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# Progress is Painful: Race Relations and Education in Chicago Before The Great Migration

Matthew D. Bernstein

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**PROGRESS IS PAINFUL:  
RACE RELATIONS AND EDUCATION IN CHICAGO  
BEFORE THE GREAT MIGRATION**

**BY**

**MATTHEW D. BERNSTEIN**

**B.A. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**

**THESIS**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Master of Arts  
History**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**December, 2007**

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## DEDICATION

For my mom and dad, and the diggers everywhere.

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To all, I say, L'Chaim!

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**ABSTRACT OF THESIS**

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**By**

**Matthew D. Bernstein**

**B.A., Religion/History, Columbia University, 2001**

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**Abstract**

This thesis is the first work focused directly on race relations and education in Chicago before the Great Migration. Proceeding from the dearth of sources covering black Chicago before the First World War era, I argue three main points. First, I disagree with historians who assert that because African-Americans received certain educational opportunities, this period represented a kind of racial golden age. Only when compared to the South and to the post-World War I period in Chicago, I assert, does the era before 1914 seem racially egalitarian. While members of the black community before the Great Migration were able to attend school with whites and thus were not subjected to the targeted and systematic deprivations that legislated segregation mandated, on an individual basis, black Chicagoans faced second-class citizenship each and every day. Second, I argue that despite the lack of extant primary sources recounting the full extent of segregation during this period, there is evidence that national and regional trends formed race relations in Chicago long before the post-Great War migration. In business, housing, and education, strictures were in place by the end of the Gilded Age that would govern social relations to World War II and after. Third, in the absence of official northern court-imposed Jim Crow laws (or *de jure* segregation), white Chicagoans turned to informal but organized *de facto* discrimination to usher in a separation of the races before the turn of the century. Running throughout these arguments is the suggestion that black Chicagoans were active in proportions far beyond their numbers in fighting for their rights as United States, Illinois, and Chicago citizens. In this thesis, I chart the increasing incidence of racial violence in the schools as the black community in Chicago

expanded, but I also argue that levels of discrimination were not directly tied to the size of the population. Thus, Chicago was a place of opportunity and restriction for black Americans by the early twentieth century, a city where progress did not come without profound struggle.

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## Introduction

The Great Migration—the post-World War I movement of more than a million southern African-Americans to the urban North—has come to define the path of race relations in modern Chicago. But seldom have historians noted that African-Americans played a central role in Chicago long before the Great War began in 1914. Nonetheless, from the city’s founding in the eighteenth century by the black Haitian Jean Baptiste Point DuSable, through the Civil War and into the Great Migration era, the black community formed an integral part of the Second City. Proceeding from the dearth of sources covering black Chicago before the First World War era, my goal with this thesis is to investigate the shape of race relations in Chicago before the Great Migration.<sup>1</sup>

Central to the fight for racial equality was the right to equal schooling. Both before and after the Civil War, African-Americans defined access to education as the key to economic, social, and political mobility in the United States.<sup>2</sup> An interracial 1905 survey of southern residents found overwhelming agreement that the “Negro man or woman was the better for education and that education contributes to the advancement of people almost without saying.”<sup>3</sup> Looking to the historic importance southern African-Americans placed on access to adequate schools and the struggles they faced to gain that access, my research investigates how similar battles played out in a northern city. To what extent did schools in pre-Great Migration Chicago provide equal access for black

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<sup>1</sup> The unfortunate terms “black” and “white” are of course inaccurate descriptors of skin color and are used here in a broad sense. They also reflect, however unfortunately, the binary notion of race in use since before the founding of the United States.

<sup>2</sup> Howard Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South: 1865-1890* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1978), 156.

<sup>3</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean*, March 6, 1905, from Illinois Writers Project, “The Negro in Illinois,” Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, Carter G. Woodson Regional Library [hereafter: IWP], Box 12, Folder 15.

students in comparison with their peers? How did white Chicago react to the demands of the gradual but steady influx of African-Americans after the Civil War and into the twentieth century? How did national race relations interact with conditions on the ground in Chicago? In what ways did all of these factors change over time?

I have divided the chapters here chronologically, with a focus on the years between 1890 and 1914. In Chapters One and Two—which cover, respectively, 1833 to 1865, and 1865 to 1890—I present the local, regional, and national context necessary for understanding the more volatile events of the early twentieth century. Chapter Three examines the volatile period from 1890 to 1914, and centers on racial conflict in schools, housing segregation, and the responses of the black community to encroaching segregation. My conclusion argues for the re-definition of the Great Migration and suggests areas where future research is necessary.

One reason there has been so little scholarship on the black community before the Great Migration is a severe shortage of sources. It is well known that the 1890 Federal Census was almost entirely burned, for example, but also lost are all but a few copies of one of the most important repositories for information on African-Americans in the Gilded Age: F.W. Barnett's newspaper the *Conservator*. As mainstream Chicago seemed to be in a constant state of denial that there were any blacks living there prior to around 1900, few sources covering this time (both primary and secondary) mentioned race relations.<sup>4</sup> And despite the important work of St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton (the pioneering *Black Metropolis*) and Bessie Louise Pierce (the seminal, three-volume

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<sup>4</sup> Chief among the primary documents that omit racial statistics are the Chicago school censuses, which for the most part failed to adequately track schools by racial enrollment. The inconsistency of the reports, directories, and proceedings published by the Chicago Board of Education in this era also make life difficult for researchers.

*History of Chicago*), until 2005 no single monograph existed that focused entirely on the black communities in Chicago between the Civil War and World War I.<sup>5</sup>

The majority of sources covering pre-WWI Chicago, in fact, do not mention black communities at all. Of those that do, most simply note that the black community at this time was “small,” and then move on to the Great Migration era.<sup>6</sup> Historians who make an effort to include urban northern African-Americans in their histories of late nineteenth and early twentieth century often depict them as either passive or, at best, reactive—that is, as victims of their time or as historical actors who opposed the efforts to impede their progress but who had little power to create proactive change. Even scholars who have made indispensable contributions to African-American social history in general have downplayed black contributions to the pre-WWI urban North. C. Vann Woodward, for instance, wrote in his 1954 book *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* that while the complacency of white northern politicians led to the desecration of black rights at the end of Reconstruction, the “resigned compliance of the Negro” also contributed to the redemption of southern racist regimes and to the onset of Jim Crow segregation in both North and South beginning around 1890.<sup>7</sup> Writing twenty-five years later, Eric Foner updated Woodward’s work in his seminal study, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. Foner wrote that in the North, “racial Reconstruction proved less far-reaching than in the South,” but he also located one reason for this apparent irony in an incoherent strategy among northern black politicians for addressing the economic

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<sup>5</sup> The 2005 book is Christopher Robert Reed, *Black Chicago's First Century: 1833-1900*, Vol. 1 (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Two examples are Robin L. Einhorn, *Property Rules: Political Economy in Chicago, 1833-1872* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) and Karen Sawislak, *Smoldering City: Chicagoans and the Great Fire, 1871-1874* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 7-8.

situation of their constituents. “Perhaps this was inevitable,” Foner wrote, “for a group representing barely two percent of the North’s population.”<sup>8</sup>

In black Chicago, though, magnitude did not always equal importance. As Michael Klarman pointed out in his exhaustive article on what he called the “Plessy Era,” the black community’s two percent that Foner downplayed potentially represented the tipping point in an era of extremely tight elections. An attack on a black Republican club on the eve of the 1880 presidential election, meant to intimidate the club’s members out of voting, dramatically illustrated the value of the black vote.<sup>9</sup> And as Richard R. Wright wrote in a 1906 article, while Chicago’s black population represented a small percentage of the city’s inhabitants as a whole, by the twentieth century Chicago was fast becoming a central black metropolis. It had risen from its position before the Civil War as “one of the smallest cities, so far as Negro population is concerned,” to twelfth place among U.S. cities in 1906, with more African-Americans than Nashville, Tennessee; Savannah, Georgia; and Norfolk, Virginia. Between 1880 and 1890, in fact, Chicago saw the highest rate of African-American immigration of any city in the nation (at 120%) and only New York witnessed more black immigration between 1890 and 1900 (see Table D).<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, the later contributions of the African-American community during and after the Great Migration and the meteoric boom of Chicago as a whole in the Gilded Age seem to have obscured the significant changes occurring in black Chicago before the twentieth century. For example, although the size of the black community tripled

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<sup>8</sup> Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), 204-5.

<sup>9</sup> Michael J. Klarman, “The Plessy Era,” *The Supreme Court Review* 1998 (1998), 318; *Chicago Inter Ocean*, October 12, 1880, and *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct 12, 1880, 2. The attack is described in more detail below.

<sup>10</sup> Richard R. Wright, Jr., “The Negro in Chicago,” *Southern Workman* 35 (October 1906): 554.

between 1880 and 1890, from 5,000 strong to 15,000, and in another decade doubled again to over 30,000, in the same period Chicago as a whole gained more than *one million* people. So it seems the breakneck ascension of the city itself has stolen the spotlight from the more subtle developments taking place in the African-American community. Nonetheless, by the time Richard Wright published his findings, the Great Migration was already well underway; between 1890 and 1910, the black population in Chicago increased 209 percent, while the non-black population rose a “mere” 97 percent.<sup>11</sup> The educational experiences of Chicago’s African-Americans in this period were part and parcel of this phenomenal growth spurt.

**Table I. Comparison of the Growth of Fifteen Major Black Cities, 1880-1900<sup>12</sup>**

City	Number of African-Americans in Chicago, 1880	Number of African-Americans in Chicago, 1890	Percent Increase from 1880	Number of African-Americans in Chicago, 1900	Percent Increase from 1890
Washington, D.C.	59,596	75,572	26.8%	86,702	14.7%
Baltimore, MD	53,716	67,104	24.9%	79,258	18.1%
New Orleans, LA	57,617	64,491	11.9%	77,714	20.5%
Philadelphia, PA	31,699	39,371	24.2%	62,613	59.0%
New York, NY*	19,663	23,601	20.0%	60,666	157.0%
Memphis, TN	14,896	28,706	92.7%	49,910	73.9%
Louisville, KY	20,905	28,651	37.1%	39,139	36.6%
Atlanta, GA	16,330	28,098	72.1%	35,727	27.2%
St. Louis, MO	22,256	26,865	20.7%	35,516	32.2%
Richmond, VA	27,832	32,330	16.2%	32,230	-0.3%
Charleston, SC	27,276	30,970	13.5%	31,522	1.8%
<b>Chicago, IL</b>	<b>6,480</b>	<b>14,271</b>	<b>120.2%</b>	<b>30,150</b>	<b>111.3%</b>
Nashville, TN	16,337	29,382	79.8%	30,044	2.3%
Savannah, GA	15,654	22,963	46.7%	28,090	22.3%
Norfolk, VA	10,068	16,244	61.3%	20,230	24.5%

\*includes Greater New York

<sup>11</sup> Estelle Hill Scott, *Occupational Changes Among Negroes in Chicago, 1890-1930* (Chicago: Work Projects Administration, 1939), 19.

<sup>12</sup> Adapted from Richard R. Wright, Jr., "The Negro in Chicago," *Southern Workman* 35 (October 1906): 554.

As the sporadic studies covering this period suggest, the experiences of the average black Chicagoan vis-à-vis schooling could exist at a number of points on a diverse spectrum between 1833 and 1914. Most historians, however, have compared pre-Great Migration Chicago to both the Jim Crow South and to ghetto formation in Chicago after World War I, and thus have found reason to be upbeat. Philip T. K. Daniel, for instance, wrote that “inadequate records notwithstanding, it can be safely stated that prior to Southern migration, blacks were in such low numbers in the high schools that overt segregation was unnecessary. Although some discrimination existed, those black children born in the city were able to go to school nine months out of the year and therefore compared favorably to their white counterparts.”<sup>13</sup> Daniel located the beginning of the downward spiral in black schooling at 1918, when blacks first constituted a majority at Wendell Phillips High. Michael Homel suggested an earlier date for the end of this open period, arguing that “race relations in Chicago during the three decades following the Civil War were relatively tranquil. Negroes living in the city in these years fondly reported integration in schools and housing and substantial interracial friendship.”<sup>14</sup> Homel used 1910 as the point when conditions began to get worse, even while acknowledging disputes prior to that date. Because “the community tended to regard tiffs involving whites and blacks in exclusively racial terms,” however, Homel

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<sup>13</sup> Philip T. K. Daniel, "A History of the Segregation-Discrimination Dilemma: The Chicago Experience," *Phylon* 41, no. 2 (1980): 131. Perhaps Daniel was merely playing it safe, for by 1919—the year of a massively violent race riot in Chicago—there was no question that black life in Chicago had become extremely (and documentably) difficult.

<sup>14</sup> Homel’s evidence for this statement appears circumstantial. He cites a man interviewed in 1939 about his experiences in Chicago schools in the 1880s. “I was never treated any different from any of the other people in the class... Things were a little different then from what they seem to be now,” the man said. This singular example hardly validates Homel’s assessments regarding interracial harmony (and is reminiscent of C. Vann Woodward’s optimistic statements about the history of black/white relationships in the pre-Reconstruction South). See Michael W. Homel, "Negroes in the Chicago Public Schools, 1910-1941," (PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1972), 9.

downplayed the severity of these incidents.<sup>15</sup> While I am deeply indebted to both of these scholars for their invaluable contributions to the field, I disagree with the positive light each has cast on the period before 1910. Rather, I want to advance three main points in this thesis.

First, regardless of what year one ascribes as the origin of the downward slope toward segregation, the existence of any golden or “tranquil” era of race relations in Chicago is entirely an illusion. Conditions certainly worsened after 1900, but for too long a comparative perspective with the South, a lack of viable sources, and the nostalgic statements of upper-class blacks (who constituted the bulk of the extant source data), obscured darker underpinnings. One does not need to apply modern standards to the conditions of a century ago to conclude that black life in the period under examination was far from equal or free. Certainly when compared to the almost total segregation of the decades to follow, the period before 1914 appears as a beacon of integration, but the mere attendance of blacks in integrated schools does not necessarily support favorable comparisons with European-Americans. The fact that, as Michael Homel pointed out, almost any incident between blacks and whites was regarded in racial terms is, after all, *itself* an important indicator of racial strife. Nominal integration notwithstanding, I argue that for a significant number of African-Americans, life in pre-Great Migration Chicago meant fighting degradation daily. And had black Americans not stood up for their rights, their educational circumstances could have been even worse.

Second, national and regional trends shaped race relations in Chicago long before the post-Great War migration. No matter how small the black community in Chicago, racial hierarchies always controlled the socioeconomic possibilities available to African-

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<sup>15</sup> Homel, “Negroes,” 11.

Americans. In business, housing, and education, strictures were in place by the end of the Gilded Age that would govern social relations to World War II and after.<sup>16</sup> Michael Klarman has argued that “many white northerners candidly acknowledged that they would have favored segregation had blacks constituted the same percentage of northern state populations as they did of southern,” and Chicago bore out this reasoning: as its small black population grew, whites imposed more and more controls.<sup>17</sup> Yet the creation of racial restrictions was also not directly linked to population increase. In the decade between 1900 and 1910, when levels of discrimination reached new heights, growth of the black population was actually at its *slowest* (see Table II). The nationwide turn toward Jim Crow meant that even as the black migration in Chicago eased, segregation became worse. Thus, national politics often trumped local social interactions in determining the outcomes of racial incidents.

**Table II. Population of Chicago, 1850-1930<sup>18</sup>**

Date	Total Population of Chicago	Black Population of Chicago	Percent Black of City Total	Percent Increase from Previous Decade, Total	Percent Increase from Previous Decade, Black
<b>1850</b>	29,963	323	1.1%		
<b>1860</b>	109,260	955	0.9%	265%	196%
<b>1870</b>	298,977	3,691	1.2%	174%	286%
<b>1880</b>	503,185	6,480	1.3%	68%	76%
<b>1890</b>	1,099,850	14,271	1.3%	119%	120%
<b>1900</b>	1,698,575	30,150	1.8%	54%	111%
<b>1910</b>	2,185,283	44,103	2.0%	29%	46%
<b>1920</b>	2,701,705	109,458	4.1%	24%	148%
<b>1930</b>	3,376,438	233,903	6.9%	25%	114%

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>17</sup> Klarman, *Plessy Era*, 334.

<sup>18</sup> Adapted from US Census Reports, 1850-1930, found in Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 12.

Third, segregation in these early years was not simply “unnecessary,” but difficult to effect. With a relatively small number of African-Americans living across a broad area, it would have cost too much in effort and money to achieve segregated schools. But the idea did have support throughout the era bracketed by the Civil War and World War I. Howard Rabinowitz’s distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination provides a useful theoretical framework here. In Chicago, as soon as *de facto* segregation was possible (both logistically and politically), the process began. And as Rabinowitz showed for the South, in Chicago the continued efforts of African-Americans to improve their political and social conditions could meaningfully be called successful. As Reconstruction crumbled and Jim Crow set in, it became clear that full integration was not an option. The choice black Americans faced was therefore not between integration and segregation, but rather between segregation and total exclusion. Rabinowitz posited that southern racist whites turned to *de jure* discrimination in the 1890s due not only to the withdrawal of northern opposition, but also due to the active and aggressive drive by southern blacks to claim their rights. In other words, if the Redeemers had faced a docile and disorganized black body politic content to work conservatively for the gradual approval of their rights, there would be no reason to exert the considerable effort it took to fight for the legal enshrinement of Jim Crow in the courts.<sup>19</sup>

In Chicago, these themes played out in reverse: whites clung to *de facto* discrimination even after *de jure* rights were increasingly won. With northern state governments largely in Republican hands and the symbols of their ideological and military victory in the Civil War to protect, northerners placed great importance in maintaining a racially inclusive appearance. The passage of state civil rights laws

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<sup>19</sup> Rabinowitz, *Race Relations*, 339.

became more popular in the 1880s, especially in northern states that sought to protect the black vote after the Supreme Court invalidated the national Civil Rights Act in 1883. But absent was a genuine commitment to treating African-Americans as equals, and nowhere was this more clear than in Chicago's schools, even if they were legally segregated only for a brief two-year period during the Civil War. Occasional racial incidents in the schools became more and more common between 1833 and 1914, and by 1919, when a horrific race riot rendered plain the severe racial tensions smoldering beneath the city, it became evident that the black belt would emerge as a segregated world of its own, separate and unequal. Despite an 1874 Illinois law prohibiting racial discrimination in schools, after the 1880s racial incidents and segregation in Chicago's schools became common.<sup>20</sup> As Radical Republican power faded, Reconstruction ended, and the United States Congress turned its back on its black constituents, white racists in Chicago—like their brothers and sisters in the South—increasingly seized the chance to limit the promises of freedom African-Americans saw as inalienable. There was little black leaders could do to combat an intensifying intolerance in a city that, ironically, more and more represented to southern blacks a rising symbol of the unlocked opportunities of the North—the promised land.

