that Gandy did not pursue her claim until after the federal government began, however weakly, to address issues of discrimination. While not powerful enough in their own right to guarantee her a positive outcome, Eisenhower’s executive order 10590 and the equal protection provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, if invoked in a legal battle, were perhaps sufficient enough to give

⁸²George B. Nutt to J. K. Williams, Dean of College and Graduate School, [1960-1961], Series 32, Box 25, Folder 3, STICUL.

⁸³William L. Watkins to Mr. George H. Bonnette, 1 August [1957]; George B. Nutt to Mr. J. F. McLaurin, 20 September 1957, Series 32, Box 25, Folder 7, STICUL.

Gandy the courage to challenge her bureaucratic mugging and to cause Clemson extension officials some discomfort.

Black extension workers do not figure publicly in the events of these years because of the long-standing federal and state policies restricting certain types of activities by agents. According to Altamese Pough, agents could promote “voter registration and citizen participation,” but could not promote a particular candidate. Another black home demonstration agent, Rosa Reed Odum, said that voter registration was handled through local community leaders. “See extension people weren’t allowed too much to visit those meetings, sometimes we kind of slipped in every once in a while.”⁸⁴ Despite the changing political and social climate, the agents remained a feature of the rural landscape. The new arrangements meant that the relationship between the agents and their clients were not as uncomplicated as they had been in earlier times, in part because of the new public posture of the agents. Although the color line remained, the closer association between white and black extension work produced a publicly consumed image of cordial race relations in South Carolina that is at variance with historical trends of South Carolina race relations during 1950s. In 1951 Paul lauded the association between white and black personnel. She noted that Margaret Fewell and a Miss McNab, white home agents in Kershaw and Barnwell Counties, both had helped the black home demonstration service. Fewell and the white women’s farm council in Kershaw County persuaded the legislative delegation to appropriate funds for a black home demonstration agent. McNab was instrumental in securing office space in Barnwell County’s agricultural building for black home agent Bettie Shakesnider’s office.

⁸⁴Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, p. 35.

Paul's assertions of good race relations continued through the remainder of her tenure as State Agent. In 1952 she declared "I am sure there is no state in the nation where a more harmonious Extension Service exists than in South Carolina." In 1955, she wrote that there was "a bond of friendship and mutual understanding and harmonious relationship which, I dare say is not excelled elsewhere in the United States of America" between the white state home agent and Paul's staff. In the report, Paul made four references to the positive racial relations between her staff and whites. In 1956 she wrote, "Despite the acute racial tensions which exist in the South at the present time, the extension workers of the other race are most understanding and considerate and liberal." She further declared that "Today with the unnecessary bi-racial upheaval, there still exists no tension in the Extension Program." In the 1958 report, Paul lauded the white district agents and specialists who "respect the rights of others and work in a most cordial and concordant relationship with our entire personnel. In these days of racial tension, these women work with interest and mutual understanding only aware of the services they render to all people."⁸⁵

A Community in Conflict?: Black Public Professionals and Black Client-Activists

The civil rights movement put black extension agents in a difficult situation. The last chapter documented the antipathy whites held for public professionals who "abused" their power in office by encouraging their fellow blacks to insist on equal rights. While

⁸⁵Paul, "Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1951," p. 22; Marian Paul, "Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1952," p. 14; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1954," p. 16; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1955," pp. 5, 17, 20, 26; Series 33, Box 281, Folder: 4713; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes, 1956," pp. 6, 27; Paul, "Annual Report Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina, 1958," p. 9.

the extension service had always emphasized its apolitical nature as part of its professional ethos, that commitment seemed to strain relationships between some extension workers and their black clients. In her 1951 report Paul noted wrote that agents “must be aware of the exploitation of our people and must not become discouraged when these people doubt our sincerity and leadership.” This would not be surprising since extension work at its core emphasized agrarian living, which in an era of broadening economic opportunity, could have been perceived as reactionary. Paul asserted that the agents were an important reference for understanding rural blacks. In her 1955 report, she noted that black agents “speak [rural blacks’] language” and that it was “no task” to “obtain the most secret data of each County.” Paul situated black home agents as an important source of stable leadership in racially volatile times. Agents encouraged black families to seek greater economic freedom and to motivate them to become “law-abiding worthwhile citizens” and assets to the state and nation rather than liabilities.⁸⁶ “Our people are all excellent followers—they only need the right leaders,” she wrote in 1955. Agents were held in high esteem by their communities, she asserted. They “assum[ed] the status of a public servant and the position of a public benefactor and advisor.” They shaped “sentiment for or against . . . public policy.” They were trained to “mobilize all available forces” to eliminate “ignorance, poverty and misunderstanding” and to serve as leaders by example. They were expected to “act in any capacity for the uplift of the county and its citizenry. . . . [and] to ease racial tensions.” She said her agents’ ultimate goal was to change rural blacks’ behavior and to encourage them “to assume responsibilities which will enlarge their capacities and *fit* [my emphasis] them for worthwhile citizenship.” She

⁸⁶Paul, “Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1951,” p. 20; Paul, “Annual Report, Cooperative Extension Work, 1957,” p. 7.

wrote of the importance of teaching blacks to learn to “respect the rights, privileges, and properties of others.” The home agent’s task was to help blacks understand “county, state, national and international affairs,” so that they, and the United States, could take their place in the new order. Paul also stated that it was the agents’ “duty to direct all of her clear thinking into channels for harmony, progress and for the well being of the nation. She must be alert to sense danger and tactful not to offend.”⁸⁷ Altamese Pough said that home agents were “highly respected . . . [and] sought out for information because we always seemed to have information.”⁸⁸

Yet, the agents’ influence played a direct role in changing the material conditions among many Afro-South Carolinians and certainly gave others the organizing skills they needed to act in their own behalf. “The old ‘plantation system’ [was] fading away.”

Marian Paul ably captured the changes that black extension work had wrought:

Gone now are the corduroy or wash board roads, the lean-to cabins, the one-teacher schools that ran three months, the horse and buggy, the one-crop system with cotton planted to the cabin door, the illiterate and superstitious families and eight Negro Home Demonstration agents to work the entire state . . . we had to corral these poor, poverty stricken, illiterate people, gain their confidence and respect, then motivate them with the desire for self improvement, hence our agents had to become half-missionary, half magician. Our program was simple but sound built upon the theory that “an enlightened people can be trusted to save themselves.”⁸⁹

⁸⁷Paul, “South Carolina Annual Narrative Report, 1949,” pp. 5, 24, 41; Paul, “Annual Report County Home Demonstration Work, . . . 1951,” pp. 20, 32, 46; Paul, “Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes, 1955,” p. 23; Paul, “Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes, 1956,” pp. 3, 7, 22; Paul, “Annual Report Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina, 1958,” p. 3.

⁸⁸Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, p. 28.

⁸⁹Paul, “Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes, 1955,” p. 40; Paul, “Annual Report Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina, 1958,” p. 7.

Despite the possible tensions that may have existed between black agents and their clients over where the former's loyalties were, it is clear that agents continued to be of central importance in ensuring that rural Afro-South Carolinians were aware of government benefits for which they qualified. Marian Paul cooperated with all federal agencies, the state departments of health, education, and public welfare, the state library board, and the state committee on interracial cooperation. Beyond state service, Paul also helped plan three regional 4-H encampments held in Tennessee, Alabama, and Washington, D. C., and served as a liaison between South Carolina State College and extension officials in the state and in Washington. She continued to work with the Human Relations Council after it affiliated with the Southern Regional Council in the early 1950s.⁹⁰ She led various community health drives, such as community chest, and she was often called on to recommend persons for important positions. "As one friend expressed it, 'You are the Bureau or Clearing House for the State'." Interracial cooperation, as well as cooperation with black groups such as the teachers' association, the fair association, and the colored women's clubs certainly contributed to the success of agents activities.⁹¹

Although the 1950s was a decade of social turmoil, black extension agents continued to help their clients tap into resources and to keep them focused on the broadening opportunities of the decade. E. N. Williams reported that his agricultural agents had secured over a half million dollars in farm loans for black farmers in 1951. In 1952, Sara Waymer helped a disabled client attend a trade school in Denmark, South

⁹⁰Paul, "Annual Report: Cooperative extension Work, 1952, Negro Home Demonstration," p. 15, Paul, "Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes, 1955," p. 22.

⁹¹Paul, "Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1951," p. 5; Paul, "Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1952," p. 15; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes, 1955," p. 22; Paul, "Annual Report: Cooperative Extension Work South Carolina, 1957," p. 11.

Carolina. Agricultural Agent William Thompson in Clarendon County reported helping twenty farmers organize their federal and state income tax returns. He also explained Social Security old age and survivors' benefits at all his outlook meetings in 1955.⁹²

A Model for Modern Living: The South Carolina Demonstration House

Agents undertook numerous activities to try to improve the lot of rural blacks. One project that stands out as a singular accomplishment is the demonstration house. In 1946 black home demonstration agents developed an idea to offer black women the first-hand experience of living in a modern home. They proposed to build a "vacation" house where rural black women could come to live for a week in a comfortable home that could be built within the financial means of most rural black families. While there, the women would learn to use modern conveniences, be instructed on meal preparation, and taught housekeeping skills. Marian Paul first approached the General Education Board with the idea in 1947. The Board invited her to discuss the project whenever she was in New York. Paul made a special trip to pitch the plan. After Paul's visit, South Carolina State College president Miller Whittaker sent a letter and a construction and operations budget to Robert Calkins, the Vice-President and Director of the General Education Board. Of the \$13,000 requested (including nearly \$3,000 for a full-time supervisor), they secured \$7,500. The remainder of the funds for the house's construction price, about \$700, and \$500 for annual upkeep was supplied by black farm women. Paul's agents took the project proposal to the black home demonstration work county councils and these women pledged to support the project. While Paul and Whittaker had planned to build the house

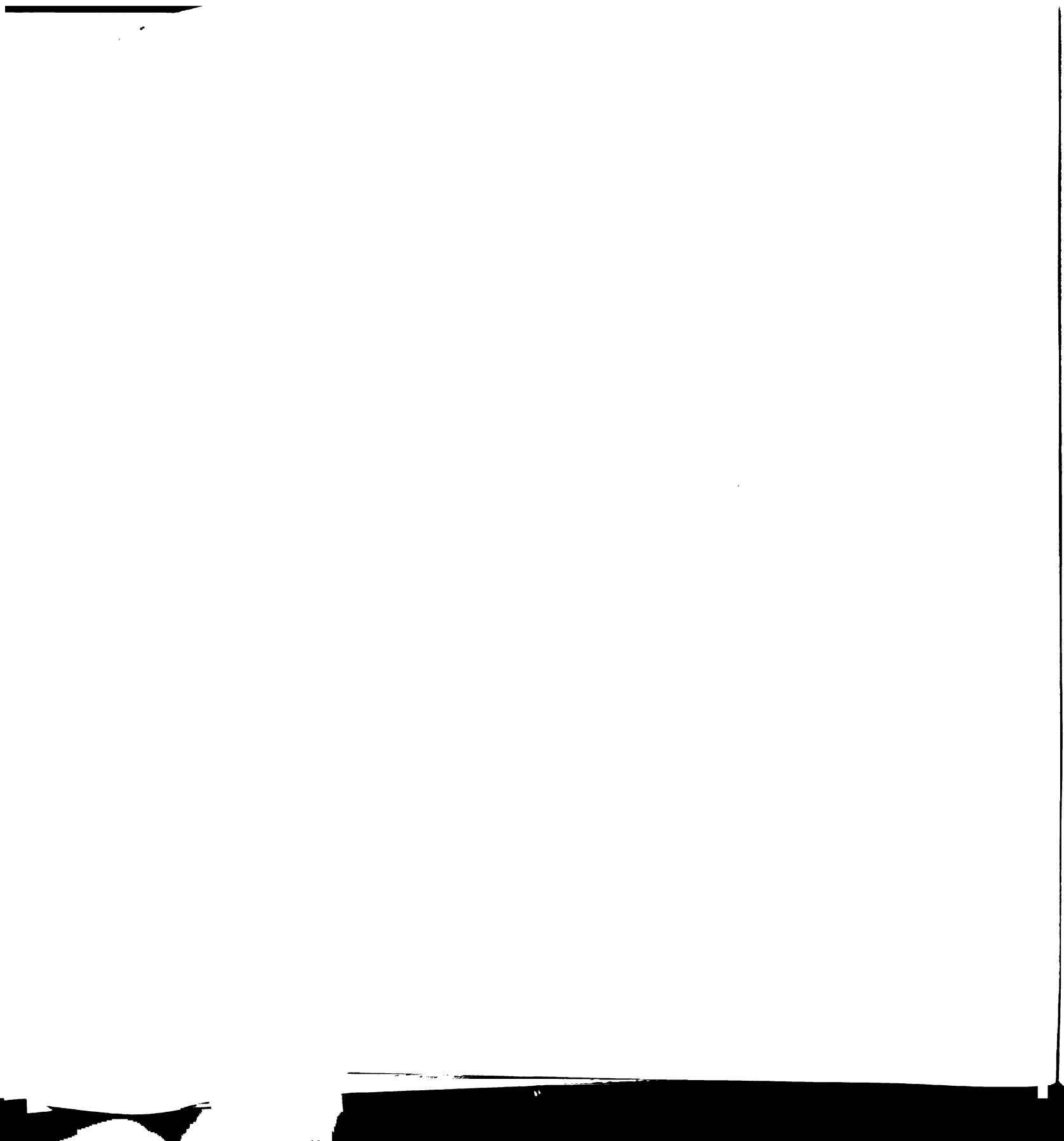
⁹²Paul, "Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1952," p. 9I; E. N. Williams, "Annual Report, 1951," pp. 6-7; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes, 1955," p. 18; William Thompson and Eugene Gerald, "Annual Report: Negro Agricultural Agent's, Clarendon County South Carolina," pp. 2-3, 11, 15, 23, Series 33, Box 284, Folder 47, p. 58, STICUL.

on the college grounds, the General Education Board recommended that it be built in a typical rural community. The house was constructed in the Jeremiah community of Kingtree, in Williamsburg County. The construction of the house was not without problems. It did not begin until 1950. A highly recommended contractor they engaged was “inefficient, stubborn, and very slow.” He was dismissed, his construction errors corrected, and the house was completed in 1952.

Paul purchased appliances at 55 percent of cost. The agents refinished a dining room set for the house that Altamese Pough recalls with special pride. “When they [local women] saw that pile of junk they wondered [who in] the world would put that in a house.” “But the dining room suite turned out beautifully.” Black women’s councils donated a vacuum, record player and radio. Pough also recalls that the furnishings for the house were provided by black women from all over the state.⁹³

Black home demonstration agents escorted groups of farm women to the home where they would spend a week. Sara Waymer said that the house gave many women their first experience in “sanitary living.” Altamese Pough said that their week at the house inspired women in a variety of ways. They learned about meal planning, they learned to do housework using modern equipment, and they also learned social skills. “We’d invite company, sometimes they would learn how to set a table, table manners, how to prepare meals for company . . . that’s the kind of thing that was and they learned how to do them properly.” Men sometimes came as well. Paul relates the story of a Union

⁹³M. F. Whittaker to Mr. Robert D. Calkins, 1 October 1947, Folder: General Education Board, Box: General Files, 1946-1947, SCSUHC; Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, p. 32; Paul, “Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1951,” p. 11; “A Way to Better Rural Homes: South Carolina Demonstration House,” pp. 4, 6, 8, United States Department of Agriculture, Extension Service Circular, No. 505.



County couple, Robert Beatty and his wife, who spent a week at the house with his mother, Bertha and another Union County woman. Beatty was the first man to visit the house.

From the minute we arrived at the House he was busy turning on the water and the heat or investigating every nook and corner to see what he could learn. His first remark concerning the House came when he put foot on the concrete porch. 'This,' he said 'is what we must have at our house.' From then on until we left, he was making note of certain features which he liked and which he hoped he could use in his house.

Paul assisted the family in planning how to use his Veteran's Administration benefits to pay for home improvements.

The demonstration house garnered accolades for the black home demonstration service and, according to the circular, promoted consideration of constructing similar houses in other states. The house proved so popular that *Ebony* magazine expressed interest in doing a story on it and people from around the nation visited it. Janie McDill, a white home extension nutritionist, brought visitors from four foreign countries to see the project. More than that, the demonstration house was a source of tremendous pride for black home demonstration agents. "This was OUR project," Sara Waymer asserted. "[It was] conceived by the black home demonstration agents," added Dr. Barbara Jenkins, State Agricultural agent E. N. Williams' daughter. "That was before any thought of integration came about. This was our thing for teaching," according to Waymer.⁹⁴ The demonstration house was the agents' solution to the problem of sluggish rates of home improvement among rural blacks. By the early 1950s, 45 percent of the state's rural black families still lived in substandard housing; half of those lived in houses that were

⁹⁴Paul, "Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes, 1956," pp. 22, 49; "A Way to Better Rural Homes: South Carolina Demonstration House," 13, United States Department of Agriculture, Extension Service Circular, No. 505; Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, p. 31.

irreparable. Twelve percent of black families had running water and only two percent of black families had bathrooms in their homes.⁹⁵ The agents hoped that the demonstration house would inspire their clients to improve their lives.

Working with the People: Developing the Family and Community Politic

The problems of Afro-South Carolinians remained myriad, but by the early 1950s they may no longer have seemed insurmountable. In her 1951 narrative Paul declared that “never in the history of South Carolina” had there been opportunities for “progress and advancement” as there were then. She cited school consolidation, school buses for black children, improved roads, and acquisition of radios and televisions as evidence of material improvement. Blacks had become “ambitious,” desired better educational facilities, better homes, improved farming methods, health and nutritional habits, and better clothing. “They are striving to become worthwhile citizens, an asset to the state.” In her 1953 narrative report, Paul listed six economic problems including: low income, few job opportunities, lack of skills, employment bias, unwise spending, and lack of education; and seven social problems including the lack of recreational or cultural opportunities, landlord-tenant relations, “ignorance,” substandard housing, inadequate medical facilities, “fear and traditional behavior,” that needed to be addressed.⁹⁶ The agents planned for problems to be dealt with by black families, a microcosm of the black community. Agents encouraged family cooperation. Black agricultural agents pushed

⁹⁵“A Way to Better Rural Homes: South Carolina Demonstration House,” 3, United States Department of Agriculture, Extension Service Circular, No. 505.

⁹⁶Paul, “Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1951,” p. 6; Paul, “Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1954,” p. 45. Paul added illiteracy to the list which she separated into economic, social and cultural categories in 1956, and added “too many broken homes” in 1958. Paul, “Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes, 1956,” p. 48; Paul, “Annual Report Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina, 1958,” p. 46.

father and son agreements for livestock and grassland farming. In Newberry County, 4-Her's held a parent youth banquet where children and their parents discussed their concerns and "returned home determined to work as a unit." Black home agents developed a unit on family life and safety that included a family devotional at least once per week, eating at least one meal together per day, holding a family fun night, and family business hours to discuss family problems.⁹⁷

While the agents helped their clients in many respects, due credit must also be accorded to local blacks who took advantage of these programs to improve their lives. In 1951 some South Carolina black 4-Her's received national awards for their projects. Rural blacks improved their material lives through employing the lessons of extension programs. Vesta Harris of Cherokee County began a floral business selling live plants and floral funeral arrangements. By 1957 she had added a den and bathroom to her home, modernized her kitchen, and sent her daughter to college. Out of thousands of women vying for the honor, Harris received the "South Carolina Negro Farm Woman of the Year" award in 1957. Blacks built new homes, 992 in 1955, improved existing homes including installing indoor plumbing and electricity, and established roadside markets to sell farm produce. Some of their gains were impressive. One black farmer's hog husbandry grossed him \$11,000 and was mentioned in the national extension report in 1952.⁹⁸ The availability of extension programs made many Afro-South Carolinians want

⁹⁷E. N. Williams, "Annual Report, 1951" p. 5; Paul, "Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1951," p. 28; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes, 1956," pp. 43-44.

⁹⁸Paul, "Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1951," pp. 12, 37-8; Paul, "Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes, 1955," pp. 36, 38; Paul, "Annual Report Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina, 1957," p. 32; USDA, "Cooperative Extension Work," *Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture, 1952*, p. 46.

to do better for themselves. In 1952 a woman in Colleton County whose husband refused to make improvements to their home invited the home demonstration agent to visit her house during the county tour to “embarrass her husband who had refused to make any improvement.” The ploy worked, the husband called the agent and said that he had never been “so embarrassed in his life” as when the tour visitors nearly fell through his broken front steps. He began improvements immediately.⁹⁹

More important than the economic improvements was the continued development of local leadership. While the use of local leaders remained difficult because many potential leaders were illiterate, agents continued to count on local leaders and their contributions to the extension program were celebrated. The women’s and girls’ programs had 1,769 local leaders working with the agents in 1951. There were 5,179 local leaders in men’s and boys’ work that year. While the number of leaders in women’s work never exceeded 2,000, there were 13,252 local leaders for men’s and boys work in 1958—the majority of them—10,928—working in 4-H. The agents took special efforts to show their appreciation to these leaders. In 1952 over 5,000 people turned out at Camp Harry Daniels to see 138 women receive certificates for ten or more years of leadership service. In 1956, 52 leaders were given certificates for twenty-five years of service. The next year, 317 women received certificates for ten years of service.¹⁰⁰

County farm councils remained vital to supporting black extension programs. In 1951 there were 745 black men on black farm councils state wide but by 1958, some

⁹⁹Paul, “Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1952,” p. 19.

¹⁰⁰E. N. Williams, “Annual Report, 1951” p. 2; Williams, “Annual Report District Agent Work, South Carolina, 1958,” p. 5, Series 33, Box 357; Paul, “Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1952,” p. 15; Paul, “Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes, 1956,” p. 21; Paul, “Annual Report Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina, 1957,” p. 25.

county councils were nearly a third that size. For example in Anderson County, the committee had 214 members. Women's councils extended their scope beyond their advisory role to become social organizations as well. By 1955 many of the councils had established choirs; meetings were punctuated not only by song but by dramatic skits as well. The meetings of the Cherokee County Council of Farm Women resembled prayer meetings, as they always began with spirituals and prayer.¹⁰¹

Transforming the Mind: The Intellectual Impact of Black Extension Work

The material success and successful grassroots organization both suggest that Roy Wilkins was accurate in suggesting that the black of the 1950s, was one of a new age. Rural blacks began to stand up for themselves and for their agents. Afro South-Carolinians, like other southern blacks, took advantage of the changing political landscape to make demands on the state in ways that they had not heretofore. Farmers had learned the benefits of organization and cooperation in their own interests, at least partially through activities of extension programs. The lessons of leadership in the family setting, in extension clubs, and farm men's and women's councils were useful to clients when they began to act politically on the community level. These experiences emphasized the importance of commitment and doing one's part. In the early 1950s South Carolina's white leadership adjusted to new racial realities with the expectation that segregation would be made more secure. Agents continued their long-standing cooperative working relationships with the state's public health agencies and contacts with local representatives of other federal agencies. They also increased their cooperation with local school

¹⁰¹E. N. Williams, "Annual Report, 1951" pp. 7-8; Williams, "Annual Report District Agent Work, South Carolina, 1958," p. 5, Paul, "Annual Narrative Report, Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes, 1955," p. 19; Minute book of the Cherokee County Council of Farm Women, *passim*, in possession of the author.

boards, which now granted agents use of buses to transport program participants, and use of schools for meetings. The school boards also gave agents access to old black schools to be used as community centers.¹⁰² As Newby suggests, “[w]hite Carolinians displayed a remarkable sensitivity to pressures from inside and outside the state. They had an uncanny ability to intuit just how much to concede to their opponents to neutralize their pressures without endangering white supremacy.”¹⁰³

However, their concessions inspired Afro-South Carolinians to make greater demands on the resources of their state. In her 1952 report, Marian Paul notes that better roads, school buses for children, the return of black veterans with an enlarged world view, and the availability of mass media were “the avenues through which the rural people have seen the many opportunities for advancement. They are dissatisfied with the meager . . . existence [sic] of former years, and they are now more anxious for an abundant life.” Rural blacks sought agents’ advice when they had been previously mistrustful of “free” services. Grassroots committees sought Paul out to inquire about the availability of an agent for their communities. “The citizens realize the need [for this] service and are insisting on *equal opportunities for all people* [my emphasis].”¹⁰⁴

One agent believed extension workers helped encourage their clients’ increased demands. Altamese Pough said that the agents’ job was to “inspire blacks to want to do more,” to improve agricultural yields so that they would have more money. “We worked to encourage them to live better and do better. . . . they aspired to higher heights. And

¹⁰²Paul, “Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1951,” pp. 5, 8, 46; Paul, “Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1952,” p. 36.

¹⁰³Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 289.

¹⁰⁴Paul, “Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1952,” p. 36.

when money became available they did these things.” Rosa Odum said that before the 1950s farmers were “asleep so to speak . . . this opened their eyes to what they could have if they’d put just a little more initiative in it. And that started the program here more so than anything else I can remember. Because then they developed this leadership in each community and these leaders, when they’d have their meetings sometimes during the month, they had their own schedule . . . and they were the ones that were pushing me to get more help.”¹⁰⁵

The actions rural blacks took to secure agent services for their communities is one example of the development of what Aldon Morris calls “local movement centers.” He describes them as “social organization within the community of a subordinate group, which mobilizes, organizes, and coordinates collective action aimed at attaining the common ends of that subordinate group.”¹⁰⁶ There is significant evidence of the politicization of rural farmers. It has already been noted that in this chapter that both the Clarendon and Chesterfield County legislative delegations appropriated an amount sufficient to pay the entire salary and benefits for a black home demonstration agent. These delegations not only were responding to the publicity surrounding the *Brown* case but also to the activism of local blacks. In both Clarendon and Chesterfield counties, groups of citizens had contacted Marian Paul seeking the appointment of an agent and also appealed directly to their county legislative delegations. At their annual outlook meeting in 1952, black agricultural and home demonstration agents decided that they would have a “governing body” made up of campers “in order to practice and learn more

¹⁰⁵Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, p. 37.

¹⁰⁶Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 40.

about civic government.” The women’s councils in these communities played an important role in influencing the delegations to make appropriations. Each women’s council had subcommittees on education, community development, and citizenship. Some of the councils took attendance by requiring the members to show proof of voter registration. Sara Waymer reported in 1961 that 688 extension clients had received voter registration certificates.¹⁰⁷

From the Farm to the Court House: *Briggs*, Elloree, and Extension Clients

Rural blacks also committed themselves to the civil rights cause in earnest. Richard Kluger’s *Simple Justice* shows that farmers in Clarendon County, for example, signed on to the *Briggs* case despite the reprisals they faced.¹⁰⁸ Dr. Jenkins and the Mrs. Pough both insisted that there were several black farmers involved in extension work who were plaintiffs in the *Briggs* action. The annual reports for the years in which the suits were filed are not extant. A comparison of persons mentioned in the 1955 annual report of William Thompson and his successor Hugene Gerald with the Clarendon petition, shows the name of only one person, a 4-Her named Willie Gibson whose name also appeared on the Clarendon petition. However, a comparison of names mentioned in the Thompson-Gerald annual report with a copy of a list of 67 black farmers being assisted by the Clarendon County Improvement Association (CCIA) finds six names on both lists, including the father of the 4-H boy whose name appears on the filing in *Briggs*. The names of three of the farmers being helped by the CCIA appear in the 1955 extension

¹⁰⁷Paul, “Annual Report, County Home Demonstration Work, 1952,” pp. 10, 36-7; Paul, “Annual Narrative Report Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes in South Carolina, 1954,” p. 18; Paul, “Annual Report Cooperative Extension Work, South Carolina, 1957,” p. 21, 31; Waymer, “Annual Report: Cooperative Extension Work South Carolina, 1961: Home Demonstration Division,” p. 5.

¹⁰⁸For a discussion of the white response to the initial filings of the *Pearson* and *Briggs* cases, see Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 17-26.

agent report as local leaders (two of them were also members of the farm council executive committee). Three other men were listed as clients.¹⁰⁹

The CCIA was a cooperative whose primary purpose appears to have been to serve farmers involved in the desegregation struggle. Hammett Pearson, the brother of Levi (of the *Pearson* case), was on its executive committee. They bought cotton fertilizer and tobacco fertilizer to sell to farmers who were the victims of white reprisals. Seventy-three farmers used the CCIA, which was able to sell fertilizer to them at lower than market prices because the association had no overhead.¹¹⁰ It had its roots in the backlash to the *Brown* decision. During the interregnum between the *Briggs* and *Brown* decisions, whites in Clarendon were somewhat solicitous of black citizens' demands. When the outcome of *Brown* struck down segregation, Clarendon whites retaliated by attempting to economically annihilate the black community. According to a statement by Billie S. Fleming, the organizer of the CCIA and Reverend J. A. Delaine's nephew, the Clarendon County superintendent of education, Reverend L. B. McCord, and S. E. Rogers, a prominent local attorney who assisted in the defense of the school district, began organizing a white citizens' council after the *Briggs* decision. (Rogers went on to become executive secretary of all of South Carolina's councils). The council immediately began to apply economic pressure on blacks who had been part of the case. By 1957 the pressure was intense. Loans were called in; farmers who had signed on to legal actions or who

¹⁰⁹Statement of Conditions, Clarendon County Improvement Association, April 4, 1961, NAACP papers, Part, 20, reel 11, frames 99-100; William Thompson and Hugene Gerald, "Annual Report: Negro Agricultural Agent's, Clarendon County South Carolina," pp. 2-3, 11, 15, 23. This analysis does not include persons who may have signed the petition and did not seek assistance of the CCIA or who left the area.

