

Fall 2021

## **“Hungering and Thirsting” for Education: Education, Presbyterians, and African Americans in the South, 1880-1920**

Rachel Marie Young

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“HUNGERING AND THIRSTING” FOR EDUCATION: EDUCATION, PRESBYTERIANS, AND  
AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE SOUTH, 1880-1920

By

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Bachelor of Arts  
Augusta University, 2018

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts in

Public History

College of Arts and Sciences

University of South Carolina

2021

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## Acknowledgments

Many thanks to my husband for keeping me grounded, reminding me that my value is not determined solely by my abilities as a student, and supporting me in all my endeavors; my cats, Harley and Morgan, for not accidentally deleting all my work; and my mom for reading my drafts and letting me bounce ideas off of her. My thanks also go to my friends for their encouragement, Dr. Kent Anderson Leslie for being incredibly generous in offering assistance and information, Dr. Donaldson for his willingness to work with me and for his source recommendations, and of course, Dr. Elfenbein, whose feedback has been invaluable and without whom I would never have come to the topic in the first place.

## Abstract

This thesis investigates the relationship between the white-dominated Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) and African Americans from 1880-1920, exploring the motivations, philosophies, and strategies of the PCUSA and the ways that they used education to achieve their goals of helping forge educated and devoutly Christian African Americans. The church's history highlights the ways in which Presbyterian paternalism developed in the years leading up to 1880, as well as contradictions in white church members' understandings of race relations and their conflation of civic duty with religious responsibility. The church's efforts in primary education provide a window into ideas about gender and the different roles of men and women and simultaneously showcase the ways that the American debate over education impacted Presbyterian understandings of education and race. While Presbyterians focused heavily on primary education in their parochial schools, they also operated colleges and seminaries to support the development of an educated class of Black professionals, teachers, and ministers. Throughout these efforts, responsibility, paternalism, and accountability led them to wrestle with issues like the "Negro Problem" and the cultural prescriptions and racial mores of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Southern United States.

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## Introduction

His boss was in court for driving a wagon without a license. Once again, Coyden Uggams, a porter, found his employer, a grocer named J. B. Reedy, in legal trouble. Reedy was in and out of court often in the 1870s and early 1880s.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps in Savannah, Georgia in 1884, nineteen-year-old Uggams found himself wondering about his purpose in life and reflecting on his previous position as servant to a Scottish—likely Presbyterian—minister in Bluffton, South Carolina.<sup>2</sup> Although he would spend much of his adult life in the Palmetto State, Coyden and his siblings spent most of their childhoods in Georgia, where he was born around 1865 to William and Sarah Uggams, who were formerly enslaved.<sup>3</sup> During his childhood, Uggams may have received some education, although in later census records, he claimed he did not attend school as a child.<sup>4</sup> As an adult, he earned multiple degrees from Lincoln University and spent his life preaching and teaching throughout the United States.<sup>5</sup> Uggams embodies a national

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<sup>1</sup> “Savannah, Georgia, Court Records, Mayor’s Fines and Information Dockets, 1883-1888” (Ancestry.com, May 4, 1884), Savannah, Georgia, Court Records, 1790-1934 [database on-line], Ancestry.

<sup>2</sup> *Sholes’ Directory of the City of Savannah, 1883* (Savannah, GA: A. E. Sholes, 1885); “1880 United States Census, s.v. Coyden Uggams,” Census (Bluffton, Beaufort County, SC, Enumeration District 045, 1880), AncestryHeritageQuest.

<sup>3</sup> “Coyden Uggams (1865-1944),” FindAGrave.com, accessed September 22, 2020, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/52247423/coyden-uggams>; “United States, Freedman’s Bank Records, 1865-1874” (Augusta, GA, n.d.), FamilySearch, accessed September 22, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> “United States, Freedman’s Bank Records, 1865-1874,” (n.d.).

<sup>5</sup> Edgar Sutton Robinson, *The Ministerial Directory of the Ministers in “The Presbyterian Church in the United States” (Southern), and in “The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America” (Northern)* (Oxford: Ministerial directory co., 1898), 515, <http://archive.org/details/ministerialdirec00robi>; *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 28th Annual Report*,

narrative of missions and education attempting to connect a country and church divided by the effects of a civil war, a restructured economy, and the dismantling of racial Reconstruction, leading to struggles over issues of education, equality, and justice.

In 1818, the white-dominated Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) cautiously denounced slavery, hoping to avoid creating a rift between the church's abolitionists and slaveholders. A schism became unavoidable during the Civil War when, mirroring their states, Southern churches seceded from Northern ones. After the war, Southern white Presbyterians hoped that Black people would return to a state of subordination, a situation many formerly enslaved Presbyterians had no desire to revisit. As seen in their reports and publications, the PCUSA felt obligated to educate African Americans. The Northern church sent missionaries and teachers to Southern African Americans to atone for their previous complicity. In their educational efforts, Presbyterians strove for justice within a framework of white superiority, resulting both in attempts to increase equity among white and Black students and in implementing unequal Jim Crow standards. They established many educational institutions and performed outreach in diverse areas, documented in the Annual Reports of the Board of Missions for Freedmen and the Board of Education. Church women, both white and

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*1892-1893, Twenty-Third Annual Report (The Ninety-First Year from the Organization of the Work) of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1893), 26, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah3kgz>; Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 40th Annual Report, 1904-1905, One Hundred and Third Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1905), <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah5ctb?urlappend=%3Bseq=1295>.*

Black, were integral in developing the PCUSA's relationship with African Americans.<sup>6</sup> White Presbyterians saw themselves in a parental role, guiding what they viewed as an undeveloped and childish race of people toward cultural, political, economic, and religious maturity. Black Presbyterians used this Presbyterian paternalism to further their own goals, in some ways disrupting the church's mindset and in others, accepting it. The church's history, reports and publications, and approaches to higher and elementary education showcase the PCUSA's complicated relationship with African Americans and demonstrate how the church's motivations of responsibility, paternalism, and accountability simultaneously contributed to and challenged cultural prescriptions and racial mores of the American South from 1880-1920.

#### *Sources and Limitations*

This thesis utilizes historiographies of African American history, religious history, women's history, and educational history, including works by historians such as August Meier, Bettye Collier-Thomas, and Edward Ayers, among others. In addition, this draws heavily on the PCUSA reports and publications produced from 1882-1918 and uses the reports of the church's Board of Education, Committee of Missions for Freedmen (which later became the Board of Missions for Freedmen), Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work, Freedmen's Department of the Woman's Executive Committee of Home Missions (the Woman's Executive Committee eventually became the Woman's Board of Home Missions), and Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United

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<sup>6</sup> For more on the PCUSA's history with African Americans before the Civil War, see Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black and Presbyterian: The Heritage and the Hope* (Philadelphia: Geneva Press, 1983), <http://archive.org/details/blackpresbyteria0000wilm>.

States of America, to which these boards and committees reported. *Home Mission Monthly*, a magazine published by the Woman's Executive Committee/Woman's Board of Home Missions and the primary publication of Presbyterian women, is also an important source. Lack of access to official Presbyterian sources reflecting the voices of the African American men and women involved in the church during this period has been a limitation, largely due to the ongoing pandemic.<sup>7</sup> Where Black Presbyterian voices are found, they represent voices of people influenced by and influencing a sometimes oppressive white-dominated, patriarchal institution.

Much of the research into African American religion and education looks to Methodists and Baptists, providing important background for understanding the historical context of the relationship between Protestants—including Presbyterians—and African Americans. Black Presbyterians were a minority, both within Black Christianity and within the Presbyterian Church, “where they were under the double jeopardy of having to fight both class consciousness and racism.”<sup>8</sup> Presbyterian churches were also often associated with urban elites.<sup>9</sup> These factors limited the PCUSA's reach from 1880-1920.

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<sup>7</sup> Part of the difficulty in finding African American voices within the PCUSA stems from the lack of Black Presbyterians in high-ranking positions, meaning that written records would likely have been stored in the churches in which they preached or with their descendants. As a result, many sources that would help shine a light on African American perspectives are either nonexistent or inaccessible to this researcher. The *Africo-Presbyterian*, a newspaper published by and for Black Presbyterians, would be beneficial for future researchers to use.

<sup>8</sup> In the South in 1890, there were approximately 114,000 Black Presbyterians, compared to 125,000 Black Methodists, 366,000 members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 310,000 members of AME Zion, and 1.3 million Black Baptists. See Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2007), 160–61, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/southcarolina/detail.action?docID=430642>; quote from Wilmore, *Black and Presbyterian*, (1983), 67.

<sup>9</sup> Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, (2007), 167.

## *Church History*

The complicated relationship between Presbyterians and Black people in America began prior to the Civil War. According to James Moorhead, while many in Presbyterian leadership nominally opposed slavery, or at the very least, viewed the South's "peculiar institution" negatively, others supported it. Still, supporters of slavery often took a more liberal approach, encouraging the education of enslaved people. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, ministers who ardently pushed for abolition faced professional, legal, and social repercussions for their outspokenness.<sup>10</sup> Around the same time, the PCUSA cautiously condemned slavery in their toothless 1818 Statement on Slavery which attempted to promote peace between slaveholders and abolitionists.<sup>11</sup> This reticence was itself indicative of the PCUSA's views on race: as Gayraud Wilmore points out, "no church was more high-sounding and profound in its Biblical and theological analysis of slavery and did so little about it."<sup>12</sup> By the mid-1800s, Rev. Charles Allen Stillman—who later founded one of the early Presbyterian schools for African Americans, the Tuscaloosa Institute for Colored Ministers, now Stillman University—wanted to maintain slavery, but hoped to encourage the "spiritual welfare and benevolent treatment" of enslaved people.<sup>13</sup> Not surprisingly, these contradictions led to strife about the white-dominated church's relationship with African Americans.

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<sup>10</sup> James H. Moorhead, "Between Hope and Fear: Presbyterians and the 1818 Statement on Slavery," *The Journal of Presbyterian History* 96, no. 2 (2018): 50–52, 55, <https://doi.org/10.2307/26751306>.

<sup>11</sup> Moorhead, "Between Hope and Fear," (2018), 58.

<sup>12</sup> Wilmore, *Black and Presbyterian*, (1983), 62.

<sup>13</sup> Barrett Abernethy, "A New Vision: Charles Stillman's Motivations to Create the Tuscaloosa Institute for Colored Ministers," *The Journal of Presbyterian History (1997-)* 90, no. 2 (2012): 73, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23338230>.

In the early nineteenth century, the Presbyterian Church split into the Old and the New Schools over disagreements about maintaining traditions and the extent to which the church should be involved in politics. Despite this break, missionary work—both domestic and foreign—remained a priority to both churches. The Old School developed the Board of Home Missions, which would later work toward the education of and religious outreach to African Americans.<sup>14</sup> A second schism occurred in 1861, when the secession of the Southern states was echoed by the Southern Presbyterian Church's split from the Presbyterian Church in the *United States* of America to form the Presbyterian Church in the *Confederate States* of America (PCCSA).<sup>15</sup> Distrust grew between the Northern PCUSA and Southern PCCSA. Divisions between the Presbyterian churches widened when, in 1864, the General Assembly of the PCUSA authorized two Committees for the Education of Freedmen. The following year, the General Assembly replaced them with a single Committee on Freedmen, governed by the Board of Home Missions in Philadelphia.<sup>16</sup> When the Old and New Schools of the Northern Church merged in 1870, they combined their efforts among formerly enslaved people and utilized their joint resources to increase education among African Americans.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Special Committee to Document the History and Contributions of All-Black Governing Bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), "All-Black Governing Bodies: The History and Contributions of All-Black Governing Bodies" (Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1996), 23, [https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/allblackgoverningbodies.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/allblackgoverningbodies.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> After the Civil War ended, the PCCSA became the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS). Richard Allen Morton, "'Means of Grace': Directions in Presbyterian Home Mission Work, 1870—1885," *American Presbyterians* 72, no. 2 (1994): 123–24, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23333369>; Abernethy, "A New Vision," (2012), 77.

<sup>16</sup> Oliver S. Heckman, "The Presbyterian church in the United States of America in Southern Reconstruction, 1860-1880," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 20, no. 3 (1943): 223.

<sup>17</sup> Special Committee to Document the History and Contributions of All-Black Governing Bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), "All Black Governing Bodies," (1996), 46–47.

The PCUSA's sense of responsibility for and accountability to African Americans manifested in the development of a cohort of mostly white individuals who witnessed to and addressed issues facing Southern African Americans.<sup>18</sup> By 1866, these whites felt they had identified the roots of the problem: lack of education and lack of appropriate forms of Christian expression, such as styles of worship.<sup>19</sup> Educating and "Christianizing" African Americans would require "the organization, first, of the family, then of the school, and then of the church, among these people."<sup>20</sup> Thinking that African Americans could improve their social status and living standards by following the rhetoric of racial uplift but that educating, evangelizing, and otherwise aiding African Americans would be a long process, the PCUSA, like many African Americans, believed that overcoming the legacy of slavery involved education as a step toward a society where "all stand upon the same footing."<sup>21</sup>

In order to educate and Christianize African Americans, the PCUSA established several colleges—like Biddle University in Charlotte, NC and Lincoln University in

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<sup>18</sup> *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 37th Annual Report, 1901-1902*, One Hundredth Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1902), 3, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah5ct8?urlappend=%3Bseq=1181>.

<sup>19</sup> *Committee on Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 1st Annual Report, 1865-1866* (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1866), [https://digital.history.pcusa.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A66998?solr\\_nav%5Bid%5D=5e75fa78583233785ab8&solr\\_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr\\_nav%5Boffset%5D=1#page/1/mode/1up](https://digital.history.pcusa.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A66998?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=5e75fa78583233785ab8&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=1#page/1/mode/1up).

<sup>20</sup> *1st Annual Report of the Committee on Freedmen*, (1866), 8.

<sup>21</sup> Racial uplift was the idea that, by gaining material wealth and changing their behaviors to reflect the ideals of white society, often including subordination to white interests, Black people could gradually earn the respect of and equal rights with white Americans. *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 24th Annual Report, 1888-1889*, 19th Annual Report (The 87th From Its Organization) of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1889), 18, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah3ljd?urlappend=%3Bseq=739>.

