

# Organized Resistance and Black Educators' Quest for School Equality, 1878–1938

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*Historical accounts of advocacy for equality in educational facilities and resources for Blacks during de jure segregation in the South have generally minimized, or ignored, the role of Black educators. This article challenges the omission of Black educators in the historical portrait by providing a historical analysis of four periods of teacher activism in Georgia prior to Brown. Results indicate that, through their organizational structure, Black educators consistently advocated for improved facilities, bus transportation, longer school terms, high schools, and better salaries. Although the success of their activities was mediated by the Southern political context of the era in which they advocated, the Black teachers' organization was the most organized agent for change throughout this period.*

Historical accounts of advocacy for equality in educational facilities and resources for Blacks during *de jure* segregation in the South have generally minimized, or ignored, the role of Black educators. Black educators are characterized as being dependent upon school boards, as being reticent to become involved in civil rights issues, and as being frightened of desegregation because of the likely loss of employment.<sup>1</sup> Although these characterizations are accurate representations of the reality of the era, the descriptions have been popularly and historically generalized to create the widely held conclusion that Black educators were sidelined in efforts to achieve equality, and that their primary concern was to protect their own self-centered individual interests. Richard Kluger's citation of the editor of a Black newspaper in Columbia, South Carolina, captures the beliefs emanating from this perspective. Describing Black teachers as shiftless and ungrateful for the work that had been accomplished on their behalf, the editorial concludes that "most [Black teachers] are as worthless to aiding fights for the race as the most worthless of citizens."<sup>2</sup>

Instead of considering the role that may have been played by Black educators, achievement of equality in Black educational opportunity has been attributed most consistently to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The resulting portrait is one of

legal victories, and of courageous parents and ministers who participated to accomplish these legal victories. Local NAACP chapters are described as being sufficiently strong that other organizations did not intrude on their efforts to broker change; indeed, some portraits suggest that the NAACP was the only organization pushing for change.<sup>3</sup> Except for some few exceptional teachers and consultants in higher education, the dominant portrait of NAACP activity generally omits references to Black educators as having any agency in seeking equality of opportunities for Black children. This characterization is widely found in general historical accounts of the era, NAACP histories, state histories, and histories of Blacks in America.<sup>4</sup>

Even in research that purports to focus specifically on education, the story has remained largely one of legal success. In Michael John Schultz's history of *The National Educational Association and the Black Teacher*, for example, the NAACP is described as beginning a "vigorous assault upon the segregated practice of education," with no reference to the role of Black educators.<sup>5</sup> Donohue, Heckman, and Todd review 17 states to explore variables influencing Black educational uplift in the South. They conclude that private philanthropy and the NAACP explain most gains in the South.<sup>6</sup> In other analyses, some scant attention to Black educational efforts is captured in reports of financial contributions of teacher organizations to the legal effort and the hint that teachers may have been more than inactive bystanders.<sup>7</sup> Yet, none explores the ways in which financial contributions were representative of an ongoing comprehensive strategy of resistance on the part of Black educators.

The role of Black educators as organized advocates is likewise not captured in the recent revisionist accounts of Black segregated schools. Focusing on the resilience of Black school communities in the midst of oppressive circumstances, this literature has demonstrated the interplay between Black parents and educators, the professional roles and training of teachers and principals, and the interpersonal and institutional caring that characterized the environments of many of the schools.<sup>8</sup> However, despite its lens that captures more intimately the environments of segregated schools, the research has failed to incorporate the paucity of sources that suggest that many of the reported activities, such as fighting for buses, may have been part of a larger rubric of Black educational activity. This omission has occurred despite earlier historical research by Linda Perkins on Black teachers that should have created the foundation for an expanded interpretation of some of the examples found in this research. Perkins describes the emergence of Black teacher organizations throughout the South by 1900, arguing that the Alabama State Teachers Association was interested in improving teacher salaries and having longer school terms as early as 1910. Her article also demonstrates that by the 1930s Black educators were campaigning vigorously for equality of educational opportunity in individual

states and through their national organization, the American Teachers Association (ATA).<sup>9</sup> Though not as well developed, some other historical accounts, such as the history of the ATA and Black teachers in the NEA, along with more recent research on Black teachers by Michael Fultz, also support these findings.<sup>10</sup> In large measure, however, the implication of these references for a broader research agenda on Black educational agency has been overlooked, and the most commonly accepted portrait has remained one of Black educators who may have been caring facilitators in individual communities, but who were disinterested spectators in the broader struggle for equality.

This article challenges the dominant portrayal of Black educators and explores specifically the organized advocacy of Black educators for decades before, and subsequently in cooperation with, the well-documented legal campaigns. It does not lessen the importance of the NAACP activity, or organizations and individuals who supported the court cases, including Black educators themselves (whose role during the era of litigation is discussed in a forthcoming work). Indeed, equality of educational opportunity for Blacks has consistently been determined by the degree to which federal court opinions upheld beliefs about U.S. constitutional claims of equality, and individuals sufficiently skilled and courageous challenged contradictions in constitutional intent and implementation. However, the current analysis does extend the one-dimensional portrait of progress that has been consistently accepted. By investigating the organized historical role played by Black educators in achieving equality and analyzing the systematic ways in which these educators resisted inequalities, a more textured, contextualized, and historically accurate pre-Brown portrait emerges. In its intent, this article is the first stage in a rejoinder to the question asked by a Black educator during a session of ATA with Thurgood Marshall in 1950. The attendee wished to know whether the time had come for the ATA and NAACP to “give more publicity to the contributions being made annually by the ATA to the cause of the judicial effort.”<sup>11</sup> Although Marshall’s response is unrecorded, as the record shows, the speaker’s goal of a more comprehensive account has yet to be realized.

This paper focuses upon the early decades of organized teacher resistance, before the period when many Black educational organizations formed more formal collaborations with the NAACP. It extends the historical literature on the influence and active stance of Black educators during *de jure* segregation in the South by extraditing and illuminating the agency, voice, and advocacy evident in the organization of Black teachers between 1879 and 1938. Using historical methodology to describe and put in context their activities as represented in newspaper accounts, teacher association records, state archival documents, NAACP records, interviews, primary source books, and secondary literature for the period covered, the paper explores

the resistance of educators in the Georgia Teachers and Education Association (GTEA) during four time frames. These periods, which emerged from the research, have been identified as: 1) association building and interracial collaboration, 2) intellectual activity and national collaboration, 3) petitions and shielded collaboration, and 4) direct appeal. In each period, the paper explores the issues that formed the foundation and context for resistance, the mechanisms Black educators used to advocate for Black education, and the external factors that facilitated or impeded their success. Although the primary source document analysis is limited to Georgia, the evidence in the secondary source literature of other states suggests strongly that the basic tenants of the story were replicated across the South.<sup>12</sup>

Results indicate that the resistance of Black educators during these periods was intentionally vested in their professional organizations, rather than in the easily recognized behaviors of individual Black teachers. Through their organization, Black educators spoke continuously and emphatically on the inequality in facilities, length of school term, buses, teacher salaries, and vocational educational opportunities evident in the educational system. Between 1878 and 1938, their activities may be characterized by efforts to advocate for equality by working primarily *within* the Southern educational system, seeking to effect change by reasoning with the White leadership through letters, petitions, and meetings.

Viewed by contemporary standards, and compared with the well-documented examples of personal risk and death that permeate the civil rights portraits of the 1950s and beyond, the resistance of the teachers during these early periods may be assumed to be mild, tentative, and overly placating. Yet, characterized by the standards of their own era, where teachers could be beaten or killed for educating children, where freedom of speech for Blacks was routinely denied, where even White university professors could be forced from their jobs as a result of speaking forthrightly about inequality, and where lynching ruled as the dominant White response to Blacks who no longer understood their place in the social order, the behavior of the teachers assumes a different characterization. Sterling Stuckey's portrait of slave culture provides a useful interpretive frame for understanding their response. Stuckey argues that any effort by oppressed people to affirm their humanity can be characterized as an act of resistance. Guided by this definition, the organized response of Black teachers to inequalities and the careful way in which they shield individual members from reprisal constitute an act of rebellion within their time period no less difficult and risky than that of their successors who would later openly march for civil rights. Historian James Anderson argues that without understanding this context of oppression, the meaning of their agency and resistance can not be appropriately understood.<sup>13</sup> Yet, when their actions are contextually measured, they exist as the primary, most consistent, and best

organized mechanism advocating for change for the segregated schools in the Georgia during this period.

#### EARLY RESISTANCE, 1878–1894: ASSOCIATION BUILDING AND INTERRACIAL COLLABORATION

The Black teachers' association in Georgia, eventually to be known as the Georgia Teachers and Education Association (GTEA), dates its organizational history to 1878. According to *Rising in the Sun*, the official history of the GTEA written in 1966 with historian Horace Mann Bond as part of the editorial team, the formation of a continuous Black teachers' group in Georgia was "unquestionably" the brainchild of Richard R. Wright, Sr. Wright, who has been described by James Anderson as "one of the brightest and most influential educators of the post-Reconstruction era," convened 300 Black educators who were the "leaders and representative men of the state" in 1877 in Atlanta to plan for Black education.<sup>14</sup> At the time of the convention, Wright had been principal of the only high school for Blacks in Georgia for seven years, and had already appeared before a U.S. Senate Committee on Education and Labor to report on conditions in Georgia. With his broad classical training—Wright graduated from Atlanta University in 1878—and a forthrightness that had characterized him since childhood, he ostensibly laid before the group the critical needs confronting the race. At the conclusion of the convention, the attendees named themselves the Georgia Teachers Association and elected Wright as their president.<sup>15</sup>

This convention marks the beginning of a Black teachers' association in Georgia that would continue until it was dismantled in the wake of desegregation mergers in 1970. However, this particular convention does not mark the beginning of educational activity in Georgia. As captured vividly by James Anderson, Jacqueline Jones, and Ronald Butchart, educational activities for Blacks in Georgia dated to the Civil War.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Wright himself, a former slave and student of the American Missionary Association (AMA) teachers, recounts in his 1894 book, *A Brief Historical Sketch of Negro Education in Georgia*, an 1864 meeting led by Black ministers as the beginning of collaborations in the interest of Black children. By 1865, Jones notes that ministers in Savannah had formed the Savannah Education Association (SEA). According to Jones, the SEA had raised \$800 by January 1, 1865, to support the education of 500 Black children, tuition-free.