¹¹⁰Statement of Conditions, Clarendon County Improvement Association, April 4, 1961, NAACP papers, Part, 20, reel 11, frames 99-100; William Thompson and Hugene Gerald, "Annual Report: Negro Agricultural Agent's, Clarendon County South Carolina," pp. 2-3, 11, 15, 23.

were members of the NAACP were unable to buy seed or fertilizer; crops rotted away because the farmers could not rent harvesters; cotton went unsold. The citizens' council went so far as to send a letter to major lending institutions outside Clarendon County to request that credit be denied to sixty-eight persons on a list they enclosed. According to Fleming, the list included the names of Clarendon plaintiffs, many of whom were farmers. The citizen's council leadership promised that those blacks who withdrew from the case would no longer feel economic pressure but that turned out not to be true. The CCIA received a large measure of financial support from outside the county, including from the NAACP, to provide "fertilizer, seed, insecticides, cash loans and other services that [farmers] could not get elsewhere." This support enabled farmers like Ladson Stukes to continue their principled objection to segregation. Stukes owed the Clarendon Memorial Hospital \$700 for the care of one of his children. He had to mortgage a mule before the child was released. Despite his small payments on the note, a sheriff's deputy threatened to arrest him but said he would not do so if Stukes removed his name from a petition from parents seeking to integrate the schools. Stukes refused to remove his name.¹¹¹

Stukes was not alone in his willingness to suffer in the civil rights struggle. At least sixteen reprisals on a list of nearly 100 compiled by the NAACP were directed at southern farmers for signing petitions and engaging in other types of citizenship actions.¹¹² The plight of South Carolina's black farmers received national attention when

¹¹¹"Statement of Billie S. Fleming, President of the Clarendon County, South Carolina, Improvement Association before the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights, April 16, 1959," NAACP papers, part 20, reel 11, frames 44-51; Billie S. Fleming to Dr. John Morsell, 1 September 1959, NAACP papers, part 20, reel 11, frame 60.

¹¹²Re: Bills, Suits, injunctions, etc., NAACP papers, Part 20, reel 7 frames 776-785.

Fleming testified before a Senate subcommittee in 1959. Fleming reported that whites refused to gin the cotton of blacks who were associated with the *Briggs* case or with the NAACP. The gin owners posted the names of persons whose cotton they would not accept. White bankers also refused to make operating loans to black farmers "to force them into submission." Fleming testified that white farmers refused to loan or rent black farmers harvesting equipment and in 1957, black farmers' crops rotted because they could not get harvesters. He recalled a talk on the situation he made to a United Auto Workers Conference in New York. The delegates collected enough money to purchase a combine. Whites in Clarendon County refused to sell a combine to Fleming and he succeeded in buying one in another county by not mentioning his affiliation with the CCIA. The combine permitted black farmers to harvest their crops and to continue to support desegregation. According to Fleming, "a number of our farmers . . . did not feel that such economic reprisals were in keeping with the American Way of life."¹¹³

Farmers in the Ellore community of Orangeburg suffered similarly after 1955 when parents there joined the NAACP and signed a desegregation petition. Small landholders were the ones who joined the suit and they were desperate for cash. According to their spokesman, "they have there [sic] own little land and that's all they has." Whites in Ellore established a citizens' council. In *Profiles in Black and White: A Frank Portrait of South Carolina*, Howard Quint reported that the "leaders of the Ellore Council declared their immediate purpose was to exert 'economic pressure on all persons

¹¹³Billie S. Fleming to Mr. John Morsell, 1 December 1958, Memorandum from John A. Morsell, 3 December 1958, NAACP papers, part 20, reel 11, frames 28-29. Once it became known that the CCIA was selling its fertilizers to black petitioners, it also found its credit cut off and made a frantic appeal to the national offices of the NAACP for a cash infusion so that they could supply their farmers. See also NAACP papers, part 20, reel 11, frames 31, 34; "Statement of Billie S. Fleming, President of the Clarendon County, South Carolina, Improvement Association, before the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights, April 16, 1959," NAACP papers, part 20, reel 11, frames 44-51.

connected with the NAACP’,” but in particular on parents who had signed the petition.¹¹⁴

While such events are not unique, what was unusual in this case is that many of the blacks who attempted to assert their rights were farmers. L. A. Blakemon, the NAACP president in the Ellore community described the plight of farmers who had signed the petition in a letter to Roy Wilkins. Blakemon reported that black owners of their own farms were “catching the devil and need help now.” The crop allotments these independent farmers received from federal programs like Agricultural Stabilization were minimal, two to three acres at most. Almost continual rain and white hostility conspired against the farmers and many were threatened with the loss of their farms yet they persevered.¹¹⁵ Four black ministers, three from Orangeburg and one from Summerton issued an open letter appealing for assistance for the farmers. The ministers reported that three black farmers nearly lost their farms for owing mortgages of less the \$100 each. They stated that many farmers in Clarendon, Orangeburg, and Sumter Counties had been unable to borrow money for operations unless they attested that they were not members of the NAACP, opposed integration, and expressed satisfaction with their current condition. Without these assurances, “a petition signer with 350 acres, unencumbered, mechanized, and improved cannot borrow \$100.” The ministers encouraged the readers of their letter to collect money for loans to the farmers made on the usual terms. Loans would “hold [the

¹¹⁴Re: Bills, Suits, injunctions, etc., NAACP papers, Part 20, reel 7 frame 783; Howard Quint, *Profiles in Black and White: A Frank Portrait of South Carolina* (Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1958), 51-3. This book is not Quint’s work but is actually the work of his student, Idus A. Newby. A comparison of its contents with those of Newby’s master’s history thesis, “South Carolina and the Desegregation Issue, 1954-1956” (University of South Carolina, 1957), shows that the works are almost identical. In his preface, Quint states that the book “could not have been written without the assistance of a young scholar who is a Southerner. Legitimately his name should be on the title page but he desires for personal reasons, to remain anonymous. Both the research and a preliminary draft of a major portion of this study were done by him.”

¹¹⁵L. A. Blakemon to Roy Wilkins, 23 May 1956, NAACP papers, Part 20, reel 11, frames 14-16.

farmer] to the line in the fight” and help farmers establish credit. Alternatively, they encouraged the sponsorship of a farm family. Such extraordinary efforts on the part of the ministers suggest that agricultural blacks were vital in the fight for desegregation.¹¹⁶ To bolster their spirits the Ellore NAACP held a program in 1958 to celebrate the anniversary of the *Brown* decision. By 1959 conditions in Ellore were further exacerbated by crop destruction caused by hurricane Gracie. More than one sharecropper family had their entire crop seized by their landlords. Others were unable to get credit or to secure day work as farm laborers. Some were without food or clothing.¹¹⁷

There were some signs that federal officials were paying attention to blacks’ complaints. In 1960, the U. S. D. A. shut down operations for fifteen days at the Clarendon County Agricultural Stabilization office to investigate Fleming’s allegations of discrimination in tobacco and cotton acreage allotments. Fleming’s claims were confirmed and the board replaced but little changed in the operation of the office.¹¹⁸ What had changed was the opinion of what was acceptable policy in extension work. The civil rights revolution had captured public and political opinion. It began to chip away at the insularity from politics that the extension service formerly enjoyed.

¹¹⁶Reverend M. D. McCollom, Reverend E. E. Richburg, Reverend Henry L. Parker, Reverend, Alfred Isaac, “An Open Letter,” n. d. [c. 1956], NAACP papers, part 20, reel 11, frames 184-185.

¹¹⁷L. A. Blakeman to Roy Wilkins, 23 May 1956, NAACP papers, part 20, reel 11, frames 14-16; “The Achievement of Full citizenship, Human Dignity, Equalization of Opportunity demands SACRIFICE, COOPERATION AND RESPONSIBILITY: Do Your Part,” NAACP papers, part 20, reel 11, frames 21-23; Reverend I. DeQuincey Newman to John A. Morsell, 4 December 1959, NAACP paper, part 20, reel 11, frames 80-81.

¹¹⁸Billie S. Fleming to Dr. John W. Morsell, 8 July 1960, (with news article “Clarendon ASC Undergoes Probe” attached), NAACP papers, part 20, reel 11, frames 88-89; Billie S. Fleming to Dr. John Morsell, 5 April 1961, NAACP papers, part 20, reel 11, frame 97.

Extension Work and the Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue

Indeed, between 1960 and 1964, the shift in political opinion led to the almost total erasure of what had been the Negro extension service. As the civil rights movement continued to escalate and move from court challenges to direct action, extension directors could no longer afford to keep the black extension service at arm's length. In 1960, the southern extension directors rejected out-of-hand the request of the Negro County Agents and Negro Home Demonstration Agents for a joint meeting. (Had such a meeting occurred, it would have signified that the services were integrated.) The directors stated that they did "not feel that they have any official concern with the place and time of meetings of the [Negro] Agents Associations."¹¹⁹ Those sentiments, however, soon changed and southern extension officials would begin to take significant control of black extension work. In 1961 President John F. Kennedy signed executive order 10925 outlawing discrimination on the basis of race, creed or color in federal employment. In instances where employees were treated differently including in "upgrading, demotion or transfer; recruitment advertising; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection of training and apprenticeship," Kennedy ordered that "immediate and specific action be taken" to prevent executive department or agency offices that practiced discrimination from using the name, facilities, or sponsorship of federal agencies. Kennedy's order also created a President's Committee on Equal Opportunity to deal with allegations of discrimination. The order required "all executive

¹¹⁹Minutes of Meeting, Southern Extension Directors, 15 November 1960, Series 32, Box 20, Folder 11, STICUL.

departments and agencies” to examine their current practices to determine whether there was discrimination—intentional or unintentional.¹²⁰

Like Eisenhower’s Executive Order 10590, Kennedy’s order put pressure on southern extension directors to modify their most blatantly discriminatory practices. At their 1961 annual meeting, the southern directors noted that several civil rights issues were pending. According to the minutes of the directors’ meeting, both the NAACP and CORE were pressuring the federal government to deal with issues of discrimination against black extension agents. In preparation for a lawsuit to equalize the salaries of black and white agents, the states were required to make salary data available to NAACP lawyers because the agents were federal employees. “Pressure in Washington is building up and being directed toward [Agriculture] Secretary Freeman,” according to the report. E. T. York, a federal extension administrator, sent George Nutt a confidential memorandum in June 1961 informing Nutt that he had supplied salary information on South Carolina agents to the Director of Personnel at the U. S. D. A. York told Nutt that the information was being turned over to Russell R. Benedict, who represented the NAACP Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. York had announced at the southern directors meeting that Benedict had told York that the President had the power to withhold extension funds if there was discrimination in salaries. York asked Nutt to keep the information in confidence but informed him that it would be discussed at a rural development meeting in Atlanta in July. York’s partisanship in the matter may have been partly a result of the fact that he was a southerner. York is a native of DeKalb County, Alabama (a

¹²⁰John F. Kennedy, Executive Order 10925, Establishing the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, 6 March 1961 press release included in Box 56, Folder: Legislation, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II; the full text is located at <http://www.uhuh.com/laws/donncoll/eo/1961/EO10925.TXT>.

northeastern county bordering Georgia that had a minute black population), and earned his B. S. and M. S. degrees at Auburn University in the 1940s.¹²¹

Sensing the danger, extension officials tried to develop a response to the potential lawsuit. P. H. Stone, a retired extension director from Georgia, and Dr. Edward B. Evans, President of Prairie View College, a black land-grant college in Texas, were consulted about the concerns of black workers. It is unclear whether the southern directors or federal officials initiated the consultation. Stone and Evans compiled a list of concerns of black extension workers. It included: salary differences; the lack of black specialists; the “objectionable” use of “Negro” in the titles of black agents; the lack of suitable office space, office furniture, and clerical help, problems in distribution of materials; limited opportunities for training; and separate training and congresses for 4-H youth. The state directors also provided an assessment of these issues regarding the extension programs of their respective states. The comments offered suggested that the complaints of black agents had merit. However, the support of racially-based titles in South Carolina in the 1950s suggests that black agents did not agree on all issues. Interestingly, there was no report on the state of extension work in South Carolina in the summation.¹²²

The situation for black campers was no better in the early Kennedy years. Historian Joel Schor reports that in 1961 *Jet* magazine, among others, excoriated the Kennedy administration’s Secretary of Agriculture, Orville Freeman for permitting segregated camping. According to Schor, the article, which challenged Freeman’s

¹²¹Minutes of Meeting of Southern Directors, September 11-13, 1961, Series 32, Box 21, Folder 1, p. 8; E. T. York to Mr. George B. Nutt, 30 June 1961, Series 32, Box 70, Folder 7, STICUL; Biographical Summary, E. T. (Travis) York, www.myflorida.com/myflorida/government/taskandcommissions/egrt_taskforce/documents/york_bio.doc.

¹²²Minutes of Meeting of Southern Directors, September 11-13, 1961, pp. 8-10, Series 32, Box 21, Folder 1, STICUL.

"Midwestern liberalism," made its way to the Secretary with a note attached by Freeman's assistant, Rodney Leonard that read, "our position in regards to the 4-H organization does not reflect very well upon the Secretary as far as the Negro community is concerned."¹²³ The directors decided to end the regional 4-H conferences for black youth and established a committee to decide on new methods of acknowledging the accomplishments of black 4-H members. Since black 4-Hers continued to be excluded from the national 4-H conferences, the punitive nature of this policy cannot be overlooked. The directors decided that the best course of action was to establish a "scholarship and special awards program." A committee of three white extension directors and three black 4-H club leaders would meet and decide on "one or two winners in a scholarship contest." One scholarship would be awarded from the 4-H Foundation, the other from the National 4-H service committee.¹²⁴ Extension officials took steps to address the increased pressure they felt, but were unsuccessful in holding back completely the changing tide. Perhaps anticipating the increasing pressure southern states would soon feel to desegregate their clubs, extension directors adopted a policy that would permit the maintenance of local control—and segregation. In April 1962 the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, (ECOP), formulated a statement on youth camping that reflected the general

¹²³Schor, "The Black Presence in the Cooperative Extension Service," 352-3. Freeman took his image into his own hands. He appointed William Seabron to assist Carl Barnes, director of personnel, with the implementation of equal opportunity. Seabron, who had formerly the CIO during World War II, the Urban League in Minneapolis and Detroit, and was currently serving as deputy director of Michigan's Fair Employment Practices Commission, would work primarily as a minority recruiter and serve as a race ombudsman within the USDA. "Former Urban League Official Named to USDA Personnel Post," 16 July 1962, USDA History Collection Series IX, Administrative and Biographical Records, ca. 1860-1995, Subseries , Biographical Sketches, ca. 1940-ca. 1970, National Agricultural Library, Beltsville, Maryland.

¹²⁴Minutes of Meeting of Southern Directors, September 11-13, 1961, p. 10, Series 32, Box 21, Folder 1; Minutes of Meeting of Southern Directors, September 5-7, 1962, p. 5, Series 32, Box 21, Folder 2, STICUL.

policy of the 1950s. The statement asserted that 4-H was a cooperative effort in which participation was voluntary. It stated that local clubs had the authority to determine their membership and emphasized that the role of the U. S. D. A. was an advisory one. States had the authority to select 4-H delegates to the various conferences.¹²⁵ The idea at the basis of this recommendation: that association, even in government programs, was voluntary and that local differences should play a role in how various programs for the public good should be run, is one that would also later work its way into the issue of public school desegregation as well. Stephen Lowe points out that from 1965 through the early 1970s southern school districts proposed several school choice plans. Most of these, Lowe argues, would have had little impact on school segregation as white parents had infinitely more choices than black parents did.¹²⁶ That conclusion is equally applicable to the situation in 4-H. Pressure was brought to bear on the extension service. At the next national 4-H conference, only one black delegate (from Maryland who was a music major at Morgan State) attended and she roomed by prior arrangement with a college student from the University of Connecticut.¹²⁷

The Federal Extension Service experienced difficulties adjusting to executive orders and even some congressional laws because the state extension services had enjoyed autonomy for too long. In addition to the executive orders, which mandated equal

¹²⁵“A STATEMENT OF POLICY REGARDING . . . AND ATTENDING REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL 4-H EVENTS, 11 April 1962,” Box 74, Folder Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

¹²⁶Lowe, “The Magnificent Fight,” 278-310.

¹²⁷ Schor, “The Black Presence in the Cooperative Extension Service,” 356.

opportunity, Congress amended the Smith-Lever Act in 1962 to require that disadvantaged farmers receive more attention from the extension service.¹²⁸ Luke M. Schruben, an assistant administrator in the Federal Extension Service, sent a memorandum to the office of personnel policies and procedures division in mid-1962. He reported that salary equalization continued despite some problems. (In 1963 he announced that salaries were “completely equalized” in nine states, citing instances in which salaries of agents in “comparable positions,” were equal. In these instances, black agents had received raises of \$300 to \$700 higher than those of white workers had.) What these figures did not often show was that county supplements often perpetuated higher salaries for white workers.

There were areas where office segregation, convening of segregated meetings, and the use of racially identifiable titles continued despite Kennedy’s order. According to Schruben, these situations had been discussed with extension directors who were not aware of the problems, but when they were informed of them, the directors demonstrated a “desire on their part to do everything possible to resolve them. The records show that there has been far more progress in the last year in this area of eliminating conditions which *might be considered discriminatory* [my emphasis] than in all previous history of the Extension Service.” The extension service celebrated the first racially integrated national 4-H conference and a rapid move toward integration of the West Virginia Extension Service (one of the states with few black workers).¹²⁹ Outside the old guard

¹²⁸National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, “The Smith-Lever act, as amended,” *The Land-Grant Tradition: Text of Federal Legislation Relating to Land-Grant Colleges and Universities*, http://www.nasulgc.org/publications/Land_Grant/Smith-Lever.htm.

¹²⁹Luke M. Shruben to Policies and Procedures Division Office of Personnel, 24 May 1962; Luke M. Shruben to Policies and Procedures Division Office of Personnel, 28 May 1962; Box 67, Folder: Organization and Management, Personnel; Luke M. Shruben to William M. Seabron, 3 July 1963, Box 75, Folder: Reports and Statistics, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

extension leadership, Schruben's rosy statements were not taken as indicative of profound change.

Calvin Beale, an employee in the Economic and Statistical Analysis Division of the U. S. D. A., submitted an employee suggestion that more blacks be invited to the National 4-H and the annual National Agricultural Outlook Conferences. Beale noted the limited attendance of blacks at recent conferences and suggested that it had resulted in a "lack of systematic access to the sources of information which white workers take for granted; [a] deep frustration and resentment that the Negro workers feel regarding their exclusion from important conferences; and [a] deleterious effect . . . on their [black agents'] ability to serve the people adequately as well as on the ability of the Department to understand and mitigate the special problems of Negro farm people."¹³⁰

Beale suggested it was ironic that at a conference of 4-H leaders that focused on bringing low-income youth into the organization, there were no black leaders although blacks fell disproportionately into the low-income category in some states. He suggested that the presence of an all white delegation posed a problem for President Kennedy of having to greet an all-white group at the White House after he had issued his executive order. At the 1961 National Agricultural Outlook meeting, none of the 17 southern states included black delegates.

Beale pointed out that the outlook "for the general economy, for farm commodities, for the consumer, [and] for Federal programs" and the problems of farm people were discussed at the meeting. He said a panel on farm youth would have been of interest to

¹³⁰Calvin Beale, Employee Suggestion number ES-10, 2 April 1962; William M. Seabron to E. T. York, Jr., 14 January 1963; E. T. York, Jr. to William M. Seabron, 1 February, 1963, Box 72, Folder: Criticism and Complaints, January through March 1963, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

black leaders and argued that these conferences were vital to black farmers because the value of their products available for sale was markedly lower than the products of white farmers. Fifty-one percent of black farmers had products worth less than \$2,500 for sale. The average farm income for a black farm family in 1960 was \$1,168 compared to \$3,194 for a white family, according to Beale. He suggested that it was time to “break through the patterns of complacency and forgetfulness that have hampered the participation of Negro leaders in conferences and similar affairs. Much of the difficulty is not deliberate discrimination or malice, but simply a tradition of leaving the Negro out of the entire decision-making process.” He recommended that agency heads remind state officials to include black farmers and leaders in their list of delegates for national programs.

He also suggested bypassing white state officials and directly inviting qualified blacks in states where the white leadership ignored the reminder. Beale also recommended sending travel authorizations and paying per diem expenses of those blacks invited under circumvented conditions. He admitted that while his recommendation would cost the Department

a minor amount of funds, the positive result would be the elimination of one fact of the many facets of exclusion and neglect which have retarded the efforts of black leaders to improve the status of the black farm population. It would improve the morale of black professional workers in the field of agriculture, raise their level of competence, and greatly increase their respect for the Department of Agriculture and their faith in the sincerity of such programs for low-income people as the Rural Area Development Program.¹³¹

Beale’s immediate supervisor, Louis J. Ducoff, and William Seabron, the Assistant to the Secretary on issues of equal opportunity, endorsed the plan. Ducoff called

¹³¹Calvin Beale, Employee Suggestion number ES-10, 2 April 1962; William M. Seabron to E. T. York, Jr., 14 January 1963; E. T. York, Jr. to William M. Seabron, 1 February, 1963, Box 72, Folder: Criticism and Complaints, January through March 1963, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

it “constructive and thoughtful.” Seabron noted that a “general concern throughout the Department from the Secretary’s office down existed that the image of the U. S. D. A. as an exclusive separate operation be changed to conform with the real intent of the Department, that of serving all citizens equally.” He thought implementing Beale’s plan to include “qualified Negro leaders in all policy and planning conferences” was a positive step. Before Seabron acted on Beale’s plan, he wrote E. T. York in the extension service to seek his opinion. York, again, invoked localism as a reason to take no action. He said that states bore the cost of their delegates to both conferences. The states established a policy for selecting delegates to the 4-H conference; the attendance at the outlook conference was open to blacks if they had the ability to pay. “The only suggestion we could make for corrective action would be to encourage agencies participating in the Outlook Conference to give further attention to the problems of financing participation.”¹³² Apparently, others in the Department of Agriculture thought differently. A 1965 report by the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights noted that only Texas and North Carolina acted positively on Beale’s proposal and sent black workers to the Outlook Conference in 1963. When other states failed to include black workers, the Department sent direct invitations to ten black colleges. Tuskegee Institute sent a non-extension employee in 1963. Maryland sent an extension worker in 1964. Four colleges eventually sent faculty members. “Thus, Negro participation at the conference again was arranged for outside of the usual channels.”¹³³

¹³²Calvin Beale, Employee Suggestion number ES-10, 2 April 1962; William M. Seabron to E. T. York, Jr., 14 January 1963; E. T. York, Jr. to William M. Seabron, 1 February, 1963, Box 72, Folder: Criticism and Complaints, January through March 1963, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

¹³³United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs: An Appraisal of Services Rendered by Agencies of the United States Department of Agriculture*, (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1965), 37. Hereafter this publication will be referred to as *Equal Opportunity*

Politics increased the pressure on the Federal Extension Service. In a January 1962 article entitled "Will the Extension Service Become [a] Political Arm of [the] White House?," the editor of the *Florence (SC) Morning News* recited an AP article recounting a speech by Secretary Freeman at an extension conference. According to the article, Freeman asked those in attendance to step away from the former president Truman's idea of that the purpose of extension work was to bring knowledge to increase efficiency and step toward the "political arena" toward the "'long neglected arena of public policy' of bringing improved conditions to agriculture." Freeman insisted that increased efficiency could no longer solve agricultural problems. The editorial questioned this new approach. It began with a statement on the historical practice of the extension service of "remain-[ing] aloof of controversies over political, [and] economic issues." According the article, Freeman asserted (rightly) that there were those in the service who wanted "to avoid this new role 'because it deals with controversial matters, because it relates to formulation of public policy, because it deals with matters that cannot be proved or disproved by chemical analysis or controlled experiment'." ¹³⁴

Congressman Charles Diggs of Michigan wrote the Agricultural Department in the summer of 1963 to ask questions about the Mississippi extension service. His letter led Joseph Robertson, an Administrative Assistant Secretary, to write Lloyd Davis, Acting Administrator of the Federal Extension Service regarding the matter. Robertson recited several facts from a publication by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

in Farm Programs (1965).

¹³⁴"Will the Extension Service Become Political Arm of White House?," *Florence (S. C.) Morning News*, 23 January 1962, n. p., found in Series 32, Box 157, Folder 5, STICUL. Freeman's remarks created a maelstrom that is documented in the Clemson series. The correspondence in the Clemson series suggests that Freeman's suggestion of institutional raised great concern about an activist federal role in extension work.

regarding black extension work including: segregation in the service, the presence of only 350 black extension agents throughout the South, the continued use of the title “Negro County Agent,” the standard practice of making black agents subordinate to whites and giving black agents lower pay and less “material assistance,” and the lack of black agents in counties with “significant Negro populations.” Robertson asked Davis to prepare his reply for Congressman Diggs.

Davis asserted that the Federal Extension Service did not do extension work, rather it was a function of the state land-grant colleges cooperating with the U. S. D. A. He pointed out that state and county funds accounted for 63 percent of extension budgets but did not explain the significance of that fact. (This figure must have been the national average because the actual percentages varied by state) While admitting that some racially discriminatory practices continued, Davis insisted that “much progress” had been made. The service’s earlier decision to stop counting program staff and participation by race paid off. Davis stated that he did not know the number of black agents employed but “had reason to believe” it was higher than 350 since a count of titles before the elimination of race identification showed 887 black agents. He reported that seven states had removed the word “Negro” from agents’ titles. Davis insisted that black agents were not subordinate to white county agents but rather to their “supervisor.” He attempted to obscure the truth of the accusation by presuming that the new title neutralized the fact that only whites were appointed to supervisory positions in southern states. He noted that in counties with racially combined services the senior white agent was designated county leader. Davis reported that salaries were “completely equalized in nine states” and the income gap had been narrowed in four others. He wrote that working conditions for black

agents were improved and in some cases equal to those of white agents. Davis added that "to [his] knowledge, White agents have never been instructed not to serve Negro families by any State. Negro agents in the several states also served White families."¹³⁵

Also in 1963, Senator Jacob Javits wrote Secretary Freeman regarding discrimination by the Agriculture Department. Javits told Freeman that there were suggestions that the U. S. D. A. had not developed mechanisms to ensure that programs were offered on a non-discriminatory basis with consideration of need rather than race or other factors. Javits also said that it was reported that the department had not made provisions to secure guarantees that federal funds were being spent without discrimination, nor had a system to determine the degree of compliance with the guarantees been developed. Javits asked Freeman to answer seven questions relating to the department policy, such as why the number of black professional employees on the department's staff was so low compared to other departments. (At 2,287 out of 79,716 classified employees (2.9 percent) The Agriculture Department had a higher percentage of workers than only four of nineteen agencies listed in a 1965 study of blacks in federal employment.) Javits also asked about the level of black participation in FHA programs, the level of parity for black workers in the extension service and the level of participation of their clients; the progress of eliminating discrimination in 4-H; and the level of participation and benefit from Soil Conservation Service, school lunch and milk program, and rural development. Finally,

¹³⁵ Joseph M. Robertson to Dr. Lloyd H. Davis, 8 July 1963; Lloyd H. Davis to Joseph M. Robertson, 10 July 1963, Box 72, Folder: Criticism and Complaints, July-September 1963, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II. Politicians also recognized the elimination of racially descriptive titles as a possible "shell game." In 1965, Fay Bennett, executive Secretary of the National Sharecroppers Fund, wrote Lloyd Davis, that while eliminating race-based titles was a step in the right direction, there remained a "serious imbalance in the number of Negro agents" particularly in areas of high black population. Bennett encouraged "rapid implementation" of Title VI to deal with the issue. Fay Bennett to Dr. Lloyd Davis, 4 January 1965, Series 32, Box 31, Folder 11, STICUL.

Javits questioned whether Freeman's department believed that it had enough authority under the Constitution and other laws to ensure that funds were distributed on a non-discriminatory basis.¹³⁶

There is no response from Secretary Freeman to the Senator in this collection; however, a memorandum written by extension administrator E. T. York asserted that the Federal extension service practiced no discrimination in salaries, personnel, office facilities, or operating procedures. The remainder of York's letter clearly shows the Secretary had not reclaimed the power the office held under Section 2 of the 1914 Smith-Lever Act to establish, with states, mutually acceptable plans for the conduct of extension programs. York asserted that the "focal point" of extension work was the county and that county governing boards (presumably legislative delegations) in concert with state land-grant colleges determined hiring practices and salary rates—all clear violations of federal executive orders. He added that states were making "rapid strides" to equalize salaries and conditions. He admitted that programs for blacks were probably not sufficient to fill the demand, but added that was likely the case with all the extension service's programs. York insisted that the racial make-up of 4-H clubs was a consequence of the racial make-up of the community. He also pointed out that the clubs were voluntary and mostly run by unpaid local leaders. "Over the past several years, much progress has been made by the State Extension Services in eliminating circumstances *construed* [my emphasis] to be discriminatory. The State Extension directors have moved with more than deliberate

¹³⁶Jacob Javits to Secretary Orville L. Freeman, 19 April 1963; E. T. York to Joseph M. Robertson, 30 April 1963, Box 74, Folder: Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II; Bernard E. Anderson, "Employment of Negroes in the Federal Government," *Monthly Labor Review* LXXXVIII (October 1965): 1225.

speed in setting up employment and office arrangements designed to house the total extension staff of the county be they Negro or White.”¹³⁷

At this juncture, it appeared that the Southern extension services maintained the upper hand. An editorial from a South Carolina newspaper probably best expresses the view of federal and state-level extension officials that the extension service should not participate in a politicized version of social engineering. The *Florence (S. C.) Morning News* insisted that keeping the extension service out of politics was vital “to its primary function; [and] necessary for its public respect.” The editorial predicted that the change would “destroy the public esteem” of extension work and “prove a death blow to its effectiveness as an education agency.”¹³⁸ The reality was that the extension service was now a part of the political landscape and if the autonomy of the state extension services was to be preserved, extension officials also had to become political.

Disintegration before Integration

The goal of southern white extension officials was not the equal integration of white and black agents but rather the establishment of an integrated system in which black agents remained subordinate to whites and were eliminated as the number of black farmers dwindled. In a memorandum to J. K. Williams, the Dean of Clemson’s Graduate School, George Nutt reported that “the number of negro [sic] farm families has declined faster in recent years than the number of white families.”¹³⁹ George Nutt began to put into

¹³⁷Jacob Javits to Secretary Orville L. Freeman, 19 April 1963; E. T. York to Joseph M. Robertson, 30 April 1963, Box 74, Folder: Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II. Bernard Anderson, “Employment of Negroes in the Federal Government,” 1225.