Philadelphia, PA—and many parochial, elementary, and normal schools. Prior to the Civil War, they had established the Ashmun Institute in Pennsylvania, renamed Lincoln University after 1865, which had preparatory, collegiate, and theological courses. In 1866, Black Presbyterians in Charlotte, NC founded Biddle University—now Johnson C. Smith University—as a church with a primary school that evolved into a men’s college with a preparatory department and a seminary.<sup>22</sup> In 1882, Biddle University was the PCUSA’s only Southern institution with a theological department for African Americans.<sup>23</sup> Lincoln and Biddle were run primarily by white men and offered religious and secular training. The PCUSA’s approach stemmed from the belief that white evangelical Christianity—especially Presbyterianism—was the best way to help African Americans become adequately moral, religious, and educated. Black people needed white Presbyterian help in establishing strong families and habits of thrift, morality, and industry, they thought, and education was the best method of achieving that. The PCUSA committed to training Black men as teachers, ministers, and leaders to achieve the goals of the Church.

Still, after the Civil War, many Americans, including some white Presbyterians, expected Black people to return to positions of social subordination. If Black Presbyterians hoped to continue attending their old churches, they were expected to

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<sup>22</sup> *1st Annual Report of the Committee on Freedmen*, (1866), 11; Special Committee to Document the History and Contributions of All-Black Governing Bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), “All Black Governing Bodies,” (1996), 28–30.

<sup>23</sup> *Committee of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 16th Annual Report, 1881-1882*, Twelfth Annual Report (Eightieth From Its Organization) of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1882), 13–14, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah3lir?urlappend=%3Bseq=475>.

“submit to a status of inferiority in order to worship with their former masters.”<sup>24</sup> The Northern PCUSA offered to aid the Southern PCUS in their work with formerly enslaved people. Although willing to accept the PCUSA subsidizing their ministry among African Americans, Southern Presbyterians wanted to restrict Black communicants more than the Northern church was willing to accept.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, African Americans refused to be trampled upon by former slaveholders and were “no more in favor of a Southern Assembly than a Southern Confederacy.”<sup>26</sup> Some Black members left Presbyterianism completely, turning to other denominations or joining informal congregations. Other Black Presbyterians utilized the systems and frameworks of the PCUSA to protect their autonomy: in 1866, several African American ministers in Georgia left the Southern church and formed Knox Presbytery under the auspices of the PCUSA.<sup>27</sup>

Work among Black Southerners fell primarily on the shoulders of the Northern church. Northern missionaries, harassed by white Southerners, found that “prejudice and lawlessness rendered it unsafe to locate missions or schools where military protection was not afforded.”<sup>28</sup> While the PCUSA demonstrated a complicated and

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<sup>24</sup> Special Committee to Document the History and Contributions of All-Black Governing Bodies and of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), “All-Black Governing Bodies: The History and Contributions of All-Black Governing Bodies” (Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1996), 24–25, [https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/allblackgoverningbodies.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/allblackgoverningbodies.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Darius L. Swann and James F. Reese, “Perspectives on the Development of the Black Presbyterian Church in the South,” *The Journal of Presbyterian History* (1997-) 85, no. 1 (2007): 50, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23338726>.

<sup>26</sup> *1st Annual Report of the Committee on Freedmen*, (1866), 14–15.

<sup>27</sup> Kent Anderson Leslie, “No Middle Ground: Elite African Americans in Augusta and the Coming of Jim Crow,” in *Paternalism in a Southern City: Race, Religion, and Gender in Augusta, Georgia*, ed. Edward J. Cashin and Glenn T. Eskew (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 126.

<sup>28</sup> *1st Annual Report of the Committee on Freedmen*, (1866), 5.

contradictory attitude toward Black members and its Southern mission field, the African American men and women of the church provided much of the labor that it required. Despite paternalistic and sometimes outright racist attitudes espoused by the white church, ministers and teachers devoted themselves to improving the spiritual, physical, and mental lives of African Americans. Nevertheless, the Northern Presbyterians laid the foundations for later work educating and otherwise aiding African American communities in the South. As decades passed, they provided for the development of African American congregants and ministers while advocating for equality. Within the white-, male-dominated institution, Black men and women found and created fertile ground for their own advancement and that of others.

## Chapter 1. “This Field of Darkness”: Presbyterian Philosophies

We have used their bodies and minds as stepping stones for our prosperity and wealth, and in some instances have used them as soldiers for our defense, without any adequate or just recompense. Mere justice makes us regard them as our wards... Justice and pity should call out our assistance.<sup>29</sup>

S. J. Fisher, *The American Negro: A Study*

In the late-nineteenth century, the Presbyterian Church re-evaluated its priorities and approaches to relationships with Black communities. The period after Reconstruction, called the “Nadir” by Rayford Logan, saw an increase in systematic disenfranchisement, discrimination, and oppression of African Americans, which included court cases like *Plessy v. Ferguson* and *Cumming v. School Board of Richmond County, Georgia* and tragedies like the Wilmington Massacre.<sup>30</sup> What many people called the “Negro Problem” appeared as a “concrete test of the underlying principles of the great republic.” The systemic legal, social, political, and educational subordination of Black people to white “tended to make the whites, North and South, shift the burden of the Negro problem to the Negro's shoulders and stand aside as critical and rather pessimistic spectators.”<sup>31</sup> The 1880s were an uncertain period of negotiating race

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<sup>29</sup> S. J. Fisher, *The American Negro, a Study* (Pittsburgh: Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, 1902), 51, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/nnc1.cu56212380>.

<sup>30</sup> Rayford Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901* (New York: Dial Press, 1954); James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 188–92, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/southcarolina/detail.action?docID=880026>.

<sup>31</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1903), 12, 58, <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=ZdV1AAAAMAAJ&hl=en>.

relations, leading to contention, gains and losses, and discontentment.<sup>32</sup> Tired of conflict, according to August Meier,

once memories of war had begun to fade, and the political and economic exigencies of keeping a solid Republican South (on the basis of an enfranchised Negro population) had passed, reconciliation and nationalism quite naturally became the order of the day... By the end of the century public opinion in the North had come to feel that Negroes were an inferior race.<sup>33</sup>

This reconciliation between North and South came at the expense of increased discrimination against African Americans. Major Protestant denominations—such as Baptists, Methodists, and Congregationalists—recognized that the late nineteenth century was a crucial turning point in the development of the United States and perceived that the ways in which racial issues were handled would grow increasingly important.<sup>34</sup> This awareness did not skip over Presbyterians. From 1880-1920, their attitudes and ideas about interacting and working with Black people resulted in debates over the best philosophies and strategies to minister to growing African American populations in the South.

As the nation deliberated over the place of African Americans in society, white Presbyterians deliberated on the best approaches to interacting with and ministering to African Americans. They found themselves asking: if it was important to educate Black people when they were enslaved,

what must be the obligations resting on the Presbyterian Church to give them the Gospel and the means of a Christian education now that they number nearly

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<sup>32</sup> Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, (2007), 137.

<sup>33</sup> August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), 21, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000367128>.

<sup>34</sup> Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, (2007), 432.

seven millions of souls... and are literally hungering and thirsting for Christian privileges and an education for themselves and their children?<sup>35</sup>

If the church withheld education from African Americans, it would imperil the interests of both the church and the nation.<sup>36</sup> Education involved much more than reading, writing, and arithmetic; it was also about teaching Black children to be *American* men and women.

Nearly forty years later, in 1918, the PCUSA still felt a need to Americanize and Christianize Black Americans. White Presbyterian women, fearing that African Americans were vicious and uncivilized, invoked the image of the “vicious Negro” to hasten fundraising for expanded education. They asserted:

Negro ministers and Christian teachers are needed for the crisis in which we find ourselves... but they are not ready to meet the opportunities offered. Some of us are distressed that the ignorant, vicious Negro is coming so near. Oh, women, the hour has struck when we must meet this problem with the Christian church and school.<sup>37</sup>

White Presbyterians absorbed and repeated commonly held fears and attitudes, which both represented a sense of superiority accompanied by paternalism and highlighted their concern for justice. Over the forty or so years following the dismantling of Reconstruction, African Americans utilized the resources of the PCUSA—despite the

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<sup>35</sup> *Committee of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 16th Annual Report, 1881-1882*, (1882), 21.

<sup>36</sup> *Committee of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 16th Annual Report, 1881-1882*, (1882), 21.

<sup>37</sup> *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 53rd Annual Report, 1917-1918*, Reports of the Missionary and Benevolent Boards and Committees to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1918), 224, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah5ctp?urlappend=%3Bseq=1255>.

church's paternalistic mindset and ingrained white supremacy—to fight for a more equitable society.

### *Education and the “Negro Problem”*

The PCUSA believed that education would solve the problems facing African Americans. Officially, white Presbyterian leaders, like other contemporary liberal groups, promoted the idea that Black people, while not biologically inferior, were culturally inferior to whites and that “crimes which would disgrace a member of an intelligent Christian society, were among them not only deemed venial, but consistent with religion.”<sup>38</sup> They saw most African Americans as financially irresponsible, as well as immoral and criminal, all of which stemmed from years of slavery. Rather than being “universal and ineradicable,” these “defects” in African Americans were “part of the bitter dregs of the slavery, from which these people suffered for two hundred years, and from the effects of which, in both character and reputation, they still suffer.”<sup>39</sup> The PCUSA believed that African Americans did not understand appropriate social or religious behavior. White Presbyterians carefully pointed out social and cultural differences to argue that there was something inferior about Black people and thought that evangelical Christianity and education would be the remedy.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 23rd Annual Report, 1887-1888*, 18th Annual Report (The 86th from Its Organization) of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1888), 5, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah3lis?urlappend=%3Bseq=689>.

<sup>39</sup> *23rd Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1888), 15.

<sup>40</sup> The term “evangelical” refers to a movement within Protestant Christianity that states, among other things, that the Bible is inerrant, that salvation comes through the grace of God alone, and that evangelism—or missionary work—is the obligation of Christians. For a more thorough discussion, see John Green, Richard Cizik, and Mark Noll, “Evangelicals V. Mainline Protestants,” PBS Frontline, accessed October 13, 2021, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jesus/evangelicals/evmain.html>.

In 1891, the Presbyterian women's publication, *Home Mission Monthly*, stated that the "best solution of the negro question is to *help the negro to help himself*."<sup>41</sup> White Presbyterians believed that helping African Americans work within a system of racial subordination was more important to solving problems of racism than was advocating for their rights, a strategy espoused by some African American leaders and opposed by others. Although perceiving self-help as a necessity, white Presbyterians also saw African Americans as unable or unwilling to work toward it alone. Twenty years later, the PCUSA maintained its philosophy, claiming that "the advancement they have made through the work that has been done for them, and through themselves, proves... that they can be developed, and that very rapidly."<sup>42</sup> Arguing that African Americans "can be developed" put the onus on white Christians to step in and serve as guides. By using passive voice, white Presbyterians reveal that the PCUSA did not see their work as a partnership among equals but as the obligation of a more powerful and superior group to a lesser one, and that therein lay the solution to the "Negro Problem."

Black Presbyterians often saw the issue differently. Some believed that the problems they faced—discrimination, prejudice, and inequality—lay in their own behaviors and beliefs, while others perceived discrimination and prejudice as the cause. In 1890, Reverend Emory W. Williams, a founder of Ferguson Academy in Abbeville, South Carolina, declared that there was no "such thing as a problem particular to the

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<sup>41</sup> *Home Mission Monthly*, vol. V (Woman's Executive Committee of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1891), 145, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/wu.89077049831>.

<sup>42</sup> "Freedmen Number," in *Home Mission Monthly*, vol. XXIV, no. 6 (New York: Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1910), 141, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015068467441>.

negroes.”<sup>43</sup> He saw poverty, ignorance, and prejudice in his daily life, and argued that, because Black people were not the problem, they alone could not find the solution. Instead, although education and religion were crucial to solving the “Negro Problem,” it was the responsibility of white Christians to fix it.

Many white Presbyterians agreed that white people contributed to many of the difficulties faced by African Americans because of the legacies of slavery. However, white Presbyterians disagreed about the core of the problem: to them, discrimination and prejudice did not lead to the poverty of African Americans. Instead, it was the failure of Black people to behave in a moral and judicious manner. For example, in 1905, J. A. Stevenson, a white Presbyterian, argued that the “Negro Problem” was a sin problem, not a race problem, and used the example of Black farmers taking out loans in order to survive. While these loans were often predatory, he believed it proved that the African Americans who relied on them were greedy and improvident and thus required white Christians to take control. The PCUSA argued that Black people needed to be taught frugality and responsibility because, until they were wiser with their resources, they would live in sin and continue to face discrimination and difficulty.<sup>44</sup> These conflicting views showcased how the PCUSA wrestled with the question of how to address the problems of white supremacy within the nation and the church.

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<sup>43</sup> “The Mexicans,” in *Home Mission Monthly, November 1889–November 1890*, vol. IV, no. 11 (New York: Woman’s Executive Committee of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1890), 252, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/wu.89077049617>.

<sup>44</sup> “The Freedmen,” in *Home Mission Monthly, November 1904–October 1905*, vol. XIX, no. 6 (New York: Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1905), 128–29, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015021280899?urlappend=%3Bseq=131>.

## *Presbyterian Women*

Presbyterian women participated in this struggle. The Board of Missions for Freedmen wanted to ensure that women were involved: “there is no field in which women’s influence is more needed, and none in which it is more blessed.”<sup>45</sup> Established in December of 1884, the Woman’s Committee’s goals were:

1st, To awaken an interest, especially among the women of the church, in the condition of the Freedmen, especially that of the women and children. 2d, To collect the children into schools and give them religious, as well as secular instruction. 3d, To reach the women by visiting from house to house, teaching them *how* to care for their families, and make attractive *Christian homes*.<sup>46</sup>

Although interested in increasing the numbers of Black ministers and other professionals, white women specifically hoped to educate Black teachers because elementary and parochial schools expanded the field of influence more than churches. Educating schoolteachers offered a greater return on investment than did sending a large number of Black men off to be ministers.<sup>47</sup> White women hoped not just to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic but also to mold Black children into proper American men and women. White Presbyterian women aimed to control African Americans by

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<sup>45</sup> *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 18th Annual Report, 1882-1883*, Home Missions: Thirteenth Annual Report (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1883), 10, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah3ljc?urlappend=%3Bseq=575>.

