African Americans: Deculturalization, Transformation, and Segregation

GLOBALIZATION AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

The word “diaspora” refers to a people forced or induced to leave their homelands. Earlier, diaspora referred specifically to the movement of Jews from Israel. Now the word is used to describe the dispersion of ethnic groups throughout the world, particularly with the development of modern global transportation systems. For instance, the African diaspora began with the movement of enslaved Africans by British, Spanish, and Portuguese imperialists to the Americas including North America, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. Also, many Native Americans were enslaved and then forcibly relocated. When slavery failed as source of labor, British colonials moved free labor around the world, particularly from India. The British transported laborers from India to Africa, the Americas, and parts of Asia.

Consider the example of the British colony of Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean. Under Spanish control in the late eighteenth century, Trinidad was populated with sugar and cacao plantations worked by enslaved Africans. Taken over by the British in 1797, Trinidad and Tobago were eventually joined under English rule in 1815. On 1 August 1834, the British government changed the face of the global economy and the racial makeup of Trinidad and Tobago by enforcing the Act of Emancipation. Slave trade and slavery were outlawed. However, emancipation caused a labor problem. At first British planters tried contracting for Chinese indentured laborers, but this proved too expensive. The Chinese workers cost too much. The next step was to tap into the labor resources of the empire. Plantation owners turned to India as a source of less-expensive labor, and as a result the East Indian population grew. Some Portuguese laborers were used on cacao plantations. It was a common myth that white people couldn’t work in the sun. Thus, believing that the shade of cacao trees would provide protection for these Portuguese workers with fair skin, owners used them to harvest the cacao pods. Of
course, British rule meant the dominance of the English language. The Native American, African, East Indian, Spanish, French, Dutch, and Portuguese languages fell into disuse. English became the language of the schools. British curricula framed the learning of Trinidadians and Tobagoans. Slave bills, indentured contracts, legislation, government documents, and newspapers were written in English. Today, residents speak the language of the global economy, namely English.\(^3\)

Or, consider Singapore, which under the British was a major port city of their Malaysian colony and after Malaysian independence from British rule in the 1950s became a separate nation. Thomas Stamford Raffles took possession of the island (originally called Singapura, meaning “Lion City”) in 1810 for the British East India Company. The British used Chinese laborers to mine tin. At the end of the nineteenth century, the British introduced the Brazilian rubber tree, which, free of the diseases that plagued it in South America, flourished on Malaysian plantations. For the rubber plantations, Tamil-speaking laborers were brought from India. Japanese occupation during World War II encouraged the independence movement from British control. The Japanese claimed that their objective in World War II was to rid Asia of Western imperialism. Dato Onn bin Ja’afar, Malaysia’s first political leader after World War II, observed, “Under the Japanese I learnt that an Asian is just as good as a European . . . [The Japanese] were brutal, true, but they inspired us with a new idea of what Asia might become.”\(^4\) Under the banner of “Asia for the Asians,” Japan openly preached anti-European doctrines and fostered local nationalism and an independence movement. Today, Singapore schools are multilingual, with the dominant language being English.\(^4\)

Therefore, the forced migration of enslaved Africans to North America was part of an evolving pattern of migration sparked by globalization. Today, migration of populations is a major part of the globalization of the world economy.
CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND THE FORCED MIGRATION OF ENSLAVED AFRICANS

Detailing the process of deculturalization and cultural transformation of enslaved Africans is complex because they originated from a variety of language groups and cultures within Africa. In addition, their treatment as enslaved workers varied from region to region in North America. The forms of deculturalization or cultural transformation depended on the structure of the labor system. Northern areas of the United States were societies with slaves in contrast to the slave societies of the southern plantation systems. In the North, owners usually had only a limited number of slaves who might work closely with white servants or farmhands. In these situations, there was greater opportunity for assimilation into the dominant white culture. A similar phenomenon took place in the coastal cities of the South such as Charleston and Savannah. On the other hand, the plantation system isolated large groups of enslaved Africans from other white workers so cultural exchange with whites was more difficult. In addition, plantation owners were in constant fear of slave revolts and, consequently, denied their workers any form of education. According to historian Henry Bullock, among white southerners there was a “general fear that literacy would expose the slaves to abolition literature.” As a result, between 1800 and 1855, southern states passed laws making it a crime to educate slaves. It is not surprising, then, that one of the great literacy campaigns in world history occurred after the Civil War when freed slaves struggled for the opportunity to learn.