Other educational activity also spanned the state during Reconstruction, though historians disagree on the exact dates. The Georgia Equal Rights Association, later renamed the Georgia Education Association, was one of the earliest organizations and was formed as a way to supervise the growing number of Black schools.<sup>17</sup> Georgia historians describe the Equal Rights

Association as an almost entirely Black organization that devoted itself to building schools and educational opportunities.<sup>18</sup> By 1870, at least 200 schools controlled by native Black men and women existed in 70 counties in Georgia.<sup>19</sup> Numan V. Bartley notes that the Equal Rights Association held its first convention in 1866 and spawned the creation of local education units among Blacks throughout the state. Given the proximity in time of its formation to the 1867 Constitutional Convention, and the overlap of some of the members, one might also infer that it provided the intellectual catalyst for the 37 Black delegates who helped write the Georgia constitution that first created a system of public schooling in the state.<sup>20</sup> In other activity, Wright also describes the era as one in which former slaves and sympathetic White Republicans worked collaboratively to certify teachers and to discuss educational ideas.<sup>21</sup>

Wright's call for a convention in 1878 reflects neither a new focus for the Black community nor a new strategy. However, the call does signal the attribution of agency in the written record to educators rather than ministers, and its timing coincides with a shift in political climate.<sup>22</sup> By 1876, in part because of the poll tax that disabled Black voter participation, the Republican Party was a diminished political force, and by the time of Wright's call, the spirit of White supremacy had emerged as a dominant political force.<sup>23</sup> Wright's convention, for example, occurred two years after a new state constitution, written in 1877, restricted the public education commitment of the earlier constitution to public education only at the elementary levels and changed the "equal" provisions for Black and White education to "equal so far as practicable."<sup>24</sup> Georgia's constitutional efforts to limit the potential of Negro attainment during this period is entirely consistent with the federal abandonment of the Negro in Georgia, as signaled in Hayes Compromise of 1876, and with the desire among Democratic Whites to regain dominance within the state. Indeed, the intent of one former Confederate officer in the rewriting of a new constitution, according to Georgia historian Donald Grant, was to create a document in which "the Negro shall never be heard from" again.<sup>25</sup>

When Wright convened his leading men of the state, Blacks were transferring their children from AMA schools to the newly forming public schools of Georgia, where White Southern officials were willing to hire Black teachers as a way of ridding the state of the Northern influence of AMA teachers. Blacks had always resisted the AMA paternalistic attitude, making the placement of Black teachers in the public schools an end upon which Southern Whites and Blacks could agree, despite the difference in rationale. Black school attendance was also rising by 1875 in the Georgia public schools, reportedly two-thirds the attendance of Whites even though the children faced harsh economic conditions. Thus, Wright's convention appears to be spawned by an understanding of the ominous political events

that threatened to thwart the budding Black educational effort, and perhaps also by an effort to build coalitions with White Democrats, some of whose ends coincided with those of the Black community.

In planning a strategy to effect change, the organization continued the utilization of interracial interaction that was begun during Reconstruction. At its meetings between 1878 and 1898, Wright quotes Henry Walker as recording the presence of men of both races at the annual meetings of teachers. These White participants are described as “friendly to the Negro cause.” As the Association convened its meetings in the major cities, such as Macon, Augusta, Savannah, Milledgeville, and Atlanta, Wright says that “the superintendents of the local systems have recognized and acknowledged the importance of this body and lent their presence.”<sup>26</sup> Into 1893, a meeting acknowledged to be “the best in its history,” this strategy of collaboration continues. The meeting records addresses from Governor Northern; Commissioner Bradwell, who is described as an untiring worker for the education of all children in the state; Superintendent Slaton; and others.<sup>27</sup>

Over the years, the Black Georgia Teachers Association grew in membership and influence. Walker is recorded by Wright as reporting that the organization continued to grow after its founding, “gathering momentum year by year until the present day [1894], when its influence can not well be calculated.” Throughout these years, sympathetic White educators continued to support the Black group, and their display of support created a climate that was conducive to growth in the membership of the organization.<sup>28</sup> With superintendent support, Black teachers could exercise freedom in attending meetings and maintaining visibility in leadership in the state gatherings. The collaboration thus served the purpose of utilizing White voices as allies to create a climate that would allow for growth of the organization.

However, the presence of influential Whites at the meetings of Black educators cannot be misinterpreted as a signal that Whites shared the aims of education that were consistent with the members of the Black association. White participation during these years reveals deeply held differences about attainment that model the contradictions between Northern philanthropists and Blacks themselves. Gustavus Orr provides an example of this contradiction. Orr became the second state school commissioner in 1872, after the ouster of Governor Rufus Bullock, the Reconstruction governor who had the audacity to denounce slavery and White supremacy.<sup>29</sup> Orr’s almost 16-year term, which overlapped with the growth of the teachers’ organization, was one that supported Negro education. He argued that that Negro children had a legal right to free education as well as the White children. Blacks consulted with Orr and, ostensibly, sought to work with him to achieve equality of opportunity.<sup>30</sup> However, in a twist that represents

the difficulty of attaining comparable education for Blacks during the era, Orr also represented the return of White rule, disfavored funding Atlanta University because of the intermingling of the races and generally sought to appease White educational interests.<sup>31</sup> In these beliefs, he exemplifies the contradiction of Whites who simultaneously sought to help the Negro, but who limited his rise to the place the White South appointed.<sup>32</sup> Local Whites such as Orr placed Black educators in the ongoing dilemma of needing to seek whatever good a White leader could offer while, as Georgia historian Donald Grant has supposed, holding onto the hope that the next person/administration would do better.<sup>33</sup>

The interracial meetings also masked differing beliefs between Whites and Blacks about the financing and structuring of Black education. While Whites largely supported the development of public education that increasingly granted fewer opportunities to Blacks, Black educators soon began to denounce openly such inequalities. After Orr's death in 1887, and in the face of decreasing expenditures and inequalities as they related to Black education, Wright began "strongly urging that the colored people be given a larger share in the appropriation made for the school support."<sup>34</sup> Although Black schools were growing in number, as were Black teachers and attendance, and the length of the school term had increased, Wright believed these "encouraging gains" were undermined by a Southern environment that was growing increasingly hostile.

In addition to interracial collaborations, the program list of the Black teachers' association during these early years also indicates the beginning of interstate collaborations among Black educators. Although collaborations with educators in other states would not fully emerge until the forthcoming period, the era did provide the groundwork for later exchanges of information across Black educational groups. For example, Booker T. Washington was present at the 1893 Georgia Teachers Association meeting, as well as some subsequent meetings. Although he had not yet delivered the Atlanta Compromise speech for which he would become famous, he was by 1893 an accomplished speaker. In 1884, he had spoken before the National Education Association (NEA); moreover, in 1882 he had helped found the Black Alabama State Teachers Association, speaking to those educators with classical references akin to those used by Wright during his 1883 congressional appearances. While the nature of Washington's talk to the Georgia association in 1893 is undocumented, his presence affirms the beginning of informed activity across states.<sup>35</sup>

In sum, this first identifiable period of the association was born of a political climate that threatened to jeopardize the gains Blacks had made during Reconstruction. It relied primarily upon organization building, interracial cooperation, and emergent inter-state information networks as mechanisms to affect change. Although it differed in purpose from that of

Whites who functioned as part of association meetings, the period was one that netted increasing schools, attendance, and length of school term.

As the climate became increasingly restricted, however, Blacks would have to identify new avenues to support Black education. In his 1894 book Wright hints at the shifts in attitude among Georgia Whites that would reconfigure the interracial collaborations. Although his 1894 writing was at the height of the Populist movement, Wright notes that the Negro "is becoming more sensitive with regard to discourtesies and insults," attributing his "restiveness" to the "natural result of his increased intelligence and love for his country."<sup>36</sup> Although not named, Wright must surely be referring to the election violence that threatened to undermine Black political influence and the increasing peonage and sharecropping that threatened to dismantle Black gains during this period.<sup>37</sup> He likely also was referencing school funding, since Blacks contributed a total of \$288,500 to the school fund through various taxes, while only \$167,857 was spent on Black education.<sup>38</sup> Wright predicted that if the "outrages" continue, Black "defiance will increase in proportion as the lawless outrages increase." Amidst a text that generally applauds the efforts of all agencies in uplift and appears particularly kind to White efforts, these predictive remarks loom as a blatant reminder of the ways in which the era of even the appearance of interracial collaboration was in the midst of change. When Wright published his history in 1894, he still maintained the hope that there would be "no possibility of trouble between the intelligent and upright colored people and the intelligent and upright white people."<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, Wright was wrong. While the organization itself would continue, the period of Black and White cooperation on school issues, fueled by the hope among Black educators that they could spur equal educational opportunities for Black children, was reaching an end.

#### RESPONDING TO SHIFTING ATTITUDES, 1894–1916: INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY AND NATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

With the turn of the century, Black educational organized activity on the state level decreased as hardening White attitudes manifested themselves in social and political legislation that separated the races. Indeed, *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 gave Whites permission to recreate a world where White supremacy ruled. By the turn of the century, restrictions had been placed in the mingling of the races in Georgia and throughout the South, including segregation laws on trains, in restaurants, and in other public facilities. In Georgia, the 1906 gubernatorial campaign and its aftermath exemplified the new era. Supported, ironically, by former Populist leader Tom Watson who was angered by Black votes that dismantled his Populist campaign,

candidate Hoke Smith stomped the state, inciting racial divisions.<sup>40</sup> The heightened tension erupted into the Atlanta Race Riot of 1906, a bloody confrontation that included Whites invading Black neighborhoods and Blacks (including Walter White, who would later head the Atlanta NAACP and subsequently the national NAACP) having to defend themselves with weapons. Blacks were also accused of bartering votes in the 1906 election. This action would lend further support to efforts to maintain White solidarity and eliminate Black political strength. Despite Black protest, formal disfranchisement soon followed in 1908.<sup>41</sup>

Additionally, the year 1906 saw the end of effective Black protest against unjust laws. While boycotts by Black citizens had been useful in stalling segregation laws in the late 1890s, these measures ceased to be effective in the new climate.<sup>42</sup> For example, an 18-month boycott in Savannah, organized by ministers and supported by the Black press, failed when Whites refused to weaken as they had in earlier times.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, despite protests by W. E. B. Du Bois and other Black leaders, by 1915, *Birth of a Nation* premiered across the South, romanticizing an imagined “old South” with such vigor that it would inspire the rebirth of the Georgia Klan at the foot of Stone Mountain, Georgia.