This central paradox, which held Chicago as an urban enclave both free and restricted, defined the city during the crucial period between 1890 and 1914, an era that contained not only the roots of the structural systems that made black life successful and the Great Migration viable, but also the origins of the entrenched discrimination, segregation, and racism that inhibited black Chicagoans in nearly every sector. This juxtaposition between Chicago as a land of liberty and as an entrapping and limiting

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<sup>20</sup> For the complete text of the 1874 law see Reed, *Black Chicago*, 457.

ghetto was often manifested in the values of the city's black migrants themselves as they gradually adjusted to the opportunities of the North, altered their sense of what was possible, and fought to augment their civil liberties. Integrated education, long out of reach in the South, was now at least within sight, even if it was not fully at hand. Chicago's role as a central station on the Underground Railroad and its reputation as a place of relative tolerance gave the black metropolis an aura of majesty, and meant that the reversion to amplified segregation in the twentieth century was all the more disappointing. Black Chicago was able to push the envelope but then saw it equally rapidly pushed back in its face. That the small but solid African-American foundation in Chicago in 1914 existed at all was due to the fact that the working-class black community had scraped and clawed to hold it together.

## **Chapter 1: Early History: 1833-1865**

From its very origins, education in Chicago was racially demarcated. In 1835, just two years after Chicago officially became a city, the Illinois legislature passed a special law mandating the election of trustees to oversee the hiring of teachers, assuring that schools would remain free of cost, and ordering that “all white children should be allowed to attend school.”<sup>21</sup> That the word “white” was inserted into this law was less a conscious attempt to exclude blacks from education than it was a prescription for protecting the only people who could reap the benefits of United States citizenship at this time; it was an assumption that was a product of its era, in which slavery was practiced not only in bordering Missouri and Kentucky, but extra-legally in adjoining southern Illinois as well.<sup>22</sup> It was also a state law born of expedience, allowing for both the educational segregation that took hold in places such as Alton, in southern Illinois, and for the more open practices in Chicago, where slavery was never practiced. During a time when African-Americans in the United States, in the infamous words of Roger B. Taney, had “no rights which the white man was bound to respect,” provisions of this sort were hardly radical, even in the North.<sup>23</sup> So it should not seem surprising that few blacks sought to attend school during period between 1833 and 1865, or that those that did faced nearly insurmountable obstacles to a quality education.

Access to schools during this era of American apartheid may have been out of reach, but African-Americans forcefully resisted other kinds of attempts to discriminate against them by acting in vocal, organized groups. As they did in many other parts of the

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<sup>21</sup> Hannah B. Clark, *The Public Schools of Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1897), 12-13.

<sup>22</sup> Reed, *Black Chicago*, 94.

<sup>23</sup> Maureen Harrison and Steve Gilbert, eds., *Great Decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2003), 18.

North, Chicago's black community fiercely objected to the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law—part of the Compromise of 1850 that Illinois' own Stephen A. Douglas had been instrumental in shepherding through Congress. Upon the bill's ratification, African-American citizens immediately organized a Liberty Association, which most of the five hundred black Chicagoans joined, and formed patrols in the city to prevent the capture of any allegedly escaped slave. Notably, the association disavowed violence except as a last measure, but its members were nevertheless able to successfully ward off the first white southern master who came looking for his "property," sending the master back south and the slave he brought with him to safe passage in Canada. On October 21, 1850, the efforts of these Chicagoans came to fruition in a 9 to 2 vote of the city council to denounce the Fugitive Slave Act and prohibit Chicago police from enforcing it—all of this over the objections of the powerful Senator Douglas.<sup>24</sup>

Still, even as a place where many whites took a progressive view of the rights of their black comrades, Chicago's legacy of bestowing civil rights on all its citizens was mixed at best. The city relied on a standard of measure set against the South to secure its reputation as a place friendly to blacks. A fitting example occurred in 1853, when the state legislature passed the infamous Illinois Black Codes, which outlawed any free black from entering the state in an attempt to ensure that the African-American population there would remain small. Notably, representatives from Chicago voted against the bill, yet they also helped pass a law to exclude from the courts the testimony of any black person against a white.<sup>25</sup> These seemingly conflicting provisions epitomized the city's

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<sup>24</sup> Mary J. Herrick, *Chicago's Schools: A Social and Political History* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1971), 401.

<sup>25</sup> Herrick, *Chicago's Schools*, 399-400.

inconsistent stance on racial contact amid a threefold increase in the black population between 1850 and 1860 (see Table II).<sup>26</sup>

In 1855, an Illinois law specified that “persons of color” in the state were to receive what was in essence a refund of the state school taxes they paid. The intent here was clear: the state was attempting to wash its hands of any obligation for educating its African-American citizens, yet was acting in self-congratulatory “good faith” by returning the money. In Chicago, however, neither city law nor custom prohibited black children from attending school, despite the lack of state funds the city received towards educating them.<sup>27</sup> As war loomed with the turmoil surrounding the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the handing down of the Dred Scott decision, Chicagoans, in the apt description of Bessie Pierce, “upon their black brethren, like many other Northerners, showered kindness and intolerance.”<sup>28</sup> This meant a willingness to tolerate the African-Americans already in the city but translated to little more; for the nation’s blacks to demand any “special treatment,” most white northerners saw as haughty. In 1861, Illinois—a state that itself outlawed slavery—was the first in the union to ratify a proposed constitutional amendment prohibiting the United States government from abolishing slavery where it already existed. This idea that simple tolerance towards blacks equaled beneficent treatment would control race relations in Chicago into the Great Migration era.<sup>29</sup>

During the Civil War, violent ethnic and racial conflict flared in Chicago, worsening the educational landscape for African-Americans. Disputes between

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<sup>26</sup> Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 12.

<sup>27</sup> Herrick, *Chicago's Schools*, 400.

<sup>28</sup> Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago*, Vol. 2 (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1937), 12.

<sup>29</sup> Roger D. Bridges, “Equality Deferred: Civil Rights for Illinois Blacks, 1865-1885,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 74 (1981), 83.

Chicago's black dockworkers, who were almost entirely devoted to the Republican Party, and the heavily Democratic Irish, were especially tense. The Irish clung tightly to their position on the bottom rung of the labor ladder and saw blacks as aiming to steal their economic stronghold on the docks.<sup>30</sup> A number of violent incidents erupted in 1862 and 1863. A July 18, 1862 *Chicago Tribune* editorial contained a plea for order, and in an unusually liberal voice, opined that, "there is no where, so far as we are informed, any pretense that the negroes have been guilty of any offense greater than that of having a colored skin," even while it was also careful to claim, "we plead not for the rights of black men only, but for the public peace now needlessly endangered by the lawlessness which bad men threaten."<sup>31</sup> A short while later, the *Tribune* related another incident between laborers under the headline "More of the Negrophobia." The Irish, the article said, "commenced the difficulty by hurling missiles at the negroes, driving them off a pier into a boat."<sup>32</sup> The worst incident in this period of unrest occurred in July 1863, when Irish longshoremen, apparently in another dispute over working rights, launched a riot that left two blacks drowned and scores seriously beaten.<sup>33</sup>

This anti-black sentiment foreshadowed the complicated position black Chicagoans would be forced to negotiate in the twentieth century and spilled over into demands that separate schools for whites and blacks be established in Chicago. In April of 1862, amid Union defeats in the east and fears that newly self-freed slaves would flock to Illinois from the lower Mississippi, Illinois Democrats won control of the mayor's office and the Chicago city council. On June 2, Redmond Sheridan, a Catholic, Irish-

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<sup>30</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, July 23, 1862, 4.

<sup>31</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, August 2, 1862, 1; *Chicago Tribune*, July 18, 1862, 4.

<sup>32</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, April 14, 1863, 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, July 10, 1863, 2.

born Democrat from the tenth ward, proposed legislation that mandated “one or more schools for the instruction of negro and mulatto children, to be kept in a separate building,” and barred blacks from attending schools where whites were present.<sup>34</sup> The proposal quickly gathered support, most influentially from Samuel Snowdon Hayes, the city’s school agent and comptroller. Hayes produced statistics showing that of Chicago’s 1,641 blacks, 1,391 lived in the city’s South Division, and thus argued that the change to segregated schools could be carried out efficiently “without inconvenience, or necessarily depriving the colored children of instruction, which can be given them in a school of their own, situated in the South Division, so as to be accessible to their entire numbers.”<sup>35</sup> Already, the notion that separate facilities could still provide adequate instruction to African-Americans was fully developed.

Hayes’ assessment, however, was only partially correct. In 1862, there were 212 black pupils in the Chicago school system, and all but one were in the elementary grades. More than half (126) were enrolled at the Jones School at the south edge of the business district, with the remainder scattered at nine other schools. Only four schools had no black students at this time.<sup>36</sup> As Robert McCaul points out, Hayes chose to ignore not only that a significant portion of black children lived outside the South Division, but that even those living within this huge area would have a “long and dangerous” walk to get to their new schools.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Michael W. Homel, "Race and Schools in Nineteenth-Century Chicago," *Integrated Education* 12, no. 5 (September-October 1974), 41.

<sup>35</sup> Robert L. McCaul, *The Black Struggle for Public Schooling in Nineteenth-Century Illinois* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 60.

<sup>36</sup> Statistics this paragraph from Homel, “Negroes,” 6.

<sup>37</sup> Citations this paragraph, except where noted, from McCaul, *Black Struggle*, 60-61.

There were at least as many good arguments against separate schools as for them, but it was indicative that Chicago's Republicans—supposedly the friends of African-Americans—barely took a stand against segregation at this crucial moment. Republicans held a twelve-to-three majority over Democrats on the school board, yet they were just as swayed by arguments that separate schools would somehow reduce overcrowding and provide better opportunities for all students. After a period of procedural maneuvering, the board passed the segregation law, and the black school opened on June 15, 1863. “The black cause of nonsegregated schooling had suffered,” McCaul wrote, “because of divisions and defections within white groups and organizations from which the blacks might have logically expected support.”<sup>38</sup> This was neither the first nor the last time African-Americans would witness the failure of white politicians to support truly equal schooling, yet black Chicago could take comfort that segregation was even harder to maintain than to prevent. Just two short years later, the segregated school was closed, a total failure.<sup>39</sup>

The three primary reasons for the school's demise seem to have been the huge disciplinary problems of a population not accustomed to attending school, the resulting high teacher turnover, and the black community's consistent and aggressive protest against the school. Of these, the last deserves the most mention because it contradicts the frequently suggested notion that black Chicago was too small to be able to make an influential dent in the racist forces stacked against it in pre-Great Migration society. On the contrary, the organized actions of a select group of African-American citizens actively campaigning to end the separate school—predominantly through basic civil

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<sup>38</sup> McCaul, *Black Struggle*, 59, 64, 68.

<sup>39</sup> Clark, *Public Schools*, 21-22.

disobedience, letter writing, and mass meetings—demonstrated a concerted civil rights organization.

At the passage of Sheridan's bill, black citizens and parents flocked to the mayor's office and the Board of Education building to voice their displeasure.<sup>40</sup> Many parents also simply ignored the order to withdraw their children from the integrated schools they were already attending. And at a meeting held October 4, 1864 at Quinn's Chapel on the South Side, participants composed a protest to the board's policy by adopting the following ten-part resolution:

"1. Resolved that the superintendent report if there are colored children attending other than colored schools. 2. That this act is a fore-runner to keeping colored children out of all public schools. 3. We consider the act of the Inspector uncharitable and serving only as a brand of degradation of the colored youth. 4. Equal tax should include equal school privileges. 5. It is out of the power of the board to determine what amount of African blood the child possesses. 6. Separate schools encourage prejudice that is difficult to erase. 7. Dispense with colored schools. Admit negroes to public schools. 8. We are recognized citizens by the government fighting for our rights that have been denied. 9. Petition to state legislature to repeal the black laws that deprive the colored man of his equal rights. 10. That the Daily Press be requested to publish the proceedings of this meeting."<sup>41</sup>

Notable for its thoroughness in covering nearly every angle of the segregation issue, the resolution also displays some remarkably modern conceptions about race that the NAACP would draw on nearly a hundred years later in arguing *Brown v. Board of Education*—namely that establishing separate schools for young children creates biases that are irreversible when those children, both black and white, grow up, and that an individual's racial "blood" component is impossible to determine scientifically. At this early date, the black community was already fully equipped to argue, and successfully so,

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<sup>40</sup> Philip T. K. Daniel, "A History of Discrimination Against Black Students in Chicago Secondary Schools," *History of Education Quarterly* 20 (Summer 1980), 149.

<sup>41</sup> *Chicago Times*, October 5, 1864, from IWP Box 14, Folder, 21.

against a logic that *Plessy v. Ferguson* would not legally validate for thirty years, and which *Brown* would not strike down until 1954. As the educational quality of the segregated school continued to falter and the protests continued, the school board incrementally backed away from its plan, first ruling that any child with one-eighth or less “negro blood” could attend the regular schools, and then finally, under continued pressure from black citizens groups, effecting a repeal in 1865.<sup>42</sup>

There was a positive outcome of the brief tenure of the black school, however—the hiring of Chicago’s first black teacher, Mary E. Mann, in 1862. Mann graduated from Dearborn Elementary School in the 1850s and earned a qualifying score for admission to the teaching training, or normal, program, but the board rejected her for admission explicitly on account of her race. By a close margin, however, a Republican bloc of the board, led by John Wentworth, passed a resolution awarding Mann admission to the normal school. Mann thus became the first African-American to attend high school in Chicago, and perhaps in all of Illinois. Just because she was admitted, however, did not mean Mann was accorded equal treatment. Despite being an excellent student who earned an average grade of 97, for example, she was not allowed to sit with her classmates at her graduation ceremonies. Instead, she sat in the audience and John Wentworth, the man who was partly responsible for her attendance, awarded her diploma in the crowd. Mann worked as teacher and principal of the “colored” school for the 1863-1864 school year and enjoyed a stable career afterward.<sup>43</sup> But as a black teacher in a white profession, her career represented more an aberration to the norm than proof of the openness of the Chicago schools.

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<sup>42</sup> Herrick, *Chicago’s Schools*, 53. There was, however, an all-black evening school from 1863 to 1870.

<sup>43</sup> McCaul, *Black Struggle*, 58-59.

As these stories of African-Americans asserting their rights—both individually and collectively—suggest, by the end of the Civil War, Chicago had become an important site for black Americans looking to augment their fortunes. African-Americans nationwide had succeeded in placing the rights of freedpeople on the national agenda of the Republican Party, and optimism for economic and social advancement was high. Partly as a result of its legendary reputation as a stop on the Underground Railroad, the city had already become a draw for men like the tailor and civil rights leader John Jones, who made his fortune catering to an upper-class, white clientele, and who was one of the first black politicians in the city. With the Republicans dominating Congress, the Radical branch of that party championing the black vote, and the city's finances booming, Chicago was seemingly a paradise for anyone willing to brave the smell of slaughterhouses and the crowded streets. For a time, these promises seemed legitimate to people of all colors, but the success of African-Americans like John Jones soon proved more the exception than the rule, and to a victorious North unwilling to endure serious self-examination, change was hard to face. As Chicago became the second city, its black residents rose no further than second class.

## **Chapter 2: Work, Society, and School in the Post-Civil War Era: 1865-1890**

The postwar era in Chicago overflowed with opportunity for people of all races and nationalities, but centuries-old racial hierarchies did not suddenly disappear with the Union victory. Between 1865 and 1890, Chicago's blacks faced stiff competition in their quest for educational and social freedoms, becoming, in the words of St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, "just one more poverty-stricken group competing in a city where economic and political issues were being fought out behind the façade of racial, national, and religious alignments."<sup>44</sup> This chapter explores the connections between national and local politics, and between occupational and school decisions among Chicago's African-Americans in order to link the experience of black Chicagoans in society at large to their educational experiences.

In depicting the Reconstruction era and Gilded Age, historians with a flair for the dramatic have often overlooked the roles African-Americans played in the city, preferring instead to focus on Chicago's awkward growth spurt—and understandably so. This period included labor shortages, two major financial panics, one Great Fire and several "lesser" blazes, the Haymarket affair of 1886, the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, and the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, among other events.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, most of the great cities of the United States up to the twentieth century developed relatively slowly, but Chicago ascended astronomically fast. By 1890, only fifty years after it was founded, it became the second-most populous city after New York, due largely to an extraordinary

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<sup>44</sup> St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis* (New York: Harper & Row, 1945), 45.

<sup>45</sup> Recent examples include Erik Larson's widely read popular history *Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2003) and James Green, *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement, and the Bombing That Divided America* (New York: Pantheon, 2006).

influx of Southern and Eastern European immigrants who flocked to the metropolis in the 1880s. By the end of that decade, an astonishing 78 percent of Chicago's population was foreign born or of foreign parentage.<sup>46</sup> Largely poor and unskilled, many unfamiliar with the customs and language of the United States but bearing the benefit of white skin, these "unclean" masses present an interesting comparative barometer of Chicago's racial climate.

Like African-Americans not far removed from slavery, many of the new immigrants—particularly the Poles and Irish—had known terrible strife. But, as white American working-class men had done earlier in the nineteenth century with their unfortunate resort to blackface, these groups chose not to make the most logical alliance, forming their allegiances on the basis of race rather than class. Competition for jobs was clearly one main reason for the animosity of the Irish toward blacks, for instance, but it was easier for recent immigrants to marginalize African-Americans as "others," as David Roediger argued, than to face the realities of competitive capitalism without this racialized class consciousness.<sup>47</sup> Dominic A. Pacyga showed that Polish immigrants formed a lasting and solid social infrastructure through the Catholic church, worker organizations, and family networks, and reached out beyond their ethnic group to form solidarity with workers of other European groups—but not, notably, with blacks.<sup>48</sup> In documenting the formation of working-class neighborhoods and class consciousness in Chicago, studies of Germans by Helmut Keil and John B. Jentz, and of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans by Gerald William Ropka have revealed similar implications:

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<sup>46</sup> Spear, *Black Chicago*, 4.

<sup>47</sup> David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991).

<sup>48</sup> See Dominic A. Pacyga, *Polish Immigrants and Industrial Chicago: Workers on the South Side, 1880-1922* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1991).

although international immigrants were made to deal with many of the same economic hardships as blacks, none confronted the same color barrier, and all were united in the fact that no matter how foreign they were to Chicago, they were all, when it came down to it, “white.”<sup>49</sup> Thus, under the racial logic of the United States, no matter how ignorant of American culture, society, and politics they may have been, these white immigrants could vote from the moment they set foot inside the United States.