In a broader framework, the denial of an education or the provision of an inadequate education often ensures compliant and inexpensive workers. There are two ways that education can be used to subjugate a population. One method is to use education to control a population after it has been conquered, such as after the United States' conquest of Native Americans and by European and Japanese colonialists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
The other method, based on a fear of the liberating possibilities of education, is to deny a population an education or to try to limit their educational opportunities. After the Civil War, African Americans faced many attempts to limit their educational opportunities through underfunding of their schools or by educational segregation. Other groups faced similar limitations. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Japanese, Chinese, and Korean immigrants worked at low wages on railroads, in factories, and on farms, while, at the same time, their children were being segregated from European American children in California schools. Mexican Americans experienced similar treatment throughout the West.

In this chapter, I will begin the complex story of the deculturalization and cultural transformation of African Americans with Atlantic Creoles in the seventeenth century and end with the educational crusades following the Civil War.

ATLANTIC CREOLES

The first enslaved Africans arriving at Jamestown in 1618 spoke European languages, had Hispanic and English names, and, in some cases, had both African and European ancestry. The enslaved Africans that arrived prior to the development of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century plantation systems came from trading areas established by Europeans along the west coast of Africa. The word “Creole” refers to a person of mixed European and black descent. At these African trading posts, Europeans took African wives and mistresses. The result was the growth of a substantial Creole population. These Creoles found themselves in cultural conflict with both the European and African populations. When they adopted African traditions, Europeans declared them outcasts. Europeans also resented Creoles when they wore European clothing and adopted European manners. Creoles were further scorned by Africans who denied them the right to marry, inherit property, and own land.¹

Enslaved and shipped to the Americas, Creoles arrived partially assimilated to the world of their owners. If fact, their ability to speak European languages and understanding of European culture were welcomed by their purchasers. They were bought in small lots and found themselves working side-by-side with white indentured servants. Socially, they were considered part of the same social class as indentured servants. The major difference between the two groups was that the white indentured servant was free after working a set number of years, while enslaved Creoles had to purchase their freedom. For instance, Anthony Johnson was sold as a slave to the Bennett family in the Chesapeake Bay area in 1621. The Bennetts allowed Johnson to marry and to baptize his children. Eventually, Johnson earned his freedom and owned a 250-acre farm while his son received a patent for a 550-acre farm. In turn, Johnson bought slaves to help operate the farms.²

Many Atlantic Creoles purchased in northern colonies also assimilated to Anglo-American culture and bought their freedom. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, large numbers of enslaved Africans congregated in New
possibilities of education, their educational opportunities were limited by many attempts to limit their schools or by limitations. In the late 18th century, and beyond, on farms, segregated from European Americans, enslaved Africans experienced the deculturalization and Creoles in the southern colonies following the Civil War.

By the middle of the 18th century, there was a dramatic change in the origins of the slave population. The burgeoning northern economy and the development of the southern plantation system increased the demand for enslaved Africans. Increasingly, slave traders arrived with cargo that had been enslaved in the interior areas of Africa. Unlike the Atlantic Creoles, these enslaved Africans had been farmers and herdsmen living in small villages, and they had little or no contact with Europeans before being enslaved. They spoke many different languages and had differing religious traditions. By the time they reached the Americas, if they survived the ocean trip, they were often psychologically devastated by the experience of being wrenched out of their villages, separated from their families, marched to the African coast in shackles, forced into the dark holds of sailing ships, and then sold to some unknown Anglo-American in a country that had little resemblance to their homelands.

By the middle of the 18th century, northern slaves were increasingly owned by artisans and tradesmen to help in the rapidly expanding workshops and warehouses of the northern colonies. In New Jersey, the Hudson Valley, and Long Island, enslaved Africans played an important role in expanding the agricultural base of the colonies. Ira Berlin reports that by the middle of the 18th century slave men outnumbered free white laborers in many New Jersey counties, such as 826 to 194 in Monmouth County, 281 to 81 in Middlesex County, and 206 to 8 in Bergen County.