¹³⁸“Will the Extension Service Become Political Arm of White House?,” *Florence (S. C.) Morning News*, 23 January 1962,

¹³⁹George B. Nutt to J. K. Williams, c. 1961.

effect the plans that he had made in the mid 1950s perhaps as a precursor to eliminating black extension agents at the earliest opportunity. In February 1962, Nutt completed the reorganization plan he first outlined in 1955. He required the titles "Assistant Agent" and "Associate Agent" began to be used by all subordinate agents in the state's extension service and eliminated the titles bearing racial identification. To qualify for "associate" status an agent must have completed ten years of service or five years of service and have a master's degree. While a significant number of black agents were appointed to associate status, none was appointed as the county agricultural or county home agent. E. N. Williams and Sara Waymer, who by then had replaced Marian Paul, were demoted from State Supervisors to "Assistants" in agriculture and home economics.¹⁴⁰ The elimination of the title "Negro" from extension titles, while essential for "integration," caused upset in some quarters. Benita Jones of Queens, New York, sent a telegram to the U. S. D. A. to complain about the treatment of South Carolina's black agents. While the telegram was not located in extension files, the response to Jones suggests that she complained about the removal of "Negro" from the agents' titles. The respondent to Jones' telegram said that black agents endorsed the change. The writer also gave Jones the assurance that the agents had not lost salary because of the title change.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰Thomas W. Morgan, "Self-Study Report for County Agent Work, [c. 1960]," p. 11, Series 32, Box 80, Folder 6.; "Organization of the Clemson College Extension Service in Districts and Counties of South Carolina," [1962], 2. Series 33, Box 83, Folder 2; Minutes of the Meeting of the Southern Extension and Experiment Station Directors, 5-7 September 1962, 10, Series 32, Box 21 Folder 2, STICUL. The title changes in South Carolina were the same as those in Mississippi with similar results. In September 1960, there were 81 white county agents, 21 white associate county agents, 89 white assistant county agents, 82 white home demonstration agents and a total of 43 white associate and assistant home demonstration agents. However there were only 36 black county agents and 54 home demonstration agents. Joseph M. Robertson to Dr. Lloyd H. Davis, 8 July 1963, Box 72, Folder: Criticism and Complaints, July-September 1963, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁴¹Letter to Miss Benita Jones, n. d. [1963]?, Box 67, Folder: Organization and Management, Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

The reduction in the number of black agents made salary adjustments easier to absorb. A December 1961 memorandum prepared for Clemson president R. C. Edwards showed that the extension service needed to provide an additional \$66,149 to equalize the salaries of white and black agents at all ranks. At the 1962 southern directors meeting, Thomas W. Morgan, assistant director of the South Carolina extension service, reported that after the salaries of all extension workers had been adjusted for 1962-1963 the salaries of black workers were adjusted an additional 3 percent. "Salaries for Negro workers will be adjusted to the level of white workers with comparable qualifications as rapidly as funds become available," he said. Director Nutt also reported to Edwards that black agents would be evaluated using the same rating system that had been followed in the past for white workers.¹⁴²

The Civil Rights Act of 1964: A Losing Battle?

Although extension officials believed that they were acting with the oxymoronic "deliberate speed," it was not at a speed that could outrun federal legislation mandating an end to many of the service's practices. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed it on 2 July of that year. Title VI, section 601 stated that no person could "be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination" in federal programs on the basis of race (among other characteristics). Section 602 required all executive branch offices of the federal government to establish rules for distributing benefits, subject to presidential approval, that

¹⁴²Robert C. Edwards to Mr. G. B. Nutt, Director, 27 December 1961, Memorandum to Dr. Robert C. Edwards, President, Clemson College, from George B. Nutt, Director of Extension, 27 December 1961, Series 32, Box 70, Folder 7; Minutes of Meeting of Southern Directors, September 5-7, 1962, pp. 10-1; Series 32, Box 21, Folder 2, STICUL; "Organization of the Clemson College Extension Service in Districts and Counties of South Carolina."

complied with section 601. Any program that did not voluntarily comply with the provision would have its funding terminated thirty days after the decision had progressed through proper bureaucratic and Congressional channels.¹⁴³ The broad powers of the federal government under the statute concerned Clemson president Robert C. Edwards, who asserted that it would “affect the future operation of the Cooperative Extension Program of Clemson University and the United States Department of Agriculture.” Edwards said that the South Carolina Extension Program would continue to operate as it always had until he received the regulations regarding the extension program, at which time he would determine “whether changes will be required as a condition of continuing this program.”¹⁴⁴ Edwards’ letter implied the possibility that South Carolina might opt out of the extension service. Various sources set the amount of federal funds South Carolina received for extension work somewhere between thirty-six and fifty-five percent of the programs’ operating budget, the loss of those funds could not be made up by state dollars.

Edwards’ studied response to the Civil Rights Act was one of two by extension officials in South Carolina. George Nutt, the extension director and Mississippi native, wrote to United States Senator John Stennis of Mississippi expressing appreciation for the stand that Stennis had taken against the Civil Rights Act in Congress. He noted that “it appears that you are on the losing side of the battle, but it is my belief that in time to come the thinking people of the nation will see the wisdom of your stand.” Regarding the

¹⁴³The Civil Rights of 1964, 2 July 1964, Sections 601 and 602, http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/statutes/civil_rights_1964.htm.

¹⁴⁴The Civil Rights Act of 1964; Robert C. Edwards to “Dear Senator_ ,” 9 July 1964, Series 32, Box 25, Folder 9, STICUL.

provisions of Title VI, Nutt asserted that in time they could learn to live with the requirements of the act but "the immediate months and years ahead will be difficult. . . ."¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵George B. Nutt to John Stennis, 13 June 1964, Series 33, Box 152, Folder 15, STICUL.

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**“A RAY OF HOPE FOR LIBERATION”: BLACKS IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA
EXTENSION SERVICE, 1915-1970**

Volume III

By

Carmen Veneita Harris

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
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Department of History

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CHAPTER EIGHT

“AN EMPTY DREAM”?: INTEGRATION AND ITS LEGACY, 1965-1970

[D]o they think he can be lifted to intellectual and financial equality and be forever denied political and social equality, (an empty dream), or do they believe that by raising him intellectually and financially he will in few generations be fit for political and social equality.—“Caucasian,” 1918

It is the ‘man farthest down’ who is most active in getting up.—Alain Locke, *The New Negro: An Interpretation*

When black extension work began in South Carolina, it held the dreams of two peoples. Those dreams were extinguished in 1965. This chapter examines the process of reconstructing the South Carolina Extension service as a racially integrated organization. It was a process that required adjustments from both whites and blacks that neither expected. It challenged long-held notions that race relations and white supremacy in South Carolina would remain unchanged as the first epigram above suggests. The first half of that epigram can be applied to white dreams that extension work could be used as an educational tool without altering the economic, social, or political status quo. Indeed, most whites believed that black extension work only held the potential to make blacks’ lives more tolerable. “Caucasian” said as much in the letter to the editor from which this epigram is taken. He remarked, “Those of the race that can be relied on are usually old and unable to read or write, which would indicate that education has not improved the race in this respect.”¹ Whites dreamed that it would always be understood that extension services to blacks were not equally important as those for whites. Like *Caucasian*, they believed that blacks’ hope for anything more was merely “an empty dream.”

¹“Caucasian,” “Treatment of the Negro, South Considerate of His Infirmities, Says Correspondent,” *The State*, 30 January 1918, p. 5.

The second epigram applies to blacks' dreams of extension work. Marian Paul's writings made it clear that blacks had dreams of better lives in the 1930s, held rising expectations in the 1940s, and were restless agitators by the 1950s. While whites dreamed that blacks would forever remain down, blacks were awake and determined to get up. Blacks dreamed for a program that would enlarge the efforts they had organized themselves and others that the General Education Board had supported. Well-educated blacks who gained employment in the service believed it offered them a chance to demonstrate their abilities as professionals. They also dreamed that the extension program would enhance the prestige of South Carolina State College and raise the level of respect for black professionals—neither group got what they wanted. To the chagrin of whites, the “intellectual” and “financial” elevation of rural blacks from extension work led to demands for political and social equality. To the disappointment of blacks the political and social equality that they pursued, led to the extinguishment of the some segregated institutions that offered college-educated blacks jobs and had nurtured their hopes and dreams.

By 1965, the work of black agents with their clients had helped to modestly raise standards of living and farmers' aspirations in the communities where they worked. Although blacks had achieved political and economic gains as a result, perhaps like “Caucasian,” South Carolina whites hoped social equality was still “an empty dream.” White resistance to the civil rights movement in the 1950s led to mostly conservative reactions by black extension workers even as some of their clients overtly defied segregation. By the mid-1960s black agents also became more politically active. By 1970, they had begun to intrude on white domination of state institutions. While they lacked the

power to totally transform formal and informal patterns of discrimination, black extension agents began to employ new federal laws to challenge whites' formerly unquestioned power over the program. However, these laws turned out to be double-edged swords that whites also used to do irreparable damage to the black extension service and its clients.

"A Revolution in Extension Work": The Civil Rights Act of 1964

The announcement of the Civil Rights Act as it related to extension work in South Carolina was a comprehensive effort. President Edwards explained how the act's provisions would affect the extension service in all the state's media outlets. He notified the governor's office and the legislature. Extension agents were informed of the act in racially separate groups. White agents and supervisors were told about the act at a meeting in Columbia on August 12, 1964. State extension officials met black agents and supervisors in Orangeburg the next day and informed them of the act. There were two other meetings for white county agents and one for white specialists between August 1964 and June 1965. In addition, "numerous meetings were held with the supervisory staff on Civil Rights." County agents met with clients to inform them of the act and its requirements.² Beyond that, the attitude in South Carolina seemed to be "wait-and-see."

The USDA also took its time analyzing the meaning of the new law. About a week before the President signed it, Secretary Freeman issued a memorandum prohibiting Department employees from participating in, sponsoring, or awarding grants for racially segregated events unless "the Federal civil rights program would be better served by

²George B. Nutt to Dr. Lloyd H. Davis, "Answers to Questions Submitted by Secretary Freeman's Citizens Advisory Committee on Civil Rights for Raleigh, North Carolina Meeting on December 5-6," 31 October 1966, p. 3, 4, Series 32, Box 30, Folder 1, STICUL.

permitting an exception to this policy.”³ To help with implementation of the policy, he created a Citizens Advisory Committee that included, among others, President Edwards of Clemson. On the committee, Edwards claimed, he encouraged “two-way communication in order that mutual understanding, respect and cooperation may flourish.”⁴ It is likely that in its full composition, this board followed the traditional pattern of recruiting southerners who best understood the “Negro problem” to analyze its solution, in essence letting the proverbial fox into the henhouse.

The U. S. Commission on Civil Rights’ *Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs*

Freeman would soon be pushed toward a more forceful civil rights stance than the one Edwards proposed. The United States Commission on Civil Rights was created as part of the Civil Rights Act of 1957 to investigate possible violations of the fourteenth amendment’s equal protection clause. John A. Hannah, Michigan State University’s twelfth president, chaired the Commission from its inception in 1957 until 1964. Hannah had other government experience, including serving as an assistant secretary of defense. In February 1965, less than nine months after passage of the Civil Rights Act, the Commission issued an assessment of the USDA’s programs. The subject matter was familiar to Hannah who graduated from the land-grant college he would later lead. Hannah had also worked for the Michigan extension service as a poultry specialist and served as Michigan’s Secretary of the State Board of Agriculture.⁵

³Orville Freeman to Assistant Secretaries, 23 June 1964, Appendix C, *Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs* (1965), 122.

⁴Robert C. Edwards to Mr. Raymond J. Anderson, 7 June 1968, Series 32, Box 30, Folder 13, STICUL.

⁵Robert Burk describes the men Eisenhower selected to lead the Commission, Hannah and vice-chairman Robert Storey, as being of “moderate persuasion who shared his allegiance to symbolic racial democracy.” Burk, *The Eisenhower Administration and Black Civil Rights*, 230. While this may have been

The February report was the Commission's first assessment of the Department of Agriculture. The Commission undertook the task "because of the importance of these programs and policies to the rural population of our nation and their direct relevance to the problems of rural poverty." It noted the steps the USDA had already taken to address discriminatory practices the Commission had brought to the Secretary's attention. The Secretary had mandated that the Department begin "immediate programs of affirmative action" to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The preface of the Commission's report ended with the assertion that "it is yet too early to assess fully the effect of these recently adopted policies."⁶

The report documents what the South Carolina case has already shown, that southern extension staffs were generally racially segregated from the administrative level down to the client level. The amount of coordination and lines of authority between white and black staff members in the counties varied widely. South Carolina was given as one example of lack of clarity in authority. The "unified" structure state extension officials had put into place in the 1950s in which white county personnel supervised black county personnel was less clear in the counties. "One Negro assistant agent thought that his supervisor was the Negro statewide assistant in Agricultural Extension, but that his

his intent, under Hannah's leadership the Commission raised questions that high-lighted serious inequalities in American life. The Commission became a force of increasing civil rights importance during Hannah's chairmanship. See for example, Burk, *The Eisenhower Administration and Black Civil Rights*, 234-5, 246; Mark Stern, *Calculating Visions: Kennedy, John-son, and Civil Rights* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 43, 49, 170. MSU Presidents, s. v. John A. Hannah, <http://www.msu.edu/unit/msuarhc/exhibits/presdnt/hannah.html>, is a biographical sketch of Commissioner Hannah.

⁶*Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs* (1965), viii.

reports were 'censored' by the white county agent. Another gave the impression that he was free to work on his own without obtaining clearance from the county agent."⁷

The report documented consequences of segregation for black extension staff. Black agents often were isolated and therefore missed out on information, including having access to the knowledge base of U. S. D. A. scientists, that they were supposed to share with their clients. For example, in January 1965 Fay Bennett, the Executive Secretary of the National Sharecroppers' Fund, told Lloyd Davis, Administrator of the Federal Extension Service, that black agents in South Carolina had not been informed about the Economic Opportunity Act. Bennett stated that at a statewide meeting, literature on this act had been given to white agents but not to black agents. He asserted that the first time that many of the black agents even heard about the programs was at an economic development committee meeting where they received copies of the literature from the South Carolina Representative of the National Sharecroppers' Fund. Regulations for civil rights compliance had only been distributed and explained to all extension-related organizations in two counties.⁸

There were limited joint staff meetings of black and white workers. Although the plans on paper for the South Carolina Extension Service required weekly meetings, the Commission report stated that the staffs met separately and that "Negroes attended only those occasional meetings to which they were invited." Segregation existed on the regional level as well and had been institutionalized for a long time. The report documented a 1928 region-wide conference that had been attended by both white and black

⁷*Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs* (1965), 23-5.

⁸*Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs* (1965), 25-7; Fay Bennett to Lloyd Davis, 4 January 1965, Series 32, Box 31, Folder 11, STICUL.

extension staff. However, the report cited no other examples of an interracial meeting after that year. Annual meetings that covered Department policy were segregated in all but four states. In Mississippi, even the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of extension work in the state was a segregated affair. Like the national and regional 4-H camps discussed in chapter 6, officials of unequal caliber addressed the Mississippi events. The white extension celebrants heard speeches by the state directors of all the other U. S. D. A. programs while the black celebrants heard from a black assistant from the Farmers Home Administration staff.⁹ Other specific findings of this report will be treated later in this chapter. Here the report's general conclusions and recommendations regarding the institutional aspects of extension work are summarized as an introduction to the climate in the extension service during the Lyndon Johnson's second administration.

The Commission report stated that black land-grant colleges were not of equal quality with white ones and therefore these institutions could not train the agents effectively. In every state but Texas, the entire experiment station research budget went to the white land-grant institution. The report noted the lack of black specialists, an "inequality that has been long noted," although in some states there were black generalists who were "*specialists*" on variety of subjects. Black agents were not offered the same professional development training as whites. There were "clear disparities" between the training white and black agents received. Black agents were denied membership in the state association of county agricultural and home demonstration agents, which meant that they could not be members of the national associations.

⁹*Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs* (1965), 25-8.

The report found that southern state black extension staffs worked under inferior environmental and professional conditions. The office situations for some agents were abysmal. Although their office situations varied, it seems that South Carolina's black extension agents may have been more fortunate than black extension agents in other states. Many of these workers had no telephones or electricity. Planning of programs was segregated as well. Black workers had heavier caseloads than white workers did. The report stated that the federal extension service had made no effort to determine the rate of black participation in extension programs. (Indeed the change to non-racial reporting in 1955 made tracking such data nearly impossible.) The Commission reached several conclusions regarding the operation of the extension service as it pertained to blacks that have been documented in this South Carolina case study. "Services to Negroes tend to be limited by the preconception, expressed by many Federal, State, and county extension service officials, that Negroes as a class cannot succeed in agriculture or productive ways of living. Federal and State as well as local agriculture officials *have participated and acquiesced in these discriminatory practices* [my emphasis]." ¹⁰

The Commission recommended that the President direct the Secretary of Agriculture to eliminate segregation from extension's administrative structure and from offices; that the Secretary require an end to segregated meetings regarding department programs, and that he prohibit any extension employee from attending any event or giving official sanction to a program from which members of either race were excluded. The Commission called for the President to direct the Secretary to ensure that equal opportunity in "employment, training, assignment, and promotion" be offered on the basis of "merit and

¹⁰*Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs* (1965), 105-6.

ability without regard to race” and to develop a mechanism for implementing and assessing the effectiveness of new programs.¹¹ The language used to define equal opportunity reflected an ideal situation at variance with the conditions documented in the report. It suggested that the two services had traveled along parallel paths where access to resources had been equal. However, the idea that the elimination of institutional segregation would offer immediate improvement of black extension workers’ opportunities was chimerical.

No More Excuses: Desegregating the Extension Service

President Johnson and Secretary Freeman must have been stung by the Commission’s critical report. Soon both were issuing edicts that would require fundamental change within the Department of Agriculture. A newspaper article announced the new order: “‘The Word has been passed,’ an FHA spokesman said. ‘You can expect more Negroes at all levels from secretaries to directors in all department (USDA) agencies by the end of the summer’.”¹² In late March 1965, Johnson released a statement to his cabinet. In it, he asserted that the federal government “must never be either the active or passive ally of any who flout the Constitution of the United States. Regional custom, local tradition, personal prejudice or predilection are no excuses, no justifications, or defense in this regard.” Johnson insisted that in offices of the government there must be “equal treatment, equal respect, equal service—and equal support—for all American citizens, regardless of race, or sex, or region, or religion.” He emphasized that public

¹¹*Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs* (1965), 109-11.

¹²Leverne Prosser, “USDA Is Checking on Racial Policies,” *Charleston News and Courier*, 7 March 1965, 11-A, attachment to George B. Nutt to “County Agent Leaders,” 10 March 1965, Series 32, Box 33, Folder 1, STICUL.

servants above all others, had a duty to uphold the rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Johnson asked his cabinet to make this message clear to all those persons under their supervision.¹³

Secretary Freeman quickly began to implement the act. He promoted William Seabron to “Assistant to the Secretary” with the primary responsibility acting as a compliance officer for Civil Rights Act of 1964. Seabron served as a liaison for the various USDA sectors and also served on the President’s Committee on Equal Opportunity in Housing. When he promoted Seabron, Freeman said, “I want the civil rights responsibilities of our agencies effectively coordinated so that there will be no delay in eliminating discrimination wherever it exists within the agencies of the Department. And I have full confidence that Bill Seabron, a well qualified and highly capable official, will vigorously carry out this assignment.”¹⁴

Getting “on the Ball”: The Southern Response to the Civil Rights Act of 1964

The southern extension directors’ minutes of their April 1965 meeting noted that Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman “stated that any agency expecting to get decent treatment had better get on the ball, and that any personnel of the Department that did not plan to carry out his responsibilities in Civil Rights had better begin to pack his bag.” In June 1965, Freeman issued guidelines to employees: steps to increase the participation of black rural people in Department programs on an equal basis with whites must be encouraged both in program administration and in program benefits; all vestiges of

¹³“Statement by the President [of the United States] to the Cabinet,” 25 March 1965, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 10, STICUL.

¹⁴“Seabron Named Assistant to Sec. Freeman for Civil Rights Coordination,” 27[?] January 1965, USDA History Collection Series IX, Administrative and Biographical Records, ca. 1860-1995, Subseries 3, Biographical Sketches, ca. 1940-ca. 1970, National Agricultural Library, Beltsville, Maryland.

segregation and discrimination must be eliminated in offices and other facilities; all personnel must serve all clients “without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin;” and Agricultural Department employees must cooperate with the Department in establishing guidelines for participation on a non-discriminatory basis in extension programs.¹⁵

The Impact of Civil Rights Act of 1964 on the South Carolina Extension Service

In some sectors of South Carolina opinion, the new rules were met with both resignation and great sorrow. In an editorial assessing the influence of the new regulations on the South Carolina extension service, one writer asserted, “There is no longer any choice; there is no longer any need to discuss the ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ of the law; the law is a matter of fact and must be obeyed to the letter, or the programs dropped.” The article said that counties had the choice of whether to comply or simply not to participate in the programs. The editorial speculated that withdrawal was not an option because the programs brought federal dollars back into the community. It also pointed out that integration was “fast becoming fact in many phases of life throughout the state.” The article stated that extension officials whose salaries were partially funded by the federal government could ill afford to challenge its policies.¹⁶ Extension director George Nutt requested an agent send him a copy of an article from a Charleston-area newspaper (most likely the *News and Courier*) which, while conceding the *fait accompli*, lamented the loss of local sovereignty. “It is unfortunate that Clemson is no longer free to conduct its

¹⁵“NOTES ON SOUTHERN DIRECTORS’ CONFERENCE, Richmond Virginia, April 27-29, 1965,” 1, Series 32, Box 21, Folder 5; “Secretary Acts to Put USDA Civil Rights Commitments Into Effect Quickly,” *USDA Employee News Bulletin*, 16 June 1965, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 10, STICUL.

¹⁶“Extension Service Integrating,” n. p., n. d. [c. August 1965] clipping in Series 32, Box 29 Folder 10, STICUL.

services in a way that it finds most efficient. But the University has to obey federal law.” Nutt forwarded the article to President Edwards.¹⁷

President Edwards reported that “good progress has been made” in complying with the new regulations but that ultimately, it would be up to the county governments to decide on the future of extension work—as long as their decisions complied with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. “We have no choice on that point,” Edwards said.¹⁸ However, there were limits even to Edwards’ willingness to accept unqualified federal jurisdiction. In his remarks to the southern extension directors meeting on 23 September 1965, he asserted that although extension work was a “prime target” for criticism, no other agency “had done more for agriculture and for rural America.” He also suggested that unlike other U. S. D. A. agencies, the extension service did not have the financial means to enforce cooperation (although 55 percent of the funds spent on extension in South Carolina were federal funds) and he asserted that Secretary Freeman’s advisory committee, of which Edwards was a member, was aware of that.¹⁹

Others in the state were bitter, some to the point of believing the changes should be resisted. Four white county agents expressed doubts about the efficacy of forced compliance with the law. The agents gave anonymous interviews to Leverne Prosser, a reporter for the *Charleston News and Courier*, and argued that the segregated programs

¹⁷“Farmers’ Service,” 23 August 1965, article sent to George W. Nutt? by Lillian Goldberg, Home Demonstration Agent, Charleston County, at the request of Barrett S. Lawrimore, County Agent Charleston South Carolina. Series 32, Box 29, Folder 10, STICUL.

¹⁸Press release, Clemson University News Bureau, 5 August 1965; “Lee Agri.[cultural] Office Consolidates in Civil Rights Compliance,” *Lee County Messenger*, [5 July?] 1965, clipping in Series 32, Box 29, Folder 10, STICUL.

¹⁹“Minutes of the Southern Directors Conference,” September 21-23, 1965, 8, Series 32, Box 21, Folder 5, STICUL.

had provided “more not less jobs for Negroes in agriculture in this state when compared to other agencies and fields.”²⁰ George Nutt recognized the importance of a more compliant “official” response. Nutt sent a memorandum to the county agent leaders and the district agent—all of whom were white—expressing concern that because the agents’ remarks were “anonymous we are all involved by implication.” Nutt urged the agents for their “own interest and the interest of the service” to refer questions regarding civil rights to President Edwards at Clemson and to instruct their staffs to do the same.²¹

When the Secretary issued his mandate that the extension service desegregate, the only desegregation that had occurred in South Carolina was the paper tiger of title changes. The administrative staff of South Carolina’s extension service maintained racially separate headquarters and there was minimal compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The white staff was housed at Clemson, which by 1965 had two blacks in the student body. The black staff remained headquartered at South Carolina State College. This practice, according a news article, was likely to be challenged. At the county level, some extension offices maintained separate entrances labeled “white” and “colored.” The signs were removed at three offices only after federal civil rights auditors discovered their existence and ordered their removal. The Civil Rights Commission report noted that “the number of Negro professional workers employed by federally-financed farm and forestry agencies in South Carolina [was] very small,” and that there were no black specialists. State officials claimed that black and white extension workers had equal access to specialists but the Commission’s investigation found a different

²⁰Leverne Prosser, “USDA Is Checking on Racial Policies,” *Charleston News and Courier*, 7 March 1965.

²¹George B. Nutt to “County Agent Leaders,” 10 March 1965, Series 32, Box 33, Folder 1, STICUL.

situation. It cited a white county agent who said that the black agents brought issues “they can’t handle” to the white agents and if the white agents “can’t handle [it], we call a specialist.”²²

The South Carolina extension service quietly began to comply with the new regulations. Integration of extension staff did not require adjustment in all counties. Only three quarters (36) of the state’s counties had black personnel. All those counties reported integrated planning and training meetings. Offices were integrated in only two-thirds (23) of those 36 counties. The Lee County office consolidated in July by moving the black agents in with the white agents. In other counties with sufficient space, consolidation also occurred. All the black supervisory staff housed at South Carolina State College was to be moved to Clemson “as soon as possible.” In counties without sufficient space, that issue was addressed. Secretary Freeman requested that the Chairman of the Administrative Committee in each state free up space in federal buildings so that white and black agents could share offices by December 31, 1965.²³

Just how “soon” it was possible was an open question. Part of the reason that desegregation went so slowly was that some federal extension officials made it easy for states to drag their metaphorical feet. At the April 1965 meeting of the southern extension directors, Lloyd Davis promised to sent out a letter stating that the Federal Extension

²²Leverne Prosser, “USDA Is Checking on Racial Policies,” *Charleston News and Courier*, 7 March 1965; *Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs* (1965), 34-5.

²³“NOTES ON SOUTHERN DIRECTORS CONFERENCE, Richmond, Virginia, April 27-29, 1965,” 2, Series 32, Box 21, Folder 5, STICUL; “County Check List on Compliance with Civil Rights Law in Conduct of Program of Clemson University Extension Service,” 9 July 1965, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 7, STICUL; Press release, Clemson University News Bureau, 5 August 1965; “Lee Agri.[cultural] Office Consolidates in Civil Rights Compliance,” *Lee County Messenger*, [5 July?] 1965, clipping in Series 32, Box 29, Folder 10, STICUL. A handwritten date on the Lee County article states that it is from 5 July. Since the article, and several others, is based on the 5 August press release, it is likely that the Lee County article is also from that date.

Service would establish a policy of “hands off unless asked for recommendations” in the reorganization of extension administration at land-grant colleges. The Commission’s report documented the Federal Extension Service’s complicity in permitting segregation to take root “at all three levels of government—Federal, State, and County.” The black rural population was important in determining the distribution of federal dollars to southern states for agricultural programs, but they did not benefit in proportion to their numbers, from those appropriations. The report also pointed out the relative lack of autonomy in the black program.²⁴ In the words of the report:

Although Negroes form a substantial portion of the population on the basis of which Southern States receive their allocation of federal extension funds, Negroes have not shared equitably in the services provided by such funds. At the Federal level funds, supportive services, and professional assistance have been channeled into the segregated system without adequate safeguards to assure equality of distribution, while Federal personnel have participated in and encouraged activities from which Negroes were barred.²⁵

The partnership between the Federal Extension Service and white southern extension services was so strong not only because of the South’s importance in agriculture, but also because many federal extension officials came through the ranks of southern white extension services. At a 1965 southern directors meeting, federal extension director Lloyd Davis practically offered a blue print to the directors on how to evade the Civil Rights Act of 1964. He stated that extension directors should notify groups and apprise them of Title VI. However, “each state Extension director will, in his own way, determine

²⁴“NOTES ON SOUTHERN DIRECTORS CONFERENCE, Richmond, Virginia, April 27-29, 1965,” 2, Series 32, Box 21, Folder 5 STICUL; *Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs* (1965), 56.

²⁵*Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs* (1965), 56.

whether a group is in compliance and whether or not to obtain a written statement.”²⁶

Utterances like Davis’s probably encouraged those who believed that the new policies were wrong-headed. Negro Girls 4-H club agent Altamese Pough recalled that South Carolina Extension Director George Nutt remarked during a staff meeting “there’s nothing in the law that says you have to have Negro extension workers” to which she replied “no, that may not be, but inasmuch as you have them, you have to something about them.” She recalled that it was Clemson’s President Edwards who mandated that integration go forth. Although all personnel had been briefed on integration after the Civil Rights Act in 1964, Pough said that the service continued to operate on a segregated basis. “After the president [Edwards] found out that it hadn’t really happened as he charged them to do, they called EVERYBODY up to Clemson to explain the civil rights and what the spirit as well as the letter of the law.”²⁷

Pough’s recollection, including Edwards’ ultimately positive role making the first halting steps toward desegregation, is supported somewhat by the documentary evidence. Edwards initially followed the traditions segregation had created by disseminating the new rules and regulations along racial lines. White agents received a copy of a letter President Edwards sent to County Senators; there was a meeting for county leaders in January 1965 to discuss the rules and regulations of the Civil Rights Act. Black agents received some information: a copy of the Board of Trustees resolution on the Civil Rights Act, a copy of the rules and regulations the act required, guidelines for 4-H activities, and

²⁶“Minutes of the Southern Directors Conference,” September 21-23, 1965, 8, Series 32, Box 21, Folder 5, STICUL.

²⁷*Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs* (1965), 29-30, 31, 37, 56; Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, pp. 5-8, 53; “County Check List on Compliance with Civil Rights Law in Conduct of Program of Clemson University Extension Service,” 9 July 1965, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 7, STICUL.

information on the prohibition of segregated meetings.²⁸ Finally, on 23 July 1965, over a year after the Civil Rights Act was signed, South Carolina extension officials held an integrated meeting of all extension staff at Clemson. George Nutt notified Raymond C. Scott, Lloyd Davis' assistant, that the agents' associations had been integrated in July 1965. However, it would be over a year, in October 1966, before professional development training sessions were routinely integrated.²⁹

The Integration Experience

Integration also required the relocation of black extension officials from South Carolina State College to Clemson University, about 150 miles northwest of Orangeburg. Both Waymer and Pough made the historic move to Clemson when extension work was integrated. They made great personal sacrifices to make the move. Waymer brought her six-year old daughter, but her husband remained in Orangeburg. Pough left her daughter in the care of a housekeeper in Orangeburg. Waymer recalled that she and Harvey Gantt, who sued the school for admission and successfully matriculated in 1963, were the first blacks on campus. "[A]s I look back on it now, I was a pioneer," she said. After two years, Waymer returned to Orangeburg where she continued to work for the service until she retired in 1978. Pough went to Clemson in 1966 and resigned from the service after one year. She returned to Orangeburg to raise her daughter. "I thought about it [moving to Clemson] long and hard," she said, "because I did have a child. But I felt like, in a way,

²⁸George B. Nutt to Dr. Lloyd H. Davis, "Answers to Questions Submitted by Secretary Freeman's Citizens Advisory Committee on Civil Rights for Raleigh, North Carolina Meeting on December 5-6," 31 October 1966, p. 3, 4.