<sup>46</sup> Emphasis original. *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 20th Annual Report, 1884-1885*, Home Missions: The Fifteenth Annual Report (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1885), 12, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah3lkf?urlappend=%3Bseq=643>.

<sup>47</sup> *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 31st Annual Report, 1895-1896*, Ninety-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1896), 94, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah3kh3?urlappend=%3Bseq=943>.

inculcating proper gender roles within Black communities through both Christian education and modeling appropriately gendered behavior.

“True manhood” and “true womanhood” were intimately connected with ideas of racial uplift, suggesting a colorblind approach to gender roles. Racial uplift was a strategy utilized by African Americans to improve their statuses in American society through modifying behavior and increasing education.<sup>48</sup> White people also supported ideas of racial uplift: to an extent, white Presbyterian women argued that racial uplift required Black students to learn to be white to be fully Christian and American. White Presbyterians believed that it was their responsibility to help Black women in the process of racial uplift, but as Bettye Collier-Thomas pointed out in *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice*, most Black churchwomen were working class, and uplift work was primarily the domain of and espoused by middle and upper African Americans.<sup>49</sup> However, Presbyterians were largely urban and elite, and some Black Presbyterians shared this view of racial uplift.<sup>50</sup> Even some Black ministers agreed that Black children could not become moral or industrious enough without Christian training provided by the white Church:

I cannot see much hope for my people, unless some children can be taken—the younger the better—and by some means have drilled into their being the

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<sup>48</sup> Gender and race were discussed in similar terms, as understandings of masculinity and manhood dictated understandings of racial uplift. See Kevin Kelly Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

<sup>49</sup> Bettye Collier-Thomas, *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice: African American Women and Religion*, Kindle (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2010), chaps. 3, "Religious Leadership Traditions Among Churches".

<sup>50</sup> Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, (2007), 167.

essentials of true manhood and womanhood... For the first thing our race needs is not trades, diplomas or professions, but character.<sup>51</sup>

The words of this unnamed Black missionary lent legitimacy to the PCUSA's mission. At the same time, white Presbyterian women prided themselves on educating Black children despite the fear that education would "spoil some of these black girls and boys for their proper places in life."<sup>52</sup> White church women assumed that properly educated African Americans would agree with all their teachings and accept a status of social subordination.

At the same time, some Black Presbyterians, like Mary C. Jackson (later Mary Jackson McCrorey), viewed the idea of "true womanhood" and "true manhood" differently. Born in Athens, GA, she attended Atlanta University and served as the principal of a large school in Florida before working with Lucy C. Laney at the Haines Normal and Industrial Institute in Augusta, GA.<sup>53</sup> Addressing the "Negro Problem" directly, Jackson noted:

Some negro teachers and leaders are beginning to see the situation *as it is* and are inspiring our young people to reach the standard of true *men* and *women* instead of the standard of *negro* men and *negro* women, which is bounded by prejudice and narrowness or does not look beyond its petty self to the universal good.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 32nd Annual Report, 1896-1897*, Ninety-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1897), 77–78, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah26ac?urlappend=%3Bseq=927>.

<sup>52</sup> *37th Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1902), 159.

<sup>53</sup> "The Freedmen," in *Home Mission Monthly*, vol. XVII, no. 6 (New York: Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1903), 132, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015068447500>.

<sup>54</sup> Emphasis original. "The Freedmen," in *Home Mission Monthly*, vol. XIII, no. 6 (New York: Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1899), 126, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/wu.89077050110?urlappend=%3Bseq=129>.

She understood that the systems of oppression in place expected and often forced African Americans to achieve less and argued that Black and white people should be held to the same moral and cultural standards because they had equal potential. She argued that while race was inescapable, colorblindness in morality would allow Black men and women to improve their positions in American society. Avoiding the stereotypes and traps of an oppressive system was her goal. She also saw education as the solution to Black crime, as Black children presented “the stern actuality of human life full of possibilities, struggling against fearful odds.” Unfortunately, schools did not have enough seats to educate all the children, and even if they did, so many children had to work to support their families that they could not attend classes, leading to a cycle of poverty and crime.<sup>55</sup> While Jackson and other Black Presbyterians supported the use of Presbyterianism to shape Black children—and to survive within Jim Crow America—and superficially appeared to agree with the paternalism of white Presbyterians, they saw opportunities and tools within the PCUSA to challenge social hierarchies and white supremacy.

White Presbyterian women advocated for the advancement of African Americans as they continued to operate within the framework of a white, patriarchal organization during a period of legally entrenched white supremacy. They mirrored both the Presbyterian Church and the nation, showcasing staunch antiracism as well as unabashed white supremacy. Black Presbyterian women adopted the tools offered by

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<sup>55</sup> “Freedmen Number,” in *Home Mission Monthly*, vol. 30, no. 6 (New York: Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1916), 134, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015067916422>.

the church and adapted them to suit their goals of equality and advancement. Much like the Baptist women discussed by Evelyn Higginbotham, Presbyterian women of all races worked in religious groups and associations to agitate for change.<sup>56</sup> These women were “crucial to broadening the public arm of the church and making it the most powerful institution of racial self-help in the African American community.”<sup>57</sup> Through their usage of the resources and rhetoric of the PCUSA, Presbyterian church women, both white and Black, shaped the church and society.

### *Presbyterian Patriotism*

The PCUSA often couched their reasoning in a rhetoric of patriotic paternalism and civic responsibility. Presbyterians feared that uneducated voters—white or Black, although they often voiced those concerns with regard to African Americans—would corrupt the democratic process in the United States. Seeing America’s Black population growing, white Presbyterians felt that they had an opportunity and obligation to spread their beliefs on religion, patriotism, gender, and education because the American government “made them citizens and voters” and the country was “not to be the white man’s government, or the black man’s government, but is, and is to be the government of both races.”<sup>58</sup> By 1887, according to the Board of Missions for Freedmen, many white Americans were interested in educating African Americans, nominally out of concern about illiterate voters. In fact, the PCUSA claimed that “the conviction is forcing itself on

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<sup>56</sup> Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993), 13.

<sup>57</sup> Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*, (1993), 1.

<sup>58</sup> *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 18th Annual Report, 1882-1883*, (1883), 12.

the minds of the people, both North and South, that the hand that holds the ballot must be guided by an educated mind and an enlightened conscience.”<sup>59</sup> Simultaneously, the late 1800s saw systematic dismantling of Reconstruction and recasting of it through the lens of the Lost Cause narrative. Although the period after Reconstruction saw many literacy tests designed to disenfranchise Black voters, the PCUSA’s Board of Missions for Freedmen was careful in its reports to insist that African Americans should be educated so that they could exercise their privilege and responsibility as Americans. The PCUSA felt American citizens must be both educated and Christian, because, as they argued in 1905,

Intelligence... without religion makes a dangerous man. Religion without intelligence is inclined to make a man superstitious, or bigoted, or fanatical, and when so-called religion takes any one of these forms it ceases to have any moral value.<sup>60</sup>

They hoped that increasing literacy through a religious—specifically, evangelical Christian—education would provide protection against superstition, bigotry, immorality, and atheism becoming enshrined in American law. Fears of ignorance, superstition, fanaticism, and immorality overcoming American democracy combined with a sense of superiority to fuel the PCUSA’s paternalism.

While education and voting were important, PCUSA’s main goal was to “Christianize” African Americans. Their work, largely centered around education, intended to use religion to transform Black people into ideal, patriotic Americans who

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<sup>59</sup> *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 22nd Annual Report, 1886-1887*, Home Missions: The Seventeenth Annual Report (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1887), 11, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah3ljw?urlappend=%3Bseq=673>.

<sup>60</sup> *40th Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1905), 9.

would support the processes of democracy to the satisfaction of white church-going Americans. However, influenced by the conflicts occurring throughout the United States, the PCUSA's civic duty to African Americans came second to their perceived religious duty, because "It is not the ballot he needs so much to elevate him as Christian schools and *industrial training*."<sup>61</sup> These ideas were also the subject of debate among African Americans. Many Black educators, based on their understandings of class and freedom, saw industrial training and adoption of these often-paternalist ideas as the best tool for protecting their freedom and guaranteeing eventual equality and successes. This approach avoided challenging "the social power of the planter regime," which many other African Americans saw as the purpose of education.<sup>62</sup> During the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, debates over the purpose and practice of education saturated the United States.

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<sup>61</sup> Emphasis original. *Home Mission Monthly*, (1891), V:145.

<sup>62</sup> Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, (1988), 33.

## Chapter 2. “For the Credit of the Race”: Higher Education

It has been frequently asserted that the college man is unfitted for practical activities. That is tantamount to saying that education is of little practical advantage to men who desire to succeed in the ordinary vocations of life. It is strange that those who look upon the negro as a rational human being capable of development and who are interested in his emancipation from ignorance and vice, should think that this can be achieved by the work of his hands, alone.<sup>63</sup>

Cecilia D. Potter, 1902, *Home Missions Monthly*

From 1880-1920, the PCUSA had many developments in its efforts to educate future Black teachers, ministers, and other professionals. Motivated by paternalism and religion, white Presbyterians recognized the importance of Black teachers.<sup>64</sup> As Anderson and Moss point out, Black people often wanted Black teachers for their children because Black teachers “were visible examples of the potential of their race.”<sup>65</sup> Although teacher training was a priority, Presbyterians also educated Black men as ministers, noting that “the preachers and teachers who are most successful among the colored people are those who have been born, reared, and educated in their midst,” and specifically exhorted churches to encourage African Americans to become ministers and teachers for their communities.<sup>66</sup> They also hoped to help create a professional

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<sup>63</sup> “The Freedmen,” in *Home Mission Monthly*, vol. XVI, no. 6 (New York: Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1902), 132, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015068447732>.

<sup>64</sup> *31st Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1896), 94.

<sup>65</sup> Eric Anderson and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *Dangerous Donations: Northern Philanthropy and Southern Black Education, 1902-1930* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 15.

<sup>66</sup> “Sixteenth Annual Report of the Presbyterian Committee of Missions for Freedmen to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America,” 13–14.

class of educated African Americans. The PCUSA experimented with different approaches to higher education as a result of advocacy by African American men.

### *Men's Colleges and Seminaries*

Among the PCUSA's tools for developing Black men into ministers and teachers were Biddle and Lincoln Universities. These schools had important similarities. Comparing them to Princeton Theological Seminary, which taught primarily white students, is helpful to identify where the Presbyterian strategies differed between white and Black students. Because Lincoln and Biddle were among the PCUSA's only theological seminaries for Black men—and Biddle was the only Southern PCUSA-chartered institution for African Americans with a theological department—comparing their seminaries to Princeton's provides the opportunity to understand the philosophies and motivations informing the PCUSA's approach to ministerial education.<sup>67</sup> Coursework, costs, and admissions policies provide key examples for doing so. In 1882, Biddle University offered three types of preparatory courses: classical, scientific, and English; two types of college course: classical and scientific; and a theological seminary. Lincoln offered one type of preparatory course, classical and English college courses, and a theological seminary with both classical and English courses. Princeton offered only the theological seminary.

Biddle, Lincoln, and Princeton had different admissions policies. The preparatory departments at Biddle and Lincoln Universities required only that students have proven

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<sup>67</sup> *Committee of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 16th Annual Report, 1881-1882, (1882), 13–14.*

moral character.<sup>68</sup> For college, students needed to pass exams to exhibit their knowledge in the information covered in the preparatory courses.<sup>69</sup> Both Biddle and Lincoln required prospective seminary students to have graduated from a college or university (with some exceptions) or to have had equivalent training, as well as to be in good standing with an Evangelical church.<sup>70</sup> For Princeton Theological Seminary, students were required to provide written testimonials of their “good natural talents,” to be prudent and discreet, to be involved in a church, and to have passed a regular course of academic study.<sup>71</sup> The admissions policies show that the Presbyterians had similar expectations for white and Black theological students. Emphasizing preparatory and college work in Black colleges highlights that the PCUSA recognized that African Americans had less access to quality higher education than did whites and thus needed their schools to offer more than theological training. Presbyterians wanted to ensure that the Black ministers of African American congregations had similar levels of knowledge and training as white ministers.

In 1882, the cost of education was steep. While schools for African Americans cost less than did the school for mostly white students, expenses were still a heavy

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<sup>68</sup> *Annual Catalogue of Biddle University* (Charlotte, NC: Biddle University, 1882), 18–19, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/nc01.ark:/13960/t2k720d05>; *Annual Catalogue of Lincoln University* (Oxford, PA: Press Print, 1882), 6, <https://www.lincoln.edu/sites/default/files/library/specialcollections/CATALOGUES/1882-83.pdf>.

<sup>69</sup> *Annual Catalogue of Biddle University*, (1882), 11; *Annual Catalogue of Lincoln University*, (1882), 13.

<sup>70</sup> *Annual Catalogue of Biddle University*, (1882), 6; *Annual Catalogue of Lincoln University*, (1882), 23.

<sup>71</sup> *Catalogue of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church at Princeton, New Jersey* (Philadelphia: Caxton Press of Sherman & Co., 1882), 13, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/njp.32101067870038?urlappend=%3Bseq=117%3Bownerid=27021597768245588-121>.

burden: in 1882, the average monthly income of a Southern farmer was \$14.67.<sup>72</sup> At Biddle, students were required to spend one hour each week improving the grounds under the supervision of the Professor of Natural Science, but tuition was free and all of a students' expenses would not have been more than \$10 each month.<sup>73</sup> At Lincoln, the expenses charged by the school for two sessions came out to \$121.50, and total expenses were expected to be under \$150 per academic year. The theological seminary was less expensive, at \$81 per year.<sup>74</sup> At Princeton, tuition was free, but expected total expenses ranged from \$175-200 per year.<sup>75</sup>

To help alleviate the financial burden, endowments and donations funded scholarships at each school and the PCUSA provided general scholarships: \$100 for preparatory students and \$120 for collegiate and seminary students.<sup>76</sup> While members of mostly-Black Southern presbyteries contributed to self-support, these schools relied heavily on money from white Presbyterians. Women of the church were critical donors: Women's Societies and later the Woman's Executive Committee were among the largest contributors, giving a significant portion of the Board of Missions for Freedmen's income for years (see Figure 2.1 Income of the Board of Missions for Freedmen, 1885-1899).