Black Chicagoans, by contrast, were relatively new voters in the 1880s, having gained the ballot only in 1870 with the ratification of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment. For African-Americans, however, the franchise provided some measure of the instant power of their bloc, producing, according to Robert McCaul “a large increase in the dialectical and punishing power blacks already possessed and [giving] them for the first time the crucial rewarding power of the vote. Now they could dangle in front of a candidate’s or a party’s eyes the promise of casting votes one way or another for quid pro quo concessions with the various spheres of community life.”<sup>50</sup> Some black Chicagoans were able to take advantage of their new place in the hotly contested electorate of the Reconstruction era and make inroads in the political sector. In 1876, for example, voters in the second district elected J. W. E. Thomas, an Alabama-born African-American schoolteacher in Chicago, to the Illinois House of Representatives. Thomas had migrated from Mobile in 1870 and after stints as the operator of a segregated school and a grocery store, the (majority white) Second Ward Republican Club elected him to the position of secretary.

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<sup>49</sup> As David Roediger, Noel Ignatiev, and others have shown, however, the Irish’s whiteness was not a foregone conclusion. For European immigrants to Chicago, see also Helmut Keil and John B. Jentz, eds., *German Workers in Chicago: A Documentary History of Working-Class Culture from 1850 to World War I* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Helmut Keil and John B. Jentz, eds., *German Workers in Industrial Chicago, 1850-1910: A Comparative Perspective* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1983); and Gerald William Ropka, *The Evolving Residential Pattern of the Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban Population in the City of Chicago* (New York: Arno Press, 1980).

<sup>50</sup> McCaul, *Black Struggle*, 88.

In a fitting symbol of the decline of American race relations, a group led by Robert Todd Lincoln, son of the Great Emancipator, opposed the nomination, and Thomas had to battle fiercely to secure his place. Despite these obstacles, Thomas was eventually successful, and went on to a thriving career, serving three terms and introducing important civil rights legislation in the 1880s.<sup>51</sup>

Without court support, however, it mattered little that there were a few black representatives who fought for civil rights legislation. As the 1870s became the 1880s, the federal judicial branch, reinforced by Republican backpedaling, retreated from its duty to enforce the will of the legislative.<sup>52</sup> In 1875 the Supreme Court handed down its decision in *United States v. Cruikshank*, overturning the lynching conviction of William J. Cruikshank and limiting the ability of the federal government to protect African-Americans under the Fourteenth Amendment. The decision sent responsibility for ensuring equal protection back to the states, which were not known for their fondness of racial equality under the law. “This left the right to vote in state elections in the grip of terror, at least so far as federal law was concerned,” encapsulated one legal scholar.<sup>53</sup> At this time, most of the “terror” resided in the South, but even if there was no reported lynching in the North before the twentieth century, the import of decisions like *Cruikshank* (and the earlier limitations the Court had placed on the scope of the Fourteenth Amendment in the 1873 Slaughterhouse cases) was not lost on black

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<sup>51</sup> Bridges, “Equality Deferred,” 98, 107.

<sup>52</sup> “Initial Republican ambivalence about black voting,” wrote Benno C. Schmidt, Jr., was “revealed in the fourteenth amendment’s suffrage provision, which was intended to promote (not compel) voting rights for blacks in the South (but not in the North) by reducing the congressional representation of states in proportion to the numbers of adult males barred from the polls.” See Benno C. Schmidt, Jr., “Principle and Prejudice: The Supreme Court and Race in the Progressive Era. Part 3: Black Disfranchisement from the KKK to the Grandfather Clause,” *Columbia Law Review* 82, no. 5. (Jun., 1982), 837.

<sup>53</sup> Schmidt, Jr., *Principle*, 840.

Chicagoans striving to keep civil rights on the platforms of politicians of all stripes.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Chicago was not devoid of racially motivated election violence. On October 10, 1880, white Democrats instigated an attack on a black Republican club on the eve of the 1880 presidential election that resulted in a number of men in the hospital (though it appears all combatants survived). The *Chicago Tribune*, while it doubted that the Democrats had started the trouble, did mention that the white mob attacked the “colored club” in an effort to intimidate the Republicans and keep them from voting the Garfield-Arthur ticket.<sup>55</sup> The Fifteenth Amendment had been made to address exactly these kinds of obstacles to the black franchise, but few in Chicago seemed to take notice. *De facto* discrimination, unburdened by *de jure* oversight, validated the use of realpolitik to remove black challenges to Chicago’s white-controlled power structures.

Even if there were a handful of black politicians committed to the social justice of all Chicagoans at both the city and state levels, there were not enough in the national Congress to guarantee black education. Reconstruction began with the eager anticipation of true and fundamental racial change in the United States. But despite intense support from legislators of both races, the national commitment to education that would have so profoundly affected black Chicago failed. The original vision of the Radical Republicans in advocating for the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments was to instill those legislative acts with deep and serious meaning. Initially, interracial education lay at the heart of this vision. In 1867, Charles Sumner, the Radical Republican from

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<sup>54</sup> That there was no successful lynching in Chicago before 1919 did not mean that white mobs did not attempt to enforce their own justice. In 1888, a mob went looking for a man, Zephyr Davis, who was accused of murdering a white teenage girl. They likely would have killed Davis had he not fled town in anticipation of their search. In addition, according to Elizabeth Dale, Chicago’s newspapers implicitly legitimized lynching in cases, like Davis’, where they deemed it justified. See Elizabeth Dale, “The People Versus Zephyr Davis: Law and Popular Justice in Late Nineteenth-Century Chicago,” *Law and History Review* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 31.

<sup>55</sup> See *Chicago Inter Ocean*, October 12, 1880, and *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct 12, 1880.

Massachusetts, had begun a long and ultimately unsuccessful fight to attach an amendment banning school segregation to the federal civil rights bill under consideration at that time in the Senate. The amendment would have ensured that states “establish public schools open and free to all without distinction of race or color.”<sup>56</sup> When his original efforts failed, Sumner again attempted similar amendments to the Second and Third Reconstruction Bills, and then later, to the Civil Rights Bill of 1875. But the still overwhelmingly Anglo-American nation was apparently not ready for integration at that time. Ending slavery was one thing, but few in the United States considered immediate and full rights for blacks as wise or appropriate.

In light of the rights Congress bestowed upon freed slaves in those crucial three amendments, the right to attend school did not seem to some northerners to be very controversial. Yet, as Heather Cox Richardson explains, to many, civil rights legislation appeared to be a “destructive capitulation of demagogues to the whims of ex-slaves, in fact threatening rather than promoting African-American equality in a misguided effort to placate frivolous black sensibilities.” These conservatives argued that legislating free schools nationally would end virtually all public education in the South because southerners would rather keep their children at home than have them sit next to black children. And even though 70 percent of black children in the South remained illiterate in 1880, white northerners consistently heard through sources as diverse as the Fisk Jubilee Singers and the Alabama Freedmen’s Bureau about the successes of southern segregated education. Without their relationship with whites distracting them, this argument went, blacks would be able to study unencumbered by racial tension. To demand legislated instant integration pushed the envelope too far too soon. Let blacks

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<sup>56</sup> Daniel, *Dilemma*, 128.

catch up in their abilities first, the mainstream concluded, and then decide on the question of total inclusion.<sup>57</sup>

Behind these ideas was a deep and permanent American racism; for a North increasingly intolerant of protecting black rights, to point toward educational systems in the South was a convenient smokescreen. An integrated education amendment might make sense to the North when Congress debated the Reconstruction bills, which governed only the recovering South, but when it came to the Civil Rights Bill—which represented a more broad, and fundamentally new, national conception of black citizenship—hypocritical northerners saw integrated education as too much to bear. Consequently, opposition to Sumner’s progressive efforts was no less intense in the latter battle than the first, and ultimately no such rider was attached to any piece of national legislation. It may not be surprising that a recalcitrant South would reject any attempt to give force of law to such a basic rubric of racial equality, but it is crucial to recognize that northerners could be nearly as deaf to the basic rights of black Americans. In fact, the fiercest opponent of Sumner’s addendum was no less than the sponsor of the Civil Rights Bill himself, Illinois’ own Senator Lyman Trumbull, who claimed that education was not “a civil right and never was.”<sup>58</sup> By 1875, through the efforts of Trumbull and his supporters, Sumner’s efforts were dead, and the Civil Rights Law went into effect March

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<sup>57</sup> Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 138.

<sup>58</sup> Quote from Daniel, *Dilemma*, 129. The distinction Trumbull made here was between “civil rights”—those essential to the ability of free workers to navigate society—and “social rights,” which were based on a person’s economic success and thus theoretically attainable by all Americans. See Richardson, *Death*, 122-123 for more on these definitions. Note also that even some African-Americans in Congress, like Richard Cain of South Carolina, did not support the integration rider, saying that racial mixing was not desired by the black community.

1 of that year with no federal guarantees against segregation.<sup>59</sup> Effectively, this legislation again assigned the right to govern education to the individual states—a defeat of Sumner’s ideals. As to how this debate, conducted in the virtual absence of African-Americans, affected the black community, an 1875 letter to the editor of the *Chicago Inter Ocean* probably expressed the feelings of most black Chicagoans:

“What are ‘civil rights’? I am a colored man and with the majority of the colored men of Chicago, I feel an interest in arriving at a definite answer to this question. We were led to expect great things from the civil rights bill, but from our experience since it became a law, I do not see that we are permitted any more rights or privileges that we had before. What does the bill secure to us that we did not enjoy previous to its passage?”<sup>60</sup>

Given this lack of federal guarantees for integrated education, it should not be surprising that the 1874 Illinois law banning school segregation, despite its language, also had little effect. The statute ruled that “all directors of schools, boards of education, or other school officers whose duty now is, or may be hereafter, to provide, in their respective jurisdictions, schools for the education of all children between the ages of six and twenty-one years, are prohibited from excluding, directly or indirectly, any such child from school on account of the color of such child.”<sup>61</sup> A statewide survey taken just before the law passed revealed that there were forty-one counties in which blacks and whites attended school together and twenty-six counties that contained full or partially segregated schools. Twenty-seven counties reported some form of “trouble” over integration, while thirty reported none.<sup>62</sup> With no way to enforce the anti-segregation

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<sup>59</sup> That the bill itself passed at all was due less to a national commitment to black rights than to the death of Charles Sumner, its sponsor. As happens from time to time in Congress, the passing of a “great man” lent validity to his final policy initiatives, and no matter how relieved some congressmen were that this firebrand would trouble them no longer, Sumner’s memory was honored with the passing of the bill. Enforcing the provisions therein proved to be another matter. See Richardson, *Death*, 141.

<sup>60</sup> Citations this paragraph from *Chicago Inter Ocean*, April 1, 1875.

<sup>61</sup> Reed, *Black Chicago*, 457.

<sup>62</sup> Homel, “Negroes,” 4-5.

law, however, there is little evidence of any meaningful change after its passage. These public accommodation laws, as Michael Klarman explains, were little more than symbolic. “Writing the principle of nondiscrimination into law was an important symbolic victory for black constituents, whose votes were much prized by Democrats and Republicans battling for control of closely contested northern states in the 1880s and early 1890s,” he wrote. “To actually enforce such statutes, however, would have alienated far larger blocs of white voters who strongly opposed ‘social equality’ for blacks.”<sup>63</sup> Most white Illinoisans, who were far more racially conservative than Chicagoans, fell into this category.

Chicagoans on all sides of the segregation/integration debates took notice of the resistance of school boards to integration in other parts of the state, such the battle over segregation in Alton, Illinois. The successes and failures of these separate schools became potential models for the situation in Chicago.<sup>64</sup> The creation of an 1889 law—fifteen years after Illinois mandated integration—that held local boards of education liable for the exclusion of any student of color confirmed that the original edict was insufficient to block widespread inequity.<sup>65</sup> The new law imposed a fine of \$5 to \$100 on any district that was shown to have engaged in some form of race-based discrimination, but was totally ignored not only in the fifteen southern Illinois counties where segregation was openly practiced, but in Chicago as well, where proving that a black student had been “excluded” was nearly impossible.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Klarman, *Plessy Era*, 333.

<sup>64</sup> Homel, “Negroes,” 4-5.

<sup>65</sup> For more on the fascinating and saddening Alton case, see August Meier and Elliott M. Rudwick, “Early Boycotts of Segregated Schools: The Alton, Illinois Case, 1897-1908,” *Journal of Negro Education* 36 (Fall 1967): 394-402, and Shirley J Portwood, “The Alton School Case and African-American Community Consciousness, 1897-1908,” *Illinois Historical Journal* 91 (Spring 1998): 2-20.

<sup>66</sup> Herrick, *Chicago’s Schools*, 401.

The ability of black students and their parents to find secure employment, however, bore more strongly on the educational landscape than did legal rulings encouraged by vote-starved party machines. Putting food on the family table—which sometimes meant sending a child to work rather than school—often took precedence during hard times. Thus, a brief look at the labor market available to black Chicagoans is crucial, in the absence of more direct information, to understanding their ability to succeed in school.

African-Americans in Chicago in the 1880s carved an economic niche wherever they could. The principal jobs held by black migrants in the postwar years in Chicago were as domestics and unskilled laborers, although as Pullman porters and waiters they were much more visible.<sup>67</sup> Many also became housekeepers or butlers for Chicago's wealthy whites. Facing frequent economic desperation, however, black Chicagoans repeatedly found labor trouble reminiscent of the Civil War era. The tactics of Chicago mine owner and businessman Miner T. Ames were typical. In the 1870s, faced with striking workers in his coal and iron mines in neighboring Indiana, Ames recruited blacks from Memphis, Louisville, and Richmond, offering them decent wages and free housing if they would move to Indiana and work for him. Little did these workers realize, however, that they were to be used solely as scabs to break strikes in dispute after dispute. Even if they refused to break strikes, though, once they had moved north these

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<sup>67</sup> Beginning in 1867, the Pullman Company of Chicago began to hire African-Americans (and *only* African-Americans) as attendants on the company's increasingly popular sleeping train cars. See William H. Harris, *The Harder We Run: Black Workers Since the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 60.

men had few options but to take the work offered them. Many would choose to go to Chicago to look for better prospects rather than cross the picket line.<sup>68</sup>

The restaurant business in Chicago offered an equally mixed chance for economic success. Perry Duis, who charted the emergence of African-Americans in the restaurant business, unearthed the story of Thomas L. Johnson, a slave for the first twenty-eight years of his life who moved to New York and then Rhode Island shortly after the end of the Civil War. There, Johnson's knowledge of the food industry caught the attention of a vacationing H.M. Kinsley, a Chicago restaurant magnate who hired Johnson and brought him to Chicago. Within a few years, Johnson had risen to the rank of headwaiter and was serving the likes of Marshall Fields and George Pullman.<sup>69</sup> Yet few black waiters in Chicago were so fortunate. Most labored under oppressive white headwaiters for low wages. The steady stream of ex-slaves to Chicago ensured that there was nearly always a replacement waiting in the wings if a worker fussed a little too much about wages or working conditions. Repeated efforts to unionize were only moderately successful for a variety of reasons, such as the decline in the late 1880s of the anti-segregationist Knights of Labor, but the most important barrier to success was race. One example occurred after a May Day, 1887 dispute over wages caused white waiters at three major downtown eateries to walk out at the busiest hour of the day. One of the three restaurants hired white scabs as replacements, but the other two brought in non-union blacks to break the strike. The racial divide between the striking workers and the newly hired scabs opened

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<sup>68</sup> Harris, *Black Workers*, 20-21.

<sup>69</sup> Perry R. Duis, *Challenging Chicago: Coping with Everyday Life, 1837-1920* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 262. According to E. Franklin Frazier, "The head-waiters were at the top of society. They almost dictated social customs. A man prided himself on being Mr. So-and-So's valet. Next to the head waiters were the porters, then came the barbers." See E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in Chicago*, here cited in Scott, *Occupational*, 41.

quickly, with threats against the blacks about a “war to the knife” if they did not relent. Management in all sectors did not fail to take notice of the ease with which divisive racial tension set in when stress levels were high. According to Perry Duis, from that point on “for decades to come, restaurateurs would segregate their staffs and threaten complete replacement of one group by the other as a way of countering demands for increased wages.”<sup>70</sup> As Michael Homel pointed out, the Chicago community’s immediate ascription of an exclusively racial character to any dispute involving whites and blacks gave these sorts of battles the air of fundamental permanence.

In the years to come, whites increasingly ostracized black workers, and economic compartmentalization in Chicago only increased. No single year of the 1870s passed in Chicago without some kind of labor disturbance.<sup>71</sup> Racially motivated disputes, often involving violence, took place among coal-yard workers in 1879, seamen in 1880, stevedores in 1881 and 1892, stockyard workers in 1886, lumberyard employees in 1887, and grain-trimmers in 1888. “In each case,” writes Duis, “the presence of black workers quickly became the central issue of the labor action, regardless of the original sources of each dispute.”<sup>72</sup> In the absence of working-class solidarity across races, management was most often the winner, and union organizers made little inroads in the black community. The majority of blacks simply saw little reason to listen to the pleas of socialist labor leaders to join the fight against unjust bankers and capitalists when they could not even mount a successful strike with the support of their colleagues. Demands so central to white workers in the Gilded Age—such as the eight-hour day—did not appeal to a black working class over half of whom worked as servants. Labor agitation would likely have

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<sup>70</sup> Citations this paragraph from Duis, *Challenging Chicago*, 267.

<sup>71</sup> Herrick, *Chicago’s Schools*, 68-70.

<sup>72</sup> Duis, *Challenging Chicago*, 266.

meant economic death for black Chicago, which had already been accused of pushing too hard for civil rights.<sup>73</sup>

Those who did push the envelope were most often members of the upper class, but even they could not escape the stigma attached to the color of their skin. These upper-class blacks were at times personally successful in challenging the social avenues open to them, but the only broad precedents set during this time were those that hindered black rights. In her article synthesizing the ambiguities of the period, called “‘Social Equality Does Not Exist Among Themselves, Nor Among Us’: *Baylies vs. Curry* and Civil Rights in Chicago, 1888,” Elizabeth Dale told the story of a lawsuit brought by Josephine Curry, a prominent upper middle-class African-American, against the owner of a Chicago theater who would not seat her because she was black. As much a study about class as race, Dale unpacked the assumptions of the era to argue that there was much more at work in Chicago’s race relations than a binary color line. Curry, Dale posited, was less interested in breaking the color barrier than in claiming the privileges given her by virtue of her and her husband’s economic success. There is even some evidence, reported Dale, that the Currys practiced discrimination in their work lives, catering mostly to white populations for fear that blacks would drive away white customers, and treating lighter-skinned blacks better than those with darker skin.<sup>74</sup>

According to Dale, this case also symbolized the varied roles migrants played in Chicago society. Josephine Curry’s husband John had arrived in Chicago only five years

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<sup>73</sup> The Great Railroad Strike of 1877, for example, left a bitter taste in the mouths of many white working people that “provided fertile soil for socialist and anarchist organizers,” socialism was a cause dead on arrival for African-Americans who lacked sufficient numbers for leverage. See Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 50.