²⁹PLAN FOR COMPLIANCE WITH CIVIL RIGHTS LAW, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 4, STICUL; Raymond C. Scott to Lloyd H. Davis, 6 July 1965, Box 296, Folder Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II; George B. Nutt to Dr. Lloyd H. Davis, "Answers to Questions Submitted by Secretary Freeman's Citizens Advisory Committee on Civil Rights for Raleigh, North Carolina Meeting on December 5-6," 31 October 1966.

that I was sort of obligated to go for many reasons. . . . I wanted to see firsthand what it would be like.”³⁰ This was not an easy transition. One wonders how typical the experience of Pough with her white colleagues at Clemson was: “[W]e’d meet people in the hall and say hello or good morning, whatever, and really they would open their mouths and not a sound would come out. I really felt sorry for them, really. . . . I guess they really hated themselves for not being able to relate. . . . [E]ventually they got used to us but it was quite an experience.”³¹

The shifting balance of power between the Department of Agriculture’s political employees and its civil service ones gave black workers an opportunity to make known the fact that the practices of extension service had permitted blatant discrimination against them and to call for more equitable changes. Under political pressure, localism was beginning to break down. In March 1966, C. A. Williams of Tuskegee recommended that the federal extension service establish cooperative relationships with community action organizations. Williams suggested that state extension services should encourage extension employees to participate in these organizations’ activities. Given the volatility of conditions in the mid-1960s Williams also suggested that black workers be able to voice “their wishes, concerns, beliefs, and feelings . . . at the highest level” in a way that “would minimize reprisals.” He recommended state level appointment of persons who could effectively bring black extension workers more fully into the extension service and called for national integration efforts to be reviewed to ensure that blacks and other minorities were accepted into all programs. Williams also encouraged direct

³⁰Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, pp. 2-3, 5, 51.

³¹Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, pp. 12, 52.

contact between state extension directors and black land-grant colleges.³² Williams' recommendations appear to have gone unheeded because similar recommendations would be made later.

A New Agent for a New Time

The agents' reactions to proposed "integration" in the 1960s puts them in a reactionary light until it is remembered that the 1950s plan called for loss of all independence black agents had. The laws of the 1960s leveled the playing field somewhat and offered black agents a modicum of security for the first time in history. After receiving copies of the new regulations, South Carolina's black agents began to act both individually and collectively to assert the rights guaranteed under the law. Sometimes they went to extraordinary lengths to do so. Altamese Pough claimed that there "was a concerted effort to keep black extension workers from meeting as a group. . . . We met anyway on our time . . . and paid for our own trips because we decided you could drive to any point in South Carolina within five hours, so we would call our meetings on Saturdays and go on down to Myrtle Beach or Atlantic Beach." The agents compiled a list of fourteen grievances that they took to extension officials. They complained that while agricultural buildings were desegregated, they were not integrated. Black personnel were typically in the same building as the white agents but the black agricultural and home demonstration agents shared the same office. They complained that although racial segregation on Agricultural Committees no longer existed on paper, it still existed in fact. They noted that county leaders passed problems at the local level on to the district level and that visits

³²"SOME CONSIDERATIONS PERTAINING TO COMMUNICATING WITH ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS INTERESTED IN THE PROBLEMS OF NEGROES AND OTHER MINORITY GROUPS," attachment to Ray Scott to Dr. Robert J. Pritchell, 4 March 1966, Box 300, Folder: Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

by the district agent were always of “a critical nature never in interest of program of work or county accomplishments.” The county leaders were encouraging black agents to seek other lines of employment “since jobs [were] so plentiful.” The black agents complained of low salaries, a rating system that was not standardized, a lack of help for black agents in carrying out their programs, the termination of black secretaries when black and white offices were combined; and the county agent meeting with groups of “his [white] people” while prohibiting black agents from attending without his consent. There was no black representation in the Extension Senate or on the administrative staff. There was no indication that black agents would be promoted to specialist or county leader. “It is the feeling of the general public that the Negro agent will lose his identity with his people and serve as flunkies for the county leader.”³³

Although the civil rights act was supposed to open public space to blacks, whites outside government were often less than willing to comply with the law. Altamese Pough recounted a poignant example of how slowly the civil rights movement changed the South. She had been summoned to attend a meeting of 4-H club workers at the Wade Hampton Hotel in Columbia in 1965. The meetings went well and Pough stayed at the hotel for dinner. A waitress took Pough’s order, gave her water but never came back with her food while whites who had been seated after her received her meal. When Pough asked why she had not been served, she was referred to the management. She inquired about the hotel manager with the elevator operator and spoke to Wayman Johnson, the Negro Boys’ 4-H club leader but decided not to discuss the incident with anyone else.

³³“Grievances of Negro County Extension Agents,” attachment to I. E. McGraw to George Nutt, 14 July 1965, Series 32, Box 34, Folder 4, STICUL.

When I got back, I told my husband that my civil rights had been violated—I'd been discriminated against. So we made a joke. So he said, "Well, what happened?" so I told him and he said you're doggone right you were. And I said "Well I'm going to write," and I did. I wrote the management and I sent a letter to my director [Nutt], Sally Musser [State Home Demonstration Agent], J. K.. Williams [Dean of the College of Agriculture] . . . well President Edwards first, I believe. I came down the chain. . . . the next morning we were in a staff meeting here at State College, the telephone rang and it was director Nutt, and he wanted to know if I could meet him in Columbia. And he told me "you had the telephone ringing off the hook." . . . And he had his civil rights *expando* file about this thick. And I had only my correspondence . . . in a little folder. He came in and he sat down there and I sat over here and this other man sat over there and he started questioning me. Well his scare tactics (inaudible) I said "no, I think I can handle it." . . . I said "Director Nutt, it has always been impressed upon me that I was an employee of Clemson University Extension Services. I was not at the hotel on personal business. . . . I doubt that I would have been there at all. . . . but I was summoned to be there for this meeting. . . ." Anyway when I wrote the hotel management, I told them I was going to sue them for punitive damages or whatever the amount. But anyway they were all upset—terribly upset that I was going to—and I told him that I certainly was. Anyway I didn't back down not one iota from the director. Well now, had I not been treated, what I thought, courteously, I probably would have gone through with the suit. . . . they got real scared about it. Anyway they told me that they had fired the waitress and they'd done all this and I did hear from the management. They wrote an apologetic letter and everything so we finally made it all right. . . . So the next week or so after that we had to go up to Clemson for 4-H Congress, camp or something. Anyway the director was down there. He looked and saw me and he walked all the way up to shake my hand. It was really funny, we all had a big laugh about it. But it was a humiliating experience. . . . I guess you learned to be thick-skinned . . . because I knew it was a new experience for them as I knew it was for me. And I . . . really tried to be nice and I usually tried to be tolerant.³⁴

Pough's experience demonstrates how new laws enabled blacks to object to white disdain for blacks.

³⁴Odom, Pough, Waymer interview, pp. 13-16.

Backlash and Resistance

Once southern extension officials re-oriented themselves to the new institutional realities, they worked to recover the ground they had lost when the Secretary of Agriculture decided to become an active partner in extension administration. Southern extension officials chose to do what new federal laws required as *they* interpreted the laws. President Edwards wrote Louisiana Director of Extension John Cox in 1966 that that Cox should have known from his own experience that “the Extension Service is a prime target of the civil rights leaders.” Edwards suggested that “we must take the initiative to do the job that we are commissioned to do *in accordance with the laws*, [my emphasis] . . . and then without apology let the chips fall where they may.”³⁵ W. M. Bost, director of extension for the state of Mississippi, wrote Dr. William Giles and Dr. Louis Wise, President and Vice President of Mississippi State University, complaining about the new equal opportunity regulations. Bost argued that the regulations invited lawsuits by making each part of the application process subject to review, by permitting former employees to take legal action against the service, and by permitting current employees and organizations such as “SNICK, COFO, NAACP, Core, Delta Ministry, [and the] Sharecroppers Fund,” to serve as litigants. The regulations required state extension services to inform “‘sources of minority group applicants’” of their employment needs and to seek these groups’ assistance in recruiting workers. State extension directors were expected “to work with community leaders to improve community conditions” which, Bost argued, was beyond the scope of the directors’ responsibility. States were required to submit “annual

³⁵Robert C. Edwards to Mr. John A. Cox, 30 August 1966, Series 32, Box 30, Folder 1, STICUL. This folder contains a letter Edwards sent to W. M. Bost director of extension work in Mississippi on 25 August; the letters are identical in content.

and quarterly plans for progress” which were subject to federal review. Progress, Bost claimed, seemed to be represented solely by an increase in the number of black employees. Bost also said that the processing of “plans, programs, policies, progress, and disposition of complaints,” seemed to have taken precedence over extension programs.

Taking the typical southern line of argument, Bost declared that the history of cooperative extension work demonstrated “the importance and necessity of local control of personnel and programs.” He argued that new federal guidelines violated that relationship. Bost protested the increasing power of federal officials over the state extension services. He specifically singled out the authority of the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Administration because the final decision on complaints rested with him. As the Assistant Secretary was the last person in the chain of appeal, Bost suggested that it was the federal government, which was the final arbiter of employment qualifications. This placed the extension service “in the category of straight-line Federal agencies.” The Secretary, Bost argued, was violating the prerogatives of Congress, which had said “that major changes in the operation and funding of the Cooperative Extension Service should be done by and with the consent of Congress, rather than by decree from the Secretary of Agriculture.” Bost suggested that rather than “submit” to the regulations; “we should ignore them and carry our case to the courts if pressed to this extent; . . .” He further argued, “I think that we have no alternative but to accept equal employment opportunities as a policy. However the method for providing equal employment opportunity is the State’s prerogative.”³⁶ Bost mailed copies of his letter to George Nutt and to the extension directors in Florida and Texas.

³⁶W. M. Bost to Dr. William L. Giles and Dr. Louis N. Wise, 26 August 1966, Series 32, Box 117, Folder 7, STICUL.

Taking on the South Carolina Extension Service: The Role of Outside Groups

Black agents also sought legal assistance to deal with continuing inequities that the state's extension service ignored. The NAACP's Washington Bureau counsel, J. Francis Pohlhaus, wrote to Secretary Freeman about the disparate salary scales for black and white assistant and associate agents whose jobs were "basically the same." Pohlhaus encouraged the Secretary to withhold approval of South Carolina's extension programs until salaries were equalized. Both the Smith-Lever Act and section 602 of the Civil Rights Act provided for the withholding of funds in certain cases. The data Pohlhaus provided showed that despite significantly higher percentage raises for black agents in the years 1961-1964, their salaries still lagged behind those of whites. At the end of fiscal year 1964 white assistant agricultural agents earned \$369 more than black agents of the same rank; white associate agricultural agents earned \$853 more than black associate agents; white assistant home demonstration agents earned \$107 more than black assistant home demonstration agents. There were no white associate home demonstration agents. While black home demonstration agents' percentage raise for fiscal 1965 exceeded that of white assistant home demonstration agents, black assistant home demonstration agents' salaries on average remained \$90 less than those of white agents of the same rank. The percentage raise for black associate and assistant county agricultural agents was lower than that of white associate and assistant county agricultural agents. As a result, the salary gap between black and white men extension agents white widened.

In the final analysis, the Agricultural Department could do little about the inequities, at least according to William Seabron's response to Pohlhaus. Seabron shared Pohlhaus's concern about the salary differences, but he noted that South Carolina had

made progress. Seabron said that the South Carolina General Assembly had provided a five percent across the board increase for all employees and that the differences resulted from varied appropriations at the county level. (An earlier draft of the letter sent out under Seabron's name included the suggestion that Title VI prevented the Agricultural Department from acting in the case. It likely would not have applied in this instance because Title VI only addressed federal agency action.)³⁷

Segregation within Integration

The question of Civil Rights implementation was a heated one. South Carolina extension officials seem to have shared Bost's assertion that within the confines of the law, the states had jurisdiction over issues of equal opportunity. One of the realities of the civil rights era is that it opened new professional employment opportunities to blacks. Unfortunately, many of those jobs offered to black administrators, in effect, were racially circumscribed positions. For example, E. N. Williams's and Sara Waymer's new job responsibilities restricted them mostly to a "resource and advisory capacity" for white extension supervisors at the district and state level regarding personnel and other matters affecting blacks in extension work. They were to "locate and recommend suitable [black?] candidates" for jobs, to serve as liaisons between black agents in the counties and the state staff, to assist black agents in improving their extension programs, to provide advice to district agents regarding extension matters of concern in their districts

³⁷Luke M. Shruben to Policies and Procedures Division Office of Personnel, 24 May 1962; Luke M. Shruben to Policies and Procedures Division Office of Personnel, 28 May 1962; Box 67, Folder: Organization and Management, Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II; Luke M. Shruben to William M. Seabron, 3 July 1963, Box 75, Folder: Reports and Statistics, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II; J. Francis Pohlhaus to Honorable Orville Freeman, 10 February 1965; Average Salaries of South Carolina Assistant and Associate Extension Agents for Certain Years Showing Percent Increase Over Previous Years; William M. Seabron to Mr. J. Francis Pohlhaus, 31, March 1965; John B. Speidel 26 February 1965, Box 296, Folder: Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

of responsibility, to evaluate black agents to “*recommend* [my emphasis] ratings, promotions, increases in salary, and disciplinary action,” to contact county leaders about the progress of programs in their counties, and to resolve extension problems with the relevant district agents. Despite the fact that their new titles no longer reflected a racial identity, their job responsibilities remained racially determined. The new job description gave Clemson’s extension service administrative cover for the operation of its programs. However, it is clear that neither Waymer nor Williams possessed any real administrative clout—not even in employee evaluation decisions. The word “Negro” is mentioned in only three of the eight responsibilities of Williams and Waymer, however it seems clear, given how Williams and Waymer conducted their jobs, that their responsibilities related solely to black extension workers.³⁸

Unfortunately for Williams and Waymer, the scope of their jobs was not governed by Title VII, Section 703(2) of the Civil Rights Act, which made it illegal for *private* employers “to limit, segregate, or classify employees in any way which would deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of such individual’s race, . . .”³⁹ Since their employer was not private the law did not protect them. There are also questions about how effective Waymer and Williams could be as compliance monitors. Waymer began a log of the adjustments Clemson officials proposed to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. She kept the log during the two years she worked at Clemson. The list covered all aspects of the extension program. The twenty-seven items refer to ending disparate treatment of black agents and

³⁸“Outline of Responsibilities of E. N. Williams Assistant in Agricultural Extension, and Mrs. Sara Waymer, Assistant in Home Economics Extension,” 17 March 1965, Series 32, Box 33, Folder 2, STICUL.

³⁹Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, 2 July 1964.

clients. By Waymer's calculations, only a third of the adjustments had been made by 1966. Clemson officials claimed they would provide equal opportunities, yet they implemented no specific means to achieve the goal. Waymer's notations indicate that extension officials not only failed to make equal opportunity a reality, but that some of the overt vestiges of racial segregation, such as separate entrances for blacks and whites, also remained in place.⁴⁰ Although she and Pough pointed out violations of the law, according to them, state extension officials responded that they would continue their programs as instituted until they were challenged.⁴¹

True administrative power remained in the hands of whites as several black extension agents soon discovered. Beginning in 1962, Clemson officials employed a university-wide ranking system using 0 to 4 to indicate the quality of employees' work. This ranking was the key component in decisions regarding continued employment, promotion, and salary justifications. In short, the ranking system reflected the university's standard of "merit." At the time these criteria were developed, the on-campus professional personnel at Clemson were all-white. The criteria they used to create the ranking system were established for the typical (white) professional employee pool at an institution that received good state financial support as well as federal extension appropriations in the millions of dollars. These funds had been used to develop strong programs in agricultural research and teaching that, before 1965, were only available to whites. The

⁴⁰Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, pp. 6, 17; telephone conversation between Sara K. Aiken Waymer and Carmen V. Harris, 24 May 1993.

⁴¹Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, p. 17.

Civil Rights Commission's report documented the inferior nature of agricultural programs in 1890 colleges. The standards as established, in all likelihood, were beyond black agents' reach.

Maintaining White Dominance: The Rating System and the Question of Merit

In a memorandum from around 1961 George Nutt wrote J. K. Williams regarding black agents: "In all fairness it must said that most negro [sic] agents are dedicated effective employees." Several of these black agents who had been considered "effective employees" before 1962 were fired in the mid-1960s after receiving substandard rankings. Morris B. Jackson, the agricultural agent from Union County received a ranking of "0," (he was one of three black agricultural agents to receive that rating) and was asked to resign his post. In the affidavit Jackson submitted to the South Carolina branch of the NAACP, he asserted that he had been held accountable for missing meetings of which he had no knowledge, that his supervisor—the white county agent—had sought criticism of him from farmers, that the white assistant agent knew that he would be dismissed or asked to resign before he was informed, and that he built a "modern home" in the city of Union after which "it seemed that nothing I did pleased [my supervisor]." Jackson also alleged that his supervisor became antagonistic after Jackson's son enrolled in an integrated school. Jackson said that he was berated by his boss for accompanying a black specialist to visit various farms at the specialist's request without prior clearance. He also alleged that the white agent carried other whites around the county to generate a sentiment that Jackson's work was inferior, although his "superiors approved of a broad outline of objectives which I submitted, and have completed almost in full. . . . His idea of carrying these persons with him, in my opinion, is to convince the white structure that

a Negro cannot do extension work which is contrary to well established precedents.” Jackson suggested that his rating and subsequent dismissal were the result of “rank racial discrimination” and was a “diabolical scheme . . . [to] defeat the true purpose of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.” Jackson reported that his white supervisor had discouraged him from forming any clubs that would require competitive judging and “integrated activities.” He also asserted that because the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prevented him from participating in segregated events, it impeded his progress and the white agent obstructed him by preventing black community groups from signing compliance forms. Jackson contested the ranking he received. He cited his graduation from Tuskegee Institute and the commendable ratings he received in the Alabama extension service. Jackson called for an investigation of his situation.⁴²

Just who had authority to investigate claims of discrimination was a contested question. During 1966, federal and state extension officials argued over who held authority over extension employees’ grievances. The Civil Rights Act prohibited certain actions but offered no method of adjudication. President Lyndon Johnson had attempted, perhaps, to close the loopholes in Title VI by issuing executive order 11246 in September 1965. In it, Johnson made clear that “equal opportunity applied to every aspect of Federal employment, policy, and practice.” He gave the Civil Service Commission the authority to deal with discrimination complaints lodged under categories protected in the Civil

⁴²George B. Nutt to J. K. Williams, c. 1961, Series 32, Box 25, Folder 3; Morris B. Jackson to The Honorable William N. Seabron, 14 May 1966, Series 32, Box 31, Folder 4, STICUL.

Rights Act. The grievance process, as Johnson outlined it, included department or agency review with the right of appeal to the Civil Service Commission.⁴³

Late in 1966 there appear to have been some efforts to compromise on the new policies. Lowell H. Watts, the director of extension for the state of Colorado and the Chairman of the Extension Committee On Policy (ECOP), suggested to state extension directors that they could not prevent an employee from lodging a complaint with the federal government, nor could the federal government ignore the complaint or give the state final review. However, Department of Agriculture officials agreed to allow states to try to address problems before they entered a formal investigation.⁴⁴ This policy worked to the state's advantage, as the cases of black agents who protested their termination demonstrate.

Morris Jackson had no recourse other than to appeal to the Clemson officials who had forced him to resign as the Civil Rights Act made no provision for resolving grievances. After being told that he had "no alternative" but to submit his complaint to university officials, the agent complied, though he insisted that he did not waive his right to higher-level review if the outcome through the university's grievance process was unfavorable. He claimed the right to cross-examine witnesses, or to have his representative do so for him. His problems following his termination point out some of the dangers for black public professionals after the Civil Rights Act passed. Jackson told Secretary Freeman's assistant, William Seabron, that he had been hired "at face value at five

⁴³EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 11246, 28 September 1965, 30 F.R. 12319, <http://www.eeoc.gov/35th/thelaw/eo-11246.html>, Part I, Sections 101, 104.

⁴⁴Lowell H. Watts to ALL STATE EXTENSION DIRECTORS, 18 November 1966, Series 32, Box 117, Folder 7, STICUL.

different jobs” but was then rejected when his difficulties with Clemson became known. He complained that he was now “being denied any work including that of a floor sweeper” because of the ranking situation. He called this a “corruption of justice, . . . merely for spite, . . . vexacious and arbitrary” which had placed his family in economic jeopardy. “To deny a person the right to earn a living in his own country cannot be considered less than giving him a death sentence.” The agent also said that he was sending a copy of his letter to President Lyndon Johnson to make a personal appeal for relief. “I ask for no more and will accept no less.”⁴⁵

Janie Lancaster, a black home demonstration agent in Georgetown County engaged in a nearly twelve-year struggle against her discrimination in the extension service. As early as 1962 she was receiving low ratings for her work. Lancaster asserts that these ratings were the results of her early civil rights activism. The highest rating she had ever received was a “3,” but in the early 1960s she received ratings of “2” and “1.” A 1962 letter from the county agent leader who confessed that he did not enjoy doing ratings, noted that he and the associate county agent leader, the home demonstration agent, “to the best of our ability placed [Lancaster] where we feel she should be.” In 1966 Lancaster was listed among the recipients of a letter Bertha Walker, President of the Palmetto County Council (the black farm women’s council) sent to Secretary Freeman. Walker complained that there were still racially segregated councils in Georgetown although it appeared that they were not on paper. In her 1966 evaluation, Lancaster received a rating of “1” and argued that her race was the reason for her substandard evaluation. Lancaster wrote a letter to federal authorities in which she complained that the

⁴⁵Morris B. Jackson to Mr. William Seabron, 13 February 1967; Morris B. Jackson to Mr. William Seabron, 27 February 1967, Series 32, Box 31, Folder 4, STICUL.

home demonstration agent is “very antagonizing.” She called for an investigation of the Clemson office and the Georgetown office after the home demonstration agent told her that she had been instructed by Clemson extension officials to check Lancaster’s work. Lancaster demanded to know how the home agent could hold both that position and the position of associate county leader when she had only two years experience. Lancaster pointed out that she had eight years of experience, a Master’s degree, and additional course work yet she was still an assistant agent. (In a recent conversation with me, Lancaster said that the woman’s degree was not even in home economics but in home furnishings. Lancaster also said that an FBI agent from North Carolina came to investigate her case. He asked if he could visit her home—apparently there had been an accusation that she did not live in the county but returned to her home county, Charleston, each night. The agent asked her about the trainings and made sure that she was able to attend them and to report back to him what happened.)⁴⁶

Lancaster was recalcitrant. She said that she was not allowed to go to any “white” events, and therefore she refused to permit the home agent to follow her to any of her events. She accepted an offer of further training but noted that even in the manner this training was provided, she was treated differently because of race. She claimed that Clemson’s Dean of the College of Agriculture, W. H. Wiley, told her that the “prior district supervisor ‘got out of extension work because he said ‘I cannot work with Negroes’.”⁴⁷ Lancaster’s complaint eventually ended up in the hands of John L. Gibson,

⁴⁶Telephone conversation between Janie Lancaster and Carmen V. Harris, 10 June 2002.

⁴⁷Martin E. Sloane to Mr. William H. Seabron, 15 December 1969, Box 312, Folder Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II. Transcript by Janie Lancaster of her meeting with Director of Extension Wayne T. O’Dell and the Dean of the College of Agriculture William H. Wiley, 27 August 1969, p. 7, Series 32, Box 31, Folder 9, STICUL.

Field representative for the U. S. Civil Rights Commission who forwarded it to William Seabron at the USDA. In his letter to Lancaster, Gibson wrote, "The Civil Rights Bill of 1964 will only have meaning when we stand up and make irregularities known." Lancaster probably needed little encouragement. "Ain't no need for me to have freedom as black and don't use it when the law has already been passed," she said.⁴⁸

Bureaucracies in Conflict: The Department of Justice and the U. S. D. A.

While the Agriculture Department was willing to permit complaints to receive a local airing first, other federal agencies were not bound by the agreement that had been reached between federal and state extension services. One such agency was the Department of Justice which could intervene in an agent's interest whenever saw fit. Department of Justice officials made their interest in extension discrimination known and that led to a tense situation between officials at Justice and South Carolina extension officials. In the summer of 1966, D. E. Epps, the county agent for Dorchester County, wrote George Nutt to inform him that someone had visited his black assistant county agent, Eugene Frederick. Epps complained that although he was in his office for the entire thirty minutes the visitor was there, could be seen plainly by anyone who entered, and had a sign that read "County Agent" over the door, the visitor told Frederick he didn't wish to see the county agent. According to Epps, Frederick reported that the visitor identified himself as William F. Miller and was with the Justice Department's Community Relations Service. Miller asked Frederick questions regarding office arrangements, whether he was aware of anyone having difficulty voting, or was afraid to vote. Frederick, whom Epps referred to

⁴⁸A. E. Libenrood to Mr. F. M. Kearse, 12 September 1962; Mrs. Bertha Walker to Honorable Orville Freeman, 20 June 1966; Janie Lancaster to "Dear Sir," 27 June 1966; John L. Gibson to Mrs. Janie Lancaster, 20 July 1966, Series 32, Box 31, Folder 6, STICUL; telephone conversation between Janie Lancaster and Carmen V. Harris, 10 June 2002.

as “Eugene” throughout the letter, reportedly said that he had not noticed any problems in these areas, and knew nothing about police brutality, about which Miller also asked. Miller asked Frederick how his salary compared to that of other extension agents. According to Epps, “Eugene told him that he did not know what other Extension workers made and that he didn’t think that it was any of his (Eugene’s) business.” Epps also reported that Miller told Frederick that federal monitors would be in the county on election day.

President Edwards wrote United States Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach to complain about the visit. “I am incensed at the method of procedure this man used as well as the lack of propriety and pertinence of the questions asked and statements made by him to the Assistant County Agent.” Edwards declared that Miller’s failure to make a courtesy call on the county agent was not acceptable protocol. Edwards suggested that Miller be prosecuted under Title 18, Section 912 of the U. S. Code if he was not a Justice Department representative. That law makes it a crime punishable by fine and up to three years imprisonment for persons falsely claiming to represent the United States or one of its agencies. Edwards said that if Miller was a Department employee, Edwards recommended that Miller “should be better enlightened as to his duties and the appropriate methods for carrying them out.” Edwards also re-emphasized his commitment to enforcing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and giving full cooperation when investigations were properly done. Roger Wilkins responded to Edwards’ letter on behalf of the Community Relations Service. He told Edwards that Miller, a decorated World War II veteran, had worked for the Department for the past year as an investigator of complaints in Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia and had done exemplary work. Wilkins wrote that Miller came

to the county to investigate a complaint sent by a resident. Discussing race relations with public officers was part of Miller's investigative method. Wilkins conceded that Miller should have spoken with Epps before interviewing Frederick during working hours. Wilkins also told Edwards that Miller's report contained no suggestions of civil rights violations by Clemson University or the extension service.⁴⁹

Fighting for Equity in Agriculture: The Role of Grassroots Activism

Because civil rights were on the national agenda, the plight of black extension workers was at least heard. National, state, and local activist groups and concerned citizens demanded fair treatment for black workers. The work of the National Sharecroppers' Association and the N. A. A. C. P. has already been mentioned. During his 1968 "Poor People's Campaign," Martin Luther King's associate and would-be successor, Ralph David Abernathy, presented Secretary Freeman with a list of eight grievances against the extension service. Freeman disagreed with Abernathy's assertion that extension services were administered on a segregated basis or that black workers were housed in inferior offices or received inferior training. However, the Department acknowledged that claims of discrimination in 4-H and home economics work, particularly race matching between clients and agents, continued. Department officials said they were

⁴⁹D. E. Epps to Mr. George B. Nutt, 21 June 1966; Robert C. Edwards to The Honorable Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, 8 July 1966; Roger Wilkins to Dr. Robert C. Edwards, 26 July 1966, Series 32, Box 30, Folder 12, STICUL; United States Code, TITLE 18--CRIMES AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE, PART I--CRIMES, CHAPTER 43--FALSE PERSONATION, Sec. 912. Officer or employee of the United States, (18USC912) http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=browse_usc&docid=Cite:+18USC912.

increasing their efforts to promote cross-racial service provisions and to encourage more black women and youth to participate in club programs.⁵⁰

Local grassroots activism was as important as advocacy group agitation in raising the issue of discrimination against agents. In the case of the fired Union County Negro Agricultural Agent, fifteen local farmers signed letters of protest to the Agriculture Department. The seven signers of one of the letters suggested that the agent was dismissed for taking advantage of civil rights opportunities by enrolling his son in an integrated school. One group of writers stated that they believed “that the action taken against [the agent] has its roots in this subterfuge which threatens to halt advance in all areas despite the fact that it [non-discrimination] is a governmental and national policy.” The eight farmers who signed another letter seconded the views of the first group. While admitting that the agents’ efforts had only led to moderate results, they insisted that *they* were satisfied with the agent’s performance and like the first group, pointed to the agent’s civil rights activism as the source of his problem. They argued that the agent’s civic activities had no bearing on his suitability as an agent and “should be of no value when his efficiency as an Agricultural Agent is weighted against his worth.” They suggested that the prejudices of his supervisors had led to the call for the agent’s resignation.⁵¹

A minister from Union County, D. J. Ziegler, waged a one-man campaign to have the agent reinstated. He telephoned and then wrote President Edwards to complain that the agent had received satisfactory ratings when he worked in another South Carolina

⁵⁰“News in Agriculture.” Press release by Dr. Maguerite Davis, United Press International, 153 UPR, p. 2, 29 May 1968, attachment to R. W. Bailey [white county agent] to George Nutt, 29 May 1968, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 6, STICUL.