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<sup>72</sup> United States, "Wages of Farm Labor in the United States: Results of Eleven Statistical Investigations, from 1866-1892, with Extensive Inquiries Concerning Wages from 1840 to 1865." (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Division of Statistics, 1892), 12, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011397794>.

<sup>73</sup> *Annual Catalogue of Biddle University*, (1882), 21–22.

<sup>74</sup> *Annual Catalogue of Lincoln University*, (1882).

<sup>75</sup> *Catalogue of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church at Princeton, New Jersey*, (1882), 20–21.

<sup>76</sup> *Annual Catalogue of Biddle University*, (1882), 20; *Annual Catalogue of Lincoln University*, (1882), 7; *Catalogue of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church at Princeton, New Jersey*, (1882), 12; *Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 64th Annual Report, 1882-1883*, Home Missions: Thirteenth Annual Report (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1883), 3–5, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah3ljc?urlappend=%3Bseq=143>.

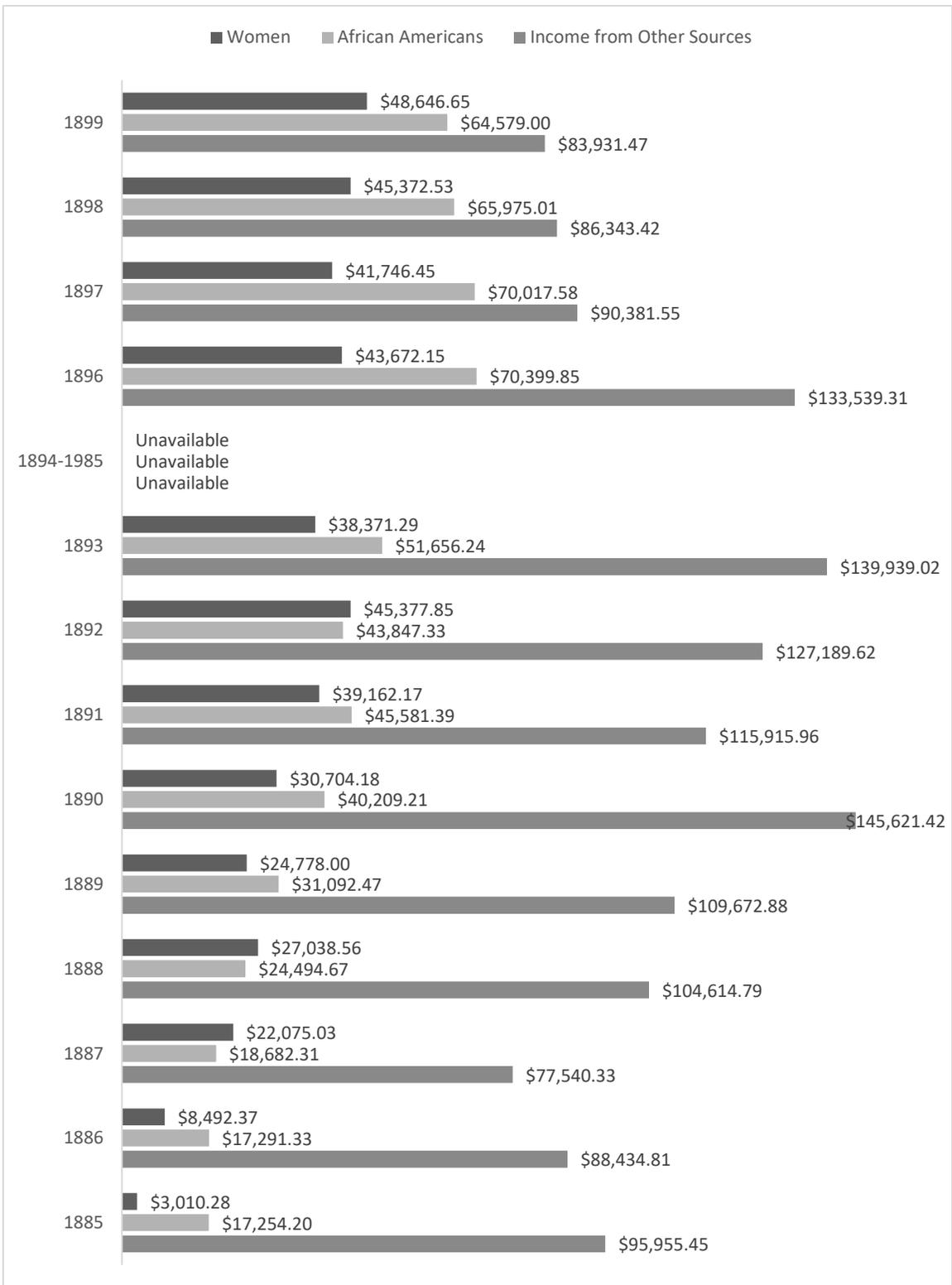


Figure 2.1 Income of the Board of Missions for Freedmen, 1885-1899

Source: Adapted from the Annual Reports of the Board of Missions for Freedmen, 1885-1899. See Appendix A for a full list.

Endowments, estates, trusts, and other segments of the church also contributed, but beginning in the mid-1890s, women and African Americans together provided about half of the income of the Board of Missions for Freedmen.

White women of the PCUSA saw fundraising as their responsibility to African Americans, arguing that to reach “this field of darkness, where the people are as sheep without a shepherd,” they needed to increase church income. Women brought more organizations “into sympathy and compassion for this cause, if the demands of the field are met, and the debt we owe to the Negro is paid.”<sup>77</sup> They also appealed to senses of moral, social, and cultural superiority, asking the young people of the church if they did “not feel some responsibility for the boys and girls of the weaker race.”<sup>78</sup> White women worked to help financially support outreach and education among African Americans through appealing to ideas of white superiority and the need of superiors to care for their inferiors. Like the PCUSA’s other work during this period, women’s work was also steeped in the church’s paternalism.

While the PCUSA strove to encourage education among African Americans, their funding distribution suggests that they prioritized the education of white ministerial candidates over Black students of all types. In the 1882-1883 school year and again in 1917-1918, students at Princeton received funding from the church at a much higher rate than did students at Lincoln or Biddle (See Table 2.1, PCUSA Scholarship

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<sup>77</sup> *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 49th Annual Report, 1913-1914*, One Hundred Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1914), 214, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah5ctk?urlappend=%3Bseq=1271>.

<sup>78</sup> *53rd Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1918), 220.

Distribution, for more information).<sup>79</sup> While the PCUSA stressed the importance of educating African Americans to become ministers, educators, and professionals, Presbyterians failed to apply their rhetoric to their actions. While admissions expectations were similar, the inequality in scholarships shows that the PCUSA invested much more in educating white students than Black ones.

Still, Presbyterians wanted to ensure that Black students received a rigorous education. The Board of Education argued that creating a strong foundation for education was crucial for a successful learning experience in college, seminary, or other further educational opportunities.<sup>80</sup> To achieve these goals and prepare students for a full college course, preparatory courses at Biddle University taught English spelling, grammar, and composition; Latin and Greek lessons; and arithmetic and algebra. Lincoln also required classes on the Bible and geography.<sup>81</sup> An admitted college student could begin taking college courses. Biddle offered two four-year degrees: classical and scientific. Classical included courses in languages, science, math, history, philosophy,

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<sup>79</sup> *Annual Catalogue of Biddle University*, (1882), 20; *Annual Catalogue of Lincoln University*, (1882), 7; *Catalogue of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church at Princeton, New Jersey*, (1882), 12; *Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 64th Annual Report, 1882-1883*, (1883), 3–5; *Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 99th Annual Report, 1917-1918*, Reports of the Missionary and Benevolent Boards and Committees to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1918), 26, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah5ctp?urlappend=%3Bseq=795>; *Annual Catalogue of Lincoln University* (Philadelphia: The James B. Rodgers Printing Company, 1917), 80, <https://www.lincoln.edu/sites/default/files/library/specialcollections/CATALOGUES/1917-18.pdf>; *Biddle University General Catalog* (Charlotte, NC: Biddle University, 1917), 50, [http://archive.org/details/biddleuniversity00bidd\\_2](http://archive.org/details/biddleuniversity00bidd_2); *Catalogue of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church at Princeton, N.J.*, *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, vol. 11 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1918), 22, [https://commons.ptsem.edu/id/princetonsemina1141prin\\_0](https://commons.ptsem.edu/id/princetonsemina1141prin_0).

<sup>80</sup> *Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 64th Annual Report, 1882-1883*, (1883), 6–7.

<sup>81</sup> *Annual Catalogue of Biddle University*, (1882), 18; *Annual Catalogue of Lincoln University*, (1882), 20.

Table 2.1, PCUSA Scholarship Distribution

<i>Students</i>	<b>Biddle, 1882</b>	<b>Lincoln, 1882</b>	<b>Princeton, 1882</b>	<b>Biddle, 1918</b>	<b>Lincoln, 1918</b>	<b>Princeton, 1918</b>
<i>Funded Preparatory</i>	26	5				
<i>Total Preparatory</i>	138	69				
<i>Funded Collegiate</i>	9	9		16	6	
<i>Total Collegiate</i>	31	128		111	148	
<i>Funded Theological</i>	4	6	48	11	10	69
<i>Total Theological</i>	11	16	124	20	36	155
<b>Total Funded</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Total Students Enrolled</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>Percent Funded</b>	<b>21.67</b>	<b>9.39</b>	<b>38.71</b>	<b>20.61</b>	<b>8.70</b>	<b>44.52</b>

Source: 1882 and 1918 Reports of the Board of Education of the PCUSA

and surveying. Scientific encompassed bookkeeping instead of surveying, and introductory history and languages rather than advanced courses in those fields.<sup>82</sup> Lincoln University offered a single four-year program which focused on the humanities, but also taught science, math, and natural theology. Without professional or career-oriented courses, it looked more to edifying the mind and soul rather than job preparation.<sup>83</sup> These courses aimed to create well-rounded individuals who understood classics, politics, and civics; were prepared to obtain a career or further education; and would be able to participate in intellectual society and communicate with white professionals. Both Lincoln's and Biddle's degree programs show that the PCUSA, while hoping to spread their version of Christianity among Southern African Americans, also aimed to help develop an educated and successful class of African Americans.

Biddle, Lincoln, and Princeton Seminaries each offered an S.T.B., Bachelor's of Sacred Theology, but they differed both in the courses offered and in level and depth of these courses. At each school, the core themes of the three-year program—exegesis, homiletics, church and ecclesiastical history, and church government—highlighted Presbyterians' ideas about the importance of eloquent and rhetorical speech and awareness of church policies. Biddle had four professors with graduate degrees, three assistant professors—one with a graduate degree, one with a bachelor's, and one without a degree—a librarian, and eight assistant instructors; Lincoln had nine professors and lecturers with advanced degrees; and Princeton had eleven professors

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<sup>82</sup> *Annual Catalogue of Biddle University*, (1882), 10–11.

<sup>83</sup> *Annual Catalogue of Lincoln University*, (1882), 14–16.

and lecturers with advanced degrees. This difference in the number of credentialed professors likely impacted the number of courses offered and required of students. Biddle's program—which required three-to-four courses per year—had the lightest course load, while Princeton had the most stringent requirements. Lincoln University Seminary had two programs: a single-year English course and a full course. The English course sacrificed some of the deeper theological knowledge and expertise to quickly produce able ministers, as well as to make it easier for students who struggled in some topics. The full course had a stronger focus on Homiletics, Apologetics, and Ecclesiastical History than did Biddle's full course. Princeton Theological Seminary required the most classes, emphasizing deep knowledge of the Bible and the ability to construct arguments. It also offered an optional fourth year of in-depth Biblical interpretation (See Table 2.2, Comparison of Theological Seminary Coursework).<sup>84</sup> Differences between the schools illustrate different approaches that the PCUSA had for its white theological students its Black ones.

Princeton Theological Seminary—a predominantly white school—demonstrated the ways in which Presbyterians wanted their ministers educated. Encouraging students to devote all of their time to their classes likely provided these budding ministers with more knowledge of the church, its culture, and its policies. Princeton was not just producing ministers, but experts in Presbyterian theology. Biddle University was more focused on creating a large group of capable Black preachers in the South than it was on

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<sup>84</sup> *Catalogue of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church at Princeton, New Jersey, (1882); Annual Catalogue of Biddle University, (1882); Annual Catalogue of Lincoln University, (1882).*

Table 2.2 Comparison of Theological Seminary Coursework

<b>Schools</b>	<b>First Year Coursework</b>	<b>Second Year Coursework</b>	<b>Third Year Coursework</b>	<b>Fourth Year Coursework</b>
<i>Biddle University Seminary</i>	Hebrew Systematic Theology Greek Exegesis Sacred History	Hebrew Systematic Theology Greek Exegesis Church History Homiletics	Pastoral Theology Greek and Hebrew Exegesis Homiletics Church Government	N/A
<i>Lincoln University Seminary</i>	Exegetical Theology Homiletics New Testament introduction Bible History Catechism Sacred Geography Pastoral Theology Hebrew Apologetics	Systemic Theology Biblical Antiquities Homiletics Apologetics Hebrew Biblical Greek Ecclesiastical History Church Government Pastoral Theology	Systematic Theology Homiletics Hebrew Ecclesiastical History Biblical Greek Pastoral Theology Church Government	N/A
<i>Princeton Theological Seminary</i>	Old Testament Literature (OTL): General Introduction Hebrew New Testament Literature (NTL): General Introduction NTL: Special Introduction to the Gospels NTL: Exegesis of selected Epistles of Paul Sacred Geography and Antiquities Biblical History Relations of Philosophy and Science to the Christian Religion: Theism Theological Encyclopedia Homiletics Extemporary Speaking Elocution	Old Testament (OT): Hebrew OT: Special Introduction to the Poetical Books OT: Special Introduction to the Historical Books New Testament (NT): Life of Christ and Exegesis of the Gospels Didactic Theology (Theology Proper, Anthropology Begun) Church History Relations of Philosophy and Science to the Christian Religion Theory of the Christian Ministry Constitution of the Church Homiletic Criticism Elocution	OT: Hebrew OT: Special Introduction to the Prophets OT: Biblical Theology (Elective) NT: Acts of the Epistles NT: Special Introduction to the Epistles NT: Biblical Theology (Elective) Didactic Theology: (Anthropology, Soteriology, Eschatology) Church History Relations of Philosophy and Science to the Christian Religion Church Government and Discipline Pastoral Care Ordinances of Worship Christian Ethics Elocution	(Optional) OT: Messianic Prophecies Comparative Semitic Philology NT: Special Introduction and Exegesis continued Greek Philology, with a particular consideration of the Hellenistic Dialect Church History (existing denominations) Polemic Theology Ecclesiology Ecclesiastical Law and Discipline Preaching

Source: 1882 and 1918 Catalogues for Biddle University, Lincoln University, and Princeton Theological Seminary

forging expertise. As discussed by Hillary Green, Louis Harlan, and James Anderson, many Southern African Americans had little access to quality education except in areas where they fought for its availability.<sup>85</sup> Recognizing this, the PCUSA established schools that began with basic, foundational schooling and offered opportunities for college educations and the possibility of further schooling. The church's approach reflects their mission of creating a successful class of educated Black professionals. Lincoln University fell between the two in its goals. In the early 1880s, the PCUSA aimed to strike a balance between forging this educated class of Black men who would participate successfully in white American society and follow the rhetoric of racial uplift while also creating a number of Black ministers who could represent the Church and adequately preach the gospel.