<sup>74</sup> Elizabeth Dale, “‘Social Equality Does Not Exist Among Themselves, Nor Among Us’: *Baylies vs. Curry* and Civil Rights in Chicago, 1888,” *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 2 (April 1997): 311-339.

before they brought the case. Interestingly, he came not from the South but Ohio, and in a few short years, John Curry had been able to earn a good living. Josephine Curry's lawyer, Edward Norris, was also a migrant and had achieved an even higher social standing than the Currys, but he had been born a slave in Kentucky in 1858, and therefore had seen firsthand the terrors separatism allowed. Norris made an ambitious argument for total racial integration based on the Illinois Civil Rights Act of 1885, which mandated "full and equal enjoyment" of public accommodations.<sup>75</sup> Dale argued that the verdict in the case—which took only one day, established no precedent for black civil rights, and was quickly forgotten—was less important than what the case says about the era. She argued that the Chicago of the late nineteenth century was in many ways a place friendly to African-Americans and cited numerous articles in the *Western Appeal*, a black newspaper with offices in both Chicago and Minneapolis, depicting Chicago as a much better place to live for blacks than Minneapolis. Thus, Dale wrote, the assessment of African-American life in Chicago before 1900 is a question of degree. But while she expertly captured this moment when blacks took it upon themselves to push the parameters of civic possibility, she again put forward the notion that because conditions in Chicago were better than somewhere else (in this case, Minneapolis), they were thus friendly in Chicago.

In critiquing Dale, Kevin Gaines highlighted her ability to elucidate the "ambiguous state of race relations in Chicago" as well as the "unpredictability of *de facto* segregation typical in the urban North of the nineteenth century."<sup>76</sup> But he also asserted that the exception proves the rule; Dale's research showed not that there existed a golden

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<sup>75</sup> Dale, "Social Equality," 311.

<sup>76</sup> Kevin Gaines, "Rethinking Race and Class in African-American Struggles for Equality, 1885-1941," *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 2 (April 1997): 381.

window of opportunity for blacks in Chicago before the turn to Jim Crow, but rather documented “one instance of widespread but ultimately highly ineffective and counterproductive black middle-class strategy of claiming entitlement to citizenship rights by stressing class stratification.”<sup>77</sup> *Baylies vs. Curry* verified that the 1885 Illinois Civil Rights Bill was imbued with little real power to effect change for Chicago’s blacks and demonstrated that lawsuits could not bring full civic and economic access. It was only “political participation at all levels,” in the words of Roger Bridges, that could guarantee “full enjoyment of civil and economic rights.”<sup>78</sup> And it was clear that full access was entirely unavailable to African-Americans at this time.

Many have repeated Dale’s assessments of a racially open atmosphere. Attempts to depict the 1880s in a positive light are not limited to the secondary literature, but existed at that time as well. In an 1884 newspaper article, for example, a man named R. M. Mitchell (“an intelligent, educated colored man, who is one of the clerks in the criminal court clerk’s office”) claimed that he knew of three interracial marriages at that time. But like the Currys, Mitchell upheld class distinctions over racial solidarity; he was careful to say that each interracial couple comprised members of the upper class.<sup>79</sup> In fact, nearly every example arguing in favor of racial openness in Gilded Age Chicago seems to emerge from the upper classes, who had significant business contacts with white society and therefore were not nearly as ostracized as the average black Chicagoan. In another example, Ralph Davis quoted Franklin L. Barnett as saying that the Chicago of 1878-1885 was a “pretty fair place for Negroes to live and there was little friction

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<sup>77</sup> Gaines, “Rethinking Race,” 383.

<sup>78</sup> Bridges, “Equality Deferred,” 108.

<sup>79</sup> Characterization of R. M. Mitchell from *Chicago Daily News*, January 26, 1884, 5.

between the races”—aside from some tension with the Irish.<sup>80</sup> Davis also reported that Barnett’s newspaper, the *Conservator*, an independent publication with Republican editors, endorsed Democrat Carter Harrison (and later, his son of the same name) for mayor “because of his liberal attitude and his fairness to Negroes,” yet there is little evidence Harrison, once in office, did much to defend black rights.<sup>81</sup> In the United States at this time, class status, as the Currys discovered, ultimately did not trump race in a society largely controlled by whites.

By 1875, the city did have a black county commissioner, black state legislators, black policemen, and black firemen, and four years later there were black mail carriers, doctors, and lawyers. By 1878, a small Negro business and professional class was developing, whose mouthpiece, the *Conservator*, militantly advocated the uplift of the black race and full equality with whites.<sup>82</sup> I. C. Harris’ Colored Men’s Professional and Business Directory of Chicago, which appeared in 1885, listed nine black lawyers at that time.<sup>83</sup> But by the mid-eighties there were still only two black teachers in the public schools, and an overwhelming number of Chicago’s African-Americans worked as domestic laborers (see Table III).<sup>84</sup> For most of black Chicago, Estelle Hill Scott’s formulation that in freedom, the average African-American had won the right to earn a wage for his labor—but not “the right to choose the work he most desired”—rang true.<sup>85</sup> Despite the optimistic outlook of men like F. L. Barnett, whose economic success

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<sup>80</sup> Ralph Nelson Davis, “The Negro Newspaper in Chicago” (Master’s Thesis, University of Chicago, 1939), 13.

<sup>81</sup> Davis, “Negro Newspaper,” 14. Carter Harrison I received about half the black vote in 1885, while Carter Harrison II, his son, won about 65 percent of the black vote in 1899. See Myrdal, *Dilemma*, 492.

<sup>82</sup> Davis, “Negro Newspaper,” 20-21.

<sup>83</sup> Harris, *Black Workers*, 22.

<sup>84</sup> St. Clair Drake, *Churches and Voluntary Associations in the Chicago Negro Community* (Chicago: Works Progress Administration, 1940), 60.

<sup>85</sup> Scott, *Occupational*, 3.

understandably influenced his perception of conditions citywide, the ability of the average black Chicagoan to earn a solid living in good working conditions was greatly hindered by the racial climate of the era.

**Table III. Occupations in Chicago, 1880-1930<sup>86</sup>**

	1890	1900	1910	1920
<b>Percent of African-Americans Employed (Ages 10 and Over)</b>				
Total	70.7%	66.4%	69.2%	67.9%
Female	36.6%	39.5%	46.6%	44.0%
Male	95.2%	89.5%	90.2%	90.6%
<b>Professional Persons</b>				
Percentage of Native-Born Whites Who Work In This Sector	4.1%	7.6%	6.8%	7.7%
Percentage of Foreign-Born Whites Who Work In This Sector	1.1%	2.7%	2.5%	3.1%
Percentage of Blacks Who Work In This Sector	1.2%	4.3%	3.5%	2.8%
<b>Professors and Teachers (Excluding Music Faculty)</b>				
Total	*3108	8791	9936	13539
Number of Native-Born White	2608	7323	8181	11664
Number of Foreign-Born White	482	1409	1686	1706
Number of Black	18	58	64	166
<b>Professors and Teachers (Excluding Music Faculty)</b>				
Percentage of Teachers Who Are Native-Born White	83.9%	83.3%	82.3%	86.1%
Percentage of Teachers Who Are Foreign-Born White	15.5%	16.0%	17.0%	12.6%
Percentage of Teachers Who Are Black	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	1.2%
*all female				

<sup>86</sup> Abbreviated from Estelle Hill Scott, *Occupational Changes Among Negroes in Chicago, 1890-1930* (Chicago: Work Projects Administration, 1939).

It is hard to imagine that the children of working-class African-Americans who labored under the conditions described above fared well in school. But perhaps no one better summed up the position of black education in Gilded Age Illinois than the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois himself, who it is worthwhile to quote at length:

“The question whether separate schools shall be provided for colored children, or whether there shall be the same schools for all, is one of very secondary importance, and should never be permitted to disturb the peace and harmony of any school district or community. It was regarded as too trivial a matter to be mentioned in the Constitution, and in my estimation, the legislature would do well to be equally silent on the subject. It is one of those matters which involve no principle worth striving for, and which are best left to regulate themselves. All experiences demonstrate the folly and futility of undertaking to control a matter of that kind by legislative enactments. The result has always been more mischief than good....What our colored citizens need, what they and their friends have been struggling for, is the means of educating their children; the solid boon of knowledge, culture; not the empty name of sitting in the same seats, or in the same house with white children....I do not believe that our colored citizens can afford to make a noise about this thing; it is unworthy of them, and of that honorable pride and self-respect which should animate them in their efforts to advance their race in the higher elements of civilization and power....Any person feeling aggrieved, has the privilege of trying the question in the courts....The ruling will, doubtless, be that while directors must provide the schooling of colored children as fully and as thoroughly as for others, they may do this either by organizing separate schools or otherwise, as they may judge best—that while the colored people can demand the education they cannot dictate as to the particular schools which they shall attend.”<sup>87</sup>

This remarkable opinion, expressed over twenty years before the Supreme Court adopted a similar logic in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, reveals a common belief of that time: that all African-Americans required for equality was the absence of any race-based laws. Give them a “fair chance,” the superintendent seemed to be saying, and they should be able to stand on their own. His somewhat cynical avowal that legislation would do little to

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<sup>87</sup> Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois, 1873-1874, cited in Mame Charlotte Mason, "The Policy of the Segregation of the Negro in the Public Schools of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois," (Master's Thesis, University of Chicago, 1917), 34.

answer to the race question in schools, even while he simultaneously recommended that blacks appeal to the courts for help in changing the law, also demonstrated the predicament black Chicago faced: with social mores stacked against them, no amount of *de jure* rulings could change the *de facto* behavior of a white society accustomed to being served by blacks.

Moreover, despite the superintendent's words, the United States Constitution *did* protect the rights of black Chicagoans to attend school under the Fourteenth Amendment, ratified five years before the superintendent spoke. "No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States," the amendment read, "nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."<sup>88</sup> African-Americans were certainly citizens, the right to attend school was undoubtedly a privilege, and equal protection of the laws dictated that segregationist practices by public schools were illegal. Here were the principles—far from "trivial," and clearly "worth striving for"—staring the superintendent in the face. That he simply ignored them showed that not even the United States Constitution held the coercive power to bring about rights for African-Americans in American schools.

Even if a black student could attend an integrated school without facing harassment, as many undoubtedly did, with much of the three-branch American system of democracy closed to them, the promise of integrated schooling rang hollow. Though the years between 1865 and 1890 brought many positive changes for African-Americans in Chicago, they also demonstrated that white northerners, though they often strove to

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<sup>88</sup> National Archives and Records Administration, *Constitution of the United States*, 2007, <[http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution\\_amendments\\_11-27.html](http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_amendments_11-27.html)> (12 November, 2007).

impose egalitarian values ostensibly their own on a recalcitrant South, had not come to their own reckoning regarding the role of racism in their society. As it became apparent that the South would violently oppose the freedoms given militarily to its former slaves, the Republican North backed down from its radicalism. The price was paid not only in the southern “redemption” of old race regimes, but in the northern rejection of full *de facto* rights for blacks. As August Meier and Elliot Rudwick wrote, “Northern whites—including many former abolitionists—found it relatively easy to pay the price of sectional reconciliation. That price was the rejection of the idea of a racially egalitarian society—and even the desertion of the blacks’ fundamental constitutional rights.”<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, *From Plantation to Ghetto* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), 192.

### **Chapter 3: Segregation Encroaches: 1890-1914**

Citywide, very few students of any race bothered to attend public high school in pre-World War I Chicago. Between 1893 and 1914, the percentage of total students in the high school department ranged from four percent in 1893 to seven and a half percent in the 1913-1914 school year.<sup>90</sup> By 1914, no high school had more than a few dozen black students enrolled, and most were in the lower grades. In 1913, Englewood and Hyde Park high schools, for example, each had only about 15 blacks. Lucy Flower High, which opened that same year, began with only ten black students.<sup>91</sup> The two main reasons for the low numbers of high school attendees in relation to total population were interrelated: the need of families to have everyone in the household work, and the lack of return on an investment in a high school education. In other words, even if black students could finish high school, their chances for employment were not necessarily any higher than if they had simply begun working rather than attend school in the first place. Discrimination certainly made school no more attractive to Chicago's African-Americans.

Likewise, *de facto* segregationist restrictions confining most black teachers to work in elementary schools and virtually prohibiting them from teaching whites increasingly ensured the separation of the races in schools, and severely curtailed the hiring of black teachers. From 1890 to 1910, the percentage of teachers who were African-American in the Chicago schools stayed steady at less than one percent (see Table III). In 1900 there were eleven black teachers at the elementary level; in 1905,

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<sup>90</sup> Jean Everhard Fair, "The History of Public Education in the City of Chicago, 1894-1914" (Master's Thesis, University of Chicago, 1939), 132.

<sup>91</sup> Daniel, *Secondary*, 151.

fifteen; and in 1910, twenty. But black teachers were not hired in proportion to the number of black students in a given school.<sup>92</sup> At Doolittle Elementary School, for instance, which was eighty-five percent black by 1919, there were only two black teachers out of a total of thirty-three.<sup>93</sup> And the number of African-American high school teachers was even lower. By 1919, there was only one black teacher in any Chicago high school: the manual training instructor at Wendell Phillips High School.<sup>94</sup>

At the outset of this period, optimism among African-American leaders regarding the place of black Americans in Chicago again ran high. Black Chicagoans could look back on the years since the Civil War and see a steady increase in victories for black rights: the repeal of the Illinois Black Codes in 1865, the conferring of the franchise in 1870, the banning of school segregation in 1874, the passage of the state civil rights bill in 1885. An 1893 article in the *Chicago Inter Ocean* estimated that there would soon be 1.5 million black pupils in the nation's public schools. "This makes 28 per cent of the race that has educated itself within twenty-eight years [since the end of slavery]," the piece asserted optimistically, "and at the ratio of the last ten years, another generation will leave the colored race in America with a smaller percentage of illiteracy than has the white race."<sup>95</sup> By the 1890s, there were five or six African-American teachers, according to the superintendent.<sup>96</sup> Black Chicagoans, in the words of Horace Cayton and St. Clair Drake, "were taking the promises of democracy seriously."<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Reed, "Civic Organization," 67.

<sup>93</sup> Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922), 247.

<sup>94</sup> Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *Report*, 252.

<sup>95</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean*, August 26, 1893, 12.

<sup>96</sup> Chicago Tribune, January 30, 1896, 4.

<sup>97</sup> Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 50.

Unfortunately, the slope of opportunity on which this formulation depended did not remain consistent. Much of this progress had been achieved with the help of a Republican North committed, in asymmetrical measures, to genuine black equality and black votes. But as the Grand Old Party gradually built new coalitions and secured a comfortable national majority, they found they no longer needed the black vote. “Northerners,” wrote Michael Klarman, “not only had become more supportive of segregation, but they were also more inclined to accommodate white southerners in their racial preferences.”<sup>98</sup>

Beginning in the 1890s, black Chicago began to feel the effects of this political shift. An August, 1893 edition of the *Chicago Inter Ocean* carried at the top of the first page the headline, “Color Line Drawn: Negro Citizens Discriminated Against at the Grotto.” A man named M. W. Caldwell had written a letter claiming discrimination on the basis of color. It seems Mr. Caldwell had attempted to buy a 25 cent general admission ticket to the theater, as was advertised on the price list, but was told that he was ineligible, and would have to purchase instead a 75 cent ticket in the “colored gallery.” Upon investigation, the *Inter Ocean* reported that the Grotto openly advertised its dual pricing system in “plainly set forth in black, full-faced letters at the bottom of the list of prices,” and was prepared to defend it even in the face of a protest by several “prominent” lawyers that the act was illegal. The theater’s management, the paper reported, “did not hesitate to avow that it was the intention of the proprietors to exclude colored people from the Grotto.”<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Klarman, *Plessy Era*, 332, 345.

<sup>99</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean*, August 18, 1893, 1.

In a later incident also chronicled by the *Inter Ocean*, the Allen restaurant, at 246 State Street in the Loop, refused service to Congressman George H. White of North Carolina and another African-American man on account of their skin color. White and his guest received a treatment common to blacks in “white” restaurants: upon sitting at a table, they were simply ignored by the restaurant staff until they decided to go elsewhere, while white customers who came in after them received prompt service. “I was greatly surprised to be accorded such treatment in Chicago,” the paper quoted the southern congressman, “there can be no doubt that service was refused us at the Allen restaurant because of our color.”<sup>100</sup> White asserted that the incident was in clear violation of the Illinois Civil Rights Act of 1885, and intimated that he would pursue the matter, but by all accounts he let it drop. The restaurant’s tactic of simply ignoring black diners meant that it would have been exceptionally difficult to prove wrongdoing in court.

When blacks did pursue legal remedies in discrimination cases, they often won small settlements that failed to set precedents—as we saw with *Baylies vs. Curry* above—and whose resolutions made them hardly worth the trouble. In an 1898 case, Illinois Judge O. N. Carter ruled in favor of plaintiff H. T. Richardson in his suit against a former manager of the Chicago Opera House, David Henderson. Richardson had a white boy purchase two tickets to a show for him but when Richardson attempted to use them, he was told that although his tickets were for the “parquet,” he could sit only in the gallery. Richardson refused, and eventually successfully sued Henderson for \$250 and court costs. Henderson never paid his fine, however, and was later arrested. In this second case, Judge Carter clearly took the issue seriously, and ruled that despite Henderson’s

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<sup>100</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean*, July 13, 1898.

claims of financial insolvency, he should remain in jail.<sup>101</sup> This litigation demonstrated that the Chicago courts were one potential ally for Chicago's African-Americans on an individual basis—and they certainly produced more justice than in the South—but there were limited means available to black plaintiffs searching to use the courts to ensure precedents for fair or equal treatment generally. Both Michael Klarman and Davison Douglas argue that minus broader social and political changes, court cases actually have little power to effect major socio-racial transformations.<sup>102</sup>

Most African-Americans clearly recognized this notion in the years following 1890—especially after *Plessy v. Ferguson* validated Jim Crow in 1896—and began to turn to more socially based remedies to the racial divide. The ideas of the educator Booker T. Washington, grounded in a conservative system of gradual, vocational education, presented one kind of solution. But according to August Meier, Washington was never popular with black Chicagoans who had greater ambitions than to be industrial workers and servants their whole lives. To Meier, a better example of black social formulations was Thomas Fortune's Afro-American League, founded in 1890 in Chicago, through which Fortune defended agitation and even “revolution” in the name of equal rights. Social welfare organizations like Fortune's became increasingly common in the late nineteenth century, and were most often centered in churches, such as the African Methodist Episcopal, that had existed in Chicago since the city's founding in the 1830s. Among these relief groups were also black women's clubs dedicated to both racial solidarity and individual welfare. These clubs ran Kindergartens and day nurseries, held

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<sup>101</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean*, July 9, 1898, 3.