As the northern slave population increased, it became more difficult for slaves to gain their freedom. In addition, free blacks found their rights severely restricted by newly enacted laws. Berlin states, "In various northern colonies, free blacks were barred from voting, attending the militia, sitting on juries," and in many places they were required to carry "special passes to travel, trade, and keep a gun or a dog."8

Unlike the Atlantic Creoles, the newly arrived enslaved Africans resisted the adoption of European culture. They often refused to Europeanize their names. Similar to Native Americans, they resisted the imposition of the Christian religion. In Newport, Rhode Island, local clergy could only find approximately 30 Christians among a black population of 1,000. It was estimated that only one-tenth of New York City's black population was Christian. In the middle of the 18th century, Americans of African ancestry established
festivals that celebrated African traditions. An observer at a festival in Rhode Island wrote, "All the various languages of Africa, mixed with broken and ludicrous English, filled the air, accompanied with the music of the fiddle, tambourine, banjo, [and] drum." 

Inevitably, free and enslaved Africans learned to speak English. In most cases, language instruction did not take place in any systematic way. It was documented in fugitive slave notices appearing in New York City's presses between 1771 and 1805 that a quarter or more either did not speak English or spoke it poorly. However, some enslaved Africans learned to read and write English well enough to petition the Massachusetts General Court for their freedom by proclaiming, "We have no Property! We have no Wives! No children! We have no City! No country! In common with all other men we have a natural right to our freedoms." 

FREEDOM IN NORTHERN STATES

For many northern state legislators, though not for southern, there was an obvious contradiction between the principles of the American Revolution and support of slavery. However, for freed slaves in the North freedom did not mean equality before the law or equality of treatment. The freeing of enslaved Africans highlighted the difference between freedom and equality in the minds of Anglo-Americans of the Revolutionary generation. Also, the treatment of freed slaves underlined the idea that equality meant equality for only a select few.

Petitions for freeing enslaved Africans began appearing during the Revolution. In 1778, the Executive Council of Pennsylvania asked the Assembly to prohibit the further importation of slaves with the goal of eventually abolishing slavery. The Council pointed out that Europeans were "astonished to see a people eager for Liberty holding Negroes in Bondage." During the same year, the governor of New Jersey called on the state legislature to begin the
process of gradual abolition of slavery because it was "odious and disgraceful" for a people professing to idolize liberty." In 1785, the New York legislature passed a bill for the gradual abolition of slavery. In Massachusetts, slavery ended through court action. By 1830, there were still 3,586 enslaved Africans in northern states with two-thirds of them being in New Jersey.14

During the Revolutionary years, abolitionist societies sprang up. These societies would play a key role in the education of freed Africans in the North and South after the Civil War. In general, the abolitionist groups had a strong religious orientation that shaped the type of education they provided to freed African Americans. In addition, these abolitionist societies were central to the antislavery movement of the nineteenth century and supported efforts by African Americans to escape bondage in the South. The Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery was organized in 1775 and joined with Quakers to ensure the speedy end to slavery in that state. Similar organizations played an active role in other northern states.

EDUCATIONAL SEGREGATION

The difference between freedom and equality quickly became apparent in efforts by African American leaders and abolitionist groups to provide educational opportunities for freed slaves in northern states. Unlike in the South when the Civil War ended, there existed in the North free, literate, and educated African Americans who could provide support to enslaved Africans as they made the transition from slavery to freedom. Education, particularly in reading and writing English, was considered key to this effort. In addition, education served to replace African cultures with the dominant American culture.

It was immediately apparent that most Anglo-Americans were not going to accept integrated educational institutions. Racially segregated schools were widely established from the late eighteenth century until the U.S. Supreme Court ruled them unconstitutional in 1954. Segregation meant more than
building a racial divide. It also resulted in unequal school funding. Educational segregation resulted in unequal educational opportunities.

In 1787, African American leaders in Boston petitioned the legislature for schools because they no longer received any benefit from the free schools. In Pennsylvania and Ohio, school districts were required to build separate educational facilities for African Americans. In Indiana, despite the fact that school laws made no racial distinctions, the white population refused to send their children to schools with African American children. The result was segregated schools. Some Anglo-Americans after the Revolution even protested the provision of any education for African Americans, claiming that it would offend southerners and encourage immigration from Africa.

Resistance to educational integration also extended to higher education. When African American leader Charles Ray tried to enter Wesleyan in 1832, student protests forced him to leave. In Canaan, New Hampshire, the Noyes Academy in 1835 admitted 28 whites and 14 African Americans. The school received support from African American communities and abolitionist societies in Massachusetts and New York. However, when the school year began, four-fifths of the residents of Canaan registered a protest against the integrated school. A mob attacked the school but was eventually restrained by local officials.