Given these events, unsurprisingly the educational climate for Blacks also became more oppressive. Three years after Wright’s hopeful evaluation of the school situation in 1894, the strong academic high school of which he was principal, and the only one of four in the Southern states, was closed by the local school board. As Anderson describes this event, the closing occurred in 1897 despite protests by the Black community, and despite its obvious violation of *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which required separate, but equal accommodations. Upheld by the Supreme Court in 1899, this judicial action signaled Whites that they could sacrifice high school education for Blacks while providing it for Whites.<sup>44</sup>

The years that followed reaped the ramifications of this judicial opinion and the national climate touting industrial education for Blacks. Despite a subsidy of \$140,000 that Blacks paid for White education in 1908, Whites continued to resist equitable resources for Black education.<sup>45</sup> The gap between Black teachers’ and White teachers’ salary, which was minimal in 1896 with only \$6.56 separating the highest Black teacher salary from the highest White teacher salary, plummeted to a gap in which the Black teacher’s salary was less than half the salary of the White teacher by 1915.<sup>46</sup> Adhering to the 1870 school law that allowed “equal [facilities] so far as *practicable* [italics mine],” Whites demonstrated the impracticability of equality.<sup>47</sup> In addition to differences in salary and expenditure per child, differences during this time were evident in inequitable distribution of funds for agriculture in public schools, inequitable distribution of funds for higher education, inaccessibility to high school education, and limited access

to elementary grades offered in some Black schools. As this era unfolded, Whites blatantly ignored the “equal” clause of *Plessy* and sought to orchestrate a “new South” still “firmly anchored in White supremacy.”<sup>48</sup> Their activities caused Du Bois to note in 1911 that the Negro common schools for Blacks were worse off than it had been 20 years previously.

In this new climate also, the teachers’ organization that had grown and received accolades in the mid to late 1800s, began to diminish in membership. The history of GTEA reports that the teachers seemed to have lost some interest in the Georgia Teachers Association; in 1894, compared with previous years, the meeting was the smallest gathering. By 1906, ironically the same year that Blacks ceased to be effective in protesting unjust laws, the history reports teacher participation down to about 300 teachers, causing the *Atlanta Independent* to lament that Georgia teachers had “absolutely no interest in their profession.”<sup>49</sup> Although the meetings continued, the president of the organization spurred teachers in 1913 by pleading for “every Negro teacher in Georgia [to] join us in an effort to bring once more to life and activity our state teachers’ association.” He encouraged every teacher to “rise up and lend his aid in making [the] association [be] what it ought to be.”<sup>50</sup>

Several contextual forces help explain the decline in teacher attendance at the annual meetings. According to *Rising in the Sun*, the decline in participation was directly associated with the rise of White supremacy and the disenfranchisement of the Negro vote.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, the climate in Georgia was becoming increasingly hostile to those who supported Black education. For example, in 1899, the homes of Black teachers were gunfire targets in Twiggs County, while promoters of Black education were whipped along with their children.<sup>52</sup>

However, several other factors may explain the decline as well. The *Atlanta Independent* hints that infighting between Atlanta University students and other colleges helped to destroy the public display of support that existed in its early days.<sup>53</sup> Although this firsthand account likely has some basis for explaining the difficulties of the era, its support is not immediately evident in the documentation. In contrast, Du Bois’ claim that systemic efforts were at the root of the decline in Black professionalism may have important explanatory power. Du Bois’ 1901 report during the Negro Common School Conference suggests that Black teachers during this era were being systematically invited to a status of inferiority, different from that they held in the previous era. He contrasted Black teachers to White teachers, who had received state incentives such as scholarships and increased salaries to entice them to complete normal and collegiate training, arguing that White teachers showed “marked improvement.” Noting that “20 years ago [White] teachers were not as good as the Negro teachers,” he bemoaned that during this same period Negro teachers were being

discouraged by “starvation wages and the idea that any training will do for a teacher.”<sup>54</sup> These behaviors stand in contradiction to the support of superintendents during the previous era that allowed teachers to attend professional conventions, and reveal intentional structures to promote inferior Black education. The environment of the era was thus one with severe restrictions upon Black educational activity, and the decline in professional participation is consistent with its tenets.

During these years, Black educational leaders attempted to maintain the organization, now crippled by an overtly repressive climate that made it difficult for teachers to attend. Ostensibly as a way to meet the needs of their constituency, they organized the association into a departmental plan that included an emphasis on the common school, the high school, the college, and the industrial education. Moreover, in 1913, they established 12 congressional districts, each headed by a vice-president, apparently as a means of creating a statewide organizational structure.<sup>55</sup>

In addition to restructuring the organization, its leaders also sought other collaborations that would forward the interests of Black education. For example, Black educators, led by Wright and joined by others who have been described as the “ultimate of the talented tenth,” formed in Georgia the American Negro Academy in 1897. Likely not coincidentally, this event occurred immediately after the *Plessy* decision and the demise of Wright’s school. The academy was designed by the intellectual leaders of the race in to the state to provide a program that would “furnish data and discussion along the most important lines of education”<sup>56</sup> Between 1898 and 1904, W. E. B. Du Bois served as its president. Before its demise in 1929, the academy published 22 scholarly papers.<sup>57</sup> Concurrent with the famed Atlanta University Conferences that were likewise designed to provide accurate academic information about the state of the Negro, individuals who were leaders of the existing state teachers’ group sought scholarly means to disseminate information about the Negro. Presumably these efforts were motivated by the belief that if Whites simply understood the plight of Blacks, they would loosen some of the structures that were constricting Black attainment.

During this period, Black leaders of the teachers’ group also became part of national collaborations that might be able to effect change. One of these groups was the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools (NATCS), later renamed the American Teachers Association (ATA). This group held its first “full-fledged” meeting of Black representatives across the Southern states in 1907. From 1909–1910, Georgia’s R. R. Wright served as its president. According to Thelma Perry, historian for the ATA, Wright believed that unions between and among educators would add strength to the educational cause. Through NATCS, Black educators were able to develop a systematic agenda for challenging educational inequality

that would later be seen echoed throughout the Southern states.<sup>58</sup> Consistent with their concerns on the state level, Perry notes that every president of this association was interested in educational equality.

Wright's association with the national group was replayed in the associations of other Georgia educational leaders such as John Hope, president of the school that would later become Morehouse College, and Lucy Laney. Both would become leaders in NATCS. However, their associations were not merely ones with other educators. Indeed, Wright and Hope were also both invited to the Niagara Conference in 1909 that would prompt the beginning of the NAACP. Although Wright was unable to attend, Hope was present. The presence of these men at the beginning of the national movement suggests that the NAACP, like the NATCS, was embraced as another national forum through which individual educators may have believed that could advocate for the issues of the Black education. Unlike the NATCS, however, the NAACP would also represent a way to agitate against the larger structural issues that kept the Black man's status expendable in the South.<sup>59</sup>

The influence of these intellectual and national pursuits revealed itself in Georgia in the efforts to revive the fervor of state organization among teachers who had more to fear in openly supporting the organization because of the oppressive environments in which they worked. Using information that could only be available through the national networks, President W. W. Reddick compared the Georgia state association with that of other states in 1913 and lamented that Georgia is the most "backward state in the whole south with respect to teachers' organizations."<sup>60</sup> Meetings also continued during this era at places like Georgia State College in 1914 (the industrial school of which Wright had now become president).

But, despite the maintenance, and even expansion, of the organizational structure during this oppressive climate, the history characterizes the dominant portrayal of the era is one where the leaders of the association participated in creating broader organizational networks that crossed states and individuals. The silence of Black newspaper accounts, such as the *Savannah Tribune*, on educational activity of the association during this era, as compared with their earlier and later reports, confirms the impotence of the association during the era.<sup>61</sup>

The period of 1894 to 1916 nets little visible change for Black education. Although the NATCS had the structure to facilitate disseminating information and the vision to eradicate inequality, it did not have the resources or power to influence individual states. Likewise, the scholarship emerging from the American Negro Academy and the Atlanta University Conferences did little to mitigate the influence of the scholarship of White academics who employed biology, theology, sociology, and history to justify the Negro's innate inferiority.<sup>62</sup> Finally, the NAACP was not then sufficiently

networked throughout the South to effect local change, even though it included education among its concerns. Indeed, as the lynching numbers of the period reveal, the mass of Black educators themselves existed in a world that was overtly threatening both physically and politically. Although educational leaders sought strategies to address the needs of their era, the success, or lack thereof, of the organization's efforts was directly linked to the oppressive external circumstances. The year was 1917 before a pivotal moment occurred that had the potential to bring about organized change.

#### NEW BEGINNINGS, 1917–1921: SHIELDS AND DIRECT PETITION

Historical and newspaper accounts concur that a shift in the national and local climate in 1917 prompted a new educational effort among Black educational leaders. Several events converged to create this climate. Notably, the great migration of Blacks from the South had been underway since 1914, with Georgians part of the exodus that claimed 100,000 Southern Blacks a year for a 15-year period.<sup>63</sup> The departure of Black farmers from Georgia began at time when the Georgia cotton crop had tripled, and White Georgia farmers were experiencing greater prosperity than they had since the 1850s.<sup>64</sup> Yet, as reprinted from the *Houston Post* in the *Savannah Times* in 1917, the Negro was not satisfied with the compensation he was receiving. “He wants more money for his work, he wants more money with greater regularity, and he wants to feel that he always receives the worth of his money,” wrote the editorialist.<sup>65</sup> As Georgia's economic interests began to be threatened, its White citizens became more amenable to listening to Black complaints, among them the continued discontent about the quality of schooling. The new governor, Hugh Dorsey, understood that the prosperity of Georgia was being jeopardized because of the economic pressure of Black departure. In 1917, he inferred that he would improve Negro education as a way of checking the migration of Blacks to Northern cities.<sup>66</sup>

The federal government and Black newspapers also spurred a more conducive climate for local corporation. As the United States entered World War I with its talk of protecting democracy, Black newspapers consistently and widely denounced U.S. failure to attend to democracy at home. Unrelentingly, and sometimes at financial risk, they pounded the irony of a country using the citizens against whom it discriminated at home to fight a war to protect democracy abroad. With increasing White interest, they created the image of a “New Negro” who demanded citizenship and was willing to agitate for equality.<sup>67</sup> The claim was believable. Two years earlier, in 1915 the NAACP had some legal success in striking the grandfather clause that kept many Southern blacks from voting.<sup>68</sup> Blacks, therefore, had

the potential to wield political power in ways they were denied in the previous era. Concurrent with these national changes, Georgia was also provided an incentive by the federal government on February 23, 1917, when Congress passed the Smith-Hughes Act. This bill provided for the first time \$42,000 in federal aid to Georgia high schools for industrial, agricultural and home-economics education.<sup>69</sup>