<sup>102</sup> See Klarman, *Plessy Era*, and Davison Douglas, “The Limits of Law in Accomplishing Racial Change: School Segregation in the Brown North.” *UCLA Law Review* 44, no. 677 (February 1997), 677-744.

sewing and cooking classes, sponsored “penny savings banks,” helped homeless girls, and ran employment bureaus.<sup>103</sup>

The more radical black protest organizations fashioned another approach to the lack of resources. Two examples were the Equal Opportunity League, which was founded in 1903 to fight “a seeming desire on the part of a certain class of citizens to separate the Afro-American pupils in the public schools from the whites,” and the Colored Convention movement, which advocated for continued black enfranchisement.<sup>104</sup> Many of these organizations were loosely constituted and some were short-lived, but each was an important precursor to W. E. B. DuBois’ Niagara Movement, which in turn bred the NAACP.<sup>105</sup>

After DuBois emerged in 1905 as a vociferous rival to Washington, the line between radical or revolutionary organizations and those that employed “self-help” or Bookerite philosophies became more evident. But on the ground in the 1890s and 1900s, any facilities that admitted blacks were generally welcomed. Chicago organizations that helped prepare the next generation of African-American activists included the training school for nurses at Provident Hospital, which graduated its first class, comprised of four young African-American women, in October of 1892. (A year later, Daniel Hale

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<sup>103</sup> See August Meier, *Negro Thought In America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1963).

<sup>104</sup> Homel, “Negroes,” 16; Charles Branham, “Black Chicago: Accommodationist Politics Before the Great Migration,” in Melvin G. Holli and Peter d’A. Jones, eds., *The Ethnic Frontier: Essays in the History of Group Survival in Chicago and the Midwest*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Company, 1977), 219.

<sup>105</sup> The NAACP was organized in 1910 and chartered in 1913. For connections between black Chicago and the NAACP, see Christopher Robert Reed, *The Chicago NAACP and the Rise of Black Professional Leadership, 1910–1966* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997); Christopher Robert Reed, “Black Chicago Civic Organization Before 1935,” *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 14 (1987), 65-77; and Christopher Robert Reed, “Organized Racial Reform in Chicago During the Progressive Era: The Chicago NAACP, 1910-1920,” *Michigan Historical Review* 14 (1988), 75-99.

Williams, a black doctor, performed the nation's first successful heart operation there).<sup>106</sup> The Standard Musical College for Colored People, "the first institution of its kind in Chicago," opened in 1894 with approximately 16 faculty members.<sup>107</sup> The Bethel Methodist Church, at Dearborn and Thirty-First streets, began a new kindergarten for black children in 1897.<sup>108</sup> And in 1899, the Douglass League of Chicago initiated a "colored school settlement" at 5056 Dearborn Street that included a free library, a reading room, and a kindergarten. Various black professionals from throughout the city were to be the instructors and lecturers at this organization, with F. L. Barnett apparently behind the project.<sup>109</sup> Institutions that focused on education became one key element in a cohesive black strategy to ensure that African-Americans in Chicago received the latest in training and instruction.

As Chicago's black population grew, these "uplift" organizations were increasingly funded by white supporters. The Ambidexter Institute, founded in 1900, taught thirty-five trades, including farming, and according to a newspaper article, "has done much in the way of elevating the colored race along educational lines and in commercial pursuits." The institute was funded locally by the Rev. G. H. McDaniel, but was also endorsed by Illinois Governor Richard Yates and "several banks and business houses."<sup>110</sup> The more radical strains in black Chicago did not protest manual training so much as what it represented. In one instance, the black community objected to an attempt by Rev. J. P. Odean to raise money for the creation of a segregated manual

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<sup>106</sup> Ernest R. Rather, *Chicago Negro Almanac* (Chicago: Chicago Negro Almanac Publishing Company, 1972), 4.

<sup>107</sup> *Chicago Evening Post*, August 29, 1894, 3, from Adeline Sterling, IWP Box 14, Folder 20.

<sup>108</sup> *Chicago Tribune* January 6, 1897, from IWP Box 14, Folder 20.

<sup>109</sup> *Chicago Daily News*, November 1, 1899.

<sup>110</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean*, July 30, 1904, from IWP Box 14, Folder 20.

training school. The problem, according to the press, was with both “the project and the promoter,” as Odean apparently had been involved in a “shady scheme” with Bishop Cornelius Lennox. But the real objection seemed to center on the project itself. F. L. Barnett said that Odean’s efforts would contribute to the establishment of a color line in the city, and few members of black Chicago would stand for that.<sup>111</sup>

As incidents such as these reflect, black Chicago was caught in an unfortunate bind; to succeed in business and philanthropic enterprises, Chicago’s African-Americans needed help from the white community (where most of the money and resources lay), and yet the kinds of rules whites increasingly attached to that money were unacceptable to anyone who stood against segregation. Drake and Cayton saw the connected nature of the white and black communities by 1900 as “traditional,” even as black leaders began to take up the mantle of black self-reliance that would become a mantra in later years.<sup>112</sup> Ralph Davis found that by 1910, one quarter of advertisements in the *Chicago Defender* were from businesses “conducted by white persons,” and two years later, that figure had risen to 36%.<sup>113</sup> Important civic and business organizations banned black businesspeople from their ranks, thereby preserving white power structures, but that did not prevent black Chicago from catering to the white community socially and economically.<sup>114</sup> There

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<sup>111</sup> Unidentified newspaper, August 7, 1895, 8, from IWP Box 14, Folder 20. In the so-called Progressive Era, philanthropists like Jane Addams and Julius Rosenwald stepped in to support reform organizations modeled on Addams’ Hull House. One such example was the Wendell Phillips Settlement, at 2009 Walnut Street. In 1914, Rosenwald offered to pay one fourth of the operating cost of this “negro settlement” provided the remaining money was raised from other sources “and that there are contributors from the colored race among the givers.” See *Chicago Inter Ocean*, February 9, 1914, 5. In 1913, the Louise Training School for colored boys, a home and school for “proper training” was incorporated at 6130 South Ada Street. The institution appeared to be a kind of halfway house. See *Chicago Inter Ocean*, July 18, 1913, from IWP Box 14, Folder 20.

<sup>112</sup> Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 57.

<sup>113</sup> Davis, “Negro Newspaper,” 139; 146.

<sup>114</sup> Daniel, *Secondary*, 150.

simply was no choice; the black community before the First World War was not big enough to function exclusively within its confines.

The struggle for adequate schools and the frequent battles over integration were centered amid these foundational struggles for equal access. Beginning in the late 1890s, the quest for satisfactory schooling came to take diverse shapes on a dark spectrum, from wars of words to physical battles in the streets. About four months before the Supreme Court handed down its landmark sanction of racism in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, a systemic pattern emerged in Chicago's school system: white parents began pulling their students from schools with predominantly black populations or from classrooms with black teachers, demanding transfers to schools with lighter-skinned student bodies. These transfer demands were compounded by another source of tension faced by children of all races—the severe overcrowding of the entire public system. From the establishment of the Chicago public schools, there had never been enough seats for all of Chicago's youth; between 1855 and 1860, for instance, enrollment rose from 6,826 to 14,199, and by 1885, the average class size had grown to between 60 and 70.<sup>115</sup> By 1900, the overcrowding problem had grown even worse. Estimates indicated that there were 8,500 new students beginning the 1903-04 school year, bringing the total enrollment to 275,000. The previous year, there had been nearly 6,000 new faces. Chicago simply could not keep up with the kind of expansion that brought over 14,000 new students in just two years. In 1903 alone, the city erected seven new schools and a nine-room addition to an existing structure—improvements totaling over a million dollars—yet 8,000 children still began the year in rented facilities. “This record of building is declared to break all previous marks in the history of the board,” an official said. “Never before has the architect's

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<sup>115</sup> Herrick, *Chicago's Schools*, 44, 58

department been so rushed in the preparation of plans.” Labor issues and construction material shortages multiplied the complicated pragmatic concerns with raising so many buildings at once.<sup>116</sup>

An early example of this transfer crisis was the case of Samuel T. Jacob. A clerk in the office of a brick-making company, Jacob was the parent of a child named Gretchen who attended the Keith School on Dearborn and Thirty-Fourth streets in the increasingly African-American 2<sup>nd</sup> ward. In January of 1896, the Chicago School Management Committee granted Jacob’s request to transfer his daughter to the Raymond School, at Wabash Ave and Eda streets, over the objection of School Superintendent Albert G. Lane. Jacob’s reasons in requesting transfer were twofold: not only were around half the students at Keith African-American, but the school had recently hired a black teacher, Ada Johnson, in Gretchen’s classroom, who her father considered incompetent.<sup>117</sup> The controversy was seemingly compounded by the centuries-old white, male fear of black male sexual aggression toward “their” women; Jacob claimed that some black boys in Gretchen’s class had passed her “improper” notes.<sup>118</sup> Johnson, Gretchen Jacob’s teacher, was careful to specifically counter that charge, saying that she did not consider her classroom worse than any other. She also did not distinguish between the behavior of her black and white students, saying only, “while in my room the boys and girls are reasonably ordered and well behaved, I do not think they are worse than in other schools.

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<sup>116</sup> Quotation and figures this paragraph from *Chicago Tribune*, September 2, 1904, 7.

<sup>117</sup> As one white leader in Philadelphia commented in 1896, expressing a sentiment widely held throughout the North: “It is taken for granted that only white teachers shall be placed in charge of white children.” Douglas, “Limits,” n.78, 743.

<sup>118</sup> For a man who demonstrated a hesitancy toward miscegenation, “improper” could have indicated as much the identity of the note’s passer as the note’s content.

It is not often that I catch them writing notes or violating other rules....Violations of rules are promptly reported to higher authorities.”<sup>119</sup>

Johnson’s white principal, Victorine Havenhill, agreed. “There have been complaints,” she said, “but I do not know they are more numerous than at other schools where the scholarship is mixed. The same trouble probably exists in all public schools. Occasionally a note not exactly chaste will be written...Pupils inclined to be wayward or boisterous are watched by both parents and principal.”<sup>120</sup> While Havenhill did not express any misgivings per se about presiding over an integrated school, she did add that the race question had become “somewhat embarrassing and is constantly coming up in some way,” and referred any further queries to Superintendent Lane. For his part, Lane said that he would continue to refuse any transfers based solely on race. He had received over a hundred such requests for the Keith School, which held only around 325 white pupils, he said, and to honor them all would mean breaking up the school.<sup>121</sup>

The board didactically claimed that their decision in this case, at which they reportedly arrived without discussion, “was not to be considered as a precedent.” But an editorial in the *Inter Ocean* took issue with the board’s reluctance to accept responsibility for setting a precedent even while it clearly did so:

“If it is not to be considered a precedent it should not have been made a precedent. It stands a precedent. Denial to the next man who objects to having his ignorant white child taught by a competent teacher will savor of injustice, now that the prayer of the first man has been granted.

The schools of Chicago are open to black, white, yellow, and brown children. All races are eligible to the office of teacher...We regard the action of

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<sup>119</sup> *Chicago Times-Herald*, January 29, 1896, from IWP Box 14, Folder 21; *Chicago Inter Ocean*, January 30, 1896, from IWP Box 14: Folder 21; *Chicago Tribune* January 29, 1896, 9; *Chicago Tribune*, January 30, 1896, 4.

<sup>120</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, January 30, 1896, 4.

<sup>121</sup> *Chicago Tribune* January 29, 1896, 9.

the board of education as ill-advised. There must be no color line in the schools.”<sup>122</sup>

Appeals to reason notwithstanding, the transfer issue came to a head in 1905. Parents of white children at schools on the edge of the rapidly forming black belt—Keith, Raymond, Moseley, Farren, and Webster primarily—had for months been pressing the board to transfer their children to schools with a low percentage of African-Americans. The school board granted the majority of these requests, but in a short time their volume increased so rapidly that in early December of 1905, the Superintendent, Edwin Cooley, called the issue “unusually serious” and lamented that he did not know how to solve the problem. If he granted all the requests, Cooley recognized that he would have to shut down schools in some districts and open some in others, and in an already intricately complicated administrative situation, he knew this was impossible. Some of the members of the school board cynically reasoned that since the board had unlimited authority to transfer whomever it wished, it should simply grant all requests from white parents while denying those from black parents. This action would admittedly have the same effect as segregating the schools, this faction conceded, but it considered few other options available. “Other schools would have to be built just outside the ‘black belt’,” an official said, “but I believe this to be the only solution to the problem.”<sup>123</sup> From this perspective, segregation was evidently more of a practical problem than an issue to debate. Yet even if the school board could somehow decide on transfers on an objective basis without

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<sup>122</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean*, January 30, 1896, from IWP Box 14, Folder 21.

<sup>123</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, December 5, 1905, 9. *Chicago Evening Post*, December 5, 1905, 7. The former article also included estimates of the percentage of African-Americans in those schools as follows: Keith, at Dearborn and 34<sup>th</sup>, at 60 percent to 70 percent; Farren, at Wabash Avenue and Fiftieth Street, 30 percent; Webster, at Thirty-Third and Wentworth Avenue, 20 percent; Raymond, at Wabash Avenue and Thirty-Sixth Place, 20 percent; Moseley, at Michigan Avenue and Twenty-Fourth Street, 15 percent. Fuller, Parkman, Haven, Jones, and Tilden schools were also listed as possessing, “a large number of colored children.”

consideration to race, it faced severe objections from both white and black parents. Chicago's African-Americans protested against transfers that discriminated against them, while white parents objected to the board's refusal to grant those same transfers.

A 1908 story in the *Chicago Record-Herald* again implicitly accepted the right of white Chicago to uphold the color line, but echoed the logistical issues involved in solving transfer problems. "When one school becomes overcrowded," the paper opined, "the only remedy is to change the boundary lines between that district and an adjoining district where there are vacant rooms, but the protests which follow every change only emphasize the impossibility of making divisions which will serve to accommodate the greatest number of pupils and satisfy parents who demand discrimination."<sup>124</sup> Another article quoted a city alderman, who said that the transferring of white students from the Wells and Columbus schools to the Mitchell and Hayes schools (the latter two of which were predominantly black) would produce "trouble" from white parents. Yet again, the reasons for the transfers had to do with the necessity of "[giving] seats to all the pupils," so the logic of transfers angered both white and black families.<sup>125</sup> It should be noted, however, that black families fighting against inferior educational conditions for their children had far more to lose than whites who held superstitious beliefs about the consequences of their children sitting next to certain others.

Around this time, an African-American woman named Mary T. Johnson, who the *Chicago Defender* identified as "from Georgia (some white man's tool) and the 'southern society of Chicago' (white)," began going door to door in predominantly black

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<sup>124</sup> *Chicago Record-Herald*, October 14, 1908, 7. The use of the term "discrimination" here is ironically apt, as it seems to have been intended to mean special treatment (for those requesting transfer), rather than unfair treatment (against the remaining black students).

<sup>125</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean*, September 14, 1910, 10.

neighborhoods gathering signatures on a petition in favor of segregated schools in Chicago. According to the *Defender's* story, Johnson and her associates were trying to spread the message that black Chicago would be better off “without fights and without having white folks calling them names,” and thus segregation was the only answer. This perhaps did indicate the opinion of some African-Americans, but probably a number far less than a majority. In its rebuttal, the *Defender* exclaimed that black Chicago would only succeed in an integrated, free environment, and argued that adding the necessary number of schools to create segregation—five hundred, the paper estimated—would place a huge tax burden on the city’s residents. More notable than its particular objection to the petition, however, was the tactic the *Defender* used in response: it commissioned a photograph showing a “successful” integrated school—the Raymond School. The photograph, a blurry mess today, shows the 1909 graduating class at Raymond, which was comprised of approximately 35 pupils. Of these, about eight or nine appear dark-skinned. The picture proved “beyond a doubt,” according to the *Defender*, “that the races and their children can dwell together in harmony. May we never see the day come,” the editorial concluded, “when these little ones will be taught race hatred.” Also in the issue was a photograph of the South Park Athletic Association’s twelve members—including one black young man—neatly arranged in three rows with their hands on each other’s shoulders.<sup>126</sup> To whatever extent scenes like these represented actual racial harmony, however, there is little evidence of any significant number of integrated social groups in the city.

Beginning in the twentieth century, racial tension was far more common than benign miscegenation, and it was not long before violence in Chicago’s schools

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<sup>126</sup> Citations this paragraph from *Chicago Defender*, November 12, 1910, 1.

progressed from a simmer to a boil. A November 1902 school “race riot” at the Farren School (Fifty-Fifth Street and Wabash) resulted in the stationing of two policemen there days later. Apparently the trouble started after school when a group of white pupils attacked a group of blacks.<sup>127</sup> Hendricks School also saw fights between white and black pupils, some of whom carried weapons, according to the *Inter Ocean*.<sup>128</sup> In 1905, poor Irish immigrants (who still saw African-Americans as taking away their jobs and remained the most vehemently anti-black ethnic group) attacked black workers in a riot that left two dead and dozens wounded.<sup>129</sup> Then, in late June of 1905, on the day of the district-wide school commencement, Chicago police arrested James H. Brayton, the white principal of the Raymond school, on charges of assault. According to newspaper reports, Brayton had hit and forcibly ejected a black woman named Fannie Emanuel from the school, who he later claimed had been “disorderly.” When she arrived at the police station, according to witnesses, her clothes were torn and her face bruised.<sup>130</sup>

In November of that same year, there was a fight between white and black pupils at the Tilden School, on Elizabeth and Lake streets. According to a report in the *Tribune*, the trouble began when a black boy struck a white girl for unspecified reasons. A white boy then stepped in and pushed the instigator and from there the dispute erupted, culminating in “a pitched battle,” with stones hurled and alliances formed along racial lines.<sup>131</sup> The police were called, and they remained at the school the next day to enforce the peace. While the interim principal of the school tried to play down the incident, a

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<sup>127</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean*, November 14, 1902, from IWP Box 14, Folder 21.

<sup>128</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean*, March 5, 1904, 1, from IWP Box 14, Folder 20.

<sup>129</sup> Harris, *Black Workers*, 55. Harris called this incident a precursor to the devastating 1919 race riot.