### *The Education of Women*

Presbyterians also had schools for women, such as Mary Allen and Mary E. Holmes. These seminaries went a step beyond elementary and normal schools. Scotia Seminary in Concord, NC—now known as Barber-Scotia College—was the main Presbyterian school of higher education for Black women on the East Coast. In 1882, its president was a white man named Stephen Mattoon, who was also the treasurer of Biddle University.<sup>86</sup> Many of the teachers at Scotia were white women, suggesting that

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<sup>85</sup> Hilary Green, *Educational Reconstruction: African American Schools in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (Fordham University Press, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt19x3jb3>; Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, (1988); Louis R. Harlan, *Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States, 1901-1915* (University of North Carolina Press, 1958), [http://www.jstor.org/pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/stable/10.5149/9780807879733\\_harlan](http://www.jstor.org/pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/stable/10.5149/9780807879733_harlan).

<sup>86</sup> "1880 United States Census, s. v. Stephen Mattoon," Census (Charlotte, Mecklenburg, NC, 1880), Ancestry.com; *Annual Catalogue of Biddle University*, (1882); *Annual Catalogue of the Officers and*

the Board of Missions for Freedmen and the Board of Education believed that teaching Black girls to become true, American, Christian women required exposing them to Christian womanhood as seen in white women. Scotia's goal was "'to educate colored girls in religion, and in the arts and sciences usually taught in seminaries of a high order; and in those domestic duties which belong to the highest type of wife, mother and teacher.'"<sup>87</sup> By the 1890s, some Black women—including Clarkie Hughes, who would later marry Rev. C. M. Young, an African American minister and teacher—taught at Scotia.<sup>88</sup>

The men's schools strove to produce ministers and professionals, but the goals of the women's and girl's schools were of a more domestic aspiration, striving to help create strong families and train girls and women to be better mothers and wives. However, they also prepared women for leadership: a student who attended Scotia in the late 1880s would later become a prominent education activist in the United States, Mary McLeod Bethune.<sup>89</sup> While the main focus of these girls' schools was to develop

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*Students of Scotia Seminary, 3rd-40th, 1872/1873-1909/1910* (Concord, NC: Scotia Seminary, 1872), <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/nc01.ark:/13960/t78s6bg4r>.

<sup>87</sup> *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 21st Annual Report, 1885-1886*, Home Missions: The Sixteenth Annual Report (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1886), 22, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah3ll1?urlappend=%3Bseq=635>.

<sup>88</sup> Clarkie M. Hughes, "The Diary of Clarkie M. Hughes" (Diary, Scotia Seminary, Concord, NC, 1893), Papers of the Jones and Young Families, Box 1, Folder 17, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

<sup>89</sup> Lillian Buchannan, "Mary McLeod Bethune, Sumter County, South Carolina" (Richland County, South Carolina: Works Progress Administration, 1937), <https://digital.tcl.sc.edu/digital/collection/wpafwp/id/1874/rec/15>. For more on Bethune, see Rackham Holt, *Mary McLeod Bethune: a Biography*, [1st ed.] (Garden City, N .Y., 1964); Collier-Thomas, *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice* (2010); Derrick P. Aldridge, "African American Educations and the Black Intellectual Tradition," in *The SAGE Handbook of African American Education*, ed. Linda C. Tillman (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2009); Ann Short Chirhart and Betty Wood, *Georgia Women: Their Lives and Times* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/southcarolina/detail.action?docID=3038921>.

Black women into better wives and mothers, they also offered coursework that would allow young women other opportunities. The transfer certificate of Vivian E. Young (later Jones), related to C. M. Young, provides an example. She attended Scotia from October 1911 until May 1918, where she took classes in Bible study, grammar, arithmetic, reading, spelling, composition, literature, history, advanced mathematics, and sciences.<sup>90</sup> This wide range of courses offered young women opportunities to build foundations for further education, to be Christian wives and mothers, or to prepare for jobs teaching at schools for African American children. For many of the Black girls and women attending these schools, education “went beyond simple schooling—it imparted an orientation toward achievement” that stemmed from the values instilled by their parents and pushed them toward both individual achievement and responsibility to their families and communities, leading many to become community leaders.<sup>91</sup>

### *Presbyterian Policy Changes*

In the mid-1880s, the Presbyterian approach to Black higher education changed both in curriculum and in philosophy of outreach. In the mid-1800s, Black and white candidates for education and ministry were ostensibly held to the same standards. By

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<sup>90</sup> Vivian Young took four years of Bible class, three years of grammar and arithmetic; two years of reading and spelling; and one year each of English composition, English literature, United States history, English and United States history, medieval and modern history, general history, elementary algebra, physics, botany, physiology, agriculture, and theory and practice. During her last three years, she took English composition, three years of Latin and sociology, two years of Bible classes, and one year each of church history, Bible history, advanced algebra, plane geometry, chemistry, zoology, ethics, history of education, pedagogy, and astronomy. “Transfer Certificate of High School Credits for Young, Vivian E. (Mrs. Jones),” January 29, 1932, Papers of the Jones and Young Families, Box 1, Folder 9, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

<sup>91</sup> Stephanie J. Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do: Black Professional Women Workers during the Jim Crow Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 1, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/southcarolina/detail.action?docID=488107>.

1885, the PCUSA found that Black students often made lower grades than white students. Although the Board of Missions for Freedmen acknowledged that there were social and cultural reasons, they argued that Black students did not seem to have an “aptitude for classical or scientific studies,” leading some church members to question whether it was worthwhile to give them a full course of education which included languages and physical sciences. They proposed that it would be better to focus on a limited English course of study which included history, exegesis, theology, and moral science and excluded languages and physical sciences.<sup>92</sup> On the other side of the debate, people argued that

The full collegiate course affords a mental discipline much needed by the negro... Moreover, it is declared to be of great importance... that its spiritual leaders be put as nearly on a level with their white brethren as is possible, and should become fully qualified to be educators in turn.<sup>93</sup>

Even though they argued that African Americans could learn, be successful, and eventually gain equality with white people, the PCUSA couched their ideas in the rhetoric of forming Black people into their image.

When they were originally established, schools like Lincoln and Biddle Universities were run largely by white men, but during the late-nineteenth century, African Americans succeeded in becoming faculty members of their own schools, such as Biddle University. By the early 1890s, Biddle had one Black professor. When the General Assembly nominated three more Black professors, the school’s four white

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<sup>92</sup> *20th Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1885), 11.

<sup>93</sup> *Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 66th Annual Report, 1884-1885*, Home Missions: The Fifteenth Annual Report (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1885), 11, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah3l1kf?urlappend=%3Bseq=353>.

professors, “for reasons satisfactory to themselves, resigned. Three other colored men were then nominated together with one white.”<sup>94</sup> The Board recognized the qualifications and skills of Black men, despite some white Presbyterians’ unwillingness to work as equals with African Americans. The early domination of leadership positions by white men may have stemmed in part from concerns about pushback, primarily from Southern whites, against Black men in leadership positions.<sup>95</sup> The Board understood that congregations might respond with prejudice toward these new professors, and requested that any mistakes made by the new faculty not be seen as caused by the new teachers’ race, but rather because they were new, inexperienced, and human.<sup>96</sup> By 1901, Biddle’s president was Dr. D. J. Sanders, “a black man, once himself a slave, but now a self-respecting free man, and an honored minister of the Presbyterian Church.”<sup>97</sup> In putting Black men in charge of Biddle University, the PCUSA demonstrated their willingness to recognize that well-educated Black men were as capable of running colleges as white men were, while also acknowledging that some church members were cautious about African American leadership.

The Board of Education made other changes as well, which in some ways increased Black students’ access to college education but in other ways made it more

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<sup>94</sup> *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 27th Annual Report, 1891-1892*, Twenty-Second Annual Report (The Ninetieth from Its Organization) of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1892), 18, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah3kgy?urlappend=%3Bseq=803>.

<sup>95</sup> Anderson and Moss, Jr., *Dangerous Donations*, (1999), 9.

<sup>96</sup> *27th Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1892), 19.

<sup>97</sup> *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 36th Annual Report, 1900-1901* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1901), 15, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah5ct7?urlappend=%3Bseq=1167>.

difficult. While the schools continued offering full courses of study, the Board required schools to offer an English course for those who struggled with the full course in order to maintain a steady supply of Black teachers and preachers. Simultaneously, they halved the amount of financial aid that African American men could receive for preparatory school. Another result of this decision was to require Black candidates to undergo two to three years of trial of their “moral and Christian character, and the real mental ability and promise,” as opposed to simply being a respected member of a church for one year, which was required of white students.<sup>98</sup> These changes to the policies regarding Black students simultaneously opened the doors to some who previously may not have qualified to attend the Presbyterian colleges and increased the inequality in expectations between white and Black students.

Beginning in the 1885-1886 school year, Lincoln University added a two-year English course to its collegiate offerings—it was intensive and advanced but did not teach languages and had less emphasis on math and sciences. The classical course became more intensive and focused more on Bible studies and on introductory work as they shortened the preparatory course to a single semester.<sup>99</sup> Biddle University did not change much: in the classical course, they changed the Latin texts from Virgil to Tacitus, and in the scientific, they added a Bible course. Preparatory courses added more readings in Latin and Greek as well as teaching rhetoric, and the English preparatory

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<sup>98</sup> *Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 66th Annual Report, 1884-1885*, (1885), 12.

<sup>99</sup> *Annual Catalogue of Lincoln University* (Philadelphia: The James B. Rodgers Printing Company, 1885), <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiuo.ark:/13960/t40s13t7k>.

course became an Elementary English course in order to prepare students to take the preparatory course.<sup>100</sup> These shifts aimed to open opportunities for more Black men to attend Presbyterian colleges and seminaries by making education more accessible.

By 1887, Black Presbyterian leadership chafed against the new restrictions. After Black synods—particularly the Synod of Atlantic (which oversaw South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida)—complained about unequal treatment, the Board of Education took incremental steps to increase the equality and equity between students, expanding the scholarship offerings for preparatory students. They also decided that, while scholarships for white theological and collegiate students were capped at \$150, Black students were allowed what they needed.<sup>101</sup> It was not until 1897, the year after the Supreme Court decision on *Plessy v. Ferguson* declared segregation constitutional, that the PCUSA decided to dispense with holding Black and white students to different standards. Despite working to make experiences for Black and white students the same, the statement they released demonstrated the Church’s paternalism:

the sections relating to colored candidates, while designed to make special provision for their benefit, were, nevertheless, sometimes interpreted as expressing distrust of the race to which they belong. The rules, as re-written, by direction of the General Assembly, have no longer even the semblance of any invidious distinctions.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> *Catalogue of Biddle University* (Charlotte, NC, 1885), <https://lib.digitalinc.org/record/39964>.

<sup>101</sup> *Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 68th Annual Report, 1886-1887*, Home Missions: The Seventeenth Annual Report (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1887), <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah3ljw?urlappend=%3Bseq=371>.

<sup>102</sup> *Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 79th Annual Report, 1897-1898*, Ninety-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1898), 5, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah5ct4?urlappend=%3Bseq=657>.

While white Presbyterians intended to make it easier for African Americans to achieve higher education, the disparate rules for admission showed that they doubted that they could trust Black applicants as much as white applicants. Debating whether Black students were capable of success in the full course of education also highlighted that well-intentioned white Presbyterians were not immune to common doubts about African Americans' innate abilities.

In 1903, the Board of Education reflected on their work with pride, considering their efforts "to put the colored candidates as nearly as possible on the same plane with the white men" to have been successful, both in financial aid and in education.<sup>103</sup> Having finally reached a point where the vast majority of their Black students entered immediately into college without attending preparatory schools first, the PCUSA believed this success stemmed from higher rates of education among African Americans which white Presbyterians believed was largely due to their work.<sup>104</sup> This Presbyterian success, while notable, is somewhat tempered by considering the scholarships that they provided: from 1882-1918, the number of scholarships going to Black students dropped from sixteen to seven percent.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> *Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 84th Annual Report, 1902-1903*, One Hundred and First Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1903), 7, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah5ct9?urlappend=%3Bseq=895>. Ironically, in 1904, the PCUSA consider absorbing the Cumberland Presbyterian Church (CPC), a wholly segregated branch of the Presbyterian Church, and released a report that argued that Black people were inferior to whites and recommended segregation. Despite the protests of African American church members, such as Rev. Francis Grimke and other members of the Afro-Presbyterian Council, in 1905, the PCUSA voted to accept the CPC. For a more thorough discussion, see Wilmore, *Black and Presbyterian*, (1983), 70.

<sup>104</sup> *84th Annual Report of the Board of Education*, (1903).