The conflation of these events ostensibly seeded the possibility of change. One month after the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act, a group of Black attendees at the March 1917 Workers Conference at Fort Valley High and Industrial School, with principal H. A. Hunt as the leader in that gathering, put forth the need for an educational body designed to take advantage of the new climate. The older Georgia Teachers Association still existed, but the older body was composed primarily of teachers who still existed in local racial climates that were hostile to Negro education. Thus, teachers, as single agitators, were viewed as unable to advocate in a visible capacity for the needs of the Black youth. In this climate, the power to act, as the fiery Black minister and organizational leader Henry M. Turner had warned during Reconstruction, would come through organizational power, and organizational power came through unity.<sup>70</sup>

Jesse O. Thomas, a contemporary of the 1917 events, was interviewed on November 17, 1961. His first-person account reflects the tension of the period in the need to create organizational, rather than individual, agency. Recalling Hunt's reasons for organizing the association, Thomas notes:

Negroes at that time could not participate in the democratic primary; therefore, they could not engage in the selection of candidates for public office. . . . The Teachers then represented a voteless element of the population. Since they were employed by the City, County and State, they were easily identifiable in the zone of reprisal. . . . It was Mr. Hunt's idea that since the Negro Teachers were voteless and also employees of the City, County or State, they were helpless to make any contribution toward significant changes in the educational pattern. He therefore organized the Georgia Education Association which took into its membership non-teaching citizens such as physicians, head of fraternal organizations, representatives of Insurance Companies and other self-employed persons.<sup>71</sup>

According to Thomas, the intended strategy was to use a professional organization, openly publicized as including other professionals, to create shields for the teachers, whose jobs were perceived to be in jeopardy if they advocated directly. The local Black newspaper, *The Savannah Tribune*, echoes Thomas' memory of the importance of this strategy in the creation of a new association. Writing in 1919, the newspaper noted: "Formerly, efforts have

been made by a handful of Negro schools teachers in their associations to do something, but it has become evident that no handful of teachers, however earnest, can bring about the change we all wish." Lamenting that the school teachers' hands were tied to their jobs, the editorial vested agency in an educational organization that would encompass all members of the community as a way to effect change.<sup>72</sup> At its inception, then, the organization both acknowledged the previous efforts led by teachers and created as its foundation the belief that teachers in this climate should be shielded by having a strong group inclusive of members who, though still susceptible to White retaliation, were not as directly accountable to the White class for financial support.

Two months after a new organization had been discussed at the Workers Conference, the new group was organized in Macon, Georgia, on May 4, 1917. All accounts give educator H. A. Hunt the credit for beginning this new association. In these activities, Hunt's actions appear to be an enigma. His reputation with the Northern philanthropists was one of accommodation, and he appeared to maintain a program as principal of Fort Valley that was consistent with their limited and menial objectives for Black education. Yet, as leader of the new association, Hunt embraced both vision and determination to use this season in U.S. history to advocate for the educational rights of Blacks. His advocacy of industrial education was certainly consistent with the beliefs of other Black Georgia educators at the time, including Wright and Du Bois. But other Black educators did not embrace industrial education to the exclusion of a classical curriculum in the ways Hunt has previously been characterized. While Hunt's actual beliefs are unknown, his actions here and in subsequent political efforts suggest, as James Anderson has subsequently argued, that Hunt learned well how to play the game of pretending to accommodate Northern philanthropists, while quietly seeking ways to agitate for change. In these behaviors, his were not unlike those of another complicated and subversive educator, Booker T. Washington.<sup>73</sup>

The timing of the meeting was no accident. In the call for the meeting of a new educational association, the planners noted: "This seems a particularly opportune time for such a gathering and there is good reason to believe that the state school authorities will take some action to better the educational interests of Negroes if the matter is properly presented."<sup>74</sup> In their behaviors, the group reflected the surge of activity throughout Georgia that reflected beliefs in the possibility for change.<sup>75</sup> Their activities also mirrored those of NATACS, which spurred educators to believe that World War I presented opportunities for racial progress in education.<sup>76</sup>

The new association met at the same time as the White Georgia Educational Association (GEA) so that members could take advantage of reduced rates on all the railroads that had been made available for White teachers. They advertised their gathering six days before its occurrence

with the newspaper headline "Great Meeting in the Interest of Education." The text invited "every one interested in the educational advancement of Negroes who can possibly do so" to "attend this meeting and lend a hand."<sup>77</sup> At the conclusion of the gathering, the new association had formulated clear advocacy objectives for its program. It wanted: "1) better salaries for teachers, 2) better schoolhouses and equipment, 3) the establishment of a normal training school for colored with adequate funds for maintenance, 4) District agricultural school to better prepare farmers, 5) securing appropriation for summer schools."<sup>78</sup> According to the *Savannah Tribune* in a later article, the group believed in the need for an "educational awakening" among the Negroes of Georgia. "There was also general agreement," they reported, "on the need of bringing to bear upon the public authorities of the state all the influences we possibly can to the end that more liberal appropriations be made and better facilities provided for the education of Negro youth."<sup>79</sup>

Immediately, the group began to implement its agenda by petitioning state leaders for equality. By August 2, 1919, the group claimed to have already "memorialized" the State Board of Education. The *Savannah Tribune* noted that "in this memorial the needs of Negro education were set forth and these bodies were asked to see to it that better pay for teachers and better facilities be given for teaching." The White Atlanta newspaper, the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, reported that 100 Negroes appeared before the State Board. The enumerated items listed requested are consistent with the ones articulated by the association. In addition, they also advocated for a more equitable share of the monies Georgia was receiving from the federal government.<sup>80</sup> Of the response they received, the *Savannah Tribune* recorded that "the officers of the executive committee had a very respectful hearing and were responded to through a written statement by a special committee on education." However, Joiner reports that their requests had a "definite influence" in the passage of the Elders-Carswell Bill, which provided a comprehensive series of measures designed to increase school opportunities in Georgia education. Moreover, other historical sources report some gains in Black education by 1919 under the Dorsey administration.<sup>81</sup> The evidence suggests that these gains may be linked to the activity of the new educational association.

For a five-year period, the new association promoted itself widely in the Black press for its ability to draw a diverse group of supporters among the Black citizens, and for the next five years membership and influence grew. In May 1919, 500 people reportedly attended their meeting. Attendance was expected to be 1,000 in 1920.<sup>82</sup> However, despite the public portrayal of an organization led by the people, the participants in this group were reportedly the same people who were participants in the older Georgia Teachers Association. Thus, the conceptual leadership appears to have

remained among educators, while other members functioned as shields for their activities.

The new education association was not alone in its advocacy of equality of educational opportunity during this era. The period of 1917 is also one that saw critical and focused educational activity on the part of the Atlanta chapter of the NAACP. The December before, the young Walter White, a recent graduate of Atlanta University and associate of Du Bois, indicated a desire to begin a NAACP chapter in Atlanta. By February 3, 1917, the new group had met and decided to fight for education, an event that occurred three days before they would formally request a charter. Within 17 days of the charter request, the group reported to the national office its victory in saving the second grade in Atlanta public schools.<sup>83</sup> It had used reasoned petition and presentation, the same activities utilized by the teachers' association, along with a skilled analysis of the educational situation in Atlanta to make its pleas. As aptly described by Edgar Tappin and verified in NAACP records, the Atlanta NAACP continued to focus on educational issues throughout September of 1917, with careful detail on the nature of the school sessions as they influenced Black children. But by December of that year, the branch had become inactive. With only rare spurts, the lethargy continued into the 1920s, with very little activity of any type inspiring membership. Only one other local NAACP branch, in Savannah, also pushed educational issues, using unsuccessfully the same strategies of petition that had been successful in Atlanta. The other branches throughout the state assume charters during this period or shortly thereafter and quickly die.<sup>84</sup>

A direct correlation can not be proven between the activities of the educational group under Hunt, which focused on statewide activity, and the NAACP, which focused its activity in Atlanta. However, reasons exist to believe that the NAACP was an avenue through which educators and other education-minded individuals in Atlanta accomplished their agenda. While they operated under different organizational names, as one 1970s NAACP state president explained, "we were (after all) the same people." The "same people" argument may be applicable in the 1917 period as well. As noted previously, John Hope was part of the original teachers' organization, serving as a member of the executive committee in 1913 and is listed as working with President M. W. Reddick to reinvigorate the program of the association. He was also actively associated with the NATCS, which was advocating for educational equality on a national level through the interconnection of states. He attended all meetings and is reported to have actively supported the NATCS program, and to have advocated for Black educational equality in other venues. But Hope, who attended the Niagara Conference in 1909, was also one of the signers of the NAACP petition in 1917.<sup>85</sup> In this capacity, his signature clearly represents his membership in the NAACP. Yet,

Hope necessarily brought to bear in this organization the education interests that he had long held. Evidence of the possibility of other individuals being members of both organizations is also evident in Charles Harper, the young principal on the membership list in 1917, but later clearly identified with the educational association. In general, the weight of evidence suggests strongly that similar ideas and some overlap in people fueled both initiatives in 1917. Such an interpretation explains the detailed evidence about the educational needs in the city that the NAACP was able to compile so quickly to make its case.<sup>86</sup>

This era, in sum, was one of focused direct activity using a variety of shielded mechanisms. Both the NAACP and the teachers' association used petitions to protest, and both organizations capitalized upon the climate of the era that made Whites more willing to listen to Black demands. In these activities, they met with some limited success, as specifically evident in the passage of the Elders-Carswell Bill. As becomes evident, however, the efforts to pressure local agencies for educational ends would soon be placed in the hands of the state education association, and educators, under the name of the teachers' association, would continue the battle for the next 20 years.

#### EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, 1921–1938: DIRECT APPEAL

Shortly after the its invigorating success in Atlanta to save elementary education, the Atlanta NAACP began a downward trend. To the chagrin of the national office, the branch rarely spoke on educational issues for the next two decades. Likewise, NAACP local chapters initiated by Atlanta University graduate James Weldon Johnson under the auspices of the national office also quickly sputtered and died.<sup>87</sup> Their lack of sustainability is reasonably linked to the hostile climate in Georgia during the era which was less conducive to local NAACP activity, particularly in the smaller cities and rural areas where members suffered immediate reprisal for membership. However, since this explanation does not capture the inactivity of the Atlanta branch, another explanation may be that for unarticulated reasons the community chose to support educators and to continue the utilization of the teachers' organization as the primary way to effect change.

By 1921 the Georgia Association of Educators, formed in 1917 under H. A. Hunt, and the Georgia Teachers Association, formed in 1878 under R. R. Wright, appointed a committee to begin the process of merging to form one organization. Since the Georgia Teachers Association never regained its effectiveness in drawing large numbers of teachers and membership across the two associations, members of both groups accepted the belief that a combined effort would create the best strategy. After meeting together for several years, they formed a new association, the Georgia Teachers and Education Association (GTEA), which throughout its history

would continue the advocacy effort to achieve equality for Black children that had been present in both parent organizations. Although the association also maintained an active program of professional development, this more visible, easily recognized aspect does not represent the full range of its activities. To the contrary, GTEA developed a coordinated mechanism through which it maintained continual pressure in a variety of ways upon Southern educational leaders to provide Negro children a fair and equitable share of state resources.<sup>88</sup>

In many ways, the advocacy of this era was one of more direct confrontation and explicit naming of requests on the part of the organization than is evident in earlier periods. Yet, despite the shifting climate as the United States embraced New Deal policies and began its move toward World War II, the period was nonetheless one in which Southern law and reprisal would not allow the teachers to take liberties in their approach with Whites. Many forms of repression still existed, and Black teachers necessarily maintained a stance of placating Whites even as they pressured for change. This stance is particularly evident in public records and personal communications where they were careful not to offend the sensibilities of those who financially controlled the schooling of Black children. However, notwithstanding the challenges, the teachers organizationally maintained an active resistance to inequality in facilities, resources, terms, and salary.

The consistency of GTEA to pressure for educational equality during this era is evident in a variety of published and unpublished documents. At the 1925 conference, for example, GTEA called for "better schoolhouses, better teachers, better school appropriations, and a better correlation of all the forces looking forward to an equal division of educational funds."<sup>89</sup> This sentiment is echoed in the minutes of the opening session of the GTEA held in 1926. The secretary noted that the president brought before the audience the objectives of the association. They were: "Better teachers, schoolhouses, salaries, terms, larger appropriations to Negro schools and better attendance by Negro children." Throughout the years, this advocacy theme reappeared with little variation in the addresses and/or reports of its presidents or other officers. According to *Rising in the Sun*, the 1928 presidential address included the statement that "better teachers and better school houses with better pay for those who teach shall be our motto. . . ." The report noted that this theme was reiterated in "numerous speeches delivered by guest speakers and other association members."<sup>90</sup> When H. A. Hunt was re-elected president in 1930, the objectives remained unchanged from his focus in 1917. Likewise, President B. F. Hubert's address in 1938 continued the trend, with a specific emphasis upon the need to equalize Black teacher salaries.<sup>91</sup>

In addition to the visible exhortation at GTEA meetings, the message that the goal was to advocate for the needs of Negro children was also

reinforced in the materials distributed to members and in the private discussions evident in the executive committee minutes. For example, in 1930 on the last page of the official publication of GTEA, *The Herald*, teachers were reminded of the goals: "Let us work and ask for better teachers, salaries, school houses and longer school terms."<sup>92</sup> Likewise, in 1936, the in-house document that outlines the vision of the administration of the new president, M. Agnes Jones, appropriates national sentiment by calling the theme of her administration "A New Deal for the Negro School Child." Among her goals are the increase in the salary of qualified teachers, the improvement of facilities for Negro children, the consolidation of single-room schools, the achievement of adequate expenditures for transportation, the implementation of a minimum seven-month school term (though she desired a nine-month term), and the expansion of the number of high schools.<sup>93</sup> In multiple published and unpublished sources, the evidence of GTEA's consistency in focus through this period is evident.

To accomplish the GTEA advocacy agenda, the organization relied primarily upon three strategies. The first, most central strategy was the development of a numerically strong professional association. As captured in the president's message in 1928: "[E]ffective organization was necessary to advance the cause of the race; individuals standing alone could not be effective."<sup>94</sup> Minutes of the Executive Committee, the nine-member team of leaders elected by the membership to represent the needs of all segments of the state, indicate that their "greatest objective was to build up an effective organization for the advancement of education among [the] people of Georgia."<sup>95</sup> The superintendent of education for Negroes in Georgia also made a plea in 1932, pointing out the role teachers must play in the educational uplift of the race. "If there is to be any leadership in educational activities in Georgia today it must come from the ranks of the professionally minded teachers," he proclaimed.<sup>96</sup> Throughout its years, GTEA continued to believe that it had to be a strong body comprised of most of the Black teachers of the state to have maximum influence and to protect its individual members since the group was viewed as the means through which "individual members [of the group] could express themselves."<sup>97</sup> To this end, teachers were expected to join and those districts with 100% representation were widely and publicly recognized.

Membership during this post World War I period never attained 100% participation, but the teachers did enroll in increasing numbers throughout the 1920s. In 1925, for example, GTEA boasted 982 members; by 1929, this number had risen to 2,500, which was approximately half the number of Black teachers employed. Membership in the early 1930s averaged from 1,800 to 2,000 members.<sup>98</sup> Some information about the perspective of teachers regarding GTEA is captured in reports of district and state meetings that were reportedly largely attended, and in information that

describes their interest in the work of the organization. Reported the executive director in 1933: "I have just returned from Savannah where the interest is very good and the teachers are all anxious to do more because of the adverse conditions. . . ." In another county, despite the lack of support of the superintendent, GTEA received \$32 in dues (\$1.00 per teacher) in 1933, even though the minimum salary in the county for Black teachers was only \$18 per month. Although these reports are incomplete accounts, the existing evidence does indicate sacrifice on the part of many teachers to maintain membership in the organization through the 1930s.<sup>99</sup> Given the hard economic times that descended upon Georgia during the Depression, and the reports of Black teachers not being paid at all, or not being paid their pittance salaries on time, their continued enthusiasm for the work of GTEA may be as indicative of their support as their membership.

Petitions, letters, and personal contacts were the primary means through which advocacy was addressed during this period. In 1930, when H. A. Hunt has been re-elected president of the organization, he notes that he and other members of the executive committee have petitioned the state superintendent of schools requesting better salaries, teachers, equipment, schools, and so forth.<sup>100</sup> Another president in 1938 noted that a committee "has conferences with the Division of Negro Education, the State Department of Education, and the Governor of Georgia on the issue of teacher salaries, and promises that they will keep this matter constantly before the people who are responsible for the apportionment of public funds in the Public School System of Georgia." He also noted that during the year he had traveled over 7,000 miles and written 318 letters to superintendents in the state of Georgia. This type of activity is consistent throughout the period.

In addition to letters to Southern White educators sent by the president of the association, the executive committee was also vested with power to meet with groups and represent the interests of GTEA. In 1929 the executive committee was provided a list of seven "duties," all of which expected that they would "effect improvement" in numbers of teachers, facilities, transportation, consolidation, salaries, and other items on the advocacy agenda (no professional activities are listed as objectives).<sup>101</sup> This 1929 executive committee included a "legislative committee" that suggested, among other things, that in the name of the association, the message of publicity concerning legislation be sent through all newspaper editors.<sup>102</sup> Minutes of the April 1930 meeting in Macon show that a "committee" appeared before the "Superintendents of State." Among other items, their petition asked that the superintendents give more attention to salaries, better teachers, better equipment, longer terms, larger buildings, better location of buildings, consolidation of one-teacher schools, and appropriations for teachers to attend summer schools.<sup>103</sup>

The delivery of their petitions and letters was the outgrowth of a finely-tuned communication flow. Generally very well educated and part of the network of Black academic thought, those members who served on the executive committee or as president held the responsibility for direct advocacy with superintendents and those on the state level who could effect change.<sup>104</sup> For example, in the 1929 executive committee minutes, one speaker argued that the committee should “build up a fine, strong sentiment in behalf of that which [they] most desire. Use key-men to exert this influence. Make a plea for justice to our schools and to our teachers’ salaries.”<sup>105</sup> Unlike previous eras when education was visibly championed by other professionals who would not suffer direct reprisals from Whites if they functioned as shields, the “key people” during this era who were to advocate through petitions, letters, and meetings were primarily GTEA elected leaders. As part of the communication flow, the elected leaders obtained the critical documentation on inequalities from individual teachers who were closest to the local situations across the state; in turn, these leaders utilized the information to maintain political pressure. In this structured manner, individual teachers were protected from the fear of local reprisal that might occur if White employers knew that their employees were part of any agitation for change. GTEA understood the vulnerability of its members, and even in its public programs that superintendents might read, focused more on professional matters than on the advocacy agenda clearly evident in its private documents.<sup>106</sup>

President Hunt’s activities in 1932 provide some insight on the implementation of the communication and advocacy pattern. In *The Herald*, Hunt explicitly encouraged teachers to refrain from speaking directly to local superintendents, yet simultaneously provided them with a copy of the letter that has gone out to superintendents in their behalf. Similar sentiment was also expressed in the instructions given teachers after the executive committee meeting in 1936. The teachers were asked to “stay informed” on situations and then “write to [their Black] district president and the state president [of GTEA], calling on them for assistance.”<sup>107</sup> This carefully crafted communication flow of petition and protection was the second way in which advocacy worked during this period.

The final GTEA strategy was the utilization of philanthropic aid as a way of implementing its agenda. At the 1925 conference, GTEA noted that its major objective was to match a Rosenwald Foundation grant in order to hire a state worker in the field who could provide the information necessary for spurring activities that would lead to educational equality.<sup>108</sup> This goal was eventually accomplished, and the fieldworker, also called the executive secretary and the Rosenwald Foundation agent, became an integral part of the GTEA activities. While a full discussion of the relationship between the state director of Negro Education, and the Rosenwald agent/executive director

of the association for this complete period is outside the scope of this article, the years 1930–1933 are instructive in providing an overview of this working relationship and how it was used to forward the interests of GTEA.