<sup>130</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean* June 27, 1905, 12, from IWP Box 14, Folder 21, and *Chicago Tribune*, June 27, 1905, 2.

<sup>131</sup> *Chicago Record-Herald*, November 29, 1905, 9.

witness with a store on Lake Street, where the fight occurred, said it was “as near a riot as I ever saw.”<sup>132</sup>

The Copernicus School, which opened its doors in 1905 on the southwest side, also faced severe racial tension from its inception. As Michael Homel has shown, Copernicus was one of the few schools to maintain approximately the same racial mix of students across the Great Migration period. The school was 30 percent black in 1908 and 35 percent in 1930. But incidents occurred throughout that time that prevent Copernicus from representing a successful experiment in integration. In January of 1907, for example, the *Tribune* reported that black students at Copernicus, resentful that whites had been transferred from the Earl School to “their” turf, had started trouble. After a week of stirred up “race feeling,” which included threats by members of both “factions” against the other, the tension finally came to a head on January 10, when about 250 students engaged in pitched battle in front of the school with stones, hatpins, and even clubs. The police were again called and broke up the fight, but not before scores were left bloodied. According to the *Tribune*, “nearly all of the stories were to the effect that McAdee, the negro, was to blame.”<sup>133</sup> Armed, race riot-type standoffs would continue at Copernicus, with fights occurring every few days, according to one student. At the Keith School in 1908, where whites reportedly felt “threatened” by the black majority (this was the only school at this time with more blacks than whites), black students chased, beat, and threatened to kill a white girl who had told a teacher that they had searched the teacher’s desk.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, November 29, 1905, 7; *Chicago Record-Herald*, November 29, 1905, 9.

<sup>133</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, January 11, 1907, 3. *Chicago Inter Ocean*, January 11, 1907, 5, from IWP Box 14, Folder 21.

<sup>134</sup> Homel, “Negroes,” 11-12.

Yet another racial incident took place in November of 1909 at the Harvard School, Harvard Avenue and Seventy-Fifth Street. The week before, A. F. Fullmore, a sleeping car porter and a father of two, had moved into the school district, which to that point had contained only white children. Upon their attendance at the school, the children—ages 10 and 12—faced “sneering glances and covert insults” from the other students. That afternoon, Fullmore’s twelve-year old son was rushed by about twenty boys who began beating him; school officials broke up the fight and the boy was left with bruises.

As was often the case in this era, the solution to this friction burdened the victims as much as the initial problem. The school principal apparently decided that the easiest way to prevent further trouble was to keep the African-American children separated from the rest of the students during after-school hours. She thus told the Fullmore children to come ten minutes late to each class, promising that they would not be marked tardy, and ordered their teachers to let them leave school ten minutes early. This seemed to work fine in the *Record-Herald*’s view, but Fullmore, the father, was not placated. He believed that his children deserved more than discriminatory treatment. “That arrangement isn’t right at all,” he said. “My children are well behaved and no one should molest them. They won’t bother anyone else. If they have to wait until all the other pupils are in school and then hurry home ten minutes before the others get out they will become cowards. The school board ought to be able to furnish protection of another kind for my children...They have as much right on the street as any other children.”<sup>135</sup> In demanding equal treatment, Fullmore manifested an old-fashioned perception of northern black rights in an era when white southern philosophies were increasingly influencing northern

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<sup>135</sup> *Chicago Record-Herald*, November 11, 1909, 3.

standards. A. F. Fullmore had recognized the negative mental effect sneaking in and out of school would have on his children. The Harvard School principal, on the other hand, acknowledged only the Fullmore children's right to attend school in the most basic sense. In her mind, she was likely doing the Fullmores a favor by giving them special treatment.<sup>136</sup> In this case, equal access certainly did not bring about equal treatment.

The widening gap between the perceived entitlements of whites and blacks in Chicago influenced another incident that transpired at Wendell Phillips High School three years later. The controversy surrounded a survey the school handed out only to its African-American students. Many of the students took the survey slips to their parents, who congregated to demand an answer from the school principal as to why the survey had been handed out along race lines. Under the headline, "No Jim Crow Schools in Chicago," the *Defender*, ever optimistic, declared that the commotion surrounding the recent trouble at Wendell Phillips was overblown. According to the paper, the intent was innocent: Assistant Principal Charles H. Perrin had recently attended the meeting of the National Negro Business League. There he had learned that the organization placed a heavy emphasis on the collecting of statistics about black scholars, so he decided to conduct a similar study at Wendell Phillips. The *Defender* was quick to exonerate him of any attempt at racist administration: "What evidently would have proven quite a mess had turned out all right under the light of careful investigation. The *Chicago Defender* ends as it begins: No Jim Crow schools in Chicago, nor nothing that savors of

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<sup>136</sup> There is no record, unfortunately, of the outcome of this incident. Did the Fullmores continue to attend the same school? Were they treated better or worse after this incident? The extant sources do not say.

segregation.”<sup>137</sup> As a demand for the future, this exhortation made sense, but as a description of contemporary times, it was woefully out of touch.

The *Defender*'s willingly blind eye and Perrin's supposedly good intentions apart, the trouble at Phillips in this case most likely emerged from administrators who watched with curious trepidation as black pupils increasingly enrolled there. The school had opened in 1905 as a replacement for the crumbling South Division High, which had been almost entirely white. (In 1904, however, one year before South Division High became Wendell Phillips, an African-American woman named Florence Davis claimed valedictorian honors there. Despite apparent “disapproval” among her ninety-three classmates, no formal objection was made to Davis giving the class address.<sup>138</sup>) That the school board moved Phillips a number of blocks south, from 26<sup>th</sup> to 39<sup>th</sup> streets, and that they had named it after a famous abolitionist, were probably not coincidence.<sup>139</sup> By 1900, it was clear that the black areas would be carved out of the ever-expanding South side, so the school board was likely aware that they were setting up Wendell Phillips for at least a partially black enrollment.<sup>140</sup> A 1906 Phillips yearbook shows only a few black faces in the graduating class, but by 1910 Phillips enrolled more African-American students than any other Chicago high school—thirty-seven according to Philip Daniel.<sup>141</sup> Twenty years later, Phillips would become almost entirely black.

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<sup>137</sup> *Chicago Defender*, September 28, 1912, 1.

<sup>138</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean*, May 17, 1904, 6.

<sup>139</sup> As to the name change, the board considered naming the school “Jeremiah Slocum” before settling on Phillips. See *Chicago Tribune*, February 15, 1903, 17. For school addresses, see Chicago Board of Education, *Directory of the Chicago Public Schools* (Chicago: Board of Education, 1900).

<sup>140</sup> For locations of ethnic neighborhoods, see map inserts to Chicago Department of Development and Planning, *Historic City: The Settlement of Chicago* (Chicago: Department of Development and Planning, 1976).

<sup>141</sup> See Wendell Phillips High School, *Red and Black* 9, no. 8 (June, 1906), n.p. Statistic from Daniel, *Dilemma*, 131.

In pointing to the reasons southerners decided to move north during the 1910s, James Grossman wrote that Phillips High became famous in the South as an institution that “promised hope” to prospective migrants who dreamed of a life without the strictures of legalized Jim Crow. Because, for a time at least, Phillips permitted its white and black students to attend school together on the same general grounds, Phillips was the quintessential school to which the *Chicago Defender* pointed in characterizing educational opportunities for African-Americans in the North during the Great Migration.<sup>142</sup> But even as reports in the *Defender* glowed, the demographics of the school were changing. And as enrollment gradually shifted from predominantly white to mostly black, racial incidents increased.

Under the headline “Race War in a High School,” for example, the *Tribune* reported a white-on-black fight in the Phillips High assembly room. Apparently, Leo Stevens, an expelled black former student at Phillips had returned and “insulted a white girl.” A white boy then hit Stevens, some black boys responded, a group of white football players on their way to practice got involved, and the brawl erupted. According to the *Tribune*, Principal Spencer Smith stopped the fracas before it became serious beyond some drawn blood and black eyes.<sup>143</sup> But the fight’s details are not entirely clear, as the *Defender* disputed almost every detail of the *Tribune*’s story. The *Defender* agreed that a former student had visited the school and that the assistant principal had warned him to stay away “in the presence of many colored and white students.” But in the *Defender*’s version, it was one of the (white) witnesses to this incident that sent the report

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<sup>142</sup> James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 36, 81.

<sup>143</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, November 1, 1912, 3.

to the *Tribune* about the “race war.” “We know positively,” the *Defender* assured its readers, “that this report was unfounded.”<sup>144</sup>

It would be easy to discount either version of the story, and both papers had their reasons for portraying the events as they did. But while these kinds of disputes sometimes proved relatively harmless, the *Defender* should not have been hasty to gloss over any racial issues at Wendell Phillips, and in coming years the paper would have to change its assessment regarding the lack of segregation in Chicago’s schools.<sup>145</sup> In March of 1914, the *Defender* reported that the dean of the school, Fanny R. Smith, had scheduled two separate school dances at Wendell Phillips, concluding that “the Afro-American children could enjoy themselves much better if they were by themselves, that the white pupils would not come and that would mar the social side of school life.”<sup>146</sup> In a similar incident from the next year, Smith again showed her lack of understanding of the complaints against her. The school social rooms were available for reservation by any of the pupils, she said. “The negro pupils also had full use of the room whenever it was not already in use....Because several of them had been kept out, however, when white girls were entertaining, there had been hard feelings.”<sup>147</sup> Smith clearly assumed that the dangers of sexual miscegenation were evident to all Chicagoans and saw no need to hide her prejudices. The *Defender* looked at the issues from a different angle. The paper composed a vitriolic torrent against the incident, writing, “Miss Smith’s foxy little move has been nipped in the bud. If it crops up again there will be no social side to

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<sup>144</sup> *Chicago Defender*, November 9, 1912, 1.

<sup>145</sup> In these early years of the Great Migration, the *Defender*, like other boosters of the city who had an economic interest in its popularity, promoted Chicago as a great place for African-Americans to find jobs and make money, and thus the paper was often quick to downplay racial incidents that stood in the way of this progress.

<sup>146</sup> *Chicago Defender*, March 21, 1914, 1.

<sup>147</sup> *Chicago Herald*, January 18, 1915, 9.

school life because the parents of the Afro-American children attending the public schools can not and will not stand for it.” This threat seems a bit overstated— withdrawing from school social affairs would simply hand segregationists victory—but the casual nature of Smith’s idea for two dances showed just how poisonous the slow-moving cultural sensibilities of a mass majority could be.<sup>148</sup>

It appears as if the *Defender*’s prediction did come true, however, though perhaps not in the exact way the paper envisioned. Claiming that segregation problems were disappearing in the public schools, by April of 1915 Superintendent Ella Flagg Young had abolished social hour altogether. “When the children are in the classrooms and at work, or associated together in intellectual pursuits, race distinction is never thought of,” she claimed. “It was only when they were together on a purely social basis that difficulty came. So I had substituted for the dancing and social entertainment semi-intellectual hours. Here the racial distinction again wore away.” In her next breath, Young praised her black students, saying that they had come so far. “Twelve years ago they were lolling around in their seats and laughing with no purpose of mind. Now they sit erect and tense. They pay attention and they understand. They are keen to learn and to improve themselves.” Not only this, but black students were “absorbing the racial characteristics of the white people. That is why they work in perfect accord with white children in intellectual tasks.”<sup>149</sup>

Although she saw assimilation as the only legitimate option for African-Americans, Young’s perspective was typical of a European-American on the more open-

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<sup>148</sup> All data this paragraph, unless noted, from *Chicago Defender*, March 21, 1914, 1. If nothing else, however, in this incident Smith inadvertently did a favor for historians, as she compiled a list of Wendell Phillips’ black students at the time, which contained twenty-nine names [see Appendix C].

<sup>149</sup> Ella Flagg Young quotes from *Chicago Herald*, April 13, 1915, 5.

minded end of the spectrum. Most whites of this time seemed incapable of perceiving any sort of blanket humanity dictating that all people seek to excel in the environment in which they are placed. She, as many of her companions, was stuck in her culturally narrow, pseudo-scientific worldview, which ascribed to fundamental racial characteristics almost every success or failure in or out of the classroom. She also took an equally narrow, pragmatic approach to race relations: if there was a problem, eliminating the symptom (social hour) was easier than taking on the bigger challenges (white racism and a huge cultural gap between the educational standards of white and black society). Nonetheless, Young, who is regarded as a pioneer Chicago educator, was ideologically committed to fair education. She had demonstrated a deep commitment to democratic ideals in her dissertation, on the marginalization of certain school children, which she concluded by writing: "From the entrance upon the first year in the kindergarten till the close of the student life, if the school functions as an intrinsic part of this democracy, the child, the youth, and the teacher will each be an organic factor in an organization where rights and duties will be inseparable; where the free movement of thought will develop great personalities."<sup>150</sup> The problem was that Young did not have a recipe for making these ideals real. In black Chicago before the Great Migration (as after it), the great personalities she mentioned may have developed, but the democratic school did not.

Not all of the racism in pre-Great Migration Chicago emerged from the kind of unintentional double standard exemplified by Ella Flagg Young, however. There was at least one incident of open and unrequited discrimination in Chicago's schools, and it plainly exposed the deep-set fears of twentieth-century white America. At the Art Institute of Chicago in 1911, an eighteen-year old white female model named Mamie

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<sup>150</sup> Ella Flagg Young, "Isolation in the School" (LL.D Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1900), 57.

Blanha refused to pose nude in front of a life drawing course because there was a black man, Thomas Downs, in the classroom. "I'll not pose as long as that man is here," Blanha was quoted as protesting, "you will have to get him to leave if I am to stay." Apparently Downs objected, but he found no support among the class, which was comprised entirely of white males aside from him, and he left quietly. The *Chicago Inter Ocean* reported that after the class, the men all crowded around Blanha and praised her, as if she had spoken for them all. Other models, when they heard of Blanha's "stand," also expressed their support and understanding. The incident was of course centered on the borderline sexual quality of this otherwise mundane encounter between the races. "I was told before I went on into the classroom that there was one Negro in the class, and I was so frightened I did not know what to do," Blanha said. "I felt just like I imagined I should if some Negro had seized me when I was in the street. I shivered all over." The *Inter Ocean* opined somewhat drastically that the incident "may lead to the exclusion of Negro men from all life classes where girls pose."<sup>151</sup>

There was no basis for Blanha's fears other than racism; Downs had studied at the Art Institute for four years, and was by all measures in good standing there. There was also no evidence he had ever been involved in any sort of unsavory activity. The color of his skin, and the accompanying mythologies white society ascribed to it, were the sole basis for Blanha's fear. Downs was one of four black students attending the school at the time, but the only one in a life drawing class. His take on the incident was that it was not Blanha but another unnamed man in his class who wanted to see him excluded, and *he* had put Blanha up to the task. Ralph Holmes, the Secretary of the Art Institute, confirmed as much, saying that a student had come to see him two weeks before, asking

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<sup>151</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean*, March 28, 1911, 1.

that Downs be excluded from the class, but that Holmes had refused on lack of grounds. Holmes was no champion of racial equality, however, and he claimed that if Blanha did not want to pose in front of an African-American, “I presume she has a right not to, and at any rate, no effort will made to force her to do so.” Holmes also said the problem was “not at all serious,” because there were so few blacks attending the school. Downs agreed that there was little leeway for him to cry foul. “If I stood on my rights, I suppose I could insist on remaining in any class, but I have no desire to affront the feelings of people who do not care to pose before me or to make myself an object of dislike to them,” he told the *Inter Ocean*.<sup>152</sup> More likely, Downs understood that the courts would offer him little solace. To sue successfully under the Illinois Civil Rights Act of 1885, he would have had to prove that he was expelled because he was dark-skinned, rather than because he was a “nonmember” of the class, as Holmes claimed. Again, in 1911, this would have proven quite difficult.

Still, not all Chicagoans agreed with Downs’ tame stance. In a letter to the editor of the *Inter Ocean*, a reader chastised the paper’s meek response to the incident. “The recent Art Institute ‘comedy’ oughtn’t to go by without your editorial comment,” Uriah N. Murray wrote. “If newspapers of the North fail to notice such incidents as they crop up from time to time, it seems to me that these things will continue to occur and cast an indelible blot on the civilization of this country.” Murray compared the racial climate in the United States to that of Europe. “Didn’t England have slaves too? Isn’t she just as much justified (if justification it be) to treat the negroes of the West Indies as barbarously as America does the negroes of this country?” he asked, while expressing his admiration

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<sup>152</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean*, March 29, 1911, 3.

that American blacks unhesitatingly volunteered for the nation's wars despite their rough treatment.<sup>153</sup>

Mainstream (read: white) public opinion, however, validated the view of miscegenation offered by Blanha, not Uriah N. Murray. The Art Institute confrontation merely exemplified that in the 1910s in Chicago, segregation had become openly legitimized. No longer would white racists have to hide their prejudices behind transfer requests based supposedly on the simple logistics of overcrowding. Now, neighborhood associations sought openly to prevent African-Americans from living—and thus attending school—in “their” areas of town. With transfer requests all but closed to black Chicagoans, the neighborhoods where families lived entirely controlled where their children went to school. The changes the Chicago School Board made to school boundaries need to be more closely studied (and there seems to be no extant record of exactly how school district boundaries changed through the years), but it is likely that the alterations the Board of Education enacted—like its resolution of June 21, 1905, which redrew the boundaries of Lake and Wendell Phillips High Schools—served to promote, not diminish, segregation.<sup>154</sup>

There *is* plenty of data, however, pertaining to the efforts of one group that put itself at the forefront of the drive to limit the living patterns of Chicago's African-Americans: the Hyde Park Improvement Protective Club. This was a semi-official, unfunded arm of the Hyde Park Protective Association, a prohibition group whose existence went back at least as far as 1894, when its members protested the proposed construction of a natatorium and resort at Fifty-Fifth and Lake Michigan because of

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<sup>153</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean*, April 1, 1911, 6.

<sup>154</sup> See, for example, Proceedings of Board of Education, City of Chicago, July 6, 1904 to June 21, 1905, 781.

worries that the new facility would attract unsavory and immoral drinkers.<sup>155</sup> In its drive to stave off the “invasion of negroes” into Hyde Park in 1909, however, the club had found a deeper calling than the more mundane issues with which its mother organization dealt. “Our position in this controversy,” one member claimed, “is simply that we are doing all in our power to get real estate owners in the large district in which our property lies to band together to keep negroes out.”<sup>156</sup> Exactly what was so disagreeable about African-Americans living in Hyde Park was not made entirely clear, but the implication was that property values would fall if large numbers of black Chicagoans moved into the area.<sup>157</sup>

Black homeowners in the neighborhood the Protective Club now labeled “white”—some who had lived there their entire lives—objected. “We don’t want to move out,” read one family’s statement. “We came here to live because we like the house. It doesn’t matter what those in the neighborhood think. Offers of bonuses [to move out] have been made us, but were not accepted and will not be.” The umbrella Hyde Park Protective Association denied that there was official money involved, but seemed to suggest that black residents should be paid if they left. Judging from a certain defensiveness on the part of a few black Hyde Park residents regarding the prices they were charging for their property, there also seemed to be charges floating around that black residents were asking exorbitant rates for their real estate. Evidently, the white racist community wanted to have it both ways: they demanded both all-white neighborhoods *and* the right to buy up black property at artificially low prices. A. L.