<sup>105</sup> *Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 95th Annual Report, 1913-1914*, One Hundred Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Church in the United

The PCUSA strove to increase equality within its own education system in the hopes of encouraging the same in wider American society. Presbyterians understood that African Americans rarely had the same educational opportunities as white Americans and felt it was important to national development that African Americans, particularly ministers, were on an equal footing with white people in religion and in education. Presbyterian colleges showed that the PCUSA wanted Black men to be ministers and teachers and also demonstrated that ministry and teaching were not the only routes that they hoped Black men would take toward success. Bookkeeping and surveying courses at Biddle suggest that helping African Americans find jobs outside of the church was a goal of the PCUSA. African Americans who attended Presbyterian colleges in the late 1800s and early 1900s were prepared to teach, preach, and spread the philosophies and ideas of the Presbyterian Church to other African Americans in the South.

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States of America, 1914), 12, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah5ctk?urlappend=%3Bseq=885>; *Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 99th Annual Report, 1917-1918*, (1918), 5; *Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 64th Annual Report, 1881-1882*, Home Missions: Twelfth Annual Report (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1882), 4–5, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah3lir?urlappend=%3Bseq=151%3Bownerid=27021597767065015-155>.

### Chapter 3. Man “Cannot Live on Bread Alone”: Elementary Schools

If the popular view and the general discussion narrows itself to the emphasis on industrial education we shall not complain, for on the one hand experience will soon teach the nation that this people must be given something more than mechanical skill, and on the other the Church will always insist that, as in the education of its own sons and daughters, religion is necessary, and man shall not and cannot live by bread alone.<sup>106</sup>

~Board of Missions for Freedmen of the PCUSA, 1903

From the mid-nineteenth through the early-twentieth centuries, Presbyterians—like Americans in general—were forced to address the burning question of how to implement large-scale education in a divided country. Education reform and the beginnings of major public educational systems became more prominent, commencing with emancipation, expanding through Reconstruction, and continuing after Reconstruction ended. As a result, Black education from 1880-1920 developed out of discussions of Reconstruction, citizenship, and a reshaped economy, and continued during periods of increasing disenfranchisement, legally-enforced racial subordination, and the association of Black literacy with Black criminality.<sup>107</sup> By the late 1880s, school reform was a priority among both Black and white Americans. Northern philanthropy, local support, and individual determination increased literacy despite segregation and

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<sup>106</sup> *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 38th Annual Report, 1902-1903*, One Hundred and First Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1903), 4, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah5ct9?urlappend=%3Bseq=1253>.

<sup>107</sup> Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 4.

unequal distribution of funding.<sup>108</sup> As African Americans utilized educational strategies with goals of strengthening and maintaining their tenuous freedom, some white groups saw education as a method of reinforcing racial and class subordination and social control while others viewed it as a method to affect gradual social change.<sup>109</sup> Education was connected to ideas of racial equality, solidarity, reconciliation, and hierarchy, and the differences in educational advocacy and strategies espoused by African Americans, white Presbyterians, and others with a stake in education highlight these contrasting philosophies.

The best form of education for children—industrial or classical—was debated. Industrial education, “part of a larger complex of ideas emphasizing self-help and economic and moral development,” extended across racial boundaries but especially referred to African Americans.<sup>110</sup> The idea was simple and popular among many Black people from the 1870s-1890s: provide students with both education and a trade. Wanting to instill moral values as well as make children workplace-ready, Black Americans saw industrial education as a solution. On the other hand, to maintain the racial hierarchy, many white people believed that Black students should only be taught basic labor, such as home economics, farming, manual training, and simple skills.<sup>111</sup> The debate over education includes disagreements among various white groups over the

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<sup>108</sup> Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, (2007), 418; Meier, *Negro Thought in America*, (1963), 19.

<sup>109</sup> Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, (1988), 2–3. For more on the variety approaches to education, see Aldridge, “African American Educations and the Black Intellectual Tradition,” (2009) and Anderson and Moss, *Dangerous Donations*, (1999).

<sup>110</sup> Meier, *Negro Thought in America*, (1963), 95.

<sup>111</sup> Meier, *Negro Thought in America*, (1963), 95.

purpose of education and discussions among African American educators and community leaders over whether industrial education and accommodationism or classical education and outspoken activism was a better strategy for protecting and furthering their rights and freedom.

### *The Debate over Education*

Hampton Institute provided inspiration for the application of industrial education and offers a clear example of its focuses: manual labor; strict social discipline; and elementary academic training, which excluded studies of classics to avoid inculcating vanity and higher aspirations among Black students.<sup>112</sup> Diverse groups, including white Southern elites and some white Northern philanthropists and Black leaders, supported versions of industrial education's goals: smoothing over race relations and making docile, malleable workers; preparing Black people for their roles in the New South; reinforcing Southern hierarchy (in some cases, with the intent of subverting that hierarchy); and, as political rights were stripped away from African Americans, removing them from political life. Crucial to the success of this plan was training Black educators—like Booker T. Washington—in this model.<sup>113</sup> As many Black educators saw education as the best way to maintain freedom and foster Black success, they used the framing of industrial education to appeal to funders.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, (1988), 48–49.

<sup>113</sup> Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, (1988), 36; Anderson and Moss, Jr., *Dangerous Donations*, (1999).

<sup>114</sup> For further discussion and examples of different approaches and motivations among Black educators and community leaders about industrial education, see Titus Brown, *Faithful, Firm, and True: African American Education in the South* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2002), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/004261381>; Green, *Educational Reconstruction*, (2016); Anderson and Moss, Jr., *Dangerous Donations*, (1999).

Washington saw economic prosperity as the route to uplift. He strove to use industrial education to bring Black people from the bottom of American society to the top by solidifying their current rights and focusing on ensuring future rights rather than achieving immediate social equality.<sup>115</sup> He firmly believed in self-help, a basic tenet of industrial education. He blamed Black people for losing skilled labor positions while expressing pride in their successes, and he combined his different ideas with a need to work interracial and peacefully.<sup>116</sup> Industrial education highlights the differences in how white and Black Americans saw education. To some white people, Black education needed to reinforce hierarchy, subordination, and the social structure, while Black people used education to maintain and grow their freedoms and wealth. While the PCUSA espoused the idea that education needed to encourage self-help and self-support, they disagreed with the idea that education should solely prepare Black people for labor and instead preferred to use the classical model of education.

W. E. B. Du Bois—like others who supported classical education—believed that education must prioritize the academic aspects in order to prepare African Americans for citizenship, the ballot, and American life. Du Bois necessarily connected education to citizenship and voting, in no small part because of efforts to disenfranchise Black people through literacy tests.<sup>117</sup> While Du Bois believed industrial training was necessary for teaching thrift, morality, and industry, he believed that, when anyone “opposes the higher training and ambition of our brighter minds,” it was the obligation of Black

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<sup>115</sup> Meier, *Negro Thought in America*, (1963), 100–101.

<sup>116</sup> Meier, *Negro Thought in America*, (1963), 105–6.

<sup>117</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, (1903), 10, 11.

Americans—really, all Americans with a sense of justice—to oppose them.<sup>118</sup> Education, he felt, must provide more options than merely learning to work and be formed into unquestioning laborers, and that instead, the mind must also be prepared for life and for citizenship.

Multiple philanthropists and organizations—such as the Peabody Fund, Slater Fund, the Rockefeller-funded General Education Board, Southern Education Board, Jeanes Fund, and the Julius-Rosenwald Fund—provided funding for African American education, often requiring recipients to offer industrial training. As a result, even organizations that favored classical education often adopted aspects of industrial training.<sup>119</sup> Large Black denominations—like the Colored Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, and AME Zion—supported classical education, as did most large white Northern missionary societies, such as the American Missionary Association, the Freedmen’s Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the American Baptist Home Mission Society, and the Board of Missions for Freedmen of the PCUSA.<sup>120</sup> The arguments of Du Bois and others like him shaped the educational attempts of the Presbyterian Church and their relationship with African Americans. The PCUSA supported complementing academic training with a limited form of industrial education. Larger Presbyterian schools provided training in carpentry, house building, plastering, painting, and dress-making because their goal was

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<sup>118</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, (1903), 59.

<sup>119</sup> Anderson and Moss, Jr., *Dangerous Donations*, (1999), 2–5; Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, (1988), 66, 140.

<sup>120</sup> Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, (1988), 67–69.

to provide people with both an education and a career. Presbyterians strove for industrial training not to overtake academic, as Black people gained preparation for work, but also edified their minds and souls.

While the PCUSA officially preferred classical education, members differed in their beliefs regarding which form of education should be prioritized. In 1900, *Home Mission Monthly* included a piece called “The Negro in Politics” which argued that instead of working on political representation and fighting for more rights, African Americans should focus on strengthening and enjoying their existing rights, a common argument used to support industrial education.<sup>121</sup> Three years later, the Board of Missions for Freedmen, arguing that classical education was crucial, believed that if the United States focused only on industrial education, “experience will soon teach the nation that this people must be given something more than mechanical skill.”<sup>122</sup> In a 1910 issue of *Home Mission Monthly*, H. L. McCrorey, an African American man who later became president of Biddle University in Charlotte, NC, argued that both forms of education were “important and really essential to the higher development of any race of people, and therefore neither should be allowed to suffer financially at the expense of the other.”<sup>123</sup> Christian education, McCrorey believed, taught Black people the importance of marriage and morality. In the late 1890s and early 1900s, the views of the

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<sup>121</sup> “The Freedmen,” in *Home Mission Monthly*, vol. XIV, no. 6 (New York: Woman’s Executive Committee of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1900), 130–31, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/wu.89077050177?urlappend=%3Bseq=131>.

<sup>122</sup> *38th Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1903), 4.

<sup>123</sup> “Freedmen Number,” (1910), 138.

Presbyterian Church waffled between a white-supremacy-informed paternalism and a more equity-based approach.

Because “the masses are reached by the parochial schools,” and the PCUSA worked to use children as a conduit to adults, their schools were crucially important to the Presbyterians (see Figure 3.1 Education and Church Membership).<sup>124</sup> Presbyterians also ran normal schools, which accepted people with little prior education and provided two to three years of education, resulting in the equivalent of a tenth-grade education. While they did not grant college degrees, the schools helped prepare people for work as teachers and for college.<sup>125</sup> However, parochial schools were the priority. In 1893, H. W. Holmes, a writer for *Home Mission Monthly*, stated that “the aim of our parochial schools is not solely to make Presbyterians... it is also true that the whole community is benefitted.”<sup>126</sup> The PCUSA understood the importance of education in sustaining freedom and success. In 1892, the PCUSA operated seventy-three parochial and elementary schools enrolling 7,360 students.

#### *Presbyterian Schools and Educators*

Black teachers ran most of those elementary and parochial schools. Teaching was highly gendered. Male ministers generally served as principal, although their wives sometimes served as heads of schools. On occasion, women unaffiliated with ministers

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<sup>124</sup> “The Freedmen,” in *Home Mission Monthly*, vol. VII, no. 6 (New York: Woman’s Executive Committee of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1893), 132, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015068447104>.

<sup>125</sup> Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, (1988), 34–35.

<sup>126</sup> “The Freedmen, April 1893,” (1893), 132.

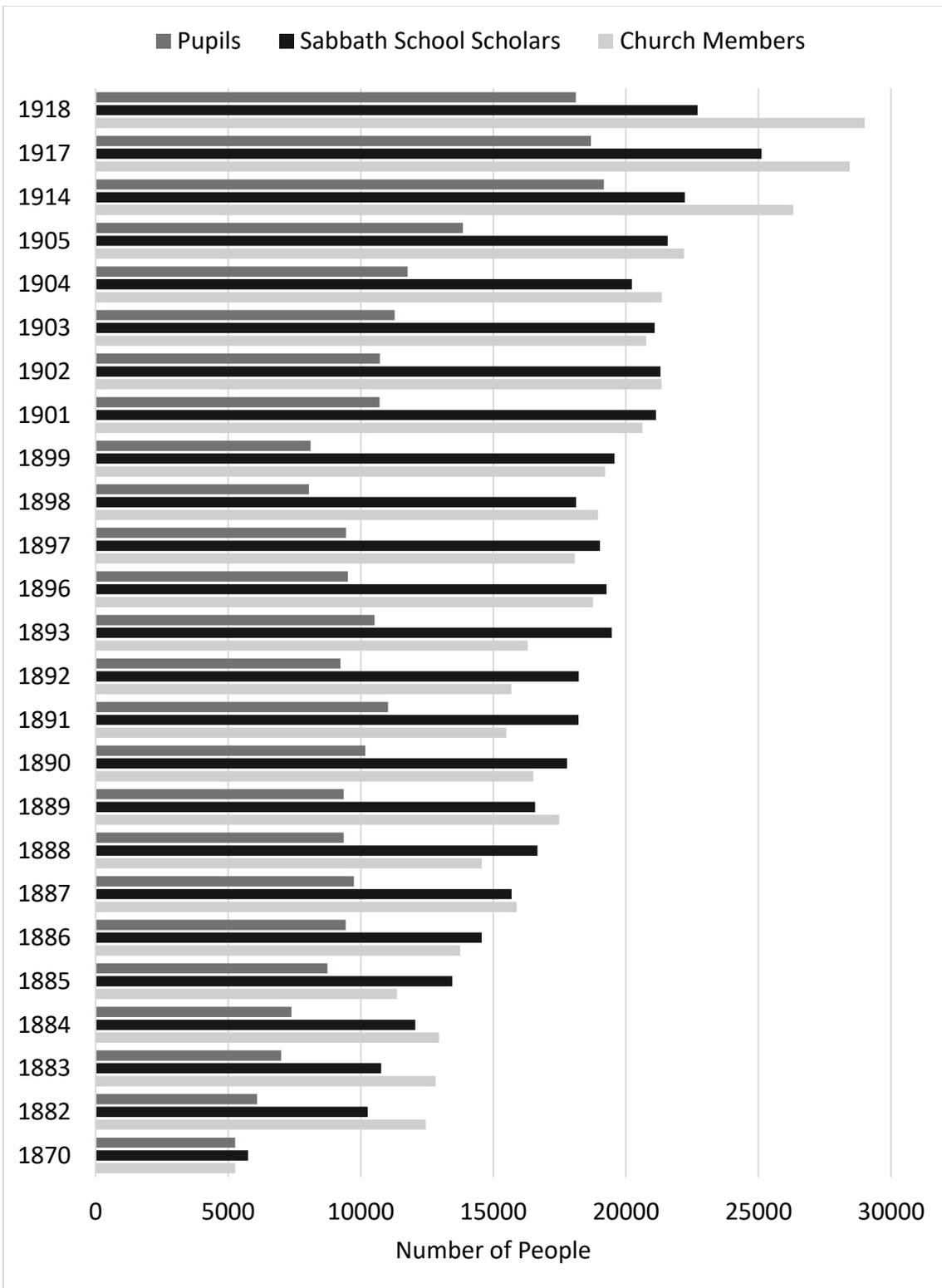


Figure 3.1 Education and Church Membership

Source: Annual Reports of the Board of Missions for Freedmen, 1882-1893, 1896-1904, 1914, 1917-1918. See Appendix A for a full list.

would start schools.<sup>127</sup> While the men were nominally in charge of the schools, the women actually ran them, controlling most of the daily activities.<sup>128</sup> An exception was Haines Normal and Industrial Institute in Augusta, GA, which was not only one of the PCUSA's most successful schools but also "the most successful private school in the South managed by African Americans."<sup>129</sup> The founder, Lucy C. Laney, was born April 13, 1854, to an enslaved carpenter and his wife, David and Louisa Laney. A devout Christian, David Laney was ordained by the PCUSA after the Civil War. Although he reportedly bristled against the admonishment to preach only to Black audiences, David Laney helped found Knox Presbytery, an African American Presbytery in the Synod of Atlantic.<sup>130</sup>

As a child, Lucy Laney attended Lewis Normal School in Macon, GA and continued her education at Atlanta University. She taught throughout Georgia (Milledgeville, Macon, Augusta, and Savannah), before returning to Augusta at the request of Black parents and the PCUSA's Board of Missions for Freedmen. Her school grew quickly, gaining accreditation by the PCUSA in 1886. Her five-year high school program offered a classical education with some industrial components. In 1892, she organized the Lamar School of Nursing. Although hesitant about a Black woman from a non-elite background founding a school, the PCUSA supported her work.<sup>131</sup> Despite the

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<sup>127</sup> "The Freedmen," in *Home Mission Monthly*, vol. VI, no. 7 (New York: Woman's Executive Committee of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1892), 151, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015068447278>; Gilmore, *Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*, (2019), 193.