⁵¹C. B. Bankhead and six others to The Honorable William N. Seabron, Assistant to the Secretary, c. May 1966; Cal Jeter and seven others to The Honorable William N. Seabron, 3 May 1966, Series 32, Box 31, Folder 4, STICUL.

county. He suggested that the agent's ratings declined "when Washington deleted the terms Negro and white from agents' titles" because that was when the state established its ranking system. According to Ziegler, three black agricultural agents had received a zero rating, although one had used political connections to have his rating changed. Echoing the Commission on Civil Rights report, Ziegler also argued that the substandard conditions under which black employees were required to work contributed to their inefficiency. He suggested that the white agents' "obstinacy" in organizing the contests prevented the Union County black agent from achieving his mission and therefore he received a low rating. Ziegler believed that since no blacks had participated in the agent's rating, the system had been set up to "eliminate [blacks] from further working in the extension service . . . because there was no such a rating system until the court ordered integration, thus then [sic] the work in the extension service of the Negro became inferior." Ziegler suggested that the agent had been asked to resign because of the color of his skin and that it was "undemocratic, unchristianlike, unethical, unamerican, and a smack in the face against the United States of America and democracy and the 1964 Civil Rights Act."⁵²

There were two interesting twists in the case. The first was that Lloyd Davis, the Extension Administrator sent George Nutt a copy of the investigative report to use on an "'Administratively Confidential' basis" to be seen only by those persons related to the

⁵²D. J. Ziegler to Robert C. Edwards, 13 July 1966, Series 32, Box 31, Folder 4; Robert C. Edwards to Mr. D. J. Ziegler, 15 July 1966, Series 32, Box 32, Folder 4, STICUL. The third agent, David Belton, to receive this rating received positive ratings from 1957-1966. In 1966, he was one of several recipients of a letter that discussed school transfers from Alice Spearman of the South Carolina Human Relations Council, which was, by then, "beginning to question the establishment." South Carolina Council on Human Relations, <http://www.usca.sc.edu/aasc/scchr.htm>. Belton was among the recipients of a letter containing instructions on how to request a school transfer. See Spearman to D. G. Belton, Jr., 4 March 1966, Box 3, Folder: March 1966, South Carolina Council on Human Relations Papers, SCL.

case. Davis asked Nutt to offer his commentary on the findings in the report to help the Federal Extension Service draft their report to the Office of Inspector General. Davis' actions forcefully demonstrate a bias toward the white southern state extension directors in racial matters. A second twist was that two black employees, one of whom gave a deposition to a USDA inspector, had evaluated the agent. In September 1966, George W. Dean stated that he and Wayman Johnson—another state-level black agent—rated the agents under the Direction of E. N. Williams, the highest-ranking black supervisor for agricultural work. Dean reported that the black supervisors found the agent in question's work to be of substandard quality, although he never explicitly indicates that their ranking was zero. Dean suggested that the agent was absent from his post, disorganized, and refused help. What is unclear is whether the rating occurred before or after the complaining agent lodged his grievance.⁵³

Edwards responded to Ziegler's letter by disputing Ziegler's interpretation of some of the facts. In addition to informing Ziegler that the agent must take up his own case, Edwards mentioned that it was he, not federal officials, who made the decision to change the titles of the agents. Edwards asserted that the title change was "only one of several conclusions you have drawn without foundation in fact." He told Ziegler that the agent had been fired for his own inefficiency and his refusal to accept assistance in improving his performance. While Ziegler may have been off the mark in his recitation of the facts in this particular case, there is evidence that demonstrates that southern extension officials recognized that undocumented extension decisions might be characterized as arbitrary or racially unfair. Because of the Civil Rights Act, employment decisions had

⁵³Lloyd H. Davis to Mr. George B. Nutt, 10 November 1966. Box 300, Folder Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II; Statement of George W. Dean, 8 September 1966, Series 32, Box 31, Folder 4, STICUL.

to have some “unbiased” basis. According to the southern extension directors, a ruling by the U. S. D. A. general counsel had that declared extension agents were federal employees for the purpose of applying civil rights laws. The directors understood that “extension may have to develop [a] statement of procedures to comply with policies.” We must be able to defend our personnel actions with regard to appointments, promotions, etc.” At a meeting in the fall of 1965, Tom Hughes, Secretary Freeman’s executive secretary, made it clear that the directors had to be prepared to “fully justify” the appointments of persons promoted in the service and that it must be clear that the person “was being promoted on the basis of qualification.”⁵⁴

When efforts to deal with South Carolina officials failed, Ziegler continued his struggle on the agent’s behalf. In January 1967 he wrote William Seabron regarding the agent’s situation. Ziegler acknowledged Seabron’s relative powerlessness in the case but said “it moistens the eye and makes the heart sad, indeed, to be reminded of the fact that the Negro’s position in American life amounts to less than that of an unwanted ward of the nation. . . . I do not hesitate to say that I should prefer to eat locusts and drink branch water than to suffer the humiliation it must have been to you to give Mr. Jackson the alternatives of submitting himself to the abuses of southern tyrants who still believe in and put the Negro under the suppression of the celebrated ‘Dred Scott Decision’.”

Ziegler’s letter drips with sarcasm over Seabron’s supposed helplessness in the situation, referring to Seabron as “feeble”, “a paper, or pasteboard assistant.” Ziegler questioned how Seabron could make any guarantees of fairness in the case. In a final salvo he

⁵⁴“NOTES ON SOUTHERN DIRECTORS CONFERENCE, Richmond, Virginia, April 27-29, 1965,” 2, Series 32, Box 21, Folder 5; “Minutes of the Southern Directors Conference,” September 21-23, 1965, 6, Series 32, Box 21, Folder 5; “Grievances of Negro County Extension Agents,” Series 32, Box 34, Folder 4, STICUL.

pointed out to Seabron that although he, [Ziegler], had not been honored with a doctoral degree, that he stood “on an equal par with [Seabron], not simply because I am a veteran who has risked his life to perpetuate this type of chicanery,” but also because he was an anointed minister who had been given the ability to push for “justice, equality and freedom,” even at the cost of his life and “without the governmental guarantees which you have at your disposal and which I have fought for you to have.”⁵⁵ There is no indication that Ziegler was successful in his effort to secure the agent’s re-employment. However, the possibility that federal officials could have overruled a local decision suggests the bifurcation of extension power. The reality was that while whites accepted the idea of civil rights policy, as it was implemented, local administrators continued to dominate extension policy.

The Removal of “The Mask”: The Penn Center Statement on Black Extension Work

Local activism may have pricked President Edwards’ conscious regarding blacks’ perceptions that the South Carolina Extension service was biased and out to get rid of black agents. After hearing Courtney Siceloff, the Director of Penn Community Services, Inc. (where leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Septima Poinsett Clark had met to discuss civil rights strategies),⁵⁶ speak on the plight of South Carolina’s black extension workers at a conference in Raleigh, President Edwards wrote Siceloff offering to supply him with whatever information he needed to complete a detailed study of the state’s black extension programs. The South Carolina conference of the NAACP also got involved.

⁵⁵The Reverend Daniel J. Ziegler to Dr. Wm. Seabron [sic], 28 January 1967, Series 32, Box 31, Folder 4, STICUL.

⁵⁶This organization, also referred to as the Penn Center, will be referred to thus in this paper. For a brief overview of its history see: The Penn Center, An Overview, <http://www.sciway.net/afam/penn.html>; and The Penn Center, Organizational History, <http://www.penncenter.com/history.html>, 2000.

Out of the meeting with Edwards, the data he supplied, and a conference with agents held at the Penn Center, the Center produced a report on South Carolina's Extension Service. The main purpose of the report was to determine whether discrimination still existed within the extension service and if so, to eliminate it. The report's general conclusion was that the state's extension service had "failed to eliminate discrimination based on race," although progress had been made in the areas of salary equalization, combined administrative structure, equal travel allowances, and tenure and discharge of personnel.⁵⁷

The report showed the results of the neglect of the black extension program. Only 31 of the state's 46 counties had at least one black agricultural agent and 33 counties had at least one black home demonstration agent. The report pointed out that in every county, the supervising "county leader" was the white agricultural agent and the associate county leader was the white home demonstration agent, even in cases where black personnel in the county had more years of seniority. In 10 of 31 instances in counties with both white and black agricultural agents and 16 of 33 counties with white and black home demonstration agents, the black agent had more experience than the county agent leader. In 12 of the counties, the black agent had more experience than any other agent did. While the average tenure of white county agents (21 years) exceeded that of black associate agents (19 years), black associate agents had the second-highest tenure of any group. In the case of home demonstration agents, the average years of experience of black associate agents and their white supervisors were 20 and 12 years respectively. In both men's and women's work there were some egregious gaps in experience between white supervisors and

⁵⁷Introductory Statement, "Clemson University Extension Service: Some Notes and Statistics Relating to Negro Participation," (Frogmore, S. C.: Penn Community Services, Inc., 1967), Series 32, Box 29, Folder 5, STICUL.

black subordinates. There were black agricultural agents who had 23 (two) and 36 years of experience supervised by agents who had 12, 13, and 18 years of experience. The experience gap was far more disparate in the case of home demonstration agents where black home demonstration agents who had 23 (two), 16, 18, 17, and 20 years of experience were supervised by women who had between 0 and 4 years' experience on the job. Twelve of the 16 white home demonstration supervisors had worked in extension for less than a decade. Additionally, there were numerous instances in which white associate agricultural agents with fewer years of experience than black associate agricultural agents held an equal or higher rank. Nine white agricultural agents whose years of experience were at least four years less than black agricultural agents' years of experience shared the associate rank. In one case, there was a 22-year difference in years of service between black and white assistant agricultural agents.⁵⁸

In most cases, the salary differentials agents had complained about in 1965 had widened by 1967. Years later, when Dr. William Hine, professor of history at South Carolina State College, asked three home demonstration agents whether their pay was equal to that of white agents, the responses were "NO!" and "HECK NO!" "We worked for almost nothing," asserted Altamese Pough. In agricultural extension work, white associate agents who had on average three years *less* experience than black associates earned an average of \$1,158 more. White assistant agricultural agents, who had an average of 13 years less experience than black associate agricultural agents did, earned an average of \$12 more. Although the average years of experience for assistant agricultural agents was regardless of race was six years, the white assistant agricultural agents earned

⁵⁸Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, pp. 59-61; "Clemson University Extension Service: Some Notes and Statistics Relating to Negro Participation," pp. 1-3, 5, H. D. 1 - H. D. 3.

an average of \$971 more than the black assistant agricultural agents. Whites with M.S. degrees earned the most, followed by whites with B.S. degrees, then blacks with M.S. degrees and finally blacks with B.S. degrees.

In one county a white assistant agent with twenty three years of experience *and no college degree* earned \$251 more than a black associate agent with 15 years of experience and a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture. Another white assistant agricultural agent in that county with a Bachelor's degree and 10 years experience earned \$722 more than the black associate agricultural agent did. In another county, a white associate agent with a bachelor's degree with the same years experience as the black associate agent who also held a Bachelor's degree earned \$1,535 more than the black associate agent did. A black agent with a Bachelor's degree and 22 years of experience earned \$86 and \$70 less than white assistant agents in his county who had 2 and 7 years experience respectively. The difference between the salary of a white and black assistant agent in another county was \$168 although both had Bachelor's degrees and the black assistant agent had three years of work experience as opposed to one year for the white agent. It is clear that within each county, while a black agent could earn more than a white agent—a significant change—the level of experience and education needed to achieve that higher salary rate far exceeded the requirements for white workers.⁵⁹

The types of salary imbalances that existed in agricultural extension work also existed in home demonstration work although the deficits were not as egregious. Assistant black home demonstration agents earned an average of \$546 less than white assistant home agents. In three instances black home demonstration agents, who had more

⁵⁹“Clemson University Extension Service: Some Notes and Statistics Relating to Negro Participation,” pp. 1-2, 5-6.

experience than white women did, earned \$96, \$456, and \$752 less respectively. In one instance, a white assistant agent earned \$722 more than the black assistant agent did although both had two years experience and held the same degree. In another case, the black and white agents earned exactly the same salary but the black agent had five years more experience. The one white associate home demonstration agent's salary was \$915 higher than the average salary of the 15 black associate home demonstration agents. All 15 black associate home demonstration agents had more experience than the white associate home demonstration agent did and none earned as much as she.⁶⁰ The salary differences raise the question as to what degree race rather than some measurable principle of "merit" fit into salary decisions. It re-emphasizes the point that black workers were penalized for the lacking particular skills although the white-imposed substandard educational opportunities and the unequal funding at black colleges prevented them from creating a competitive practical and theoretical academic curriculum.

The black agents complained of a lack of blacks in specialist positions, which paid significantly higher salaries than those of county workers. The one black agricultural specialist in South Carolina had worked for the service for 31 years. Only three specialists had more experience, yet all 30 white specialists earned more than he did. The agents also noted that some specialist slots remained unfilled and that recently-filled appointments were with persons with less than five years tenure with the extension service. Black administrators also received significantly less pay than white ones. The Assistant in Agriculture (formerly the State Agent for Negro Agricultural Extension Work) earned \$3,516 less than the lowest paid white agricultural administrator did. The Assistant in

⁶⁰"Clemson University Extension Service: Some Notes and Statistics Relating to Negro Participation," pp. H. D. 1-H. D. 2, H. D. 4.

Home Economics (formerly the State Agent for Negro Home Demonstration Work) earned \$3,804 less than white state workers did. No blacks were employed at the district agent level; none of the clerks in the state office was blacks.⁶¹

The agents also complained of a lack of adequate support staff. Only three of the administrative specialists were blacks. All the secretaries employed were white. Salary discrimination filtered down to this level as well. Although a black extension secretary had lodged a civil rights complaint in 1965 alleging, among other things, salary inequity, nothing changed. The salaries of the stenographers for black agricultural agents were \$907 less than those of county agents' secretaries. The salaries of white stenographers exceeded those of black stenographers by \$277. Stenographers for white home demonstration agents earned \$245 more than black home demonstration agents' stenographers. When Orangeburg County extension secretary Jacqueline Abraham complained that she had been given a lower salary than white secretaries had, George Nutt responded that she was paid by the county, not by the extension service. One reason for the disparity was the continuation of local control of black staff. The salary disparities persisted despite George Nutt's assertion that he would recommend to the University officials and the State Budget and Control Board that black and white secretaries work under the same requirements.⁶²

Another major point of contention between the agents and administrators was the ranking system, which has been referenced above. The system was supposed to provide

⁶¹"Clemson University Extension Service: Some Notes and Statistics Relating to Negro Participation," p. 8; Courtney Siceloff to Robert C. Edwards, 1 February 1967, Series 32, Box 33, Folder 3; Responses to various issues raised in the Penn Center Report, p. 4, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 5, STICUL.

⁶²George B. Nutt to Mr. Joseph Flannery, 18 November 1965; Robert J. Pritchell to William M. Seabron, 17 December 1965; Robert J. Pritchell to William M. Seabron, 21 December 1965; Box 296, Folder Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II; "Clemson University Extension Service: Some Notes and Statistics Relating to Negro Participation," p. 8.

justification for promotions and raises based on merit. President Edwards initially resisted Siceloff's request for the data on the results of extension evaluations, citing confidentiality. Siceloff persuaded him that the rankings were necessary to determine whether a pattern of racial bias existed in employee evaluation. Siceloff offered to accept the data with only the race of the agents included and under those terms, Edwards provided the information.⁶³ The data Edwards provided showed the negative consequences of the use of the ranking system for some individual agents that have already been related. When the numbers are considered in the aggregate, they suggest that the ranking system disproportionately disadvantaged black agents. It would also seem to suggest that there was a pattern of discrimination in evaluating extension work performance at the county level.

While nearly 87 percent of white agents received the highest ratings (65.6 percent of whites received "3" and 21 percent received "4"), only about 47 percent of black agents received these rankings (45 percent [34 agents] received "3" and 1.4 percent [1 agent] received "4"). Forty-eight percent (37 agents) of blacks received a ranking of "2" compared with 13 percent of whites. While no whites received a ranking of "1" or "0," nearly 6 percent (4 agents) of black workers received these scores. Among the agricultural agents, two of the black agents who received a rating of "2," held master's degrees from Cornell University and the University of Minnesota respectively. One had nearly 30 years of extension work experience and the other had over 26 years of experience. What is even more interesting is that fifty-six percent of the agricultural agents who received a score of "3" had earned their bachelor's degree between 1929 and 1939 while they only accounted for 19 percent of the scores of "2" or below. These agents accounted for only a third of all

⁶³Courtney Siceloff to Dr. Robert C. Edwards, 20 December 1966.

black agricultural agents employed. While 38 percent of the agricultural agents graduated in 1950 or later, they accounted for only four (25 percent) of the scores of “3,” but nine (42 percent) of the scores of “2” or lower. Almost the opposite trend was in place in the women’s service. Nearly 65 percent of those who received a score of “3” had earned their bachelor’s degree in 1951 or later. While agents who earned degrees in the 1930s represented only 23 percent of all home demonstration agents, they represented 33 percent of those who received a score of “1” or “2” on the rankings.⁶⁴ These numbers raise some significant questions regarding the ranking process. The majority of agents received their undergraduate training at South Carolina State College. It seems highly unlikely that a college which was so poorly funded in the 1930s could have turned out such superior agricultural graduates while turning out such poor quality agricultural graduates after the 1950s. It also unlikely that the increased funding made available after 1950 could produce outstanding home demonstration agents in the 1950s and such poor quality agricultural agents. Rather the forces that may have been at work in these evaluations considered the assessment of demeanor as a basis for defining competence.

The Penn Center report did not directly assert that the evaluations were racially discriminatory, but it noted that all the black agents’ evaluators were white. Although assistants in Agricultural and Home Economics participated in the evaluation process at the regional level along with the white district personnel, the report questioned whether this was sufficient to offset possible racial bias since some measure of the agents’ worth

⁶⁴“Clemson University Extension Service: Some Notes and Statistics Relating to Negro Participation,” p. 8; 5; list of agents’ credentials and ratings.

had already been done in the counties.⁶⁵ Martin Sloane, Assistant Staff Director in the Office of Civil Rights Program and Policy in Washington, D.C., expressed similar concern to William Seabron, Assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture two years later in 1969.⁶⁶ In a follow-up letter, Siceloff reminded Edwards that Sara Waymer and Bennie Cunningham, E. N. William's successor, could not "carry the entire burden of building confidence of the Negro extension personnel in the Department, nor should they be expected to assume the role of spokesmen or apologists for the Department. They should be urged to speak critically of the Extension Service in areas that need to be worked on, as well as reporting progress being made in eliminating some of the inequities." However, Siceloff recognized that Waymer and Cunningham played an important role in connecting with black agents. He encouraged Edwards to permit them unfettered contact with the agents and to permit them to serve as liaisons for the agents at the county and district levels. If they were not given any real power, Siceloff believed they would lose the respect of the black agents and their value to the extension service.⁶⁷

In addition to recommending more actual power for the black supervisors, Siceloff recommended to Edwards, that as only three of the 137 professional extension staff at Clemson were blacks, Edwards consider recruiting qualified candidates. "Assignment of a number of Negro agents to the Clemson staff would be a good indication that the Extension Service is not a dead-end profession for Negro personnel, as well as affording Negroes the opportunity of seeing themselves better represented on the

⁶⁵"Clemson University Extension Service: Some Notes and Statistics Relating to Negro Participation," p. 9.

⁶⁶Martin E. Sloane to Mr. William H. Seabron, 15 December 1969, Box 312, Folder: Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

⁶⁷Courtney Siceloff to Robert C. Edwards, 1 February 1967.

administrative level.”⁶⁸ Siceloff also recommended more equitable salaries for black agents. One of the reasons for the continuation of salary inequality was Edwards’ flat refusal to consider a standardized salary scale. Edwards justified this on the academic model that professors of similar rank but different disciplines were often paid different rates. Siceloff recognized that Edwards might have to be more aggressive to attract qualified white agents than black agents “because alternate opportunities for trained Negro personnel in the state are quite limited.” However, Siceloff suggested that it appeared to be “racial discrimination” to pay persons different rates for doing the same work in the same profession.⁶⁹

The Penn Center report also contained a special statement on the role of black agents in their communities. It declared that they were “some of the best trained Negro personnel in the state, and particularly in areas where there are no other Negro professionals.” For that reason the reports authors argued that it was important for agents to participate in the total life of the community including voter registration, school desegregation, representation on Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service committees, attendance at NAACP meetings, and meetings to expand equal opportunity in employment. The presumption was that “overt pressure, [a] desire to improve their job ratings, or . . . self-doubt” contributed to the reticence of black agents. They insisted that black

⁶⁸“Clemson University Extension Service: Some Notes and Statistics Relating to Negro Participation,” p. 8; Courtney Siceloff to Robert C. Edwards, 1 February 1967; Responses to various issues raised in the Penn Center Report, p. 4.

⁶⁹Courtney Siceloff to Robert C. Edwards, 1 February 1967.

agents had to become involved in the life of the community if the extension service was to be effective and attract able blacks to the extension ranks.⁷⁰

“Not an Integration Agency”: Justifying Discrimination

As usual, Clemson officials rejected most of the report's criticisms. They justified the lack of a full compliment of black home and agricultural by asserting that there were not enough potential applicants because of a decline in the number of home economics majors and the lack of agricultural training at South Carolina State College, (a school the state continually underfunded.) They insisted that their policies were merit-based. They argued that the rating system “provides a systematic judgement . . . and avoids snap judgments; [that] it points up progress or difficulties . . . [that] it provides information concerning estimated potential of an individual [and that] it provides for several independent judgments of an individual performance.” They claimed that they lacked black personnel who were “qualified for advancement to leadership roles.” The administrative and supervisory staff for the home demonstration agents issued the “combined judgement” that “no Negro home demonstration employee is yet ready for the position of leadership required for a home demonstration position.” They insisted that length of service was not as important in appointment to the home demonstration agent's position as demonstrated ability to “plan, initiate and carry out an effective Extension program.” They also suggested that black agents did not live up to the billing that their grades and recommendations suggested. This, in part, explained the salary differentials. Salaries, they stated, were not based “on training and experience but on qualifications and ability.

⁷⁰“Clemson University Extension Service: Some Notes and Statistics Relating to Negro Participation,” p. 13.

Competence or ability must be stressed above seniority.”⁷¹ Extension officials used the “ability” argument to explain the lack of black specialists also. They determined that none of the blacks then on staff had the “necessary qualifications” for the specialist positions and that they had not received external applications for them. “From a personnel and program standpoint, our goal is to develop the strongest possible educational program for Extension’s clientele. Strong programs require strong personnel.”⁷² To the recommendation that the agents play a greater role in the grassroots community life, officials at Clemson responded by re-stating federal policy on political participation. The person who drafted the response to the Penn Center report also wrote “The Extension Service is *not an integration agency* [my emphasis]. We are the education agency of [the] USDA for Agriculture, Home Economics, and Youth and related programs.”⁷³

The ranking system, the continued subordination of black personnel to white personnel, and the impossibility of securing promotion certainly affected the morale of the black workers. In a letter to President Edwards following a face-to-face meeting in late January 1967, Courtney Siceloff asserted that “[t]he most serious problem as I see it, facing the Extension Service is the lack of confidence in the organization by Negro personnel.” He suggested that changes in the rating system might minimize “actual or supposed . . . racial bias” in the system.⁷⁴ Siceloff reported that there were some black

⁷¹“Comments on the Report from Penn Community Services, Inc.” [1967?], pp. 1-2; Responses to various issues raised in the Penn Center Report, pp. 2-3, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 5, STICUL.

⁷²Responses to various issues raised in the Penn Center Report, p. 4.

⁷³Responses to various issues raised in the Penn Center Report, p. 1.

⁷⁴Courtney Siceloff to Robert C. Edwards, 1 February 1967.

agents who believed that “only limited jobs [were] available to Negro personnel.”⁷⁵ It was clear that white extension officials had little regard for the abilities of their black colleagues. An example of the lack of confidence that extension officials had in black agents can be seen in assignments given to Sara Waymer, formerly the supervisor of Negro Home Demonstration Work, and Altamese B. Pough, the former Negro Girls 4-H Club Agent. Both women moved to Clemson when the services were combined. Their assignments, according to Pough, were “simple things.” For example, they spent a great portion of their time judging contests.⁷⁶ Since most of their other job responsibilities revolved around the issue of race, there was little time to prove their competence at anything else. Pough stated that at one time counties seemed to be “indifferent” to black state agents because “it seemed to me that they had the feeling that as black, you couldn’t tell me anything as a white person. . . . [W]e would be invited to attend meetings where there would be two blacks and two hundred and seventy or three hundred whites. So they couldn’t . . . miss us . . . so we just got the feeling that we were show blacks in other words.”⁷⁷ Clemson extension officials strongly asserted that the only issue at hand was competence. This was an opinion with which black extension agents and other blacks certainly would not have agreed.

Integrating the Communities

White extension agents were permitted to serve clients without regard to race beginning in 1965. According the 1965 plan for compliance, “negro [sic] agents are not

⁷⁵Courtney Siceloff to Robert C. Edwards, 3 February 1967.

⁷⁶Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, p. 12.

⁷⁷Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, p. 13.

yet accepted by all people to work with whites.” There was no indication in the 1966 report that black agent-white client service had begun. The report asserted that extension officials foresaw no “insurmountable problems in connection with the Civil Rights program in South Carolina” but said that there was in progress, “a period of adjustment, which, in time, we feel will be resolved in good faith by all concerned.”⁷⁸

If there was little headway made in desegregating the service, even less progress was made in the desegregation of client services during the Johnson years. All forty-six counties in the state reported that all adult and 4-H events were planned and carried out on a non-segregated basis and that contests were open to all races. Despite pronouncements of progress, segregation of programs continued to be a serious problem. Pough and Waymer alleged that programs that left Clemson offices of extension as integrated often were implemented in a segregated fashion in the counties. Pough stated that although all agents were supposed to jointly plan their programs, in reality the white staff wanted to know what the black staff was doing but whites “never really said what they were doing or how they were doing something.” Client mailing lists were no longer maintained on the basis of race. Thirty-nine counties reported integrated advisory committees.⁷⁹ County advisory boards were disbanded and re-constituted on an integrated basis.⁸⁰ The greatest

⁷⁸PLAN FOR COMPLIANCE WITH CIVIL RIGHTS LAW, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 4; George B. Nutt to Dr. Lloyd H. Davis, “Answers to Questions Submitted by Secretary Freeman’s Citizens Advisory Committee on Civil Rights for Raleigh, North Carolina Meeting on December 5-6,” 31 October 1966, p. 7, Series 32, Box 30, Folder 1, STICUL.

⁷⁹Odom, Pough, Waymer interview, pp. 5-11; “County Check List on Compliance with Civil Rights Law in Conduct of Program of Clemson University Extension Service,” 9 July 1965, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 7, STICUL.

⁸⁰Press release, Clemson University News Bureau, 5 August 1965; “Lee Agri.[cultural] Office Consolidates in Civil Rights Compliance,” *Lee County Messenger*, [5 July?] 1965, clipping in Series 32, Box 29, Folder 10, STICUL; Odom, Pough, Waymer interview, pp. 5-11.

concern was about continued segregation of facilities rather than the denial of services. Racial designations had been removed from restrooms, water fountains and other facilities in extension buildings.⁸¹ USDA programs in some communities, especially those of the Pee Dee region and the Lowcountry where blacks were often a numerical majority in their respective counties, caught the attention of federal officials for segregation and discrimination.⁸²

Civil rights compliance became an established part of the South Carolina Extension Service's activities. Administrative, district, and county staff each held monthly meetings to review civil rights regulations and their programs. Director Nutt sent all organizations that cooperated with the extension service information on the new civil rights laws and informed them that the South Carolina Extension Service could not cooperate with any organization that practiced discrimination as spelled out in the Civil Rights Act of 1964.⁸³ Pough and Waymer alleged that civil rights compliance forms were sometimes not truthful. The integration of women's home demonstration councils provides a case in point. The Palmetto Council, which had been organized by black women in the late 1940s, voted at their annual meeting in May 1965 to continue as an autonomous organization. In essence, the majority of the membership voted to continue racial segregation in their council. The executive board of the council met with Sara Waymer and State Home Economics Leader Sally Musser, who explained the provisions

⁸¹"County Check List on Compliance with Civil Rights Law in Conduct of Program of Clemson University Extension Service," 9 July 1965.

⁸²Leverne Prosser, "USDA Is Checking on Racial Policies," *Charleston News and Courier*, 7 March 1965, 11-A.

⁸³George B. Nutt to Dr. Lloyd H. Davis, "Answers to Questions Submitted by Secretary Freeman's Citizens Advisory Committee on Civil Rights for Raleigh, North Carolina Meeting on December 5-6," 31 October 1966, p. 5.

of Title VI to the group. The board voted for their president to sign a compliance certificate for the extension service and to organize conferences between their organization and the South Carolina Extension Homemakers Council, which represented white women. For the extension service, compliance did not necessarily mean integration, rather it meant “that no one [was] excluded from either organization, and that if the members of the organizations wanted to take further action, they were free to do so.”

Director Nutt recommended that the black and white councils meet to discuss ways they could cooperate. The councils were organized as segregated and parallel, rather than integrated, institutions. The South Carolina Extension Homemakers Council held a leadership conference to which they invited all home demonstration agents and members from both councils. Some members of the Palmetto Council attended and the president of the South Carolina Extension Homemakers Council was invited to the Palmetto Council's 1966 annual meeting. The South Carolina Extension Homemakers Council's executive board approved the development of a group with representatives from both councils to better coordinate activities. The policy of pro forma compliance hit a snag early in 1966 when, after signing her certificate of compliance, the president of the Georgetown Home Demonstration Council, which was organized by blacks, asked why meetings were not being held on an integrated basis. It was reported that she suspected that the white Georgetown Extension Homemakers' Council was receiving financial support from the county but when it was explained that they were not, the issue was resolved.⁸⁴

⁸⁴Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, pp. 7, 17; Ruby Craven, “A STATEMENT REGARDING THE OPERATION OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL AND THE PALMETTO HOME DEMONSTRATION COUNCIL AS IT RELATES TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS LAW OF 1964,” Series 32, Box 117, Folder 7, STICUL.