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<sup>155</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, June 17, 1894, 15. For prohibition identification, see *Chicago Defender*, February 24, 1912.

<sup>156</sup> Quotations from *Chicago Tribune*, August 22, 1909, 2.

<sup>157</sup> This was a passive logic by which white homeowners could claim that they did not object to blacks *per se*, but rather simply did not want to see their property values fall.

Williams, a longtime black resident of Hyde Park, who claimed that his land, within one block of the Hyde Park Hotel, was the main cause of the uproar, called those charges “bosh.” As one of the largest owners in that section of the city, he asserted his willingness “to sell my property at reasonable figures if my white neighbors signify they don’t want me.”<sup>158</sup>

Three years later, although the *Chicago Defender* said that it had only “a few disgruntled members,” and notwithstanding its parent organization’s attempts to distance itself from its similarly named cousin, the Hyde Park Improvement Protective Club was still active. By this time, the *Defender* (in accordance with its name) was striving to roust black support against the persistent drive for segregation. An editorial in that paper by Mildred Miller compared the Protective Club’s efforts to, among other things, the dual class society of ancient Rome, and addressed the notion proffered by the club that segregation would be better for both white and black students. Notably, the article also equated Chicago’s black children with the white European immigrants who were firmly entrenched as an integral part of the city. “Place a few real Irish, German, Dutch, or any foreign boys in an American public school and they will fare no better than the negro boy,” Miller wrote, and then asked sarcastically, “would it be better for these foreign parents and boys for the boys to be placed in a separate room for protection?” No, she countered, “rather let negroes and white boys study and play together as children and they will grow to a better understanding and live more peaceably side by side as neighbors when they grow to be citizens, for the negro is here to stay.”<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Citations this paragraph from *Chicago Tribune*, August 22, 1909, 2.

<sup>159</sup> Citations this paragraph from *Chicago Defender*, February 24, 1912, 1.

The *Defender* advocated several strategies to fight against the drive of the Protective Club, including the boycotting of businesses run by club members. First, the paper screamed that if Chicago's blacks did not vacate the rental apartments of George Cave, a white landlord who supported the Jim Crow schools, "they have no race pride." Miller's article also gave examples of black students who succeeded in classes with white counterparts and noted that "a few negro teachers are drawing salaries for teaching white children," even while she invoked class standing in claiming that "colored teachers with almost never an exception come from the best families and are the highest type of womanhood." Lastly, Miller urged the black community to turn the drive for school segregation into a blessing. "If the negro citizens of Chicago will study this 'Jim Crow' effort right now and do a little thinking for themselves and cast their ballot accordingly in the coming election," she wrote, "then will the 'Jim Crow' action of the Hyde Park club defeat its own aim and prove to black Chicago a blessing curiously disguised."<sup>160</sup>

In another article in the same edition of the paper, the *Defender* elaborated on these ideas. It was time, the paper said, for increased black representation in key political perches. There was no black alderman, school board official, or employee in the mayor's office, "and in none of these places will there be a negro to stand up for justice and to plead for the equality of all citizens under the law." "The *Defender* wants to go on record at this time as demanding," the editorial continued, "not only that every negro do his duty in trying to elect a colored alderman, by supporting Mr. E. H. Wright, who is the only colored man running for that office, but we here and now demand that Mayor Harrison give us representation on the board of education."<sup>161</sup> Unfortunately, Wright did not win

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<sup>160</sup> Citations this paragraph from *Chicago Defender*, February 24, 1912, 1.

<sup>161</sup> *Chicago Defender*, February 24, 1912, 8.

his seat, and as mentioned, Harrison did little while in office to make life better for black Chicago. Mildred Miller, the *Defender* reporter, wrote a follow-up article editorializing on the reasons for Wright's defeat. She chalked it up to "jealousy" and "lack of race pride" among the black community, and went on to lament, "there are those of the race who will not help to elevate a negro to any place of honor that they themselves have not or can not obtain." Apparently, a lack of passion against the issue of school segregation also played a part, as the six thousand black voters in the second ward in which Wright ran held substantial power to elect any candidate they chose if they voted as a bloc.<sup>162</sup> Miller's tone in lamenting Wright's loss contained a mix of frustration and patronization, but she still seemed committed to stirring opposition against the school segregation issue, and she called for an assembly the following day at the Frederick Douglass Center, a meeting place for black leaders, to discuss her original article advocating the boycott.<sup>163</sup>

Undeterred, in March of 1912 the Hyde Park Club held a meeting of their own to protest the planned move of the Home of the Good Shepard for Colored Girls, a Progressive-style center for "dependent and neglected" African-American women and girls, into Hyde Park. The only dissenting vote in the club's resolution to protest what it again called an "invasion" was cast by an "aged minister" named Rev. John T. Jenifer. Jenifer's speech, eloquent in its passion, supposedly provoked a near riot at the meeting. "There is something to me more sacred than property rights," the *Tribune* quoted him,

"and that is the right of liberty of mankind and the sacred rights of citizenship guaranteed the citizens of this country by the laws. I conceive that such an institution is indispensable and is one of which this city should be proud and not ashamed. It is far better that these dependent negro girls be taken care of than be

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<sup>162</sup> For Wright loss, see *Chicago Defender*, March 9, 1912, 7. For six thousand black voters in the second ward, see *Chicago Defender*, February 24, 1912, 8.

<sup>163</sup> *Chicago Defender*, March 9, 1912, 7.

left to drift into evil and become a menace. I am in favor of this and similar institutions in Hyde Park or anywhere else where good can be accomplished.”<sup>164</sup>

Although Jenifer’s speech invoked many commonly held Progressive beliefs regarding social uplift, objections to his words were immediate. Again, the primary protest was that if the school was allowed to proceed as planned, property values would drastically depreciate, although participants also voiced concerns about day-to-day miscegenation, including interracial marriage, integrated schools, and “social equality.” It appears that reformers’ moves to help the needy, widely popular in one of the leading cities during what historians have dubbed the “Progressive Era,” extended only so far. Not in its backyard, the Hyde Park Club insisted.

Another meeting of the Protective Club, held three months later, showed that it had broadened its goals. Sixty-six members convened with the purpose of again promoting, more than fifty years after its short initial tenure, a segregated school in Chicago. A card of invitation circulated in the neighborhood, according to the *Defender*, “cordially” invited locals to attend a meeting with the purpose of discussing not only separate schools, but, in the *Defender*’s words, “how some negroes buy houses or flats with a view of selling out to their white neighbors at a profit.” (Exactly what was so unusual about buying real estate and selling it at a profit, the article did not clarify). The *Defender* minced few words in calling the Hyde Park outfit a “band of South Carolina Red-Shirters, Georgia Klu-Klux and bad men in general,” as well as a “small coterie of no-account Caucasians” and “a set of white rascals in Hyde Park who do not amount to anything in their own race, never did anything for anyone and never will.” That the paper called the club southerners (they were most likely thoroughly Chicagoan) demonstrates

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<sup>164</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, March 16, 1912, 3.

the assumptions of the black community of this time: segregation was a southern problem, so anyone in favor of it in Chicago must be from the land of Dixie.

The *Defender* took the club's efforts seriously because the paper's editors clearly recognized that it was not just whites on the fringes who might support another attempt at school segregation, but the city at large. And if *de facto* segregation had not been more politically facile than *de jure*, perhaps official segregation would again have taken hold. At any rate, the *Defender* again urged a publicity campaign directed at Mayor Harrison and employing "the plainest English." "Give his honor to understand," the paper editorialized, "that the consensus of the colored citizens of the city of Chicago is that he should use his authority as a chief executive of this city to abolish this dirty, race-disturbing, and no-account organization." The article went on to insist that the Illinois Governor would no doubt investigate, and concluded, "there shall be no 'jim crow' schools in Chicago, the Hyde Park Improvement Protective Club notwithstanding. The Negroes in Chicago are not an experiment; they are tried and true and they will not tolerate this mad idea of a lot of disgruntled southern nobodies."<sup>165</sup>

Experiment or not, blacks in Chicago could do little to stop residential segregation, which Thomas Philpott found to be "nearly complete" by 1900.<sup>166</sup> Philpott illustrated examples of the pressures on hotel owners in the district of Woodlawn, for example, who began to let their (worst) rooms to blacks after the close of the World's Fair in 1897, until neighboring property owners rose up against the hotel owners and demanded the blacks move out. In other words, whether they were racists or not, it was

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<sup>165</sup> *Chicago Defender*, June 22, 1912, 1. Here the *Defender* again attributed housing segregation to the South. Chicago, it seemed to say, was above these sorts of blunt attempts at discrimination.

<sup>166</sup> Thomas Lee Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto: Immigrants, Blacks, and Reformers in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1978), 131.

simply more expedient for white businesspeople to find other (lighter-skinned) customers than to attempt to fight such deeply ingrained racism. Unwitting migrant blacks who had little idea of proper rental prices also compounded the housing situation by paying exorbitant rents to crooked white landlords for sub-standard housing within the rapidly forming South Side ghetto. As this process became more common toward the start of the twentieth century, the housing situation—and the rift between black migrants and white natives—worsened.

By 1912, when a *Defender* advertisement for a room to let could plainly read, “whites \$25, Negroes \$37,” the segregation battle was fundamentally over.<sup>167</sup> Not only had racist whites—through the use of restrictive covenants, informal alliances, and the faceless market’s assignation of property values—hemmed blacks into a narrow strip of land on the South Side, but a 1909 Chicago Vice Commission report showed that in terms of crime, the worst area in the entire city, the so-called vice district, was intertwined with the black belt. In 1912, after Booker T. Washington called for blacks to eliminate “vice areas” from their communities, one leader of black Chicago retorted:

“A good deal of the vice in the ‘colored belt’ is the white man’s vice, thrust there by the authorities against the protest of the colored people. But the thing runs deeper than that. Vice and crime are in large measure the result of idleness, of irregular employment, and even of regular employment that is underpaid and exhausting. It would be fatuous for the white community to deny its responsibility, in very large measure, for the economic conditions under which thousands of Negro men and women struggle right here in Chicago.”<sup>168</sup>

Black leaders also complained to the chief of police about the prevalence of prostitutes in middle class neighborhoods that same year, but the chief’s solution was merely to order the prostitutes to operate west of Wentworth Avenue and east of Wabash, an area that

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<sup>167</sup> Daniel, Daniel, *Secondary*, 154. It appears as if the *Defender* willingly ran blatantly racist advertisements such as these.

<sup>168</sup> Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 56.

contained the largest concentration of blacks in the city.<sup>169</sup> White city officials had inadvertently validated Booker T. Washington's objection to segregation, which lucidly described the high stakes involved in living arrangements:

“The negro objects to being segregated because it usually means that he will receive inferior accommodations in return for the taxes he pays. If the negro is segregated, it will probably mean that the sewerage in his part of the city will be inferior; that the streets and sidewalks will be neglected; that the street lighting will be poor; that his section of the city will not be kept in order by the police and other authorities; and that the ‘undesirables’ of other races will be placed near him, thereby making it difficult for him to rear his family in decency.”<sup>170</sup>

To this day, the most dangerous neighborhoods in Chicago—and some of the city's roughest schools—still exist within the city's black South Side. This is in no small part due to the work of segregationist groups like the Hyde Park Improvement Protective Club, completed over one hundred years ago.

As the Great War consumed the attention of Americans and industry leaders scrambled to keep production levels high, more and more southern blacks boarded Jim Crow trains for the long ride north to work in stockyards, train cars, and, increasingly, factories. For twenty years, these migrants had heard stories, first-hand and through letters, about the blessings of life in Chicago. But rarely did these letters make mention of the kinds of discrimination outlined above. When the *Chicago Defender* began circulation in the South in the 1910s, many migrants recognized that the benefits of Chicago included (at least in theory) not just the promise of economic inclusion, but also the right to vote, to share integrated public accommodations, to live without fear of violent persecution, and significantly, to good schools.

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<sup>169</sup> In 1917, the Chicago Real Estate Board proposed restrictive covenants to preserve the residential segregation already in place, and by 1920, the area around Wendell Phillips High School had become a center for prostitution, gambling, and marijuana. See Daniel, *Secondary*, 152, 156.

<sup>170</sup> Booker T Washington, "My View of Segregation Laws," *The New Republic*, December 4, 1915, 113-14.

But in their decisions to move north, southern blacks more often than not reacted to idealized perceptions of the northern racial climate rather than specific knowledge of life in Chicago, and thus the conditions they experienced on arrival were sometimes disappointing. “These prospective migrants assumed that access was the crucial issue and that it was race and region that limited access,” wrote James Grossman. “Only later would their children learn the limited efficacy of access in the absence of community power and economic resources.”<sup>171</sup> Still, especially in regard to educational opportunities, to look at the numbers for the South is to understand why schools in Chicago became prime draws. Whatever hardships migrants may have faced in Chicago were minor compared to the strictures of Mississippi or Alabama. In 1910, for example, there were 290,000 African-American citizens, ages 15 to 20, attending school in the South. Of these, only 25,000 were above the elementary level. This meant that 90 percent of black southerners were overage pupils in the elementary grades. And that is to say nothing of the quality of the segregated, under-funded, overcrowded southern schools, which was extremely low.<sup>172</sup> African-Americans who lived in the South faced virtually no chance to elevate their status as workers and learners on the bottom rung of the economic and social ladders. Whatever the North had to offer, then, was certainly an improvement, and migration increasingly seemed the best option for southerners as the twentieth century progressed.

Yet historians have too often absorbed this same logic of relative conditions in their portrayals of urban northern history. While racial conditions in the North were indeed “better” in general than those to the South, black life in a city like Chicago could

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<sup>171</sup> Grossman, *Land of Hope*, 36.

<sup>172</sup> Daniel, *Secondary*, 150.

be difficult nonetheless. After all, when faced with confining job prospects, low pay, rents far above market value, and violent, white gangs at school, few longtime members of black Chicago likely shrugged these hindrances off as “better” than anything. The poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar, himself the only black member of his high school in Dayton, Ohio, said in 1903 that the race line in Chicago was just as prevalent as it was in the South, even while he pointed to institutions, like Provident Hospital, that gave cause for pride.<sup>173</sup>

The Chicago Commission on Race Relations, created to investigate the terrible 1919 race riot, found that by the 1910s, the Chicago School Board had completely ceased counting the number of black children and teachers in any school or in the city at large.<sup>174</sup> Ostensibly, this was done in the name of fair treatment; if race was not used as a stamp of identity, the concept was that no decisions could be made on a racial basis. But in spite of official denial, the commission’s report made it evident that predominantly black schools received vastly different treatment, by 1919, than did those that were mostly white.<sup>175</sup> The facilities in the majority-black schools were greatly inferior to those of the white, and thus teachers and principals working in schools with significant minorities of African-Americans—20 or 30 percent—constantly worried that their workplaces would be regarded as “Negro schools,” and treated with the according stigma.<sup>176</sup> The commission also found that “the most important factor determining the attitude of the

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<sup>173</sup> *Chicago Inter Ocean*, July 5, 1903, from IWP Box 31, Folder 4.

<sup>174</sup> Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *Report*, 239.

<sup>175</sup> Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *Report*, 244.

<sup>176</sup> Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *Report*, 245.

teachers in a school was invariably the attitude of the principal.”<sup>177</sup> Needless to say, there were no black principals in the entire city of Chicago at this time.<sup>178</sup>

Notably, when the Chicago Commission on Race Relations asked teachers to assess the racial situation in their school, the answers they received varied widely, and thus the commission could make no generalizations that could successfully predict racial climate based on the racial composition of schools.<sup>179</sup> “In schools where the principals were sympathetic and the interracial spirit good,” the commission wrote, “the teachers reported that Negro children were much like the other children....” But the commission also acknowledged that personal politics played a role; the head of a school that was twenty percent black reported more problems than schools that were almost entirely black, but also declared that she was in favor of separate schools. A teacher in the same school contradicted her colleague’s assertions, saying that there was no higher incidence of problems among black students. In the end, while the Chicago Commission on Race Relations had trouble arriving at a clear statistical picture of the racial situation in Chicago’s schools, it did find persistence evidence, by 1919, of discrimination. In writing this thesis, my process and conclusion have been much the same.

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<sup>177</sup> Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *Report*, 245.

<sup>178</sup> Maudelle Brown Bousfield was the first black principal in the city. She worked at Wendell Phillips from 1939 to 1950. See City of Chicago, *Chicago Landmarks: Wendell Phillips High School*, 2003, <<http://www.ci.chi.il.us/Landmarks/P/PhillipsHighSchool.html>> (21 October, 2007).

<sup>179</sup> Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *Report*, 245.

## **Chapter 4: Conclusion and Epilogue**

As this thesis demonstrates, racial friction in Chicago's schools has existed as long as the schools have. While members of the black community before the Great Migration were able to attend school with whites and thus were not subject to the targeted and systematic deprivations that *de facto* segregation allows, on an individual basis black Chicagoans faced second-class citizenship each and every day. Each of the violent racial incidents described above testify to many more that went unreported. And violence is only the most detectable form of discrimination; its existence testifies to many other invisible hardships. With fewer support systems and resources, and with even fewer job prospects than the war years would provide, the working-class pioneers of black Chicago lived under the deeply racist conventions of the United States from the city's founding through the early twentieth century. As I have described, there was cause for optimism in race relations in Chicago at various points between 1833 and 1914, but from a macroscopic vantage, the slope towards discrimination in that period remained constant. I have found no evidence that education, embedded as it was in the social fabric of the United States, presented any special island of safety for African-Americans, despite the assertions of some scholars.<sup>180</sup> Unless we look optimistically at the national picture of race relations up to 1914 or measure the North solely against the South and the pre-Great Migration period against only the post-, we find that American apartheid significantly hindered the rights of black Americans to the free, equal, and open system of education promised by the Constitution, the United States Congress, and Radical Reconstruction.

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<sup>180</sup> According to Mary Herrick, for example, white Chicago questioned the rights of African-Americans to attend integrated schools far less than they did to engage in other social functions, such as their ability to sit where they wanted in a theatre or to join an integrated union. Exactly how accurate this statement is, and if it is so, why this was the case, are questions for future studies. See Herrick, *Chicago's Schools*, 53.