<sup>128</sup> "The Freedmen, April 1903," (1903), 132-34.

<sup>129</sup> "The Freedmen, May 1892," (1892), 151.

<sup>130</sup> Leslie, "No Middle Ground," (2001), 124-30; Wilmore, *Black and Presbyterian*, (1983), 76.

<sup>131</sup> Leslie, "No Middle Ground," (2001), 124-30.

cultural prescriptions of not referring to Black men and women with titles of respect, in their reports, the PCUSA called her “Miss Lucy C. Laney” and the teachers who worked with her as Miss, Mrs., and Mr.<sup>132</sup> While Laney was a major proponent of education and argued for its importance, she also believed in training women to be wives and mothers, saying,

We thank God for the great light of letters that has come to us. It was and is now greatly needed, but there is to us another need, and one not less in any particular, the knowledge of how to make homes, Christian homes, and an appreciation of home and home training.<sup>133</sup>

Her school trained students to become hard workers and to be proficient in domestic skills.

Women like Lucy Laney and Mary Jackson, who worked with Laney at the Haines Institute and would later play a major role in establishing YWCA chapters for Black women, played multiple roles in the Presbyterian world.<sup>134</sup> Not only were they educators, but they also acted as uplifters and “race interpreters,” a term Bettye Collier-Thomas says describes the Black women who spoke to white people about the plight of Black people in an effort to gain financial support.<sup>135</sup> In 1897, Laney visited the Synods of Indiana and Illinois, succeeding in increasing contributions to the women’s

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<sup>132</sup> Leon Litwack, *Trouble In Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 333–34; *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 33rd Annual Report, 1897-1898*, Ninety-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1898), <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah5ct4?urlappend=%3Bseq=1021>.

<sup>133</sup> “The Freedmen,” in *Home Mission Monthly*, vol. XII, no. 6 (New York: Woman’s Executive Committee of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1898), 125, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/wu.89077050110?urlappend=%3Bseq=129>.

<sup>134</sup> Gilmore, *Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*, (2019), 193.

<sup>135</sup> Collier-Thomas, *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice*, (2010), chaps. 6, section “Success and Failures: The FCC Church Women’s Committee”.

committee.<sup>136</sup> She saw similar success in her 1904 visits to California and the Northwest, which resulted in increased funds from those synods.<sup>137</sup> Jackson, in 1898, also travelled to Presbyterian synods and societies for fundraising.<sup>138</sup> Both Laney and Jackson represented African Americans, particularly women, when they wrote for *Home Mission Monthly*. They communicated their needs and their successes to a mostly white church. To the Presbyterian Church, having Black women offer race interpretation was crucial to developing Black women as wives, mothers, and teachers who believed in the goals and values of the Presbyterian Church.

Like Lucy Laney, Ella Williams, wife of Rev. Emory Williams, opened a school in Abbeville, SC. In 1885, although connected to her husband's church, Ella ran the school alone.<sup>139</sup> Many other mission schools listed the minister as principal and as a teacher.<sup>140</sup> Between April 1890 and March 1891, the PCUSA acquired the Abbeville school, which officially became known as Ferguson Academy.<sup>141</sup> With the merger, Ella Williams was no longer the head of the school; instead, she, and two other women, S. C. Pearson and

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<sup>136</sup> *32d Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1897), 74.

<sup>137</sup> *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 39th Annual Report, 1903-1904*, One Hundred and Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1904), 158–59, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah5cta?urlappend=%3Bseq=1265>.

<sup>138</sup> *33d Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1898), 76.

<sup>139</sup> *Committee of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 16th Annual Report, 1881-1882*, (1882), 29; *20th Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1885), 32.

<sup>140</sup> *20th Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1885), 32.

<sup>141</sup> While the PCUSA had previously supported teachers at the Abbeville school, it was not until it acquired the school in 1891 that it took on the \$1,631 debt. Ferguson Academy later became Harbison Academy and then Harbison Industrial College. *Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 26th Annual Report, 1890-1891*, Twenty-First Annual Report (the Eighty-Ninth from Its Organization) of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1891), 7, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.ah3kgx?urlappend=%3Bseq=769>.

Beulah Walker, were teachers and Rev. Williams was principal.<sup>142</sup> While women could run schools and their labor was necessary for them to function, the PCUSA preferred men, particularly educated ministers, to be in charge.

The PCUSA relied on Black women to shape Southern African American communities, to teach, and to show white church members the faces and voices behind the Church's goals and values, but the church leaned on Black men as ministers and principals. In 1906, the PCUSA replaced Rev. Williams at Harbison Academy with Rev. Calvin M. Young. Born into slavery in 1859, Young worked on his family's farm to support his mother and siblings until 1881, when he left for Biddle University.<sup>143</sup> After completing Biddle's preparatory courses, Rev. Young earned a bachelor's degree in 1891 and completed his Bachelor of Sacred Theology (S.T.B.) from Biddle's seminary in 1894.<sup>144</sup> Rev. Young then preached and taught in Rock Hill, SC, where he was beloved by the people, did "much for the betterment and uplifting of his race," and won "the respect of the white people of this city."<sup>145</sup>

Rev. Young guided Harbison Academy through many changes. In March 1910, the school was set on fire. Black and white citizens of Abbeville worked together to find the arsonist. When Rev. Young requested a guard at night until the students could find

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<sup>142</sup> *26th Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1891), 26.

<sup>143</sup> J. L. Hollowell, "Obituary for Calvin Monroe Young," November 3, 1929, Papers of the Jones and Young Families, Box 1, Folder 15, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; *Annual Catalogue of Biddle University*, (1882).

<sup>144</sup> Hollowell, "Obituary for Calvin Monroe Young," (November 3, 1929).

<sup>145</sup> "New President for Harbison," *State* (Columbia, SC), May 26, 1929, Access World News – Historical and Current, <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A11210D30DA68B248%40EANX-NB-1470D266DB093830%402425758-1470CAE681DF20FA%4012-1470CAE681DF20FA%40>.

suitable living arrangements, the town agreed.<sup>146</sup> Because he had developed positive relationships with the white citizens of Abbeville, he was able to fulfill the PCUSA's goal of improving race relations. The following year, the school moved to Irmo, SC, where it remained until it closed.<sup>147</sup> Young remained president of Harbison until a few months before his death on November 3, 1929.<sup>148</sup> Rev. Young represented many of the goals of the PCUSA, availing himself of opportunities presented by the Church, attending preparatory school, college, and seminary before working to serve others and to build race relations with local white communities and strove to educate Black children.

Primary education enabled Presbyterians to reach large groups of people and evangelize them while also offering opportunities to African American communities by blending classical and industrial education. In their efforts, they participated in debates that arose during the dismantling of Reconstruction and the reshaping of the American South. Their work alternated between challenging and supporting the legally and socially codified racial caste system in the United States, often promoting ideas of self-help and uplift. White Presbyterians refused to only prepare Black children for unskilled labor, instead striving to provide holistic educations that would give African Americans options and allow for racial reconciliation.

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<sup>146</sup> "Investigate College Fire at Abbeville," *Columbia Record* (Columbia, SC), March 18, 1910, Access World News – Historical and Current, <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A1426FFF4BA214D0E%40EANX-NB-166770EC86CB046B%402418749-166503BFFA21E2D9%407-166503BFFA21E2D9%40>.

<sup>147</sup> "Land Bought for College," *Columbia Record* (Columbia, SC), February 13, 1911, Access World News – Historical and Current, <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A1426FFF4BA214D0E%40EANX-NB-1666BE4D256B0A8E%402419081-1665157D6F9ABAE8%407-1665157D6F9ABAE8%40>.

<sup>148</sup> Hollowell, "Obituary for Calvin Monroe Young," (November 3, 1929).

## Conclusion

In spring 1903, Rev. Coyden Uggams—who, at this point, had multiple degrees from Lincoln University, had worked for Lucy Laney as associate principal of the Haines Institute, and had run several churches and schools of his own—represented the Synod of Atlantic at the PCUSA’s General Assembly in Los Angeles, California.<sup>149</sup> As the PCUSA considered whether to absorb the Cumberland Presbyterian Church (CPC), it was forced to address questions of racial segregation and territorial divisions, and appointed Uggams—along with one other Black man and five white—to the Committee on Territorial Limits of Presbyteries in Certain Synods.<sup>150</sup> In bringing the CPC into the fold, the PCUSA faced one of many debates over the status of African American church members: the place of segregation in the church.

In fall 1903, the Committee on Territorial Limits of Presbyteries in Certain Synods met in St. Louis, Missouri, where the multiracial committee concluded that there should be “no legislation which would discriminate against any race or nationality, or deny to one the rights and privileges in which others share.”<sup>151</sup> However, because of the nation’s

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<sup>149</sup> Edgar Sutton Robinson, *The Ministerial Directory of the Ministers in “The Presbyterian Church in the United States” (Southern), and in “The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America” (Northern)* (Oxford: Ministerial directory co., 1898), 515, <http://archive.org/details/ministerialdirec00robi>; *Charleston, South Carolina, City Directory, 1903* (Charleston, South Carolina, 1903).

<sup>150</sup> Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. General Assembly, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1903), 3, 169.

<sup>151</sup> Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. General Assembly, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1904), 143.

“prevailing unwillingness to accept [African Americans] on equal social standing,” many white congregations refused to respect African American leadership in predominantly Black presbyteries.<sup>152</sup> While in the past, the church had ruled that multiple presbyteries could not exist on the same territory—thus preventing wholly segregated presbyteries—the committee felt that flexibility on this rule was necessary. The committee noted that, throughout much of the country, many churches and presbyteries were already segregated along racial or national lines. They condemned “the evils of social prejudice and racial antipathies,” but acknowledged that some church members had prejudices that could cause difficulties in church unity. To mitigate potential conflict, the committee recommended that the PCUSA allow presbyteries to overlap, which would result in segregated presbyteries so that they did not “draw the color line... and exclude the whites from our communion.”<sup>153</sup> Rev. Uggams supported this recommendation.

The relationship between African Americans and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America has been complicated from its beginnings. Its history reflects shifts within the United States, sometimes working counter to larger cultural movements and sometimes reinforcing them. The PCUSA’s efforts from 1880-1920 fit within a cultural context featuring debates over whether Black people were inferior to white people and whether culture or biology was at the root of it. Concerns about the status of women and their place in society and in the church arose during this

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<sup>152</sup> The committee strongly condemned the prejudice of white church members, but acknowledged that it was not going away anytime soon. As a result, they focused on practical recommendations. Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. General Assembly, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, (1904), 144.

<sup>153</sup> Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. General Assembly, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, (1904), 146.

transitional period of American history. Questions over what kind of education would best fulfill the goals of various interested groups featured prominently. Each of these factors impacted the white Presbyterian Church and its relationship with African Americans. While Presbyterians viewed themselves as different from the rest of the country, in many ways, they were instead a microcosm of race relations in the country as a whole. The history of the church, its understanding of the “Negro Problem,” its attitudes toward education, and the work of the women all contributed to its relationship with African Americans from 1880-1920.

Many of the actions of the church since the Civil War, both the good and the bad, “have a common matrix in the policies and strategies of the Freedmen’s Board established at the end of the Civil War.”<sup>154</sup> The Board of Missions for Freedmen passionately pleaded for funding and acknowledgement of the work done by missionaries. The Board argued that their work of “Christianizing” and “educating” brought African Americans up out of a perceived degraded state, educating African Americans so that they no longer tolerated “hovels of filth and wretchedness” and instead preferred having organized homes.<sup>155</sup> In 1891, the Board reported that, where local guidelines allowed, African Americans were gaining success and material wealth. However, white Presbyterians lamented that African Americans had “not improved in morals as he has in material things, and that because of the lack of moral and religious

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<sup>154</sup> Wilmore, *Black and Presbyterian*, (1983), 68.

<sup>155</sup> *Committee of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: 16th Annual Report, 1881-1882*, (1882), 10.

influences.”<sup>156</sup> They saw African Americans in two ways: as childlike, needing to be acted upon and saved, and as adults who needed to support themselves and fix their own problems. With this contradictory approach, the PCUSA believed that Christian education was the answer to the “Negro Problem.”