The residents of Canaan mixed patriotism with racism in protesting the Noyes Academy. For some Americans, racism would always be cloaked in the mantel of patriotism. The protestors in Canaan condemned abolitionism and praised the Constitution and Revolutionary patriots as they removed the school building from its foundations and dragged it by oxen to a new site. Stories of this sort were typical of efforts of African Americans and abolitionist societies to establish integrated schools.

Discrimination and segregation affected other parts of the lives of African Americans in northern states. Attempts to prohibit interracial marriages occurred in New York, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Illinois. In Philadelphia, African Americans were allowed to ride only on the front platforms of horse-drawn streetcars, and in New York City blacks could ride only on "colored-only" vehicles. Race riots broke out in Philadelphia and Cincinnati. In 1834, rioting whites in Philadelphia forced blacks to flee—and in 1841, whites in Cincinnati used a cannon against blacks defending their homes.16

BOSTON AND THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

An important example of the early struggle for equality of educational opportunity occurred in Boston. Boston organized the first comprehensive system of urban schools after the passage of the Massachusetts Education Act of 1789. This legislation required towns to provide elementary schools for 6 months of the year and grammar schools in communities with more than 200 families.
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red the legislature for the free schools. The legislature refused to build separate schools, despite the fact that black children were not allowed to attend white schools. The result was legislation even more restrictive than before, claiming that it would prevent black children from attending higher education.

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The Boston School Committee's decision created a complex situation. First, the committee supported and controlled a segregated school, although no law existed requiring segregation. In theory at least, black children were free to attend public schools other than the one established for them. Second, the African American community supported the segregated school as an alternative to the prejudice existing in the other white-dominated schools. Last, the school was supported by a combination of private and public monies. Private contributions to the school became a major factor when Abiel Smith died in 1815 and left the entire income from his shares in New England turnpikes and bridges and from the U.S. bonds he had owned to the support of black schools. The school committee assumed trusteeship of the estate, which meant that it controlled both the school and the majority of private funds supporting the school.

By the 1820s, the African American community realized that a segregated education was resulting in an inferior education for their children. The school committee was appointing inferior teachers to the all-black school and was not maintaining the school building. In 1833, a subcommittee issued a report on the conditions of the schools. The major conclusion of this report was that black schools were inferior to other schools in the quality of education and the physical conditions. The report argued that "a classroom better than a basement room in the African Church could be found. After all, black parents paid taxes which helped to support white schools. They deserved a more equal return on their share of the city's income."
school committee accepted the idea of segregated education and argued that the real problem was assuring that separate schools for black children were equal to those of whites.

Local black abolitionist David Walker answered this question with a resounding No! Walker was representative of an increasingly militant and literate African American community in the northern states. Walker was born in North Carolina in 1779 of a free mother and a slave. According to North Carolina law, Walker was thus born free. He moved to Boston in the early 1820s and became a contributor to and local agent for the nation’s first black newspaper, Freedom’s Journal, published in New York.

In the newspaper and in his other writings, Walker argued that there were four principal factors responsible for the poor situation of blacks in the nation: slavery; the use of religion to justify slavery and prejudice; the African colonization movement designed to send free blacks back to Africa; and the lack of educational opportunity. White Americans, he argued, were keeping black Americans from receiving any significant amount of education. As proof, he cited the laws in the South that made it illegal to educate slaves. In the North, according to Walker, the inferior education blacks received in schools was designed to keep them at a low level of education.22

After studying the conditions in Boston schools, Walker reached the conclusion that segregated education in the city was a conspiracy by whites to keep blacks in a state of ignorance. Walker’s arguments added fuel to the fire. Demands by the black community for integrated education intensified, and for almost two decades the black community struggled with the school committee to end segregated education. Part of the issue was the loss of control of black schools by the black community. Originally, the black community exercised control over its private educational endeavors. Over the years, however, the school committee had gained complete control, so that any complaints the black community had about its schools had to be resolved by the committee.

In 1849, the protests over segregated schools finally reached the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court when Benjamin Roberts sued the city for excluding his 5-year-old daughter from the schools. In this particular case, his daughter passed five white primary schools before reaching the black school. Consequently, Roberts decided to enroll her in one of the closer, white schools. He lost the case on a decision by the Court that the school system had provided equal schools for black children. This was one of the first separate-but-equal rulings in American judicial history.

The issue of segregation in Massachusetts schools was finally resolved in 1855, when the governor signed into law a requirement that no child be denied admission to a public school on the basis of race or religious opinions. In September of that year, the Boston public schools were integrated without any violent hostilities.