Chicago presented many opportunities for economic, political, and educational advancement not found elsewhere, but for African-Americans, the pre-Great Migration Second City represents, in the words of Kevin Gaines, “more paradox than paradise.”<sup>181</sup>

While education constitutes just one of a variety of political and social rights contested in this period, I want to suggest certain similarities in scope if not scale to the southern narrative elucidated by Woodward and Rabinowitz. In this, I am not the first. Estelle Hill Scott wrote seventy years ago that “prior to 1915 the position of the Negro in the northern cities was not much different than from what it was in the South.”<sup>182</sup> Before the First World War, Chicagoans of all races were acutely aware of the racial climate in Dixie, and invoked its image for a wide range of purposes. For instance, in denying requests that they provide alternative or home schooling for households where the parents worked across the city while the children cared for the home, school officials cynically replied that no matter how bad educational conditions were in Chicago, life there was still better for blacks than conditions in the South.<sup>183</sup> But there are other parallels. The story of race relations in education in Chicago also began with the legal exclusion of blacks (most notably in the Illinois laws that restricted the migration of African-Americans to the state during the Civil War) and progressed to a state of semi-inclusion. As in the South, in Chicago, conditions worsened for the average school-going African-American in the last decade of the twentieth century, and especially after 1900. So it was not the Great Migration that brought on the rise of *de facto* school segregation, unequal facilities,

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<sup>181</sup> Kevin Gaines, "Rethinking Race and Class in African-American Struggles for Equality, 1885-1941," *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 2 (April 1997): 378.

<sup>182</sup> Scott, *Occupational*, 4.

<sup>183</sup> Philip T. K. Daniel, "A History of Discrimination Against Black Students in Chicago Secondary Schools," *History of Education Quarterly* 20 (Summer 1980), 154.

and Jim Crow social patterns; the influx of southern blacks moving north merely exacerbated conflicts that were well underway at the outset of World War I.

As the years progressed from 1833 to 1914, black Chicago's quest for social justice faded in an out of white society's consciousness, and it became increasingly unwise for African-Americans to complain about nonviolent incidents—such as school discrimination—if they could avoid doing so. Ever proud, yet insecure about their newfound metropolitan status, white Chicagoans constantly sought to prove their city's greatness, and found it easy to overlook the plight of their fellow citizens. Most Chicagoans, for example, looked at events like the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition as their chance to show the city's greatness to a closely watching world. But even at the fair, an event abundantly touted in its day and majestically depicted by historians since, a visitor could stroll from a 'civilized' Teutonic city to an unambiguously 'uncivilized' Dahomey village where tribespeople dressed in animal skins and other supposed representations of their culture.<sup>184</sup> The fair's planners had entirely excluded African-Americans from participating in the event, which was probably why one description of the Dahomey exhibit read: "Sixty-nine of them are here in all their barbaric ugliness, blacker than buried midnight and as degraded as the animals which prowl the jungles of their dark land. Dancing around a pole on which is perched a human skull, or images of reptiles, lizards and other crawling things, their incantations make the night hideous. In these wild people we can easily detect many characteristics of the American negro."<sup>185</sup> That few frowned at these exhibits—in fact, that most revered them—showed that the

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<sup>184</sup> For the majestic type of interpretation, see Larson, *Devil*.

<sup>185</sup> Philip Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown* (New York: Modern Library, 200), 89.

excitement of a city on the move often overshadowed whatever dark practices may have been needed to make its gears turn.<sup>186</sup>

The authors of this description were of course employing a version of the racialized language of the day, infused as it was with infantile anthropology and eugenic pseudo-science, but they still must be held responsible for their role in creating a racially insensitive climate in a city that owed its freedom directly to those black men and women.<sup>187</sup> Furthermore, it is no coincidence that brutal aggression followed these kinds of quaint racial euphemisms. Michael Klarman and Philip Dray both found evidence of “unprecedented” violence against blacks nationwide after 1885.<sup>188</sup> Bolstered by a bluntly racist immigration policy and a hypernationalist belief in American exceptionalism that would only be increased by the country’s imperial adventures after the Spanish-American War, European-Americans whipped themselves into an ideological frenzy that frequently culminated in violence.<sup>189</sup> Towards the turn of the century, race riots and lynching increased nationally. In 1886, there were 74 blacks lynched nationwide; by 1892, that number had risen to 162.<sup>190</sup> Whites attacked blacks in Wilmington, North Carolina in 1898, New York City in 1900, Atlanta in 1906, and Springfield, Illinois in 1908.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> For more on blacks at the Fair, see Christopher Robert Reed, *"All the World is Here!" The Black Presence at White City* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000).

<sup>187</sup> That is to say, without crucial support from African-Americans it is unlikely that the North could have won the Civil War.

<sup>188</sup> Klarman, *Plessy Era*, 338 and.

<sup>189</sup> This era presents some fascinating developments regarding United States immigration policy. The Chinese Exclusion Act was legislated in 1882, while an agreement in 1908 curbed the influx of Japanese migrants. It was not until 1899 that the Immigration Service began to classify immigrants by “race or people”—on almost purely pseudo-scientific and racist grounds. And the anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic American Protective Association was formed in 1887, and reached the height of its popularity in the mid-1890s, when it boasted 2.5 million members. See Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 18, 19, 25.

<sup>190</sup> Dray, *Hands*, iii.

<sup>191</sup> This while most of the nation looked proudly on William McKinley as he proclaimed in 1901, “We are reunited. Sectionalism has disappeared,” even as a new era of American imperialism had begun and Jim Crow segregation had taken hold. See Klarman, *Plessy Era*, 315.

Before the beginning of World War I, the number of total lynchings rose to eleven hundred.<sup>192</sup> Even the President himself supported these backward racial notions: in 1905 Teddy Roosevelt expressed the feelings of many white Americans when he said that in the great land over which he presided, “race purity must be maintained.”<sup>193</sup>

In the face of this terror, hundreds of thousands of black Americans moved north as soon as they were able. By 1900, eighty percent of Chicago’s black population had been born in states other than Illinois.<sup>194</sup> In 1903, W. E. B. DuBois commented that “the most significant economic change among Negroes in the last ten or twenty years has been their influx into northern cities.”<sup>195</sup> In fact, in the course of researching and writing this thesis, I have come to question why historians locate the beginning of the Great Migration after 1914 at all. Aside from the damaging long-term effects that near total *de facto* segregation inflicted on black Chicago after the Great War began, nearly all of the elements that characterized the Great Migration—except the massive numbers of immigrants who flooded the city after 1914—were present at the turn of the century. Moreover, between 1880 and 1900, the percentages of increase of African-Americans to Chicago by decade were nearly the same as for 1910-1930 (see Table II). Thus, especially regarding segregation, we can trace the beginnings of the Great Migration to the 1880s.

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<sup>192</sup> Branham, “Black Chicago,” 217.

<sup>193</sup> Klarman, *Plessy Era*, 338. This was not the worst of TR’s transgressions against black people. Not only did he exclude blacks from his famous Rough Riders, but in his heroic retelling of the Battle of San Juan Hill, an account that gave him the national fame he would ride all the way to the White House, Roosevelt somehow neglected to mention that when the Rough Riders reached the top of the hill, they found that segregated black units had preceded them there. See Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty!: An American History*, Volume 2 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 576.

<sup>194</sup> Spear, *Black Chicago*, 11.

<sup>195</sup> Meier and Rudwick, *Plantation to Ghetto*, 234.

In proposing this paradigm shift, it seems even more tragic that the source base for such a fertile period is so sparse. Historians have ten times the information about certain parts of the colonial period than they do for turn-of-the-century black Chicago. At many points in the research for this project I have been frustrated by dead ends in the archives. Nonetheless, I have attempted to carve out a probable picture of education in this period using a combination of the available primary and secondary documents, extant statistics, and peripheral records that point to the educational circumstances black Chicagoans most likely faced. Where I have come across raw data that I thought might be useful for future scholars of this topic, I have included it in the appendices.

A great deal of additional research is necessary to re-contextualize our understanding of the lengths to which northern black Americans went to establish their own vision of a post-emancipation America. The 1870s and 1880s are especially uncharted decades. The role of gender in all of these educational developments is similarly unexplored. A deeper, quantitative, look at census data to chart living and school patterns, enrollments, transfers, changing school boundaries, and administrative decisions, is also necessary. But to examine the local, national, and regional trends is to see that there never was any truly open, golden era of urban northern race relations in pre-Great Migration Chicago. The city was at the forefront of both integration and segregation.

One final source succinctly demonstrates this contradiction, and includes perhaps the best depiction of what it meant to be black in Chicago before the Great Migration. In 1904, Fannie Barber Williams submitted a short article, titled, “A Northern Negro’s

Autobiography,” to the magazine *The Independent*.<sup>196</sup> As a teacher, activist, and reformer born in 1855 in western New York who came to Chicago in 1887, Williams had seen a previous series in the *Independent* about the “so-called race problem” in the United States, which included testimonials from a northern white woman, a southern black woman, and a southern white woman. Recognizing the obvious omission, Williams sent the magazine a richly detailed account of her own experiences, in which she vividly illustrated the paradox of living in Chicago. As an African-American Progressive reformer in an era of very few, Williams wrote that she often found herself working “hand in hand with white women on a common basis of fellowship and helpfulness.” Sounding much like F. L. Barnett above, who saw “little friction” between the races, Williams said that she “experienced very few evidences of race prejudice and perhaps more than my share of kindness and recognition.” But, she wrote, this kindness to her as an individual did not often extend to the cause of black rights in general:

“I soon discovered that it was much easier for progressive white women to be considerate and even companionable to one colored woman whom they chanced to know and like than to be just and generous to colored young women as a race who needed their sympathy and influence in securing employment and recognition according to their tastes and ability.”

Williams provided a number of vivid examples of these kinds of situations, most involving employment she tried to secure for jobless young black women: a bank president who insisted skin color did not “cut any figure” with him but who failed to stand up to a board of directors that refused to hire African-Americans; a manager who claimed an abolitionist family and a desire to “help the colored people,” but who insisted

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<sup>196</sup> All Williams citations from Fannie Barber Williams, “A Northern Negro’s Autobiography,” *The Independent*, July 14, 1904, 91.

that his clerks would leave if they had to work next to a black woman; a Progressive philanthropic club stirred to controversy by the thought of admitting a black member.

Williams reported successful relief efforts, too: a fully competent young worker “with only a slight trace of African blood,” for example, whose boss defended her when a southern visitor said she had no place working at a desk and writing. But she said her experience in the South was not so different from what she saw in the North. She took no relative position on the treatment of African-Americans, even while she clearly appreciated that life in the North—where prejudice “does not manifest itself so openly and brutally”—was better for blacks than in the South. Still, Williams was careful to invoke class prejudices even while asserting that there should be none based on race. “The hateful interpretation” of Jim Crow laws, she wrote, “is to make no distinction between the educated and refined and the ignorant and depraved negro.”

In her one-page self-history, Fannie Barber Williams touched on nearly all of the main points I have sought to argue in this thesis: that a comparative perspective obscures the true conditions and the battles fought to change them; that class friction within the black community often masked racial hostility outside it; that African-Americans consistently challenged their second-class status; and that through it all, black Chicagoans found decent chances to live, work, and pursue an education in the northern, urban landscape.

But Fannie Barber Williams’ last words were her most stinging, and are fitting for the denouement here: “The conclusion of the whole matter seems to be that whether I live in the North or the South, I cannot be counted for my full value, be that much or little. I

dare not cease to hope and aspire and believe in human love and justice, but progress is painful and my faith is often strained to the breaking point.”<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Fannie Barber Williams, “A Northern Negro’s Autobiography,” *The Independent*, July 14, 1904, 91.

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## Appendix A: Occupations in Chicago, 1890-1920

	1890	1900	1910	1920
Total Population of Chicago	1099850	1698575	2185283	2701705
Total Population of Black Chicago	14271	30150	44103	109458
Percent Black	1.3%	1.8%	2.0%	4.1%
<b>Percent of African-Americans Employed (Ages 10 and Over)</b>				
Total	70.7%	66.4%	69.2%	67.9%
Female	36.6%	39.5%	46.6%	44.0%
Male	95.2%	89.5%	90.2%	90.6%
<b>Professional Persons</b>				
Percentage of Native-Born Whites Who Work In This Sector	4.1%	7.6%	6.8%	7.7%
Percentage of Foreign-Born Whites Who Work In This Sector	1.1%	2.7%	2.5%	3.1%
Percentage of Blacks Who Work In This Sector	1.2%	4.3%	3.5%	2.8%
<b>Percentage of Sector Who Are Native-Born White</b>				
Percentage of Sector Who Are Native-Born White	73.8%	73.4%	73.6%	76.9%
<b>Percentage of Sector Who Are Foreign-Born White</b>				
Percentage of Sector Who Are Foreign-Born White	25.2%	24.4%	24.3%	20.3%
<b>Percentage of Sector Who Are Black</b>				
Percentage of Sector Who Are Black	1.0%	2.1%	2.0%	2.7%
<b>Proprietors, Managers, Officials (Including Farmers)</b>				
Percentage of Native-Born Whites Who Work In This Sector	9.1%	8.4%	8.3%	7.4%
Percentage of Foreign-Born Whites Who Work In This Sector	9.0%	9.9%	9.7%	9.5%
Percentage of Blacks Who Work In This Sector	2.0%	2.0%	2.4%	1.8%
<b>Percentage of Sector Who Are Native-Born White</b>				
Percentage of Sector Who Are Native-Born White	44.2%	47.2%	48.2%	52.9%
<b>Percentage of Sector Who Are Foreign-Born White</b>				
Percentage of Sector Who Are Foreign-Born White	55.4%	52.1%	50.4%	45.5%
<b>Percentage of Sector Who Are Black</b>				
Percentage of Sector Who Are Black	0.4%	0.6%	0.7%	1.2%
<b>Clerks and Kindred Workers</b>				
Percentage of Native-Born Whites Who Work In This Sector	26.6%	28.7%	33.2%	38.5%
Percentage of Foreign-Born Whites Who Work In This Sector	7.0%	9.4%	8.4%	11.1%
Percentage of Blacks Who Work In This Sector	1.9%	3.7%	4.7%	6.7%

Percentage of Sector Who Are Native-Born White	71.7%	76.2%	81.0%	82.7%
Percentage of Sector Who Are Foreign-Born White	28.0%	23.2%	18.4%	15.9%
Percentage of Sector Who Are Black	0.3%	0.5%	0.6%	1.3%
<b>Skilled Workers and Foremen</b>				
Percentage of Native-Born Whites Who Work In This Sector	12.8%	15.2%	15.4%	16.3%
Percentage of Foreign-Born Whites Who Work In This Sector	22.2%	22.0%	21.7%	23.8%
Percentage of Blacks Who Work In This Sector	2.4%	3.6%	4.1%	6.1%
<b>Semi-Skilled Workers</b>				
Percentage of Sector Who Are Native-Born White	31.2%	42.4%	43.9%	49.7%
Percentage of Sector Who Are Foreign-Born White	68.5%	57.1%	55.5%	48.6%
Percentage of Sector Who Are Black	0.3%	0.5%	0.6%	1.7%
<b>Unskilled Workers</b>				
Percentage of Native-Born Whites Who Work In This Sector	12.2%	12.7%	16.3%	19.1%
Percentage of Foreign-Born Whites Who Work In This Sector	10.9%	12.4%	17.4%	22.5%
Percentage of Blacks Who Work In This Sector	8.1%	9.5%	12.6%	18.7%
<b>Unskilled Workers</b>				
Percentage of Sector Who Are Native-Born White	46.5%	51.4%	49.7%	53.0%
Percentage of Sector Who Are Foreign-Born White	52.1%	46.7%	47.8%	41.8%
Percentage of Sector Who Are Black	1.4%	1.9%	2.1%	4.9%
<b>Unskilled Workers</b>				
Percentage of Native-Born Whites Who Work In This Sector	15.6%	15.5%	9.7%	8.8%
Percentage of Foreign-Born Whites Who Work In This Sector	17.9%	29.5%	28.6%	28.1%
Percentage of Blacks Who Work In This Sector	65.9%	74.1%	68.1%	77.7%
Percentage of Blacks Who Work as Servants	53.7%	49.6%	53.3%	32.9%
<b>Unskilled Workers</b>				
Percentage of Sector Who Are Native-Born White	27.3%	33.0%	24.8%	26.2%
Percentage of Sector Who Are Foreign-Born White	67.5%	58.4%	65.7%	56.0%
Percentage of Sector Who Are Black	5.2%	8.0%	9.3%	17.6%

Percentage of Servants Who Are Black	11.1%	14.6%	19.7%	27.4%
<b>Professors and Teachers (Excluding Music Faculty)</b>				
Total	*3108	8791	9936	13539
Number of Native-Born White	2608	7323	8181	11664
Number of Foreign-Born White	482	1409	1686	1706
Number of Black	18	58	64	166
Percentage of Teachers Who Are Native-Born White	83.9%	83.3%	82.3%	86.1%
Percentage of Teachers Who Are Foreign-Born White	15.5%	16.0%	17.0%	12.6%
Percentage of Teachers Who Are Black	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	1.2%
*all female				
From Estelle Hill Scott, <i>Occupational Changes Among Negroes in Chicago, 1890-1930</i> (Chicago: Work Projects Administration, 1939), 7, 14, 31, 36, 53, 54, 66, 70, 105, 108, 116; 119, 168, 170, 182, 185, 214.				

## **Appendix B: Black Teachers, 1896**

*From Chicago Tribune, January 30, 1896, 4.*

Gertrude G. Sampson (Hayes School)

Fannie E. Douglas (Harrison)

Virginia A. Douglas (Harrison)

Rachel A. Hargrove (Froebel)

Ellen L. Cooper (Ward)

R. A. J. Shaw (Raymond Evening)

## **Appendix C: Black Students at Wendell Phillips, 1914**

*From Chicago Defender, March 21, 1914, 1.*

Broch, Marguerite  
Dewberry, Benson  
Foster, Ralph  
Grant, William  
Hampton, Edith  
Harris, Lela  
Johnson, T.  
Hardaway, Armell  
Legare, Edith  
Legare, Anna  
Lightfoot, Robert  
Lewis, Cecil  
Mallett, Celia  
Mundy, Charles  
McDawell, Iva  
O'Grady, Ethel  
Peeples, John  
Scott, Helen  
Sayha, Hellen  
Sloan, Rubie  
Simpson, Lither  
Stewart, Theola  
Thomas, Francis  
Lully, Leonora  
Shores, Veatrice  
Ward, Ira  
Wade, B.  
Walker, Raymond  
White, Kate

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