As late as 1967 some black home demonstration councils operated separately from the general extension organization. State Extension Home Economics leader Ruby Craven reported that there were 30 counties with such councils in 1967. By October, thirty-three of the white "Extension Homemakers Councils had invited Negro club members to become members" and in 32 counties at least some of the black clubs had affiliated with the white extension council. Craven expected 95 percent of black clubs to affiliate with white clubs within six months. The white women's organization was formally recognized as the Extension Homemakers Council in 45 counties. In the remaining county, the black home demonstration council was recognized as the official county extension council. According to Craven, in this club, "White club members will be admitted when they so desire."⁸⁵

Little progress was made in desegregating homemakers' clubs. In 1968 there were 120 homemakers' clubs in the state, 62 for white women and 58 for black women. None was racially integrated. What typically happened with this sort of "integration" was that there were joint meetings and training sessions for leaders, but also a great deal of leeway for continued segregated program operation. While Craven could report that all the councils were in compliance with civil rights laws, her memorandum clearly indicates that the compliance was more legalistic than an objective report of reality.⁸⁶ George Nutt intimated to President Edwards in June 1968 that the arrangement with the homemakers' clubs likely would not be acceptable. Signed compliance forms in other states had not

⁸⁵(Miss) Ruby Craven to Mr. George B. Nutt, 6 November 1967, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 6, STICUL.

⁸⁶(Miss) Ruby Craven to Mr. George B. Nutt, 6 November 1967.

been sufficient, because in many instances, meetings were held in club members' homes on a segregated basis.⁸⁷

There were also problems associated with youth activities. Two newspaper articles contained dire predictions for the future of 4-H. Leverne Prosser's article stated that although all references to race had been removed, many 4-H chapters in fact continued to operate on a racially segregated basis. The four white agents Prosser interviewed declared that "Massive integration of classrooms and school organizations could all but destroy the 4-H movement in many communities." An editorial from an unknown paper predicted that "some of the programs through the extension service, however, will not survive integration—certainly not with the strength and usefulness of the past. It is certain that the 4-H Clubs will suffer . . . it would be only a wild guess to attempt to estimate the time it will take such organizations as the 4-H Club to regain its present position. . . . It is possible they never will."⁸⁸

"Sticking Our Necks Out": Federal Support of Reactionary Policies

In a move that demonstrated his solidarity with the white southern extension position, federal extension director Davis said it was acceptable for the state extension agents to train voluntary 4-H adult leaders and to permit those leaders to operate clubs as they saw fit, including holding meetings in private homes (which, at that time, would not likely be open to everyone).⁸⁹ The minutes of a 1965 southern directors meeting noted that agents could only conduct 4-H clubs in schools that the Department of Health,

⁸⁷George B. Nutt to Dr. R. C. Edwards, 3 June 1968 [no subject], Series 32, Box 117, Folder 10, STICUL.

⁸⁸Leverne Prosser, "USDA Is Checking on Racial Policies," *Charleston News and Courier*, 7 March 1965, 11-A; "Extension Service Integrating," n. p., n. d. [c. August 1965].

⁸⁹"Minutes of the Southern Directors Conference," September 21-23, 1965, 8.

Education, and Welfare (H. E. W.) had certified as eligible for federal school aid because they complied with various civil rights requirements. Directors were uncertain whether they could maintain segregated clubs until the schools had integrated. They decided that they could not hold single race events of the same type without “sticking our necks way out.” They opted instead for the short-term solution of having two events each open to both races. In 1966, thirteen South Carolina school districts were cited for failing to comply with Title VI, which meant that programs such as 4-H could not be held in these districts. In eleven of the districts there was proven noncompliance or reason to believe that the districts were not complying with Title VI. By October 1967, only Calhoun County School District #2 had not signed a compliance form with H. E. W. George Nutt reported continued segregation with most club work outside the schools in 1968. Of the 350 4-H clubs in South Carolina, 275 were operated on a segregated basis: 86 served 1,830 white children, 189 served 6,668 black children. There were 75 multi-racial clubs that served 1,901 white and 319 black children.⁹⁰

South Carolina extension officials made no effort whatsoever to promote integrated youth camping. Between 1964 and 1967, all the state’s youth camps were closed. In 1967 extension officials made plans to open Camps Long and Bob Cooper, which formerly served only white youth, and Camp Daniels which formerly served only black youth. Each club agent was given the right to specify their order of preference at the camps. Parents were given a letter explaining how the camps would operate. Director

⁹⁰Lloyd H. Davis to Mr. George B. Nutt, 8 September 1966, Series 32, Box 117, Folder 7; George B. Nutt to Dr. R. C. Edwards, 19 October 1967, Series 32, Box 117, Folder 9; George B. Nutt to Dr. R. C. Edwards, 3 June 1968 [Re: 1968 4-H Camping Schedules], Series 32, Box 117, Folder 10; U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Inspector General, “Audit of Civil Rights Implementation in the South Carolina Cooperative State Extension Service, South Carolina State Office, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, 13 February 1969,” 16, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 12, STICUL.

Nutt made it clear that attending camp was “voluntary and . . . a mutual arrangement between club members, their parents, and county Extension workers . . . so that there cannot be any misunderstanding during or following the week of the camp.” Campers from 23 counties planned to attend Camp Long and campers from 20 counties planned to attend Camp Cooper, which was opened for the first time since 1964. Twenty percent of the campers were black. In his memorandum announcing the camps to President Edwards, Director Nutt suggested that the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division might be called in “to eliminate any possibility of outsiders interfering in any way with the operation of the two 4-H camps.”⁹¹ The reopening of the 4-H camps was part of a national trend. In a letter dated, ironically, 4 April 1968, Deputy Extension Administrator N. P. Ralston reported to the Secretary of Agriculture that 4-H camping was on the rise in southern states. Efforts to racially integrate camps and involve low-income youth were being made along with cooperative ventures with other organizations. “Most Southern State 4-H leaders are optimistic about the expansion of 4-H camp experiences,” Ralston said.⁹²

Defending Themselves: Black Agents Assert Their Rights

In addition to integrated camps, there were other positive signs of change as well. By 1967, Sara Waymer was assigned to evaluate white personnel. The federal presence began to make a difference in the treatment of black extension agents. In September 1966, Waymer complained to the Justice Department on behalf of an agent who was being treated poorly in one lower-state county. In a 1993 telephone conversation with Waymer

⁹¹George B. Nutt to All Extension Employees, Series 32, Box 117, Folder 8, STICUL.

⁹²N. P. Ralston to Secretary of Agriculture, 4 April 1968, Box 307, Folder: Reports & Statistics, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

she recalled, "I had a strong feeling that 'right is right,' I hoped that if we pointed out that a black agent was being treated unfairly that the federal authorities would back us up." Justice Department officials came to South Carolina to interview the agent's clients and spent two weeks in the state before Clemson officials became aware that an investigation was underway. When the investigators came to Clemson, they interviewed Pough, who had worked with the agent at one time during the 1950s. The complaint succeeded and the agent enjoyed a long career in the extension service. It is worth noting that this successful challenge was not a result of following the extension-mandated chain of command. The fact that a black agent could successfully protest unfair treatment was a "revolution in extension [work]" according to Pough.⁹³

This really was not a revolution, merely a victory in the ongoing extension struggle; other agents' cases remained unresolved as the Nixon administration came into office. The black home demonstration agent who began her quest to have her case reviewed by federal officials continued her appeal into the Nixon years. Martin Sloane could only "marvel at her persistence." Her case raised some red flags for Sloane. He wondered whether someone who said "I cannot work with Negroes" could be objective in the home agent's treatment. In a letter to Seabron, Sloane stated that the Civil Rights Commission had not been satisfied with the way the agent's case had been handled. While he credited the South Carolina Extension Service for making training opportunities available, Sloane questioned whether the training was routine or something "contrived only for [the agent] with the possibility that she may not be able to keep up with such training and thus be dismissed from extension work on that basis." He stated that the

⁹³Courtney Siceloff to Robert C. Edwards, 1 February 1967; Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, pp. 11-12; telephone conversation with Sara Waymer, 24 May 24 1993.

agent, who held a M. Ed. from South Carolina State College, was willing to receive additional training. Sloane also noted, with disapproval that the agent had been required to pay her own expenses to attend the state extension council meeting while another agent was reimbursed. Nor was she given an opportunity to appear on any programs while her co-workers had.

For Sloane, the agent's case also raised larger issues regarding the failure of the extension service to sign on to the civil rights agenda.

The Department's apparent willingness to absolve itself of responsibility in this matter, both in its individual and general aspects is not encouraging. It is clear that the problems regarding the Cooperative Extension Service cannot and will not be alleviated without firm Department action. This sort of action has not been applied with the result that the Cooperative Extension Service now stands clearly apart from sister USDA agencies with respect to the status of equal opportunity in agricultural programs. I almost despair at times to think how problems of extension work have been allowed to continue without significant progress for almost 5½ years since Title VI was enacted into law. I refer specifically to the situation of equal employment opportunity for minority group extension workers and the very pressing problem of segregated and unequal services largely upon racial lines for minority group residents who have the most need of extension services.⁹⁴

Sloane wondered, "How long will it be before Federal law and policy is translated into reality in the Extension Service?" He noted that a recent Inspector General's Audit Report on the South Carolina extension service and other audits suggested continued discrimination against "minority employees and rural residents who are potential beneficiaries of extension services." Sloane said he had tried repeatedly to get Agriculture Department officials to understand the "sense of profound concern and frustration in this matter" but that these attempts had "apparently gone unregarded [sic]." Sloane asked Seabron to

⁹⁴Martin E. Sloane to Mr. William H. Seabron, 15 December 1969, Box 312, Folder: Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

make it known at the highest levels of the Department of Agriculture that the United States Civil Rights Commission believed that the “time for action is long past due and the ultimate test of the Department’s intentions regarding equal opportunity in agricultural programs is what it is willing to do about the Extension Service.”⁹⁵ Perhaps nothing demonstrates the federal extension service’s continuing commitment to their long-term relationship with southern white extension officials than what became of Sloane’s letter. Edwin L. Kirby, Associate Administrator in the federal extension service, sent a copy of it to Wayne O’Dell, the Director of the South Carolina Extension Service, for a response to Sloane’s concerns. In his letter, Kirby wrote “your cooperation in helping us to more adequately respond to Mr. Sloane’s letter will be greatly appreciated.”⁹⁶ Extension officials were unable to get rid of Lancaster. She moved to Greenwood County where she worked as extension agent but quit in 1974 after she received a “0” rating. At age 60 she said that she was “tired of the pressure” and that she felt that she was fighting for civil rights alone.⁹⁷

The Department’s failure to act with force to address blacks’ complaints of discrimination perhaps influenced another black home demonstration agent to write the President’s Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity in 1969 to complain about her treatment in the Fairfield County office. She reported that she had worked in the office for ten years and that “since 1964” there was decreased harmony in her work environment that had been caused by changes in the chain of command. She cited deteriorating

⁹⁵Edwin L. Kirby to Dr. Wayne T. O’Dell, 12 January 1970, Box 312, Folder: Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

⁹⁶Edwin L. Kirby to Dr. Wayne T. O’Dell, 12 January 1970, Box 312, Folder: Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

⁹⁷Telephone conversation between Janie Lancaster and Carmen V. Harris, 10 June 2002.

relationships between herself and her immediate supervisor that led to her hospitalization. She reported that her supervisor and the county agent met with the district supervisors regarding her status without her being present. A session between the black home demonstration agent and the district agents followed; then, at the agent's request, another meeting of all the parties was held. She said that it was "strongly intimated" that she resign. She said that they had all the papers needed with them. "I had no chance." She claimed the District Home Economist dictated her letter of resignation to her. The agent's major concern was to clear her record. She stated that she had received a written performance rating of two. She said that she sought information from the District Home Economist on ways to improve her performance but received no answer. The agent said she sought more training on her own "and tried to do a better job." As a result, she received a verbal rating of "-1," which she said was an unspoken suggestion that she resign.⁹⁸

Change Only by "Mutual Consent": The Federal Audit of the Extension Program

Other problems also remained. In 1968, George Nutt reported to President Edwards that 12 counties (25 percent) would receive follow-up visits from civil rights auditors. Nutt suggested that in an effort to meet expectations, he had "to make a number of shifts in personnel and office arrangements in many counties." He also said that there was difficulty in having white farmers served by black extension workers "because of deep-seated attitudes on the part of many white clients."⁹⁹ In four counties, as late as 1969 racially identifiable listings for black agents were in the local telephone book. Racial

⁹⁸Miss Coy Smith to The President's Committees On Equal Employment Opportunity, 2 June 1969, Series 32, Box 31, Folder 13, STICUL.

⁹⁹George B. Nutt to Dr. R. C. Edwards, 3 June 1968 [no subject].

segregation of agents persisted in one county, although the assistant extension director was negotiating with county officials to resolve the matter. Incomplete data often made it hard to determine the extent of improvement in cross-racial service. When Clemson officials asked county personnel to submit reports of non-white clients served over six months in 1967, they only submitted the names of persons agents visited and omitted other forms of contact. Clemson officials did not collect any data on white clients so the data was useless. The statistical report the federal government required was based on estimates rather than actual clients served.¹⁰⁰ Estimates of cross-racial client-agent contacts ranged from white agricultural agents serving 4 to 14 percent black clientele and black agricultural agents serving 3 to 17 percent of white clientele. In home demonstration the percentage of white agents who served black clientele ranged from 0 to 23 percent of black clientele, while the percentage of black agents who served white clients was 0 to 27.¹⁰¹

Federal laws were simply not strong enough to hasten the desegregation process. In 1967 Assistant Secretary of Agriculture George Mehren, wrote President Edwards to get his opinion on a proposed grievance policy. Edwards's response questioned the Secretary of Agriculture's authority to "unilaterally promulgate regulations" regarding equal opportunity. Although the regulations Mehren had sought Edwards' advice on were not objectionable, Edwards disagreed that President Johnson's executive order 11246 applied to cooperative extension work. Under that order, Clemson University could have

¹⁰⁰U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Inspector General, "Audit of Civil Rights Implementation in the South Carolina Cooperative State Extension Service, South Carolina State Office, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, 13 February 1969,"15.

¹⁰¹"Audit of Civil Rights Implementation in the South Carolina Cooperative Extension Service," 13 February 1969, pp. 8, 11-2, 18-9.

been designated a "contracting agency." If its policies regarding hiring extension workers were found to be discriminatory, federal funding could be cut off. While he supposedly committed himself to full enforcement of the Civil Rights Act, Edwards argued that because one county and home agent in each county of South Carolina were hired under the regulations of the state's "county agent law." Part of their pay was covered by state and local funds, therefore, the federal government could not claim absolute jurisdiction over these agents' employment. Edwards expressed concern that the grievance process for extension agents would be different from that of other institutional employees if federal rather than university guidelines were applied.

Edwards' membership on the Secretary's advisory committee gave him inside knowledge that a firm legal basis for Johnson's order had not yet been established and he took advantage of it. He insisted that the current relationship between his university and the Department of Agriculture could only be changed by "mutual consent. We do not concede that such change can be accomplished by executive order or regulations. . . . It is my considered opinion that the problems relating to allegations of discrimination in the operation of the Cooperative Extension Program cannot be finally resolved without new Federal legislation [that would make extension work solely federally funded]."¹⁰² The likelihood that the programs would become entirely federally funded was no greater than the chances that a state could fully fund its extension programs. A stalemate existed.

¹⁰²"Minutes of the Southern Directors Conference," September 21-23, 1965, 8; R. C. Edwards to Mr. George L. Mehren, n. d. [c. June 29-30, 1967], Series 32, Box 29, Folder 6, STICUL. An anonymous document in the in this folder, "Reaction to 'Equal employment opportunity in the State Cooperative Extension Services,'" issued 17 January 1968 reiterates Edwards' objections, that the regulations were unnecessary, contrary to prior agreement, (especially the Smith-Lever Act) and threatened the cooperative spirit of those agreements, and perhaps illegal. It also suggested that the extension service was being singled out from other divisions of land-grant institutions for special treatment.

Both federal and state extension officials continued to question administration policy, often with under the auspices of southern politicians. According to historian Joel Schor, Senator Richard B. Russell of Georgia wrote Lloyd Davis to ask him not to pull 4-H out of segregated Georgia schools that were not compliant with HEW and allow “the bureaucratic determination of HEW to deprive the people of this county [Screven County] one of the most outstanding programs the federal government participates in.” Russell suggested that removal of 4-H was being done on a “flimsy excuse.” Several challenges to federal authority ensued. Georgia and Mississippi extension programs sought a waiver on non-compliance in 4-H. Davis asked Hardin to remove a paragraph from departmental guidelines that required compliance for 4-H and to permit extension to serve in segregated schools under the idea that extension was apolitical. His request was rejected.¹⁰³ An unsigned memorandum responding to a statement entitled “Equal Opportunity in the State Cooperative Extension Services,” issued on January 17, 1968 questioned the legality of the policy and the power it gave to the Secretary of Agriculture to administratively make decisions regarding extension policy. The writer argued that the extension service was being singled out from other divisions of the public universities with which they were affiliated for a more stringent application of civil rights laws.¹⁰⁴ Even as they attempted to comply with civil rights laws, the Associate Director of Clemson’s extension service, J. B. Copeland, pointed out the necessity that they all be

¹⁰³Schor, “The Black Presence in the Cooperative Extension Service,” 360-1.

¹⁰⁴“Reaction to ‘Equal employment opportunity in the State Cooperative Extension Service,’ under the date of 17, January 1968,” Series 32, Box 29, Folder 6, STICUL.

“consistent with our answers to questions posed by Civil Rights auditors . . . this will be particularly true with regard to our rating procedures and our promotion procedures.”¹⁰⁵

Return to the Past? The Civil Rights and the Extension Service in the Nixon Years

State and federal extension officials could afford to drag their feet as an election year loomed. Perhaps they expected that they could use their expert opinion to turn back the civil rights clock. A reversal of fortune seemed likely. Johnson’s civil rights bill of 1966, which addressed equal housing, failed to pass the Senate. Congress became increasingly less compliant with Johnson’s civil rights proposals. They rejected Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach’s proposal to sue schools that remained segregated even when no complaint had been made. “There . . . seemed to be too much risk in pressing for stronger use of the government’s administrative muscle in such sensitive areas as housing, schools, or Title VII authority on jobs. The best the group could do was to agree, ‘as rapidly as feasible by quiet administrative arrangements,’ to require ‘assurances’ of nondiscrimination in employment from state and local agencies receiving federal assistance.” Public sympathy for civil rights waned partly because of race riots, but also because civil rights became an issue outside the South. Indeed, urban riots in places like Watts, Detroit, and Newark had redirected the nation’s attention away from the plight of the disfranchised rural peasantry toward the dangerous urban dwellers. The manifestation of the new mood was the electoral defeat of forty-seven Democratic congressmen and three Democratic Senators in 1966.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵J. B. Copeland to Administrative and Supervisory Staff, 12 September 1968, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 6, STICUL.

¹⁰⁶Hugh Davis Graham, *The Civil Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy, 1960-1972* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 261-2, 268-9.

One of the significant factors for those of a more conservative stripe was the election of Richard M. Nixon in 1968. Nixon had colluded with Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, who offered southern support in exchange for a slowing of the civil rights agenda. Yet, as Hugh Davis Graham suggests, “there was no Republican counter-revolution.” A report prepared for Nixon by Columbia University economist Arthur Burns recommended that the administration continue “the status quo” on a variety of social policies. However, Nixon’s public statements could have been interpreted as supporting segregation. “‘I do not see any significant area where any additional legislation could be passed that would be helpful in opening doors that are legally closed.’ ‘Whether it’s housing, or whether it’s education, or whether it’s voting rights, or whether it’s jobs.’” While he referred to the civil rights movement as a “‘needed revolution,’” “what was now needed was ‘something that no Congress and no law can provide . . . preparing people to walk through the doors that have been opened’.”¹⁰⁷

The changing political winds probably buoyed career bureaucrats who had been exasperated by the Johnson Administration’s policies and who hoped for a restoration of familiar relationships. In the early days of the Nixon Administration, Extension Administrator Lloyd Davis sent the new Secretary of Agriculture, Clifford M. Hardin, a memorandum that included a discussion of Title VI. He reported that there were broad differences in the understanding of Department policy by various divisions and he recommended that these be harmonized. To that end, Davis sent a memorandum to all the extension directors, except those in the northeast, and included a policy draft the objective of which was “to clarify certain policy questions that have bothered us for some time—and to

¹⁰⁷Graham, *The Civil Rights Era*, 305-6.

provide a basis of common understanding of these policies among the various staff offices of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Federal and State Extension Services.”

The draft, written in February of 1969, was submitted early enough during Nixon’s first administration that it could have modified long-term policy as many of the political appointees were just getting into place. While the draft stated that no person could be denied extension services on the basis of race, it also suggested that “people participate voluntarily in Extension program activities and that the people participating in a given activity may be entirely or predominantly of one race, color, or national origin because of a variety of reasons. *Such a condition is not by itself evidence of discrimination* [my emphasis].” The statement went on to assert that the planning or conducting of extension activities could not be done with the “*intent* [my emphasis] of separate service or conduct of these activities.” The proposed guidelines also stated that when the capacity of facilities was limited, or the geographical area too great, that it was also possible that a group meeting might be solely or predominantly of one race. Davis declared such meetings—if the plan was not to discriminate intentionally—acceptable. The plan also attempted to remove the 4-H program from a position where it could have served as a wedge to desegregate schools. Davis deemed 4-H programs in schools where “enrollment in that school automatically restricts participation in 4-H to one race, color, or national origin. . . . If school administration is considered to be operating illegally this of itself will not be considered as affecting Extension compliance if 4-H Clubs continue to operate in these schools, since there is no official connection between the 4-H program and the school administration.” He also did not consider it a violation of civil rights policy if a

client asked for a particular extension worker “even though this may result in an individual worker consulting predominantly with people of one race.”¹⁰⁸

Preserving the Service at all Costs: Promoting “Unintentional” Segregation

The flexible interpretive approach Davis adopted in his correspondence is also reflected in the U. S. D. A. audit of the South Carolina extension program. For example, the audit report noted that both county agents and the associate state director had insisted that clubs were open to all races but that membership was “predominantly of one race because of the apparent desires of the participants.” They also said that “the SCCSES [South Carolina Cooperative State Extension Service] could assure that clubs were *open* to all races, but they could not *force* racially mixed membership” [my emphasis]. State extension officials required meetings in public buildings to make sure that all clubs were truly open to all races. The auditors accepted this policy and the compliance forms. They concluded that segregation in clubs was not due to any positive action by extension workers.¹⁰⁹

In June 1969, Davis directly wrote South Carolina extension director Wayne T. O’Dell to encourage him to re-write the state’s policy requiring home demonstration clubs to hold their meetings in public buildings. Davis suggested that in many communities there were no facilities to hold public meetings, or having to travel to such meetings from distances of 35 to 40 miles constituted a hardship. He recommended to O’Dell that

¹⁰⁸Lloyd H. Davis to “Extension Directors in the West, North Central and South,” 27 February 1969 and attachment, “Supplemental Instructions for ADMINISTRATION OF TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964, IN THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE,” Box 309, Folder: Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁰⁹ U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Inspector General, “Audit of Civil Rights Implementation in the South Carolina Cooperative State Extension Service, South Carolina State Office, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, 13 February 1969,” 17.

if there were club members who were willing to host meetings open to all at their homes, which would fall within the boundaries of compliance. Davis feared that Clemson's established policy of requiring meetings in public buildings hindered the extension program. Davis told O'Dell, "It would be quite acceptable to us if you were to revise your policy so long as these meetings are open to people of both races." He encouraged O'Dell to make the changes because they would allow clubs to remain a vital part of the service.¹¹⁰ Obviously, such meetings likely would be open in theory only. The reality that whites and blacks continued to occupy segregated social spaces would mean that the policy shift would encourage re-segregation.

Despite Davis's concerns, "forced" integration was beginning to pay off. An unsigned memorandum for the week of November 4, 1969 noted that state extension directors were willing to suffer temporary losses in their programs' participation levels for long-term gains. The memorandum noted that levels of participation had almost returned to 1964 levels by 1968. Another weekly memo reported that state extension directors had been asked to take steps for full inclusion of "various segments of society, including minority groups." They even developed a special committee to develop training programs dealing with issues of access and equity.¹¹¹ There were other signs that the reversal of desegregation in extension programs that Davis expected would not happen. In 1968 Raymond Scott had passed on to Lloyd Davis the suggestion that the service identify ten university social psychologists "to counsel with [southern] State Directors on

¹¹⁰Lloyd H. Davis to Dr. Wayne T. O'Dell, 2 June 1969, Box 309, Folder: Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

¹¹¹Weekly Report to C. Nelson Dorn, 4 November 1969; Weekly Report to C. Nelson Dorn, 8 December 1969, Box 310, Folder: Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

their problems within an objective framework” and that federal funds be used to provide the counseling.¹¹² Documentary evidence does not suggest that Davis took any action on this suggestion.

South Carolina Integration Stories: Successes at the Local Level

Agitation by blacks at the local level was also beginning to pay off. Supporters of black extension agents in South Carolina pressed South Carolina extension officials to open broader opportunities to black extension workers. It took some time for whites to accustom themselves to the idea of black agents as county extension leaders. In November 1966, the white home demonstration agent for Dorchester County resigned. Her position was not filled, leaving Bernice Brown, a black home demonstration agent, as the sole home demonstration worker in the county. Brown had been working alone for three months when Penn Center Director Courtney Sicheloff wrote R. C. Edwards for the second time to discuss black extension work matters after their January 1967 meeting. Sicheloff brought Brown’s situation and that of a black associate home demonstration agent in Anderson County (in the northwestern part of the state) to Edwards’ attention. The Anderson County home demonstration agent’s position was also vacant. Both black women had received a score of “3” on their ranking and Brown had ten years experience. There were three home demonstration workers in Anderson County. The black Associate Home Demonstration Agent held a Master’s degree from Michigan State University; the two assistant agents held bachelor’s degrees and each had less than a year’s experience. Sicheloff suggested that if neither of these black home agents qualified for promotion, then

¹¹²Raymond C. Scott to Lloyd H. Davis, 12 August 1968, Box 306, Folder Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

there were certainly black personnel in other counties who were qualified. He recommended that the promotion of these women would be “an excellent indication that jobs are not limited by race, and of the opportunities of advancement within the Extension Service for Negro personnel.”¹¹³ Edwards did not promote either home demonstration agent, although in Dorchester County, the home demonstration agent’s position remained open for over two years. The state’s extension service continued to offer only limited opportunities to its black workers and black South Carolina farmers began to complain about the manner in which black agents were treated in the service. A group of black farmers in Orangeburg County complained that while all the white agents were heard on local radio broadcasts, no black agents were. The farmers’ group noted the lack of a black specialist and that there was no county in the state where a black served as county agent.¹¹⁴ None of these complaints was fruitful in the short term. The response to the farmers was an explanation of why certain policies continued rather than how the institutional structure could be modified to become more inclusive.

According to the transcript of a meeting the farmer’s group held with extension officials, Extension Director Nutt asserted that the radio stations were private and that the extension service could not “tell them how to operate their businesses” (although he could have prevented all of the agents from airing spots on the stations). He recommended that the farmers let the situation go for the time being rather than cutting off all

¹¹³Courtney Siceloff to Robert C. Edwards, 3 February 1967; list of agents’ credentials and ratings, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 6, STICUL. Siceloff sent copies of all his correspondence with Edwards to I. DeQuincey Newman of the Field Director of the South Carolina Chapter of the National Association of Colored People. According to the 1968 agent roster, black home demonstration agents were the highest ranking women employees in five counties, but none held the rank “County Home Demonstration Agent” or “Associate County Agent Leader.”

¹¹⁴Transcript of meeting between “a group of Orangeburg County Farmers,” (transcriber unknown), 20 May 1968; George B. Nutt, to Dr. R. C. Edwards, 4 June 1968, Series 32, Box 30, Folder 13, STICUL.

extension-related radio for the county. In his memorandum to Edwards, Nutt reported that all four white county agents in Orangeburg County did radio spots on a rotating basis. The county agent also did telephone spots on the radio. Nutt recommended that the black agents make tapes that could be used on the radio.

Regarding specialists, Nutt insisted that the 4-H agents were specialists. He also asserted that he had “never had an application from a Negro to serve as [a subject matter] specialist.” Rather than admit the adamant refusal of the extension service under segregation to consider hiring blacks for specialist positions, or that the service offered specialist-led in-service training to the black extension agents rather than hire specialists, Nutt suggested the problem was with the qualifications of potential employees. He suggested that because blacks typically majored in agricultural education rather than agronomy or horticulture, they were not prepared for specialist work. Nutt stated that appointments were made on qualifications. He said the service “screen[ed] and rescreen[ed]” personnel records to find the “best qualified person.” Regarding the County Agent leader slots, Nutt assured Edwards that “in time we will employ well qualified Negroes in the top county positions.” Nutt noted that the Orangeburg County extension leader remarked that Quincy Smith, a black Associate Agricultural Agent, was serving white clients and that he had “developed considerably during the past two years.”¹¹⁵

The time for employing blacks in top county positions did not come during George Nutt’s administration of the South Carolina Extension Service. In affidavits they filed in the Lancaster matter, both Lancaster and Sara Waymer asserted that Nutt had ruled out the possibility of there ever being black women in the top jobs. Lancaster

¹¹⁵Transcript of meeting between “a group of Orangeburg County Farmers,” (transcriber unknown), 20 May 1968; George B. Nutt, to Dr. R. C. Edwards, 4 June 1968.

recalled that Nutt said “no Negro, irregardless of education or qualifications, would ever be home Demonstration Agent. . . . he said that some of us in attendance might have a Master’s Degree but would get no further consideration.” Both women stated that Nutt suggested that black women would never rise to the position of County Home Demonstration Agent because there were legislative delegations that would not permit it.¹¹⁶ In December 1968, Nutt retired after working in South Carolina agriculture for more than 35 years, including serving as the director of Clemson’s Department of Agricultural Engineering before his thirteen-year stint as extension director. It is perhaps not coincidental that the doors to county agent leader jobs opened slightly for blacks in the wake of his departure. About five weeks after Nutt retired, Edwards offered Bernice Brown a permanent appointment as Dorchester County Home Demonstration Agent.