Vincent H. Harris was employed as executive director of GTEA and Rosenwald field agent in December 1930, following several other GTEA members who had been employed in the 1920s. Harris' appointment coincided with the appointment of J. C. Dixon as the White supervisor of Negro education in 1930. Harris received his salary from GTEA and, in an equal amount, a travel allowance from the Department of Education through Dixon's office. Throughout the years, in these dual roles Harris worked with local school Boards and trustees, traveled extensively throughout the state, met regularly with the executive committee and the president of GTEA, wrote petitions and letters, provided formal communications to members, published the *Herald*, and handled the details of GTEA meetings. Ostensibly, he was expected to report on his activities to Dixon, who was to implement the Rosenwald plan for industrial education in the South.<sup>109</sup>

In the early communication disseminated from his office, evidence for Dixon as a representative of the industrial goals of the General Education Board is evident. For example, he traveled with representatives of the Rosenwald Foundation to inspect new schools that were being built with the help of the foundation, and he appeared to be committed to the vocational education that Northern industrialists espoused. His misunderstanding of the ways in which Black educators advocated is also revealed in his naïve suggestion that Black teachers speak to the House and Senate members of the Legislature—an advocacy plan that would make teachers vulnerable and that is never discernable in GTEA materials. However, over the course of Dixon's relationship with Harris, his communications suggest a shift in commitment to the cause of GTEA. He meets with the GTEA executive committee, receiving their suggestions about the content and timing of his letters to White superintendents requesting support for Black teachers. He seeks the advice of Harris to help construct the wording of his letters and, utilizing his access to the networks of White superintendents, gives Harris advice on when the timing may be right for him to make an appearance in a local district or contact the state superintendent. By 1932, he indicated his reluctance for himself or his White assistant to be part of the program at a state meeting, noting that he didn't want to be perceived as "dictating" the activities of GTEA. To be sure, Dixon never wanted to alienate White support and he cajoled Whites as necessary; yet, his actions appear to indicate an evolution of his role. Over time, and presumably through his association with Harris and other Black educators, Dixon appeared to become more an agent of GTEA even though he was employed the General Education Board.<sup>110</sup>

The addition of this level of advocacy reveals the final layer of a carefully concealed information flow that began with local teachers and extended through the leadership and into the office of the Division of Negro Education. However, the flow of information did not merely provide information from teachers to GTEA officials; it also received information from GTEA officials and utilized teachers to communicate critical needs back to the community. The building of the Rosenwald schools in Georgia provides an illustration of this reversed communication pattern. In a 1932 editorial in the *Herald*, Harris told teachers that they should organize an educational committee within their communities, especially in rural communities. Using his extensive knowledge of the state and aided by Dixon's information on the monetary developments in funding, Harris explained that the local Black trustees have no program, that teachers are to make a program, and that they are to call the trustees together themselves, and "tell them what [they] expect them to do for the school. . . . Tell them that it is their duty to go before the Local Board when it meets on the first Tuesday in the court house and to ask for things that are fair and just and in keeping with the needs of your school."<sup>111</sup> Coupled with a call to teachers in the 1932 *Herald* to "[h]elp us build Rosenwald Schools, shops, and teachers' homes in every county in Georgia," the evidence suggests that the teachers were the conduits through which GTEA information was disseminated from leaders to Black parents so that parents could approach boards and request Rosenwald schools. Of course, the teachers were not the only recipients of this information. Though outside of the purview of this article, GTEA also simultaneously encouraged members of the Black state Parent Teachers Association, who met at the same time as teachers and were considered a functioning part of GTEA, to organize and to cooperate with the teachers and principals. Yet, that teachers could have been part of the mechanism that explains that the attainment of 262 Rosenwald schools in Georgia by 1937 is not a correlation that has been explicitly made in the scholarly literature.<sup>112</sup>

These activities of GTEA stand in stark contrast to those of the White teacher association in Georgia, the Georgia Education Association (GEA). Even though both organizations shared the same organizational structure, they held different values in the education of Black children. GEA occasionally reported on Negro education, possibly as a result of Dixon's urgings; but the general thrust does not reflect a disposition on the part of the organization that suggested that it desired to advocate to eradicate the inequalities in Black education.<sup>113</sup> Attention to the needs of Black education is also not evident in its resolutions. Indeed, to the contrary, some actions of GEA supported overtly hurt Black educators.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, their journal is congratulatory toward Governor Eugene Talmadge for getting school debts paid, while ignoring the overtly denigrating and racist behavior he

exhibited as governor during this period toward Blacks.<sup>115</sup> With a membership of the superintendents and state school leaders who resisted change in Black education and a model in the National Education Association (NEA) of lack attention to salary differentials between Black and White teachers, the GEA consistently chose a course that maintained the status quo. Because of their silence, the Black organization was left to its own devices as the single voice to agitate for improved Black education.

By the end of 1938, though some gains, such as a longer school term and textbooks, had been accomplished, many of the items for which GTEA had advocated had remained unfilled.<sup>116</sup> Some of their difficulties may be attributed to the real economic difficulties in Georgia during the Depression; some reflect the continuation of the prevailing Southern belief in limited educational opportunities for Blacks. In the years to come, GTEA would cease to attempt to reason with Whites in the manner that some Black national leaders argued was necessary during the 1930s. Instead, they would embrace the ideology of other Black leaders who, referring to the pervasiveness of racism, argued that “appeals to [a] sense of fairness among Whites [was] likely to be useless.”<sup>117</sup> The NAACP victory in the *Gaines* decision in 1938 helped prompt this move, as did the adoption of the Virginia Teachers Association use of legal means in 1938 to address the complaints the Virginia teachers had long held. As chronicled in forthcoming work, the new era of Black educational advocacy would mark one of direct confrontation as GTEA employed local attorneys, requested assistance from the NAACP Legal Defense fund for its efforts, provided plaintiffs, and formed formal relationships with the NAACP and other groups to accomplish its agenda.

## CONCLUSION

The four periods described—association building and interracial collaboration, intellectual activity and national collaboration, petitions and shielded collaboration, and direct appeal—provide evidence of the resistance of Black educators to inequality from 1878 to 1938. Their organization was born as a result of overt structures designed to thwart Black educational opportunities, and it sustained and recreated itself for over 50 years in response to various forms of White neglect or hostility. Yet, despite continual delays, generally without the support of the White teachers’ association, and through clever strategies of concealment, Black educators assumed the lead in advocating for Black educational opportunity in a way that is unparalleled within the state. In these behaviors, they were arguably, as Horace Tate, the former executive director of GTEA has captured them, the “engine behind the civil rights movement.”

This portrait of Black educators in their various iterations of activity does not discount earlier historical interpretations of Black teachers as afraid of losing their jobs during desegregation. Indeed, the data indicate that fear of economic reprisal for teachers was an accurate concern during this period of restrictive and oppressive race relations. However, earlier interpretations have failed to explore the ways in which Black teachers used their organizational structure as a means of resistance. Indeed, GTEA represented a concerted effort to preserve agency and voice, while minimizing individual reprisal. The very fear that has been used to discount Black educators in striving for equality, in reality, became the basis upon which the organizers developed political and united voice. To focus only on individual agency and not the organizational agency, as most previous research has done, does not reveal this structure.

The educators' efforts during this period yield little structural change since their capacity for effectiveness appears inextricably linked to the federal and state climate in which they lived. Yet, their efforts provide important context for the legal movement that follows. Indeed, the data demonstrate that the legal battle was not the first, but the fifth in the series of movements by Black educators to accomplish equality for Black children. The historical context thus centers Black educators as agents in the advocacy of equality in ways they have been heretofore generally ignored. In this year in which the legal victory ultimately accomplished in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision is being rightly celebrated, unmasking the roles of Black teachers in educational advocacy is critically important for historical accuracy.

*This article is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Horace Edward Tate (1922–2002), whose foresight in preserving organizational materials and willingness to make them available for research purposes has enabled new lines of inquiry into the history of African American education. Professors Russell Irvine, Jackie Irvine, and James Anderson also offered critical feedback at various stages of the development of the work. The Spencer Foundation, Emory University, and Eleanor Main, representing the Division of Educational Studies, provided financial and other in-kind support.*

## Notes

1 Numerous historical accounts depict Black teachers for their concern about employment loss and/or render them invisible in the struggle equality. See David Cecelski, *Along Freedom Road: Hyde County, North Carolina and the Fate of Black Schools in the South* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977); Liva Baker, *The Second Battle of New Orleans* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996); Matthew D. Lassiter and Andrew B. Lewis, ed., *The Moderates' Dilemma: Massive Resistance to School Desegregation in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998); Robert A. Pratt, *The Color of Their Skin: Education and Race in Richmond, Virginia, 1954–89* (Charlottesville: University

Press of Virginia, 1992); David R. Goldfield, *Black, White, and SOUTHERN: Race Relations and Southern Culture* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 12–16; Charles Payne, “Debating the Civil Rights Movement: The View from the Trenches,” in Steven F. Lawson and Charles Payne, *Debating the Civil Rights Movement, 1945–1968* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), 124.

2 Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 339.

3 Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: The Free Press, 1984); Karen Ferguson, *Black Politics in New Deal Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

4 Donald Grant, *The Way It Was in the South: The Black Experience in Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993); Stephen N. Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta: The Struggle for Racial Equality in Georgia, 1940–1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001); Kenneth Coleman, ed., *A History of Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1977); Oscar H. Joiner, *A History of Public Education in Georgia, 1734–1976* (Columbia, SC: R. L. Bryan Company, 1979). For more general civil rights accounts that neglect teachers, see also Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954–63* (New York: Touchstone, 1988); Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: The Free Press, 1984); Philip A. Klinkneer with Rogers M. Smith, *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) and Harvard Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality, 1954–1992* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981); Robert Margo, *Race and Schooling in the South*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 53, 63.

5 *The National Educational Association and the Black Teacher*, 55.

6 John J. Donohue, III, J. J. Heckman, and P.E. Todd, “The Schooling of Southern Blacks: The Roles of Legal Activism and Private Philanthropy, 1910–1950,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* (February 2002).