By the end of World War I, African American Presbyterians in general, long tired of being problematized, and Black ministers in the north in particular, weary of segregated work and their exclusion from church leadership, wanted to work cooperatively and on equal footing with whites, demanded that a Black minister serve on the Board of Missions for Freedmen. As a result of their advocacy, the Board appointed a minister from Philadelphia, Rev. J. W. Lee. Despite the Board of Missions for Freedmen having just passed its fiftieth anniversary, he was the first Black man to hold a position on the Board.<sup>157</sup> Two years later, following the Red Summer of 1919, Presbyterians reevaluated their view of African Americans. The 1920 special issue on Freedmen’s Work in *Home Mission Monthly* was written almost exclusively by African Americans, took a strong stance against both racism and sexism, and expressed a need for change, both in the nation and in the church. One such article was “What the Negro Wants—A Chance” by Rev. J. A. Boyden, who pleaded that the church recognize that:

For years, the black man has been the most faithful, dutiful, peaceful, and obedient class of the nation. He has been true to the country’s interests when called to serve, and at no time has he been weighed in the balance and found wanting in loyalty to the government. Notwithstanding his ignorance he has been an important factor in the civic, economic, and industrial life of the nation. Groaning under the heavy burdens he is compelled to carry, he does not rebel outwardly, but in his soul of souls cries out: “I am black but comely. For my

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<sup>156</sup> *26th Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1891), 12.

<sup>157</sup> *53rd Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1918), 12.

loyalty to my country both at home and in far-off France I am entitled to a man's chance at every human endeavor, nothing more, nothing less."<sup>158</sup>

Drawing upon the recent memory of World War I, Boyden challenged the church and country to extend the basic rights of American citizens—equality of opportunity, of wages, of justice, and of protection—to its Black citizens. He asked the church specifically to “give the impact of its influence against mob rule and lynching.”<sup>159</sup> His plea, and the fact that the PCUSA published it, showed a shift in understanding by the Presbyterian church of what the “Negro Problem” actually was. An overtly feminist article by Mary Jackson was published, as were a discussion of Black professionals, an argument for their inclusion in studies of Americanization, and an article seeking ways to further interracial understanding.<sup>160</sup> This issue also featured calls for the Church to establish councils for interracial discussions.<sup>161</sup> While the PCUSA expressed concern about the status, morality, and criminality of African Americans, white Presbyterians gradually began to realize that Black people were not the problem, and that instead, the problem lay within a system of discrimination and prejudice that enshrined racial subordination within its laws and social structure. Church efforts were imperfect, halting, and littered with paternalism, but education was consistently used as a tool for reconciling white and Black people, saving the nation from corruption, and improving the lives and status of Black people.

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<sup>158</sup> “Negro Americans,” in *Home Mission Monthly*, vol. 34, no. 6 (New York: Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1920), 127–28, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015067916141>.

<sup>159</sup> “Negro Americans,” (1920), 127.

<sup>160</sup> Mary Jackson had, by this point, married H. L. McCrorey and published as Mary McCrorey.

<sup>161</sup> “Negro Americans,” (1920).

Presbyterian self-reflection and efforts for racial equality did not end in 1920. Nor did their efforts end when the PCUSA combined with other Presbyterian churches to become the Presbyterian Church (USA). The PC(USA), in some ways, continues the tradition of working in racial issues. Almost exactly one hundred years after the special issue of *Home Mission Monthly*, in June of 2020, the 224<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the PC(USA) voted, 407-72, to “actively confront and dismantle systemic racism in our church and in society at large, and to work for a more just, merciful, and peaceful country that allows all of God’s children to flourish.”<sup>162</sup> They pledged to repent, individually and institutionally, for the part they “played in history and continue to perpetuate today, even if unknowingly, in systemic racism and White Supremacy.”<sup>163</sup> They planned to educate congregations; develop antiracism policies; study the relationship of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) with the church; and take action toward equality rather than merely discussing it. One of the initiatives the PC(USA) undertook was creating an online document of “Resources for Self-Study on Racism.” It contains links to resources on race and racism within American churches.<sup>164</sup> The modern work by the Presbyterian Church represents more direct and overt attempts at antiracism than their efforts during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but it builds upon the foundation they established.

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<sup>162</sup> Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), “On the Church in This Moment in History—Responding to the Sin of Racism and a Call to Action,” Pub. L. No. 00–29, accessed December 5, 2020, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000727>.

<sup>163</sup> Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), “On the Church in This Moment in History—Responding to the Sin of Racism and a Call to Action.”

<sup>164</sup> “Resources for Self-Study on Racism,” Presbyterian Historical Society, n.d., <https://www.history.pcusa.org/history-online/topics-note/resources-self-study-racism>.

These recent endeavors reinforce the prediction made in 1889 that racial equality would not “be accomplished in one nor in two generations” and would require many years of planning and effort.<sup>165</sup> Although iterations of the Presbyterian Church have had varied success in their work advocating for racial equality, they have continued to devote time and energy into the effort. The historical relationship between Presbyterians and African Americans may be complicated, but it reflects broader trends within the United States. Understanding the ways in which the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America utilized education as a tool for racial justice, analyzing the ways that their work reflected national trends, and observing how women played roles in ministry and education reveals the contradictory ways that an institution dominated by white men and operating within a context of white supremacy strove to use education as a tool for reconciling white and Black people, saving the nation from corruption, and improving the lives, souls, and social standing of African Americans.

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<sup>165</sup> *24th Annual Report of the Board of Missions for Freedmen*, (1889), 18.

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## Appendix A: Sources for Figures

### *Figure 2.1 Income of the Board of Missions for Freedmen, 1885-1899*

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*Figure 3.1 Education and Church Membership*

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## Appendix B: Glossary

classical education: Refers to the idea that the purpose of education was to edify the mind and included academic training. From 1880-1920, many classical schools did include some industrial training as a complement to the academic.

Cumberland Presbyterian Church: The CPC was segregated and required Black churches to be supervised by whites, even after being absorbed into the PCUSA in 1907. While the PCUSA was, in practice, segregated and did have mostly white people in positions of power, it was not a matter of policy.

“English” course: an abbreviated course of study, usually at the college level although sometimes seen in preparatory and theological courses, that often focuses on history, exegesis, theology, and moral science and excludes teaching languages and physical sciences.

Evangelical church: refers to a movement within Protestant Christian churches that states, among other things, that the Bible is inerrant, that salvation comes through the grace of God alone, and that evangelism—or missionary work—is the obligation of Christians.

industrial education: Refers to the idea that the purpose of education was to provide not only academic training but also work skills to students. It often involved strict social discipline, enforcement of morality, basic academic training, and hard work that varied from menial labor to work that required high levels of skill.

“Negro Problem”: a term used by mostly white Americans to refer to the question of how to interact with a large, newly-freed African American population after the Civil War.

normal school: a type of school that offered two to three years of remedial courses to people with little prior education, providing the equivalent of a tenth-grade education with the intent of allowing them to become teachers or to prepare them for further education.

parochial school: a primary school associated with a church that provides a religious-based education

presbytery: a division within the Presbyterian Church. Each presbytery was composed of multiple churches.

race interpreter: a term used by historian Bettye Collier-Thomas to describe Black church women who spoke to white people about the plight of Black people, often using white pity as a tool to exhort them to help Black people. They often worked to help raise funds for their goals.

racial uplift rhetoric: the idea that, by gaining material wealth and changing their behaviors to reflect the ideals of white society, often including subordination to white interests, Black people could gradually earn the respect of and equal rights with white Americans.

synod: the highest division within the Presbyterian Church. Each synod was made up of multiple presbyteries.

## Appendix C: Timeline of Presbyterian Activities

Table D.1 Timeline

1787	Synod of New York and Pennsylvania officially supports abolition, arguing for accompanying emancipation with education
1818	PCUSA releases a Statement on Slavery, offering cautious condemnation of slavery
1837	Split Between Old and New Schools
c. 1859	C. M. Young born
1861	Southern states secede  Northern and Southern Churches split over slavery and the Civil War to become PCUSA and PCCSA
1864	PCUSA General Assembly Authorizes 2 Committees for the Education of Freedmen and begins work among African Americans in the South
1865	Committees for the Education of Freedmen combined into Committee on Freedmen  PCUSA establishes schools and churches. Of the seventy-seven missionaries listed in the 1866 report, twenty-eight are Black, three of whom are ministers and twenty-five teachers, and the report mentions that many of the unlisted teachers are as well  Coyden Uggams born
1866	First Annual Report of the General Assembly's Committee on Freedmen announces that a lack of education and proper Christian expression is the root of problems among African Americans. This leads to their strategy of using education as their primary approach to ministry to Black people  Biddle University founded in Charlotte, NC, as a church and parochial school  Knox Presbytery founded
1867	Scotia Seminary founded in Concord, NC

- 1868 Hampton Institute founded by Samuel Chapman Armstrong and the American Missionary Association to train Black students in industrial education
- 1870 Old and New Schools merge
- 1876 Rev. Charles Stillman founds Tuscaloosa Institute for Colored Ministers under the PCUS
- 1876-77 Reconstruction ends
- 1882 Establishment of the Slater Fund to support industrial education  
Biddle University is the only PCUSA chartered institution with a theological seminary for Southern African Americans.
- 1883 Committee on Freedmen becomes Board of Missions for Freedmen  
Board of Missions for Freedmen expresses a sense of guilt for slavery and obligation to help African Americans due to the PCUSA's complicity
- 1884 Woman's Committee of the Board of Missions for Freedmen created with the goals of giving Black children religious and secular instruction and to teach Black women how to take care of their families and make good Christian homes
- 1885 Different standards implemented for Black and white students. Board of Missions for Freedmen begins to question if Black people are capable of a full education or if they need an abbreviated, "English" course. They began offering English courses as well as the Classical and Scientific courses.  
They also began requiring Black students to undergo two to three years of trial of their character as opposed to being a member of a church for one year, which was required for white students.  
Ella Williams begins a Presbyterian school in Abbeville, SC  
Lincoln University adds a two-year English course to its collegiate offerings
- 1886 PCUSA establishes Mary Allen Seminary in Crockett, TX  
Black synods, especially the Synod of Atlantic, begin pushing back against the unequal standards put in place by the PCUSA  
Lucy Laney asks the PCUSA to fund the Haines Normal and Industrial Institute in Augusta, GA
- 1887 PCUSA expresses concern over uneducated Black people voting and damaging the democracy in the US.

- PCUSA's Board of Education increased the amount of money that Black students could receive for preparatory school and removed the cap for Black students in college and theological schools.
- 1890 PCUSA officially accepts Haines Institute as its state institute for Georgia and offers Laney funds
- Rev. E. W. Williams denies the existence of a "Negro Problem," but says that if it did exist, the PCUSA's approach was the best one.
- 114,000 Black Presbyterians
- Panic of 1890, intense but short-lived
- 1891 PCUSA acquires the Presbyterian school in Abbeville, SC and renames it Ferguson Academy. Rev. Emery Williams becomes the principal, while his wife is listed as only a teacher. The school later becomes Harbison Academy
- Home Mission Monthly* has its first special monthly issue on Freedmen's Work, beginning with the story of "Hun' Hepsy"
- Biddle University has seven Black faculty members after the white professors quit because three Black professors were added
- 1892 PCUSA as a whole short on funding. Decreased scholarship offerings for white and Black students
- 1893 Panic of 1893, massive recession in the US. Continued until 1897
- 1894 John S. Jarvis argues that Black people are not taught the value of morality, virtue, and hard work, and that they needed to work on bettering themselves instead of fighting for more rights
- 1895 Atlanta Exposition where Booker T. Washington made the "Cast Down Your Bucket" speech. Lucy Laney also speaks here
- 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* upholds the constitutionality of segregation, requiring that "equal" facilities be available for Black people, but the criteria of "equal" was not enforced
- The April issue on Freedmen's Work of *Home Mission Monthly* includes multiple Black writers and draws on sociology to argue that education will decrease lynchings by lowering Black crime rates and by making white people more empathetic. It says that they needed to transform Black people into "intelligent American citizen[s]"
- 1897 PCUSA abolishes holding Black and white students to different admission standards
- Lucy Laney visits the Synods of Indiana and Illinois

- Late 1890s PCUSA begins cutting teacher salaries and shortening school terms because of low funds
- 1898 Mary C. Jackson visits Synods  
Spanish-American War  
Wilmington Race Riot (Wilmington Massacre)
- 1899 Mary Jackson is published in *Home Mission Monthly*, talking about “true” men and women. She also visits Synods again
- 1900 PCUSA rehires teachers and lengthens school terms
- 1901 Rev. D. J. Sanders, a Black man born into slavery, becomes president of Biddle
- 1903 Board of Education believed that they had put Black and white students on the same plane. This was also the point at which more students entered college without attending preparatory school first, highlighting an overall improvement in primary education among Black Presbyterians.
- 1904 Lucy Laney visits California and the Midwest
- 1905 J. A. Stevenson says that the “Negro Problem” was actually a sin problem, and that Black people taking out loans supported this interpretation
- 1906 Rev. C. M. Young becomes president of Harbison Academy  
Atlanta Massacre  
Interracial and interdenominational Christian League of Law and Order  
Lucy Laney rallies Black women of all denominations to sign a petition banning dancing in the City of Augusta, GA, and is praised in the *Augusta Chronicle* and by the PCUSA.
- 1907 Lucy Laney argues in *Home Mission Monthly* that a holistic classical education is necessary to support the creation of common ground between Black and white people  
Cumberland Presbyterian Church absorbed into PCUSA, which allows the former CPC churches to continue practicing segregation and requiring white supervision over Black church members. While the PCUSA was, in practice, segregated and did have mostly white people in positions of power, it was not a matter of policy.
- 1910 Harbison Academy burns down and moves to Irmo, SC
- 1914 Issue of *Home Mission Monthly* includes an article written by Mrs. D. J. Sander talking about the importance of Black women and their work. It also includes an article by a white woman begging for contributions for

work among African Americans and written in an egregious caricature of AAVE.

World War I begins

1917 United States enters World War I

1918 World War I ends

Black Presbyterians demanded that the PCUSA have a Black minister serve Board of Missions for Freedmen. Rev. J. W. Lee is chosen as the first Black man on the Board.

1919 Red Summer

1920 Special issue in *Home Mission Monthly* written mostly by Black Presbyterians who issue a challenge to the PCUSA. Writers include: Rev. J. A. Boyden, Mary Jackson McCrorey, Thomas A. Long, and others