In his letter offering Brown the job, Edwards referred to the reports he had received of her “splendid program” in the county. He informed Brown that extension officials were convinced that she was “the best qualified person for the position” and that a senior member of her legislative delegation approved her appointment. Edwards expressed to Brown his “personal interest” in her promotion and asked that she accept the position because she had “demonstrated clearly the ability to provide leadership and direction that this program needs as we look toward the solution of problems that lie ahead in providing the very best services possible to the people of Dorchester County.” Brown was the first black agent appointed the lead county home demonstration agent in

¹¹⁶Affidavit of Janie Lancaster, Exhibit 3, pp. 4-5; Affidavit of Sara A. Waymer, Exhibit 7, page 4; Series 32, Box 31, Folder 7, STICUL.

the state.¹¹⁷ The appointment also made her associate county agent leader. Brown's appointment represented an intersection between conceptions of racial inequality and the new realities brought about by the civil rights movement. In the evaluations of black agents, we can see that whites in South Carolina adhered to traditional notions of black ability (or lack thereof). Brown had ten years of home demonstration experience at the time the home agent's position was vacated in 1966 yet it over took two years of her working independently for her to gain the acceptance needed to secure the job. However, the fact that the county home demonstration agent's position remained vacant suggests that the appointment of a white woman to the lead agent's position would have had to be defended under civil rights laws. Whites had come to recognize that blacks were willing to use those laws to pursue equal employment opportunity.

Brown's promotion came literally days before a civil rights audit of the state's extension service was issued. Although the 1969 Inspector General's audit found no discrimination in "recruiting, training, salaries and promotion of employees," the state had only one black agent in a position of county leadership and one in state-level leadership—Bennie Cunningham had been appointed as State Leader of a low-income program. The audit found continuing deficiencies in the number of black agents, which had an impact on the services available to black clients. Clemson officials had tried to remedy segregation by having county employees develop expertise on a particular subject and be on call in a multiple-county area. Extension officials continued to point out that the majority of the agricultural agents had graduated from South Carolina State College

¹¹⁷Press release announcing the retirement of George B. Nutt effective 31 December 1968, n. d., Series 32, Box 117, Folder 10; Robert C. Edwards to Bernice Brown, 7 February 1969; Wayne T. O'Dell, Director [of Extension] to Dr. R. C. Edwards, President, 20 February 1969, Series 32, Box 30, Folder 12, STICUL.

which had limited agricultural subject matter courses of study while the majority of whites had graduated from agricultural colleges with a variety of agricultural majors as a source of the problem. The inability of black agents to use training they received at a state institution to advance professionally pointedly shows why Afro-South Carolinians had struggled for decades against segregation. Clemson's Assistant Director of Extension expected that within two to three years they could improve the skills of black personnel to levels where they could provide specialized client services.¹¹⁸

At the same time that extension officials were giving auditors optimistic assurances about blacks' future employment opportunities, the extension service instituted new rules for certain types of positions which placed them beyond the reach of black aspirants. The new organizational structure of the state's extension service included the objectives of encouraging specialists to be more researched-oriented rather than subject-matter based and requiring that state specialists must have a Ph. D and area specialists must have a master's degree or doctorate depending on their speciality.¹¹⁹

A Difficult Adjustment: Creating an Equitable Extension Service

The changes to the extension program were not sufficient to deal with the two-tiered employment tracks in the extension service in part because policies such as those just described canceled out equal opportunity efforts. Black extension agents had limited recourse in attacking this double-dealing. Secretary Hardin issued Memorandum 1662 in September 1969. It reaffirmed the Department's commitment to the Civil Rights Act of

¹¹⁸U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Inspector General, "Audit of Civil Rights Implementation in the South Carolina Cooperative State Extension Service, South Carolina State Office, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, 13 February 1969,"10.

¹¹⁹"ADDENDUM TO AUDIT OF CIVIL RIGHTS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE," 13 February 1969, 4, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 12, STICUL.

1964, equal opportunity, and a “fair complaint procedure.” Hardin prohibited discrimination in facilities, offices, and programs. His order expanded on Raymond Scott’s suggestion of offering racial sensitivity training to extension personnel by requiring such training for all USDA personnel early in 1970. The focus of the one-day training sessions, one in D. C. and four regional sessions was to identify why minorities did not participate in extension programs and to improve their participation rates.¹²⁰ In early August 1970, Secretary Hardin told his staff that by “snowfall” he expected a program to be in place “to make it possible to elevate the status of black staff members and make it possible to promote more of them.” Hardin suggested that the extension service consider cooperating with a black land-grant college or university to create a training center for black agents. The idea for a center is reminiscent of the Rosenwald Schools that began in the 1930s. Hardin said that “organized groups of Negroes were reaching the stage of supporting the efforts of the Department; and with the exception of Extension there were no major problems, and Extension only because someone had selected it as the ‘point of attack’.” Hardin’s recommendation of a pedagogical solution suggests that he accepted the prevailing rhetoric that blacks were not being promoted because they were not qualified for promotion. He seemed to subscribe to the notion that the injection of racism as a reason for employment discrimination was polemical. However, the training offered to U. S. D. A. personnel was aimed at reforming official attitudes, not increasing the number of qualified black personnel. Soon after Hardin’s speech the extension service produced a film, “Understanding Prejudice and Racism” with James A. Bayton, the Chair of the

¹²⁰Weekly Report, 20 January 1970; Weekly Report, 3 March 1970, Box 313, Folder: Reports & Statistics, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II. The Secretary’s Memorandum is not available on the Internet or in published secondary sources I consulted. A summary of its major provisions is located at <http://bfo.chae.wsu.edu/personnel/civilrights/summary.htm>, Washington State University extension service.

Department of Psychology at Howard University and author of *Tension in the Cities*. The film's purpose was to educate extension workers regarding the "fundamental components of prejudice, and their supporting influences, . . . the fundamentals of attitude change, the initial motivation and the subsequent reinforcing beliefs, [and the] cost-effect relationships on Extension programs, policies, staffs, and audiences."¹²¹

Despite his desire to bring blacks more fully into the extension organization, the Secretary, like those before him, remained solicitous of bureaucratic opinion. When the possibility of making direct arrangements for cooperative research with 1890 institutions—as black land-grant colleges and universities were called—Hardin agreed with recommendations he received that the approval of the white 1862 colleges and southern educators be secured before making any agreements. He also accepted a proposal by individuals at the meeting that the white colleges and educators would "be instrumental in developing guidelines [for division of appropriations and for cooperative arrangements between 1862 and 1890 institutions] rather than any of us in the Department attempting to do this."¹²²

The ambiguity that existed in the institutional history of black extension workers and their relationship with federal and state extension officials is also evident in the history of their clients' relationship with the extension service. This work has chronicled the positive effects of extension work on rural blacks' lives, yet much remained undone. The demographics of South Carolina in 1960 were far different than they had been in

¹²¹Weekly Report, 18 August 1970; Weekly Report, 15 September 1970, Box 313, Folder: Reports & Statistics, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

¹²²Gene M. Lear to Edwin L. Kirby, 11 August 1970, Box 312, Folder: Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

1910. Only 35 percent of the state's 2,382,594 citizens were not white. Between 1950 and 1970 400,000 blacks left South Carolina; twenty-five percent more than had left between 1920 and 1940. The majority of these black migrants were from rural areas. Mechanization of agriculture replaced their human labor. In 1950, 1.2 million acres of cotton were harvested; 1.1 million acres were picked by hand. In 1960, 453,000 acres of cotton were picked in South Carolina and only 236,000 acres were picked by hand. Mechanical tobacco harvesters reduced human labor needs by seventy percent.¹²³ There were also "pull" factors involved in black farmers' decisions to leave. The 1950s was an era of unparalleled prosperity in the history of the United States and many hoped to enjoy the life that urban areas seemed to offer. "Push" factors were also important and cannot be overlooked. The most important among these was mechanization. Mechanical cotton pickers and tobacco harvesters made it possible for white farmers to rely less on rural black labor. It also made it increasingly difficult for independent small farmers to compete.

In 1962, on the eve of the first tentative steps toward the elimination of racially identifiable federal agricultural programs, the Southern Regional Council conducted a study of nine rural South Carolina Counties: Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, Clarendon, Hampton, Jasper, Lee, and Williamsburg. The study was to determine the degree to which blacks were employed in U. S. D. A. programs, whether or not blacks were excluded from participating in any programs, and the role blacks played in advisory roles in the programs. Of the counties in the study, eight had general populations that

¹²³U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Inspector General, "Audit of Civil Rights Implementation in the South Carolina Cooperative State Extension Service, South Carolina State Office, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, 13 February 1969," p. 3; Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 530-31.

were more than fifty percent black (in five of these the percentage was higher than sixty percent). In five counties, the number of black farmers exceeded fifty percent and the lowest percentage of black farmers was thirty-nine percent. In all the counties studied, the average number of acres white farmers owned was three to nearly seven times the acreage that black farmers owned. The average number of acres whites farmed was four to twelve times as much as black farm operators. The highest average number of acres owned by black and white farmers was 71 and 388 acres respectively; the highest average acres of land farmed by black and white farmers respectively was 65 and 634.¹²⁴

The statistics alone demonstrate that white South Carolina farmers' profit potential in these "Black Belt" counties, as the report referred to them, far exceeded that of black farmers. The report also documented that blacks in these counties sometimes did not fully understand agricultural programs or how to actualize their right to the benefits of these programs. Local domination by whites clearly was the reason. For example, the FHA was run by a white county supervisor who had the option of hiring a black to work with applications from members of the race. Final recommendations of loans included a process in which three local farmers who had been recommended by the county FHA supervisor and selected by the FHA director would review the applications. The study found, not surprisingly, that no black had ever been county supervisor. It also concluded that while blacks were able to get FHA disaster loans at a rate of about 33 percent of available emergency funds, few were able to secure home ownership loans. Between 1959 and 1962, only nine home ownership loans had been made to blacks in the counties

¹²⁴Southern Regional Council, "Special Report: A Study of Negro Farms in South Carolina," SRC: 23. December 1962, pp. 1-2, 4.

studied. Out of over \$2.5 million the FHA distributed in these counties to encourage home ownership, black farmers received only about \$137,000.¹²⁵

The study also found discrimination in the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) committees, which set quotas and price supports for crops. Although these county committees were democratically elected and could contain black members, no blacks apparently had served on the committees since they were created in the 1930s. The report suggested that the same type of employment discrimination found in the FHA also existed in the ASCS in South Carolina. "In fact, throughout South Carolina, there seems to be no regulations, policies, or procedures established by the state committee . . . to implement fair employment practices contained in the civil service regulations or in the pledges made by the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunities."¹²⁶

One can infer that their lack of familiarity with and their failure to benefit from U. S. D. A. programs stemmed from the lack of black federal employees. In 1962 there were only five black agricultural agents and six black home demonstration agents working in these counties. Some of the counties had neither a black agricultural nor home agent. By 1967 Allendale, Barnwell, Calhoun, and Jasper Counties—63, 43, 67, and 62 percent black respectively—still had no black agricultural agent. Calhoun and Jasper Counties also had no black home demonstration agent. "Because of the shortage of trained Negro extension service agents and the fact that they must cover far more territory

¹²⁵Southern Regional Council, "Special Report: A Study of Negro Farms in South Carolina," pp. 5-12. The number of applications by blacks for ownership loans was quite low, less than five, but in most cases, these loans were not granted.

¹²⁶Southern Regional Council, "Special Report: A Study of Negro Farms in South Carolina," pp. 13-5.

and deal with far more people than their white counterparts, it seems fairly obvious that their work cannot begin to compare with the extension work being done in white communities,” the report asserted.¹²⁷

Challenging White Privilege: The Ellore Community Rises Again

Between 1962 and the late 1960s, black farmers began to recognize their own needs and the benefits of government programs like extension services. Activist groups such as the N. A. A. C. P. made certain that blacks were aware of their rights and were able to empower themselves by asserting them. There is no better example of this than the activities of farmers in the Ellore community of Orangeburg. Title VI and subsequent federal memoranda made clear that all people had a right to expect equal treatment in federal government services. The complaints about the mistreatment of agents in Orangeburg County were intertwined with the farmers’ complaints that they had been discriminated against as well. In 1968 Raymond Anderson and a committee of six other farmers from Ellore—representing a group of farmers that correspondence on this matter identifies as “low income” —wrote Clemson President R. C. Edwards to complain that there had been no extension agent to serve them since July 1967. The one black agricultural agent in the county, according to Anderson, spent most of his time working with 4-H youth. (According to reports, he was also serving white clients.) The farmers complained that they had been left “without farm visits, on the farm advice and little or no information when office calls are made.” Anderson admitted that black farmers received information when they requested it, but the group sought the sort of impromptu personal attention that they had received when there was a black agent who worked with black farmers.

¹²⁷Southern Regional Council, “Special Report: A Study of Negro Farms in South Carolina,” p. 17; “Clemson University Extension Service: Some Notes and Statistics Relating to Negro Participation,” p. 9.

While his group recognized that it might be difficult to find “qualified” personnel, they also questioned the level of effort that had been put into the search. They demanded an immediate replacement of the black agent who had been transferred to Laurens County in 1967. The form of the letter itself demonstrates the development of some political astuteness by rural blacks. They sent copies of their correspondence to George Nutt and their state representative and senator.¹²⁸

Anderson’s letter began two months of investigation of the matter. Director Nutt told Edwards he had intended to replace the transferred agent with a “qualified Negro agricultural graduate.” Nutt said Bennie Cunningham was in the process of checking the qualifications of several applicants, but they had “not found a qualified person for the position.” Edwards wrote to Anderson to express his commitment to see that the farmers’ needs were served.¹²⁹

Clemson officials arranged a meeting with the community group for 28 May 1968 at Camp Harry Daniels, which was located in their community. The committee requested that the white county extension leader not attend. Apparently, they believed him to be a racist. At the meeting, the Anderson committee complained that although a majority of the farmers in Orangeburg County was black (61%), there was a lack of equitable representation of blacks on the county agricultural extension staff (20% black). Nutt responded to this complaint in much the same way that earlier extension directors would have: whites constituted 60% of owners and part owners while blacks accounted for only

¹²⁸Raymond Anderson and six others to Dr. R. C. Edwards, 3 May 1968, Series 32, Box 30, Folder 13, STICUL.

¹²⁹R. C. Edwards to Mr. Raymond Anderson, 13 May 1968, Series 32, Box 30, Folder 13, STICUL.

40% of that number.¹³⁰ No laws related to extension work had ever stipulated that its programs were for owners only, yet South Carolina extension officials continued to use this logic to justify keeping more whites than blacks on the payroll when demographics would suggest that more black than white agents would be appropriate. In a memorandum to President Edwards, Nutt defended this extension practice. He pointed out that there were 1,293 white farm *owners* and only 855 non-white farm *owners* in Orangeburg County. He also defended using the black agents primarily in 4-H because “Four-H is a proven method of reaching adults through their children.” (While this policy proved effective in the early years of extension work when many adults were suspicious of the program, one imagines it hardly could have been necessary 50 years later.) Nutt explained that white agents did not visit black farms unless specifically requested to do so because they were “extremely busy with the multiplicity of work expected of County personnel.”¹³¹ According to the Inspector General’s 1969 audit, South Carolina’s white farm operators received 69 percent of services rendered to farmers and 62 percent of services rendered to households. Conversely, black youth received 61 percent of the youth services provided.¹³²

One of the farmers’ greatest frustrations was how the Orangeburg County fat livestock show had been conducted. They claimed that there was discrimination in the manner black boys’ hogs were handled. The hogs offered for sale by black boys were

¹³⁰Transcript of meeting between “a group of Orangeburg County Farmers,” (transcriber unknown), 20 May 1968, Series 32, Box 30, Folder 13, STICUL.

¹³¹George B. Nutt, to Dr. R. C. Edwards, 4 June 1968.

¹³²U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Inspector General, “Audit of Civil Rights Implementation in the South Carolina Cooperative State Extension Service, South Carolina State Office, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, 13 February 1969,” 5.

priced lower than those of white boys were. They also complained that there were no blacks on the board of directors that organized the livestock show. Extension officials responded that the black boys' hogs garnered lower prices because none of them won prizes. (The lone judge was white.) Officials asserted that the prices of the hogs offered for sale by black boys and those of white boys who did not win prizes were comparable. They insisted that the shows were held "without discrimination." While admitting that there were no blacks on the show's board of directors, it was pointed out that there were blacks on all other committees. Nutt reported to President Edwards that the board of directors was a "self-perpetuating body. The Extension Service is not involved in the membership of this group."¹³³ It would seem that extension officials should have been precluded from cooperating with an all-white board even if it was to organize a racially integrated show under Title VI and subsequent departmental orders; however, this issue was not raised directly by the farmers. (During the conference about the group's expressed the feeling that the white county agent, J. C. King, while knowledgeable, was a "segregationist primarily for permitting having segregated seating at an event after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had been enacted.)"¹³⁴

Quincy Smith, the only black agricultural agent assigned to Orangeburg County, gave a "voluntary" opinion on the charges of the committee. He admitted that four of the charges that the group made were true, although in some instances he added additional explanation. For example, he agreed with the group's claim that adult farmers and their

¹³³Transcript of meeting between "a group of Orangeburg County Farmers," (transcriber unknown), 20 May 1968; George B. Nutt, to Dr. R. C. Edwards, 4 June 1968.

¹³⁴Transcript of meeting between "a group of Orangeburg County Farmers," (transcriber unknown), 20 May 1968.

wives were being neglected because of the presence of only two workers in the county working directly with blacks. He agreed that there were no black agents on the radio but stated that the agents had never asked for a broadcast nor had their clients asked them to offer one. Regarding the livestock show and sale, Smith suggested that there was “no planned discrimination” but that “there were a few occurrences which seemed discriminating but they were simple, unintentional occurrences.” He listed the use of a single white judge (but he suggested that more judges could not have done better), he stated that the manner in which the hogs were sent into the auction pen permitted white boys’ hogs to enter first. “The hogs being sent in this order set a stage of apparent discrimination which was not intended by anyone.” He also said that the show complied with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. He agreed that there were no black specialists but focused on the services that white specialists had provided to blacks when asked. While admitting that there was no county in the state with a black county agricultural agent, he said that this was not the concern of farmers.¹³⁵

On the same day that Smith offered his statement, a meeting of Orangeburg County extension staff was presided over by the county agent who farmers claimed was a “segregationist.” He read a letter from Director Nutt regarding Civil Rights compliance and asked whether there were areas that should be addressed. According to the minutes, “the agents felt that every group was being treated the same way, regardless of race, color, or creed. No instances were reported of non-compliance to the Civil Rights Law.” In his memorandum to President Edwards, Nutt used this meeting to try to diminish the validity of the Elloree group’s claims. He sought Edwards’ approval to have the white county

¹³⁵Quincy J. Smith to Mr. G. B. Nutt, 3 June 1968, Series 32, Box 30, Folder 13, STICUL.

agent and Quincy Smith meet with the group—and others in the county—to address their concerns.¹³⁶

To his credit, Edwards' analysis of the information he received considered the nuances of the reports. After reviewing Nutt's memorandum, Edwards wrote Anderson to offer a personal assessment of the issues at hand. While he relied on Nutt's statistics that showed that there were more white than black farm owners in Orangeburg County rather than count the number of persons engaged in farming, he used the figures to suggest that the number of farmers who needed help was so large that even the addition of another agent would not be a sufficient remedy. He made it clear that a black agent could not be hired to work solely with black farmers as it violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but he assured Anderson that services would be provided on a non-discriminatory basis. Edwards suggested that the resources provided to develop extension work were insufficient, which often meant that smaller farmers were overlooked. As a result, he said that such individuals might suspect discrimination. Edwards said that perceptions might be "correct" particularly if "discrimination were deliberate and based on race." Edwards added an odd twist to the analysis to suggest that "on the other hand" a person who received no services whatsoever rather than one whose needs had not been met was the likely victim of discrimination. Edwards also told Anderson that "appropriate action" was being taken in the matter radio broadcasts.¹³⁷

¹³⁶Minutes, Orangeburg County Extension Staff Meeting, 3 June 1968, Series 32, Box 30, Folder 13, STICUL; George B. Nutt, to Dr. R. C. Edwards, 4 June 1968.

¹³⁷Robert C. Edwards to Mr. Raymond J. Anderson, 7 June 1968.

Discrimination at the Orangeburg livestock show was one of the most serious allegations the group had raised with Nutt. In his response to this issue Edwards demonstrates that the perception of discrimination could be as powerful as actual discrimination. He suggested to Anderson that one reason that events unfolded as they did in the 1968 fat livestock show was that livestock was brought in from surrounding counties, which increased the volume of animals and depressed the prices at which they sold. He also stated that in the past, there had been black winners at the show. However, Edwards also recognized that there had been mistakes made at the show. Edwards believed that it would be better to “attempt to safeguard against any [future] possibility of the show or sale being conducted in a manner that could suggest possible racial discrimination.” He promised that Director Nutt would meet with the show’s organizers to address problems. Edwards made it clear that civil rights laws prevented Clemson University from participating in programs that were not operated “on a totally non-discriminatory basis. It is our responsibility to work with the officials of the Orangeburg Live Stock Show and Sale to develop a complete understanding about what this responsibility entails.” He emphatically stated that Clemson employees would not be permitted to work with the organizers of the event unless they complied with the law. However, Edwards’ remarks to the farmers also suggest that he accepted assertions that the animals blacks brought to the show were of inferior quality. He recommended that black farmers and their sons take full advantage of the opportunity by showing off their best livestock “since it costs no more to feed and care for a top-quality animal than for one of much lesser quality.”¹³⁸

¹³⁸Robert C. Edwards to Mr. Raymond J. Anderson, 7 June 1968.

Regarding the appointment of black specialists and county agents, Edwards stated that all appointments were made to “qualified personnel on an equal opportunity basis.” He told Anderson that he was personally committed to hiring blacks in these positions.¹³⁹ The complaints by the Elloree group produced some positive actions in short order. By 25 June 1968, about 8 weeks after the controversy began, two qualified applicants had been identified for the vacated position with the expectation that one would be appointed within the week. The white county agent leader for Orangeburg arranged for the black agents to broadcast on one of the county’s radio stations. Although he thought that “progress will be slow,” he would be able to secure “acceptance of negro [sic] agents from all three local stations.” While District Agent D. A. Shelley stated that “no intended discrimination” occurred at the Orangeburg livestock show, changes were made for the next year’s program. They planned to publish a list of all the committees that participated in organizing the event. All the committees would be integrated. The exception was the board of directors that remained all-white but would create a racially integrated “advisory committee” that would work with the board’s executive committee to establish rules and regulations for the show. “Every effort will be made to prevent any evidence of discrimination in the operation of the next show and sale.” The county agent and his staff also planned to meet with low-income farmers to ensure that their needs were met.¹⁴⁰

Despite Shelley’s optimism, the agent’s position was not filled and the relationship between the Elloree community and the extension service deteriorated. The Elloree committee canceled an 11 July meeting with the county agent. Both applicants for the

¹³⁹Robert C. Edwards to Mr. Raymond J. Anderson, 7 June 1968.

¹⁴⁰D. A. Shelley to Director G. B. Nutt, 25 June 1968, Series 32, Box 30, Folder 13, STICUL.

vacant position who were identified in June declined it. Nutt suspected that racial unrest in Orangeburg—perhaps the killing of several South Carolina State College students who were protesting a segregated bowling alley in the “Orangeburg Massacre” a few months earlier—convinced the men to reject the offer.¹⁴¹

In D. A. Shelley’s August report, he stated that five men, including the agent who formerly held the post, had refused to accept the position. Shelley also reported that Bennie Cunningham had written to North Carolina A&T in an attempt to locate a black applicant. The correspondence reveals that non-race-based hiring was not a reality in the extension service. Nutt was of the opinion that “someone outside of the Ellore group is directing or advising this group on procedures.” Shelley subsequently wrote Nutt to report that the county agent had heard that black farmers in Ellore and Holly Hill were working to get “four (4) carloads of Negroes to come to Clemson to meet with Dr. Edwards” at Edwards’ invitation. According to Shelley, the county agent also “heard rumors” that legal actions against the extension service for discrimination was also planned and that the NAACP had agreed to accept the case and was at present investigating the issues.¹⁴²

This episode made clear that if they were aware of new laws, even low-income farmers could use them to force extension officials to address their concerns. While black

¹⁴¹George B. Nutt to Dr. R. C. Edwards, 9 July 1968; “An excerpt from the monthly report of Mr. D. A. Shelley, dated August 1968,” Series 32, Box 30, Folder 13, STICUL.

¹⁴²George B. Nutt to Dr. R. C. Edwards, 9 July 1968; “An excerpt from the monthly report of Mr. D. A. Shelley, dated August 1968;” “An excerpt from the monthly report of Mr. D. A. Shelley, dated August 1968;” Mr. D. A. Shelley to Mr. G. B. Nutt, 14 August 1968. How difficult it was to hire qualified blacks is open to debate. Lloyd Davis wrote William Seabron and reported that in Florida, the director of extension was having difficulty filling positions vacated by resignations and retirements. William Seabron questioned the accuracy of the representation that it was difficult to get (and keep) qualified black agents. He suggested that more specific job descriptions, “objective employment assignments, promotion, and termination criteria” be introduced throughout the South to remedy the problem. William M. Seabron to John B. Speidel, 5 October 1965; Lloyd H. Davis to William M. Seabron, 16 October 1965; Box 296, Folder: Personnel, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

extension employees were familiar with employment grievance procedures, the 1969 audit re-affirmed what the Southern Regional Council report had found nearly a decade earlier—rural Afro-South Carolinians generally lacked sufficient information about grievance procedures to secure their rights. The state office had sent a brochure detailing the procedure to the county offices for inclusion in the public distribution rack. The report offered no insights on why this type of dissemination had been unsuccessful. The audit report stated that “the State Office had not taken the necessary action” to ensure that clients had grievance procedure information. Without it, clients “lack[ed] the knowledge” to report discrimination. Interviews with black clients in the audited counties showed that those who “were familiar with the procedure, had only vague ideas concerning the procedure to follow.”¹⁴³

“Decades of Neglect”: The Howze Study of Black Extension Work

The situation the civil rights audit found in South Carolina was not atypical. In 1970, Glenn Howze of the Carver Research Foundation at Tuskegee Institute completed a study of the use of USDA services by black farmers in the Alabama “black belt counties.” Howze concluded that the U. S. D. A. had failed to live up to its “statutory requirements” in providing services to blacks. He found that a significant number of black farmers (ranging from 34 to 81 percent) had no knowledge of particular agricultural policies that could benefit them. Only twenty percent of his sample population had ever been visited by an agricultural agent and only twenty-three percent had been visited by a home demonstration agent. Eighty-eight percent of those visited by agricultural agents and 94

¹⁴³U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Inspector General, “Audit of Civil Rights Implementation in the South Carolina Cooperative State Extension Service, South Carolina State Office, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, 13 February 1969,” pp. 13-4.

percent of those visited by home agents said that the agent who visited them was also black. Only 20 percent of black farmers in the study had visited their local extension office; 55 percent reported that they were called by their first name and treated differently than whites when there. Howze expected little to change because the U. S. D. A. “denies that it has failed to serve Black Americans.” He suggested that new strategies and approaches must be taken. If the U. S. D. A. were to live up to its obligation, “it is not enough to start serving the Black farmer at the same level as his white counterpart. Compensatory service must be provided in order to overcome decades of neglect.”¹⁴⁴

One of the longstanding criticisms of the extension service was that it had overlooked the most needy farmers. Lloyd Davis, Administrator of the Federal Extension Service, had promised Secretary Freeman in 1965 that something would be done to address the needs of low-income farmers; however, it does not appear that those needs were met to the satisfaction of some blacks.¹⁴⁵ The extension service expanded its operations into a variety of new areas throughout the 1960s. In 1965 it played an important role, along with the Office of Equal Opportunity, in distributing Head Start applications in low-income counties. Fulfilling the new Great Society mission of President Johnson, the service connected with local leaders in a variety of communities and developed Neighborhood Youth Corps, similar to NYA, to work in county extension offices.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴Glenn R. Howze, “The Black Farmer and the USDA,” *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Association of Southern Agricultural Workers, Rural Sociology Section*, 1970, pp. 3, 6, 9-11.

¹⁴⁵“NOTES ON SOUTHERN DIRECTORS CONFERENCE, Richmond, Virginia, April 27-29, 1965,” p. 2.

¹⁴⁶Lloyd H. Davis to Secretary of Agriculture, 22 April 1965, Box 297, Folder: Reports and Statistics, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

Seeing New Possibilities: Rural Black Folk Envision a New Age

The shift in focus in extension work led to some interesting projects. A pilot program to deal with the problems of low-income farmers was launched in Lee County, South Carolina in July 1964. The main conclusion from the project was “that sympathetic understanding on the part of workers concerned . . . was essential. Where this sympathetic understanding has developed, low-income people have quickly begun to take steps that they have never taken before.” The results reflected the early success of the black programs. The families in the community built a playground, screened homes, and froze vegetables. They began to apply techniques of scientific agriculture and land management. They tested and properly fertilized their soils, used chemicals to control weeds, and worked cooperatively on a drainage project. One man bought a mechanical cotton picker that was used throughout the community to harvest cotton, “thus enabling the children to stay in school during the cotton harvest season.”¹⁴⁷

Clemson’s 1969 audit response included low-income work as one of the four pillars of the state’s program. Bennie Cunningham, the former assistant who supervised black agricultural agents, was appointed state leader for the program. The state leaders for commercial agriculture, home economics and family living, and 4-H and youth development were all white.¹⁴⁸ The audit response also stated that its objectives would include working more with community development programs and low-income groups, use of

¹⁴⁷“Lee County, S. C. Pilot Program in Two Low-Income Rural Areas,” attachment to Robert J. Pritchell to William M. Seabron, 7 March 1966, Box 300, Folder: Programs-Projects, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II. The report refers to the communities as “ethnically and culturally” different.

¹⁴⁸“ADDENDUM TO AUDIT OF CIVIL RIGHTS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE,” 13 February 1969, pp. 1, 9.

“sub-professional assistants,” and more involvement of “lay people in program determination and implementation.” In ordinal arrangement, these objectives were numbered 11-13 (of 14), which suggests low priority.¹⁴⁹ The race of the farmers to be served by community programs was not noted in the 1966 narrative or in the audit response, the methods adapted to deal with these “illiterate low-income people,” including the use of local leadership had been part and parcel of the black extension program for decades.

The Federal Extension Service’s division of research and education also helped states develop in-service training programs to deal with ways to assist minorities and the disadvantaged. The training sessions focused on the “problems and needs of people of the disadvantaged, alienated, racial, minority, ethnic groups to have a better understanding of the nature of tolerance and its effect on Extension program development.” In some states, office segregation was still an issue and the service cooperated with state personnel to work out compliance under Title VI.¹⁵⁰ Although the civil rights movement gave impetus to the plight of disadvantaged farmers and heightened the focus on southern programs, like other civil rights initiatives it had a broader effect. Illinois began to focus on the plight of its low-income farmers.¹⁵¹ One of the results that federal extension officials found from low-income projects such as Alabama’s “The Will to Try” program was “that nonprofessional aides, trained and supervised by Extension home economists, can help low-income families.” A report later that year noted that in the balanced programming training session which addressed the needs of “disadvantaged, alienated, racial, minority

¹⁴⁹“ADDENDUM TO AUDIT OF CIVIL RIGHTS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE,” 13 February 1969, p. 4.