7 See Adam Fairclough, *Teaching Equality: Black Schools in the Age of Jim Crow* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), and Mark Tushnet, *The NAACP’s Legal Strategy Against Segregated Education, 1925–1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

8 The first set of studies on Black segregated schools included Alvis V. Adair, *Desegregation: The Illusion of Black Progress* (Lanham, Maryland: University of America, 1984); M. G. Hundley, *The Dunbar Story (1870–1955)* (New York: Vantage Press, 1965); Russell Irvine and Jackie Irvine, “The Impact of the Desegregation Process on the Education of Black Students: Key Variables,” *Journal of Negro Education* 52 (1983), 410–422; Faustine Jones, *A Traditional Model of Educational Excellence: Dunbar High School of Little Rock, Arkansas* (Washington: Howard University Press, 1981); F. Rodgers, *The Black High School and Its Community* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1967); Thomas Sowell, “Black Excellence: The Case of Dunbar High School,” *Public Interest*, 35 (1974), 1–21; Thomas Sowell, “Patterns of Black Excellence,” *Public Interest*, 43 (1976), 26–58. More recent scholarship emerged in the 1990s. Generally, it has been more widely disseminated and discussed than the earlier studies. See Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafontant, “A Movement Against and Beyond Boundaries: ‘Politically Relevant Teaching’ Among African American Teachers,” *Teachers College Record*, 100 (1999), 702–723; Cecelski, *Along Freedom Road*; Michele Foster, “Constancy, Connectedness, and Constraints in the Lives of African American Teachers,” *NWSA Journal*, 3 (1990), 233–61; Michele Foster, “The Politics of Race: Through the Eyes of African American Teachers,” *Journal of Education*, 172 (1990), 123–41; Michele Foster, *Black Teachers on Teaching* (New York: The New Press); Rhonda Jeffries, “The Trickster Figure in African American Teaching: Pre- and Post-Desegregation,” *The Urban Review*, 26 (1994), 289–304; Alicia McCullough-Garrett, “Reclaiming the African American Vision for Teaching: Toward and Educational Conversation,” *Journal of Negro Education*, 62 (1993), 433–440; Vivian Morris and Curtis Morris, *Creating Caring and Nurturing Educational Environments for African American Children* (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 2000); George Noblit and Van Dempsey, *The Social Construction of Virtue: The Moral Life of Schools* (Albany, NY:

State University of New York Press, 1996); Vanessa Siddle Walker, *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Vanessa Siddle Walker, "Caswell County Training School, 1933–1969: Relationships Between Community and School," *Harvard Educational Review*, 63 (1993), 161–182; Vanessa Siddle Walker, "Valued Segregated Schools for African American Children in the South, 1935–1969: A Review of Common Themes and Characteristics," *Review of Educational Research*, 70 (Fall 2000), 253–285; Vanessa Siddle Walker, "African American Teachers in Segregated Schools in the South, 1940–1969," *American Educational Research Journal*, 38 (2001). These scholarly descriptions are accompanied by a number of locally published histories that span both time periods. See Lenwood Davis, *A History of Queen Street High School: 1928–1968* (Kingston, NY: Tri State Services, 1996); W. C. Edwards, Preston Royster, and Lazurus Bates, *The Education of Black Citizens in Halifax County: 1866–1969* (Springfield, VA: Banister Press, 1979); T. Tilford-Weathers, *A History of Louisville Central High School, 1882–1982* (Louisville: Central High School Alumni Association, 1996).

9 Linda Perkins, "The History of Blacks in Teaching," in Donald Warren, *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 351–357.

10 Thelma Perry, *History of the American Teachers Association* (Washington, DC: NEA, 1975); Michael John Schultz, Jr., *The National Education Association and the Black Teacher* (Michael Fultz, "African-American teachers in the South, 1890–1940: Growth, Feminization, and Salary Discrimination," *Teachers College Record* 96 (Spring 1995) 40–64; Thomas O'Brien, *The Politics of Race and Schooling: Public Education in Georgia, 1900–1961* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 1999).

11 *The Bulletin*, Jan–March, 1950, 26 (1), 14. Horace Tate Private Collection.

12 Rupert Picott, *History of the Virginia Teachers Association* (Washington, DC: NEA, 1975); Thomas Patterson, *History of the Arkansas Teachers Association* (Washington, DC: NEA, 1981); Ancella Bickley, *History of the West Virginia State Teachers' Association* (Washington, DC: NEA, 1975); Gilbert Porter and Leedell Neyland, *History of the Florida State Teachers Association* (Washington, DC: NEA, 1977); John Potts, Sr., *A History of the Palmetto Education Association* (Washington, DC: NEA, 1978); Percy Murray, *History of the North Carolina Teachers Association* (Washington, DC: NEA n.d.).

13 Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist theory and the foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

14 *Rising in the Sun*, 23.

15 For descriptions of Wright, see Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 75–76; James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 29–30.

16 Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*; Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865–1873* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

17 Anderson, *The Education of Blacks*: 11, records the founding as 1865; Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 54: records the founding as 1866.

18 Numan V. Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983), 51.

19 For early educational activities in Georgia, see Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 541–563.

20 Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia*, 51–55; Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 72. Oscar H. Joiner et al., *History of Public Education in Georgia* (Columbia, SC: R. L. Bryan Company, 1979) do not mention the Black association. Joiner et al. chronicles instead 25 white educators from schools and colleges who met in Atlanta and formed the Georgia Teachers Association four months before the convention. Reportedly, they consulted with the George Peabody Fund in 1867 and received money to study needs and to develop a system of public schools, 70.

21 Richard R. Wright, *A Brief Historical Sketch of Negro Education in Georgia* (Savannah, GA: Robinson Printing House, 1894), 18.

22 The earlier leaders, described as ministers, also were likely educators. Thus, this shift may be one of name only rather than actuality. See Wright, *A Brief Historical Sketch*, 7.

23 See Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 195–201; Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia*, 69; Grant, *The Way It Was in the South*, 126–128.

24 See Joiner et al., *History of Public Education in Georgia*, 89; Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia*, 80.

25 Grant, *The Way it was in the South*, 130.

26 Wright, *A Brief Historical Sketch*, 47.

27 *Rising in the Sun*, 24.

28 Wright, *A Brief Historical Sketch*, 47.

29 Joiner et al., *History of Public Education in Georgia*, 87–88; Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia*, 61.

30 Wright, *A Brief Historical Sketch*, 47.

31 Hines Lafayette Hill, *Negro Education in Rural Georgia* (A thesis submitted to Emory University, August 1939), 12.

32 Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, provides the most comprehensive description of the variety of ways Whites educated Blacks for their roles in the South.

33 Grant, *The Way It Was in the South*, 127.

34 *Rising in the Sun*, 23.

35 Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader, 1856–1901* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 154.

36 For a discussion of the populist movement in Georgia, see Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia*, 91–94. For commentary on inequality, see Wright, *A Brief Historical Sketch*, 52.

37 Grant, *The It Was in the South*, 127–128.

38 *Ibid*, 232.

39 Wright, *A Brief Historical Sketch*, 33, 52.

40 Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics and Culture in the 20th Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

41 For comprehensive accounts of the rise of Southern racism, see C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); Kluger, *Simple Justice*. For information specific to Georgia, see Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia*; Grant, *The Way It Was in the South*, 209.

42 In 1892, Atlanta Blacks boycotted streetcars, which resulted in non-enforcement of the segregation requirement. See Grant, *The Way It Was in the South*, 217; Coleman, *A History of Georgia*, 277. In other activism, in 1891 officers of the Colored Farmer's Alliance addressed the General Assembly and urged that Jim Crow laws not be passed and the laws were not passed. See Coleman, *A History of Georgia*, 277.

43 Grant, *The Way It Was in the South*, 216.

44 Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 188, 192–193.

45 Grant, *The Way It Was in the South*, 232.

46 *Rising in the Sun*, 16. Grant reports that before disenfranchisement, Black teachers averaged 58% of the White teacher scale; three years after disfranchisement, Black teachers received only 38% of the scale. The average salary of Black teachers declined \$5 a year, whereas white teachers' salaries increased by more than \$100. Grant, *The Way It Was in the South*, 235.

47 Coleman, *A History of Georgia*, 239.

48 Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia*, 85.

49 *Rising in the Sun*, 25.

50 "Special Notice to Colored Teachers," *Savannah Tribune* 28 (August 16, 1913) 4.

51 *Ibid*.

52 Grant, *The Way It Was in the South*, 228.

53 Reported in *Rising in the Sun*, 25.

54 W. E. Burgharadt Du Bois, "The Negro Common School," in *The Atlanta University Publications* (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), 117.

55 *Rising in the Sun*, 24–25.

56 "National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools to Meet," *Savannah Tribune* 32 (July 7, 1917), 1.

57 Grant, *The Way it was in the South* 244.

58 Perry, *History of the American Teachers Association*, 47–48; Donald H. Parkerson and Jo Ann Parkerson, *Transitions in American Education: A Social History of Teaching* (New York: Routledge Farmer, 2001), 87.

59 For leadership of Wright, Laner, and Hope in NATCS, see Perry, *History of American Teachers Association*, 103, 104, 107. Wright was unable to attend the 1909 meeting; however, Hope attended. See Ridgely Torrence, *The Story of John Hope* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1948), 161.

60 "Special Notice to Colored Teachers," *Savannah Tribune* 28 (August 16, 1913) 4.

61 For references to newspaper accounts of Black educational activity in the 1880s, see *Rising in the Sun*, 22–24. Except for the 1913 reference, reported activity in the *Savannah Tribune* does not resume until 1917. For example, see "Georgia Association for Negro Education Holds Successful Meeting in Atlanta," *Savannah Tribune* 36 (May 14, 1921), 1; "Educational Association Planning Big Meeting," *Savannah Tribune* (April 13, 1918), 2; "Many Attend Educational Mass Meeting," *Savannah Tribune* 31 (May 10, 1919). Others are cited in references below.

62 Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 85–86.

63 Grant, *The Way It Was in the South*, 293; Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 100.

64 Coleman, *A History of Georgia*, 261.

65 "The Negro 'Exodus' in Texas," *Savannah Times* 32 ( July 17, 1979), 1.

66 Grant, *The Way It Was in the South*, 293–294.

67 William G. Jordan, *Black Newspapers & America's War for Democracy, 1914–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 145.

68 Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 100–104.

69 Joiner et al., *History of Public Education in Georgia*, 200.

70 Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Mercy*, 72.

71 "Jesse O. Thomas Interview" (1961). Tate Papers.

72 "Big Educational Meeting Next Month," *Savannah Tribune* 34 (April 19, 1919), 1.

73 Hunt may have been mirroring the behavior of Booker T. Washington. For a description of Washington's actions politically behind the scenes and Tuskegee students studying national philosophy, ancient history, and civil government in 1897, see Harlan, *Booker T. Washington*; David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois: Biography of a Race* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993), 197–198. On Hunt's liberal arts curriculum in 1915, see also Lewis, 545. On the evolution of Hunt, James Anderson argues that Hunt may have learned from his predecessor what happens to Blacks who fail to play the game of vocational education correctly. This understanding, coupled with his familial associations with Tuskegee faculty, allow him to publicly pretend to eschew his Atlanta University training, while quietly finding ways to generate resistance. James Anderson, personal communication.

74 "Great Meeting in the Interest of Education," *Savannah Tribute* (April 28, 1917), 1.

75 Grant, *The Way It Was in Georgia*, 294.

76 "National Teachers at Harper's Ferry," *Savannah Tribune* (July 27, 1918), 1.

77 Great Meeting in the Interest of Education," *Savannah Tribute* (April 28, 1917), 1.

78 *Rising in the Sun*, 26. Interestingly, these points are the same points argued by Waycross leaders during that same year. Though no explicit link has been identified, the leaders of that group quite likely are part of the new educational group. For a description of the Waycross activity, see Grant, *The Way It Was in the South*, 294.

79 "Need Felt for Educational Awakening," *Savannah Tribune* (March 2, 1918), 1.

80 Joiner et al., *History of Public Education in Georgia*, 212.

81 Thomas O'Brien, *The Politics of Race and Schooling*, 15.

82 "Many Attend Educational Mass Meeting," *Savannah Tribune* (May 10, 1919); "Educational Ass'n to Meet in Macon," *Savannah Tribune* (April 24, 1920), 1.

83 Walter W. White to Roy Nash, New York, 16 December 1916; Walter White to Roy Nash, New York, 3 February 1917; Walter W. White to Roy Nash, New York, 3 February 1917; Walter W. White to James W. Johnson, Florida, 22 February 1917. NAACP Branch Files, Atlanta, Georgia, 1913–1917. NAACP Records, Library of Congress.

84 Edgar Tappin, "Walter White and the Atlanta NAACP's Fight for Equal Schools, 1916–1917," *History of Education Quarterly* 7 (Spring 1967), 3–17. For Atlanta branch activity, see also Walter White to James W. Johnson, New York, 27 March 1917; Walter White to Roy Nash, New York, 19 March 1917; Walter White to Roy Nash, New York, 3 February 1917; Walter W. White to Roy Nash, New York, 3 March 1917; Walter W. White to James W. Johnson, New York, 27 September 1917. For lessened activity in the Branch, see Acting Secretary to Harry H. Pace, Atlanta, 12 December 1917; Acting Secretary to Walter White, Atlanta, 12 December 1917; Walter W. White to James W. Johnson, New York, 5 December 1917; Director of Branches to Austin T. Walden 27 January 1925; Director of Branches to E. Franklin Frazier, Atlanta, 21 January 1925; Director of Branches to E. Franklin Frazier, Atlanta, 24 February 1925; 2–27–27; 6–19–19. For charter requests and demise of other Georgia branches, as evidenced by lack of communication, see examples of correspondence in Branch Files for Albany, GA, 1919–1933; Americus, GA, 1919, 122–1924; Athens, GA, 1917–1918; Brunswick, GA, 1918–1938; Columbus, GA; Cordele, GA; For branch activity in the 1930s, see branch files for Augusta, GA, Jan.-Nov. 1933; Bainbridge, GA; Alblany, GA 1934; Baxley, GA, Apr.-Nov. 1936; Cartersville, GA; Cedartown, GA; Collins, GA; Cuthbert, GA, 1934–1939. Savannah activity can be documented in the Savannah Branch Files. NAACP Records, Library of Congress.

85 "Special Notice to Colored Teachers," *Savannah Tribune* 18 (August 16, 1913), 4; Perry, *History of American Teachers Association*, 105; Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois*, 550; Walter White to James W. Johnson, New York, 22 February 1917.

86 Tour guides at the King center currently describe the King home as the place where educators met with A. D. Williams, NAACP president, to plan advocacy. Public Parks, Atlanta, GA.

87 Grant, *The Way It Was in the South*, 311. As noted in footnote 83, Georgia branches formed circa 1917–19. The branch files reveal little activity in the 1920s. For branch activity in the 1930s, see, for example, branch files for Augusta, GA, Jan.-Nov. 1933; Bainbridge, GA; Albany, GA, 1934; Baxley, GA, Apr.-Nov. 1936; Cartersville, GA; Cedartown, GA; Collins, GA; Cuthbert, GA, 1934–1939.

88 The association continued to evolve until 1926. *Rising in the Sun*, 41, notes that several other previous associations, such as the Georgia Business and Professional League and the Organization of Private Colleges and Schools, also became part of GTEA. During the 1920s, this association is known as the Georgia State Teachers and Educational Association. For clarity, I refer to the organization throughout as the Georgia Teachers and Education Association (GTEA).

89 *Rising in the Sun*, 29.

90 *Ibid* 50–51.

91 "Annual Address of President B. F. Hubert," *The Herald* 4 (June 1938), 4–5.

92 *The Herald* 2, (April 1930), 15. Horace Tate Collection, Atlanta, GA.

93 "A New Deal for the Negro School Child," 1–2. Horace Tate Collection, Atlanta, GA. In these and other excerpts, I omit other concerns of the Association that relate to curricular matters, increasing teacher qualifications, and so forth. Although the teachers were equally interested in these areas, this topic is not the focus of the present paper.

94 *Rising in the Sun*, 51.

95 GTEA Executive Meeting minutes, June 28, 1929. Horace Tate Collection, Atlanta, GA. This statement is also recorded in *Rising in the Sun*, 51.

96 J. C. Dixon, "Everyone to the Annual Convention in Macon," *The Herald* 2 (April 1932), 7.

97 J. C. Dixon to Jeanes teachers, Georgia, 6 December 1933. Vincent H. Harris File, Georgia State Archives.

98 *Rising in the Sun*, 54; Vincent Harris, "Editorial," *The Herald* 2 (April 1932), 7.

99 Descriptions of teacher response are most evident in the Vincent Harris file, Georgia State Archives. See Vincent Harris to Dorothy Millsap, Atlanta, 31 January 1931; H. A. Hunt to Vincent H. Harris, Atlanta, 25 January 1932; Vincent Harris to Dorothy Millsap, Atlanta, 28 March 1932; Vincent Harris to Mayme R. Brown, Cuthbert, GA, 16 February 1933; Mayme R. Brown to J. C. Dixon, Atlanta, 31 January 1933. For their response during the Depression, see Vincent Harris to W. P. Stephens, Calhoun, GA, 4 October 1931; Walter Stephens to J. C. Dixon, Atlanta, 18 October 1932, 10–18–32; J. C. Dixon to Mason Williams, Morven, GA, 20 February 1933; Dixon to J. Mason Williams, Morven, GA, 7 March 1933.

100 *Rising in the Sun*, 56.

101 *Rising in the Sun*, 56.

102 *Ibid.*

103 "Minutes of annual Meeting," April 17, 1930, 20. Horace Tate Collection, Atlanta, GA.

104 W. E. B. Du Bois served on the advisory board for GTEA for 1936 and 1937 and lectured at one of the GTEA meetings in 1937. At least two copies of the Herald carry articles/speeches by him during his affiliation with GTEA. See "Dr. W. E. B. DuBois speaks at Georgia State College," *The Herald* 5 (February 1939), 10–11 and "Curriculum Revision," *The Herald* 3 (March 1937), 13.

105 Executive Meeting Minutes, June 28, 1929. Horace Tate Collection, Atlanta, GA.

106 In public materials, the advocacy is often concealed under such categories as "presidential recommendations," or, in later years, "teacher improvement." The contrast between the minutes of the executive committee and the annual meeting suggest a concealment or minimization of the advocacy in public discourse. Minutes of Annual Meeting, Savannah, GA, April 17, 1929. Horace Tate Collection, Atlanta, GA.

107 Vincent Harris, "Editorial," *The Herald* 2 (April 1932), 7; H. A. Hunt, Letter to Fellow Teachers, *The Herald* 2 (April 1932), 14; Agnes Jones, "A New Deal for the Negro School Child," 4. Horace Tate; Collection, Atlanta, GA.

108 *Rising in the Sun*, 29.

109 Vincent Harris to J. C. Dixon, Atlanta, 21 March 1932; J. C. Dixon to Vincent Harris, Atlanta, 11 April 1932; Vincent Harris to Dixon, Atlanta, 4 October 1932.

110 For Dixon's evolution, see J. C. Dixon to Vincent Harris, Atlanta, 12 January 1931; Vincent Harris to J. C. Dixon, Atlanta, 9 March 1931; Vincent Harris to J. C. Dixon, Atlanta, 8 April 1931; J. C. Dixon to Vincent Harris, Atlanta, 24 July 1931; Vincent Harris to J. C. Dixon, Atlanta, 6 January 1932; Vincent Harris to J. c. Dixon, Atlanta 8 December 1933; J. C. Dixon to Vincent Harris, Atlanta, 6 April 1933; Vincent Harris to J. C. Dixon, Atlanta, 1 March 1933. The evolution of Dixon may shed meaning on the statement of his contemporary, captured in James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*. Anderson records that Newbold notes, "If only these walls could talk." Newbold may, in fact, be suggesting a relationship occurring within those walls that was not publicly unveiled.

111 "Vincent H. Harris, Editorial," *The Herald* 2 (April 1932), 7. The relationship between Dixon and vocational education is as yet unclear. GTEA members themselves advocated for vocational education, and had since the Smith-Hughes Act. They seemed to see no contradiction between this advocacy and classical education, indeed allowing both of them to exist side by side in local school settings.

112 "The Julius Rosenwald Fund," *The Herald* 3 (March 1937), 4. Horace Tate Collection, Atlanta, GA; *Rising in the Sun*, 51.

113 See "Negro School Conditions," *Georgia Education Journal*, 27 (January 1935), 33, for an example of one of the few reports on Negro education.

114 See, for example, "Editorial," *Georgia Education Journal* 28 (February 1936), 20. "Editorial," *Georgia Education Journal* 28 (November 1935), 20.

115 "Editorial," *Georgia Education Journal* 28 (January 1936), 20.

116 For various reports on teacher certification, building program enrollment gains, see *The Herald* 3 (March 1937), 12. However, it must be noted that it is difficult to disaggregate this activity from the GEA influence, since GEA also advocated for general issues such as school term.

117 Tushnet, *The NAACP's Legal Strategy*, 12.

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