¹⁵⁰Weekly Report, 20 January 1970; Weekly Report, 3 March 1970. Box 313, Folder Reports & Statistics, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁵¹Weekly Report, 19 May 1970; Box 313, Folder: Reports & Statistics, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

and ethnic groups,” they taught staff members that these populations could be reached if extension workers understood the problems and needs of these groups, involved members of these populations in leadership and program development, and “increase[d] understanding of the nature of tolerance and its effect on program development.”¹⁵²

The Death of Old Dreams and the Birth of New Ones

The new vistas of mainstream opportunity available to Afro-South Carolinians were evident in the minutes of one meeting of the Cherokee County Council of Farm Women. Paul Webber, Jr., a field representative from the Office of Economic Opportunity, addressed a meeting of the Cherokee County Council of Farm Women in 1966. Webber told them, “This is a good age or time to live in.” He encouraged them to take on tough jobs. “You don’t have to be the plumber’s helper any more; you can be the plumber.” He encouraged them “to learn all you can about all you can, read, develop local community heros” and encourage youth to pursue technical education. Webber also distributed pamphlets on equal opportunity to the group.¹⁵³ However, South Carolina blacks did more than see possibilities for the future, they used their knowledge of new laws to improve their conditions.

The ultimate consequences of the demise of black extension work probably could not have been envisioned by the agents or their clients as they held other dreams. Despite the continued struggles during the 1960s, there were signs of bright future possibilities for both agents and clients. In 1967 for example, Jonas T. Kennedy, a black farmer from Marlboro County, was one of 95 farmers invited to have lunch with President Johnson to

¹⁵²Weekly Report, 19 May 1970; Weekly Report, 15 September 1970, Box 313, Folder Reports & Statistics; , Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

¹⁵³Minute Book, Cherokee County Council of Farm Women, 22 April 1966, in possession of the author.

discuss issues affecting farmers. Kennedy, a producer of turkeys, corn, cotton, and soybeans, gave a report to the local paper on the issues the farmers raised in the meeting. According to the article, the high point of Kennedy's day was meeting the President. "I just can't wash that hand off quite yet."¹⁵⁴

Afro-South Carolinians probably did not recognize the drastic changes that integration would bring to their extension service. Not only did integration lead to a loss of services they had come to expect, it also led to a loss of black-created institutions in which they had immense pride. One of these was Camp Harry Daniels. In late 1959, the board of trustees of the camp, which included three of the state-level black extension administrators, five agricultural and three home demonstration agents, met to decide what was to be done with the camp. According to Altamese Pough, the General Assembly could not give funding to the camp because it was black-owned. The board decided that it was best that it be turned over Clemson College or the state to be used for 4-H camping purposes. George Nutt recommended to the comptroller of Clemson College that any income from the property be deposited at Clemson for 4-H camps. The Palmetto Home Demonstration Council deeded the demonstration house to the People's Cooperative in the Jeremiah community of Williamsburg County and transferred its student loan fund to Orangeburg County, presumably to the South Carolina State College.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴"Kennedy has lunch with LBJ," 24 February 1967, Series 32, Box 29, Folder 10, STICUL. The article has written across it, "clipped from front page, county paper."

¹⁵⁵George B. Nutt to Mr. M. A. Wilson, Comptroller, 5 November 1959, Series 32, Box 25, Folder 8, STICUL; Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, p. 49; Minute Book, Cherokee County Council of Farm Women in possession of the author. In the back of the county minutes is a set of notes from the state council meeting. The decision to deed the house to the People's Cooperative was after the passage of the Economic Opportunity act as the notes refer to the Head Start Project.

The audit of the South Carolina extension program included a study of five of the counties included in the 1962 Southern Regional Council study. The results showed that little had changed in the seven years between the two reports. The auditors found that in counties with agents of both races, agents still “predominantly” served clients of their same race. According to the report, one county agent said that often clients asked for particular agents by name. The audit noted no deliberate denial of service or other types of racial discrimination. However, the report also quoted the assistant state director, who suggested that “past customs and desires of clientele were the reasons for the continuance of this practice.”¹⁵⁶

The federal and state extension services still had much to do to address the resources available to low income farmers. Federal officials had to offer answers to a variety of questions on the low-income programs in Beaufort and Jasper Counties in March 1969. One of the questions they had to answer related to the salaries of extension agents relevant to other agricultural department employees in the counties.¹⁵⁷ A year and a half after Bernice Brown’s promotion the first black county agent was appointed. Ellis D. (E. D.) Dean, the associate agent in Bamberg County, was promoted to county agent for the county in September 1970. As in Brown’s case, he was not promoted over a white agent. He replaced the white agent, who had moved to Orangeburg County to fill the county agent position when the white county agent there was promoted to dairy specialist. The agent sent to Orangeburg, a much larger and prosperous county than Bamberg

¹⁵⁶U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Inspector General, “Audit of Civil Rights Implementation in the South Carolina Cooperative State Extension Service, South Carolina State Office, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, 13 February 1969,” pp. 9-10.

¹⁵⁷Lowell H. Watts to R[ichard] R. Rankin, [Director, Division Management Operations], 21 March 1969, Box 310, Folder Reports and Statistics, Entry 1002, RG 33, NA II.

County, had a B. S. degree from Clemson, some graduate work at the University of Wisconsin, and 14 years of experience as an agent. Dean held B. S. A. and M. S. A. degrees in agriculture from Savannah State and South Carolina State College respectively. Before he became an extension agent, he had served terms as school principal in Barnwell, Beaufort, and Bamberg counties. He was 57 and had worked in the extension service for 26 years. Of his appointment, Dean said, "Give the world the best you have and the best will come back to you."¹⁵⁸

Dean's appointment was no more significant as a measure of institutional transformation than Brown's appointment had been. In 1970 the Commission on Civil Rights stated that "It is disheartening to note that as of 1970, salary disparities and segregated service patterns still exist in the Extension Service offices."¹⁵⁹ South Carolina's Extension Service was required to submit affirmative action compliance plans as a result of the Alabama extension service case *Strain v. Philpott*. As a result, the 1972 report on equal opportunity in farm programs found that between 1971 and 1972 the number of black professional personnel in South Carolina's extension service jumped over 27 percent from 74 to 102 workers. However, their clients' participation in food and nutrition programs was 58 percent, in the most lucrative aspects of extension programs

¹⁵⁸"Negro County Agent Named," *The State*, 16 September 1970; "New County Agent is Announced Here," Orangeburg, (S. C.) *Times & Democrat*, 10 September 1970; "Dean Named County Agent at Bamberg," Charleston (S. C.) *News and Courier*, 16 September 1970, Series 32, Box 31, Folder 14, STICUL.

¹⁵⁹Quoted in "Apartheid in Texas Agriculture: A Biography of 'Affirmative Action,'" by Greg Moses, a paper presented at the National Association for African American Studies, 16 February 1996, <http://members.tripod.com/~gmoses/tcrr/apart3.htm>.

blacks' participation languished between 15 and 29 percent. Black youth participation rates in 4-H declined to 44 percent of all participants.¹⁶⁰

What was the “best,” as Dean stated, is difficult to determine. The black extension service gave blacks an opportunity to lift themselves and its central utility was the pride and hope it created. Many graduates of the black extension programs—Marilyn Scott, a dietician at South Carolina State College, Dr. Sarah Washington, also working at South Carolina State College, Louis Lynn, a Clemson University alumnus and trustee whose family won the black farm family of the year award in 1962, Everette Francis who worked for a governor of South Carolina and in a federal program—are but a few examples of blacks who benefitted from the hope the black extension agents encouraged during an age of segregation. “We would have elections and they learned parliamentary procedure through 4-H clubs. And they would politic in order to get things done. And many of those have gone into government and they’re doing quite well in various jobs. . . . 4-H really helped a lot when we had them, as we say separately. We are able to do, I think, a lot more with them. The projects were more meaningful.” In an exchange during an oral interview with this author, Sara Waymer and Altamese Pough painted a picture of what the black program meant:

¹⁶⁰Office of Equal Opportunity, U. S. Department of Agriculture, *Equal Opportunity Report: USDA Programs 1972* (February 1974), pp. 6-7, 21, 23, 33, 41. There were at least four cases filed against the extension service in various southern states including Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, and North Carolina. The cases are: *Strain v. Philpott*, 331 F. Supp. 836 (1971); *Wade v. Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service*, 528 F. 2d 508 (1976); *Poole et. al. v. Williams et. al.*, Civil Action No. 72-H-150, U. S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas, Houston Division (1976); *Bazemore v. Friday*, 478 U. S. 385 (1976). According to interviews Joel Schor did with Willie Strain, a black agricultural agent in Alabama and William C. Payne of the Civil Rights Commission, Strain had intended to sue the USDA for non-enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. To save the Department of Agriculture embarrassment, the Justice Department intervened in the case to sue the state of Alabama on Strains behalf. The court found that discrimination still existed in the Alabama extension service. It required the state to hire more black employees, required more equitable salaries, integrated client services, and to give former Tuskegee administrators preference in promotion. Schor, “The Black Presence in the Cooperative Extension Service,” 396-7.

Waymer: "We had a good program . . ."

Pough: "[a] beautiful program, it was strictly black.."

Waymer: "We were helping people, it wasn't just on paper . . ."

Pough: "we actually did the work . . ."

Waymer "and we wanted to show it!"¹⁶¹

A Transformed People: The Meaning of Black Extension Work

What is significant is that for over fifty years, black extension agents and their clients, like the larger African American community, struggled to make the most of what they had. They learned from their interactions with mainstream society to demand their due not merely by non-violent civil disobedience, but by learning about institutional organization and employing it in their own behalf. What the agents and their clients did are in Aldon Morris' model of "resource mobilization." In this model, "formal and informal" local organizations and local leaders are crucial to generating collective action. Organizational skills are more important than long-held grievances to the development of such movements. Such protests are "rational . . . grow[ing] out of preexisting social structures and political processes."

The resource mobilization model holds that third parties can have an important effect in social protest. One version of the theory says that dominated groups rarely possess the skills and resources needed for social protest and are unable to organize and sustain movements by themselves unless they receive assistance from outside elites. . . . Outside elites include governmental leaders, courts, affluent liberals, and philanthropic foundations. It is these groups, the theory holds, that are able to provide the dominated with the necessary skills and resources required for protest.¹⁶²

Morris applied this model to urban grassroots process led by the black under classes.

However, it is equally applicable to this analysis of the development of a protest tradition

¹⁶¹Odum, Pough, Waymer interview, pp. 39-40; "Farm Family and Community Leaders Honored," *Palmetto Education Association Journal* volume XII, no. 5 (January 1962): 21.

¹⁶²Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 279-280.

among black farmers. Black extension agents filled the role of outside elites, providing rural blacks with an understanding of organizational structure through clubs and councils. The agents also provided rural blacks with resources by training them to farm more profitably and by assisting in gaining access to government resources. Although the historical record suggests that black agents and clients continued to experience discrimination in extension services—and the continued discrimination against black farmers into the 1990s is well known—the revolution came in the transformation of the mind. As Marian Paul remarked in 1955, progress is measured “not ‘where we are,’ but rather ‘from whence we came.’”¹⁶³ Being black no longer meant accepting the “crumbs” of whites. Extension programs had imbued blacks with skills of organization that would serve both agents and clients in a struggle for real equality between African Americans and the United States Department of Agriculture that had just begun.

¹⁶³Paul, “Annual Narrative Report. Home Demonstration Work Among Negroes, 1955,” 24.

CONCLUSION

The history of the extension service serves as a microcosm of the reality of the segregated South. It reveals that segregation institutions took root in the South not because of federal acquiescence but because of conscious political and, more importantly, federal bureaucratic collaboration. Extension work among blacks is an increasingly studied field but few are aware of its broader significance in African American history. The interest that black activist groups like the NAACP and blacks outside had in the well-being of the program suggests we need to re-envision the role of farm life in African American history. Indeed black Americans continued to embrace the idea of yeoman independence. Migration was not necessarily an escape from the farm but whites.

I have demonstrated that the study of extension works for blacks using a state-level approach fails to document the active role the federal government played in creating a universe of discrimination that limited the growth of the black extension service. Non-southern white politicians in Congress were willing to rely on the expressed promises of their southern white colleagues that justice would be done to the extension service. Safeguards were included in the Smith-Lever Act to protect blacks' rights to extension services. However, they vested these powers in the executive branch of government, which had to be far more concerned about the how the withholding of federal funds would play out in the South than any non-southern Congressman would.

After Democratic Secretary of Agriculture, David Houston forced the creation of an extension service in the South—perhaps to persuade non-southern Democrats and the

national Republicans that southern states would not be allowed to subvert the Smith-Lever Act where blacks' interests were concerned, no Secretary of Agriculture between he and Orville Freeman, Kennedy's and Johnson's Secretary of Agriculture, took strong measures against the blatant inequality blacks experienced in extension employment and delivery of services. These Secretaries were not unaware of the complaints regarding the treatment of agents which was reported by activist groups and by ordinary black citizens. They chose to rely on the "expert" opinion of the white men who served in the federal extension bureaucracy for decades and whose conclusions likely correlated with their own prejudices. These federal officials had developed strong collegial relationships with southern extension directors. Sometimes the federal officials were native southerners who possessed the racial biases of the regions.

The close working relationships between federal and state extension bureaucracies, certainly gave the federal officials great confidence in the way southern services operated. When complaints arose, federal extension officials served as an organ for southern extension ideology rather than an impartial role. Federal extension bureaucrats insisted that much was being done for blacks, yet they never considered the justice of equity.

Blacks who were employed in the segregated institutions, did what black Americans have always done—"make a way out of no way." While they were not satisfied with what they got, they made the best of resources they had, and asked for more. They proved their utility to both whites and to the black masses who they encouraged to do the same.

Like many of the public institutions created for and manned by blacks during the age of Jim Crow the black extension service no longer exists. Yet this project ended on a note of celebration. Every scholar who has written on this subject—including myself—has presented the oppressive side of extension work for both black agents and clients. However, what I find phenomenal that many of these agents do not dwell on the inequity but rather on the pride in what they accomplished. This was the story the three home agents I interviewed told me, and it is this new aspect of the story that I felt compelled to add as a corrective to the literature through a social history aspect. The institutional history is important. But by reflecting solely on the institutional aspect, or adopting a materialist critique of success, much is missed in the history of black extension work. Consequently, this work is a celebration of a segregated institution.

This history raises questions that, perhaps, African American scholarship should not engage. “What was the social cost of integration? Was it worth it to the black community?” The simple answer to these questions should be “yes.” Clearly at 1970, that is the “right” answer. However, we have knowledge of the post-script. From it, we know that the number of black extension workers decreased and black clients received less services. [Indeed, to this day, black farmers are losing ground every day even as they protest the inequity of the USDA in making farm loans.] South Carolina State University lost its role in extension work until the early 1980s when Clemson University and South Carolina State University entered an collaborative arrangement for an “1890” program that offered extension services to low-income people. However, not even that program

can replace the visible cadre of black public professionals of the 1960s. What, then, is the meaning of this story?

At African American funerals, ministers typically console the family by telling them that their loved one is not gone but has made a transition to another place. That concept offers us a model for thinking about black extension work. Indeed, material advancement, I believe, was not the most important aspect of black extension work. Its most important product was the people it made. Chapter 8 offers a few examples of persons who used what they learned in black extension programs to succeed in the “mainstream.” There are countless others who are not included here. The lessons and aspirations of the black extension program became part of the lives of many Afro-South Carolinians. It still lives, not merely on the farm, but in community-building, and in the lives of professional people for whom black agents were role models. Black extension work is no longer an active force in historical memory, but it certainly has a long “half-life.” To borrow from the preachers: black extension work did not die; it made a transition.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Table 4: Employees of the South Carolina Extension Service, 1930-1949

Year	State-Level Supervisors				State-Level Specialists and Club Agents				County Agents		Assistant County Agents		Home Agents		Assistant Home Agents	
	Men		Women		Men		Women									
	w	N	w	N	w	N	w	N	w	N	w	N	w	N	w	N
1930	5	1	NA ¹	1	NA	0	NA	0	NA	10	NA	0	NA	8	NA	0
1931	NA	1	NA	1	NA	0	NA	0	NA	NA	NA	0	NA	8	NA	0
1932	5	1	4	1	23	0	5	0	46	12	5	0	46	7	1	0
1933	NA	1	NA	1	NA	0	NA	0	NA	NA	NA	0	NA	7	NA	46 ²
1934	NA	1	4	1	NA	0	6	0	NA	NA	NA	0	46	11	1	0
1935	5	1	5	1	22	0	7	0	46	15	15	14 ³	46	13	4	0
1936	6	1	5	1	23	0	7	0	46	17	15	0	46	13	3	0
1937	4	1	5	1	29	0	7	0	46	17	15	0	46	14	3	0
1938	5	1	5	1 ⁴	35	0	7	0	46	18	21	0	46	15	3	0
1939	6	1	5	1	36	0	7	0	46	19	20	0	46	15	4	0
1940	5	1	5	1	35	0	7	0	46	19	20	0	46	16	7	0
1941	6	1	5	1	40	0	7	0	46 ⁵	19	19 ⁶	0	46	16	8	0
1942	5	1	5	1	32	0	7	0	46	19	23	0	46	16	7	0
1943	5	1	5	1	32	0	7	0	46	19	18	0	46	16	8	0
1944	5	2	5	1	34	0	8	1	46	19 ⁶	14 ⁷	0	46	14 ⁸	11	0
1945	11 ⁹	2	5	1	32	0	8 ¹⁰	1	46	27	20 ¹¹	10 ¹²	46	20	13	13 ¹²

Table 4: Employees of the South Carolina Extension Service, 1930-1949

¹"NA" indicates that data is not available. There are gaps in both the published and primary source reports for these years.

²Forty-six Negro women were employed as emergency food workers.

³These workers were listed in extension reports but were assistants in the soil conservation service.

⁴After 1937 Marian Paul became a full-time administrator and not longer did county demonstration work.

⁵Two white county agents and an assistant county agent went on military leave on 30 November, 1941.

⁶There were also 10 emergency agents.

⁷There were also 6 war food emergency workers.

⁸There were also 21 war food emergency workers.

⁹Includes six persons who worked specifically with farm labor.

¹⁰Includes a woman who was an assistant editor of publications in Clemson.

¹¹There were an additional 18 agents who dealt with the problem of farm labor.

¹²These were war food workers.

Year	State-Level Supervisors				State-Level Specialists and Club Agents				County Agents		Assistant County Agents		Home Agents		Assistant Home Agents	
	Men		Women		Men		Women				w	N	w	N	w	N
	w	N	w	N	w	N	w	N								
1947	6	2	6	2 ¹³	51	0	8	0	46	29	44	0	46	27	28	0
1948	5	2 ¹³	5	2 ¹³	50	1 ¹⁴	11 ¹⁰	0	46	30	21	0	46	28	31	0
1949	5	2 ¹³	5	2 ¹³	55	1 ¹³	12 ¹⁰	0	46	31	50	0	46	29	32 ¹⁴	0

Table 4: Employees of the South Carolina Extension Service, 1930-1949

¹³One man served as agricultural agent-at-large.

¹⁴Includes an assistant-at-large.

APPENDIX B

Table 5: Employees of the South Carolina Extension Service, 1950-1969

Year	State-Level Supervisors					State-Level Specialists and Club Agents					County Agents		Assistant/ Associate County Agents		Home Agents		Assistant/ Associate Home Agents	
	Men		Women			Men		Women					w	N			w	N
	w	N	w	N		w	N	w	N		w	N	w	N	w	N		
1950	5	2	4	2	54 ¹	1 ¹	8	0	46	30	46	1	46	28	28	0		
1951	5	2	4	2	58	11	9	0	46	28	45	2	46	29	28	0		
1952	5	2	4	2	59	11	10	0	46	29	41	2	46	29	28	0		
1953	5	2	4	2	49	11	9	0	46	29	45	2	46	30	26	1		
1954	5	2	4	3	50	11	9	0	46	30	64	3	46	30	32	2		
1955	5	2	4	3	46	1 ¹	9	0	46	31	68	6	46	33	34	4		
1956	5	1	4	2	50	2 ¹	9	1	46	33	81	6	46	33	29	5		
1957	5	1	4	2	45	2 ¹	9	1	46	33	80	8	46	33	35	6		
1958	5	1	4	2	46	2 ¹	9	1	46	33	83	7	46	33	32	6		
1959	5	1	4	2	46	2 ¹	9	1	46	33	78	5	46	33	32	4		
1960	5	1	4	1	NA	2 ¹	10	1	46	34	79	6	46	36	30	3		
1961	5	1	4	1	44	1 ²	10	1	46	33	73	3	46	33	25	0		
1962 ³	5	1	4	1	49	2 ¹	10	1	46	0	68	35	46	0	30	27		
1963	5	1	4	1	52	2 ¹	10	1	46	0	72	34	45	0	33	30		
1964	5	1	4	1	47	1 ⁴	10	1	46	0	58	37	45	0	34	28		
1965	6	0 ⁵	4	1	58	2 ¹	9	1	46	0	55	35	46	0	31	32		
1966	6	1	4	1	58	2 ¹	10	1	46	0	52	32	46	0	33	31		
1967	6	1 ⁶	3	0	64	2 ¹	10	1	46	0	56	28	44	0	32	31		
1968	7	5	4	0	67	2 ¹	8	0	46	0	60	27	41	0	25	30		
1969	9	1	5	0	70	0	11	0	46	0	54	27	42	1	26	23		

Table 5: Employees of the South Carolina Extension Service, 1950 to 1969

¹Includes agricultural agents-at-large

²G. W. Dean county agent-at-large, later referred to as "area agent," is not mentioned in this report.

³Agents were not listed by race after 1961. These estimates are based on following the names of agents as they were filtered into new titles and addition names from other sources such as supporting documents produced by agents for the Penn Center report.

⁴G. W. Dean is listed as an Associate Agent in Orangeburg County.

⁵There is no mention of a black supervisors in this report.

⁶Bennie L. Cunningham is listed as "Assistant to the Director."

APPENDIX C

Agents of the South Carolina Negro Extension Service

Negro Home Demonstration Agents

Adams, Louise M. K.
Alston, Bertha G.
Anderson, Erma
Anthony, L. Bragg
Archey, Fannie E.
Arnold, Delphena Wilkerson
Backus, Ethel M. (3)
Barnwell, Helen T.
Black, Mae A.
Blakeman, Marie A. B.
Bonds, Dorthula
Bowman, Queen E.
Boykin, Susie L. Bivens
Brandyburg, Mayme S.
Brooks, McPhine J.
Brown, Bernice House
Brown, Fannie M.
Brown, Lillian W.
Butler, Annie M. J.
Calhoun, Elizabeth F.
Campbell, Yvonne B.
Chaplin, Viola
Chisholm, Gwendolyn
Clagett, Cammie Fludd
Cornwell, Hattie M.
Counts, Daisy F.
Cox, Bernice L.
Crosby, Lillie B.
Daniels, Dora E. Boston
Daniels, Gladys T.
Daniels, Sara Z.
Davis, Deloris E. R.
Dauphiney, Doris
DeVeaux, Albertha
Devore, Alma
Dickson, Julia E.
Dorman, Zella I. B.
DuPree, Edna K.
English, Erbanna
Esau, Lillian L.
Evans, Margaret E.
Fitzgerald, Mattie M.
Forte, Hattie B. W.

Negro Agricultural Extension Agents

Adams, Benjamin S.
Amaker, J. A.
Anderson, R. W.
Bacote, Roscoe C.
Barnwell, Benjamin
Bellinger, Robert E.
Belton, David G., Jr.
Benbow, Quincy
Blanton, J. E.
Blassengate, Herbert A.
Bowen, M. B.
Bowman, J. G., Jr.
Bronson, Charlie Jr.
Brown, C. A.
Brown, C. O.
Bunch, W. C.
Cooper, David P.
Craig, William H.
Croker, J. A.
Cunningham, Bennie L.
Daniels Harry E.
Daniels, G. W.
Dean, E. D.
Dean, G. W.
Dickson, J. E.
Disher, Spencer C.
Dowdy, Ernest
Dowdy, George T.
Drayton, David H.
Foster, Lucius C.
Frederick, Eugene
Garrett, F. D.
Gerald, Hugene
Gill, B. J.
Gresham, J. A.
Harrison, W. B.
Hammond, T. A.
Hill, Joseph
Hilyard, W. H.
Holcomb, W. M.
Jackson, M. B.
James, Hinton A.
Jenkins, E. D.

Negro Home Demonstration Agents

Funderburk, Sara, R. M.
Gadson, Rosa G.
Gandy, Minnie E.
Gibbs, Frankie B.
Gist, Bessie C.
Goudlock, Gussie L. M
Hamilton, Sicily
Harrison, Pauline
Hardy, Madge W.
Harvey, Della
Haywood, Barbara G.
Heath, Queenie Smith
Henderson, Gladys S. S.
Hicks, Marvinna K.
Holeman, Daisy B.
Howard, Janie Rucker
Howard, Mabel K.
Hughes, Nannie M.
Hunter, Anna Dickson
Hurley, Gladys
Hurley, Mildred S.
Ingram, Naomi J.
Jamerson, Lillie M.
Jackson, Christine O.
Jackson, Lioneal Harrison
Jenkins, Annie B.
Jeter, Laura J. Maney Whitney
Johnson, Annie J.
Johnson, Cecile
Johnson, Gertrude
Johnson, Wilhemina P.
Jones, Connie N.
Jones, Margarette
Kenner, Nettie V.
King, Angie L.
Kynard, Nancy O.
Lancaster, Janie
Lawrence, Eva G.
Leslie, Beatrice
Limehouse Lillie J.
Littlejohn, Leota Sherard
Lowery, Hattie P.
McCants, Bernice

Negro Agricultural Extension Agents

Johnson, Calvin
Johnson, Elliot T. J.
Johnson, Leon
Johnson, W. P.
Johnson, Waymon Kinder, A. J.
Limehouse, George Jr.
McGraw, I. E.
McIntosh, B. T.
Maloney, Jason
Maloney, R. V.
Marshall, J. D.
Marshall, R. A.
Marshall, S. B.
Middleton, E. M.
Miller, B. T.
Miller, Harvey C.
Mitchell, J. J.
Mott, John, Jr.
Nesbitt, J. W.
Page, J. E.
Pasley, H. B.
Person, H. S.
Powell, J. P.
Riley, H. W.
Robinson, J. M.
Salley, C. P.
Sanders, Arthur
Seabrook, P. T.
Shields, T. E.
Sitton, M. M.
Smith, Q. J.
Smith, R. C., Jr.
Smith, R. N.
Spruill, J. A.
Stanfield, Joseph J.
Stewart, G. W.
Sweeney, John D.
Thomas, V. B.
Thompson, William
Walker, Larkin V.
Ward, L. M.
Warren, W. J.
Waymer, David B.

Negro Home Demonstration Agents

McCollom, Rhoden
McDonald, Shirley
McDuffie, Goldie E.
McDuffie, Sara Ruth
McGraw, Toynetta
McMillan, Leona B. (1)
Miles, Nettie
Mance, Williet Bowers
Miller, Johnie
Mills, Cornelia Walker Mitchell,
Catherine G.
Mitchell, Maude D.
Moore, Bessie K.
Mouzon, Jennie M.M.
Mungin, Leona W. Bing (1)
Nelson, Helen C. Walker
Nowlin, Larkie A.
Odom, Rosa Reed
Osborne, Alice G.
Overstreet, Mattie E.
Patterson, Shirley
Paul, Marian Baxter
Perry, Hallie Q. Bacote
Platt, Willie V. T.
Poinsette, Georgia E.
Porter, Faynetta L.
Pratt, Mary L.
Price, Ivora P.
Primus, Hestella V. Broadwater
Pough, Altamese B.
Reed, Deloris
Reid, Martha
Rembert, Alice V.
Risher, Iola D.
Rogers, Shirley A. H.
Rountree, Amanda
Sanders, Gertrude (2)
Sanders, Marion L.
Sanders, Willie G. (2)
Saunders, Lillian G.
Sawyer, Bertha B.
Scott, Hazel P.
Shakesnider, Bette H.
Shannon, Jessie J.

Negro Agricultural Extension Agents

Webber, Paul R.
Wells, Amos, Jr.
Westbrooks, Julius
Williams, A. F.
Williams, E. N.
Wilson, Jesse J.
Wilson, C. N.
Woodward, H. W.
Wright, Benjamin C.
Young, John W.

—End Negro Agricultural Agents—

Negro Home Demonstration Agents

Shelton, Mabel
Shuler, Naomie V.
Simpson, Dollis E.
Simpson, Willie B.
Sims, Florence R.
Sloan, Johnnie G.
Smiley, Ethel B. (3)
Smith, Coy
Smith, Jennie M.
Smith, Merle
Smith, Susie H.
Spann, Annabella E.
Spigner, Thelma
Stevens, Mamie I. A.
Summers, Blanche S.
Taggart, Ethel (3)
Tanner, Leila
Taylor, Annie R.
Thomas, Doris
Thomas, Frances P.
Thompson, Juliette M.
Thompson, Rebecca J.
Thompson, Susie G.

Negro Home Demonstration Agents

Thompson, Willie M.
Toatley, Juanita W.
Washington, Gloria J.
Washington, Willie Mabel Price
Watson, Adell W.
Watson, Marian M.
Waymer, Sara K. Aiken
Wesley, Francena E.
Whittington, Virginia
Williams, Della W.
Williams, Elouise
Williams, Jean McK.
Williams, Ophelia C.
Williford, Cynthia Williams
Wilson, Johnsie R.
Wilson, Phinetha H. Salley
Wilson, Virginia R.
Wimberly, Annie R.
Wimberly, Effie J. Henderson
Wright, J. Alfreda
Wright, Mary E.
Young, Cecelie Mc.

Source: List of agents in Series 65 Agricultural Business Office. Personnel, Clemson University Libraries, Strom Thurmond Institute. This list was compiled by the archivist. Additional names have from my own research in extension records. Reports for the World War II years do not include lists of agents. I have identified home demonstration agents by family name and married name when the agent married during her employment. I have identified three instances in which home demonstration agents may have listed an agent twice.

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