The Boston situation also illustrates the ambivalent attitudes of whites about the education of African Americans. On the one hand, whites might feel that containing the threat of African culture to the dominant Protestant culture
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of the United States required "civilizing" African Americans in the same manner as Native Americans. This meant providing schools. On the other hand, whites who thought Africans a threat to their racial purity and culture wanted education of African Americans to occur in segregated schools. As a result of the latter beliefs, public education for African Americans in the United States remained primarily segregated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

PLANTATION SOCIETY

Beginning in the eighteenth century, the plantation system spread through the tobacco-growing regions of the Chesapeake area to the rice-growing regions of the Carolinas and eventually to the cotton fields of the deep South. The plantation system originated in the twelfth century in the sugar-growing areas of the Mediterranean where owners used both white and black slaves. The model was transplanted to the sugar, tobacco, rice, and cotton areas of the Americas, making its appearance in Brazil in the sixteenth century. In contrast to the small farmer, the plantation system involved the cultivation of vast areas of land with an army of regimented workers. The Great Plantation House surrounded by workshops, barns, sheds, and slave quarters was the center of this factory-like system. In the hierarchical system, the plantation owner issued orders to the overseers, who commanded a regimented labor force in the workshops and fields. Discipline and order were the keys to making the system work.

Unlike slavery in the North, plantation owners used the lash and other brutal punishments to control enslaved Africans. Southern courts did not prosecute plantation owners if their punishments resulted in the death of a slave. Plantation owners lived in constant fear that their slaves would either run away or revolt against their masters. Brutality, they believed, was essential to maintain control.

Deculturalization was also considered key to making enslaved Africans dependent on their owners. One of the first things planters did after purchasing enslaved Africans was to take away their identities by giving them new names. (The reader will remember that slaves in the North resisted this process of renaming.) Since most newly purchased slaves from interior Africa did not speak English, the plantation owner and overseers made it a practice to frequently repeat the name until the enslaved Africans realized that it represented their new identity.

The deculturalization process continued with newly purchased slaves being housed in barrack-like structures. In these conditions, the recent arrivals on a plantation experienced linguistic isolation. They could not communicate with their owners because they could not speak English. Often, they could not speak to other slaves because they did not share a common language. Because plantation owners made little effort to provide organized instruction in English, enslaved Africans on plantations had to create a language of communication
that would be understood by owners and overseers and by their fellow slaves. Also, enslaved Africans had to create new modes of interaction since they came from a variety of African cultures and had been separated from traditional cultural patterns related to marriage, family relations, property, child rearing, friendships, and social status.

This process of deculturalization did not result in the assimilation of enslaved plantation workers to European culture. The first generation carried all the marks of its African heritage, including hairstyles, scarification, and filed teeth. Discovering the economic value of having slaves reproduce, planters supported the rapid growth of native, enslaved Africans. As African Americans, this second generation of plantation slaves abandoned the outward bodily symbols of its African parents and rarely gave African names to its children. Words, gestures, and language forms were adapted to the new living and working conditions. Rituals involving birth and death incorporated traditional African practices into the requirements of plantation life.

Enslaved Africans developed cultural styles for interacting with an owner who had the power of life and death; an owner who could at any time inflict severe punishment. It was a relationship in which the slave was not protected by any legal institution from the arbitrary brutality of the master, and the owner could demand sexual relations with any slave. The owner had the power to break up families and wrench children from their parents by selling them.  

The oral tradition that developed among enslaved Africans provided a psychological refuge against the degradation of slavery. Slave songs were created while working, during whatever leisure time was available, and during religious services. In Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom, Lawrence Levine concludes, "The slaves' oral traditions, their music, and their religious outlook ... constituted a cultural refuge at least potentially capable of protecting their personalities from some of the worst ravages of the slave system."

Created in context of domination, this oral tradition reflected distrust and dislike of whites. Also, this oral tradition reflected methods by which slaves tried to cope with their state of powerlessness. The religious songs of slaves often portrayed whites as the devil and slaves as the chosen people. As the chosen people, slaves would eventually triumph over the cruelties of white people. "We are the people of God," "We are de people of the Lord," "I really do believe I'm a child of God," "To the promised land I'm bound to go," and "Heaven shall-a be my home" are examples of refrains that ran through slave spirituals. On the other side of the coin, slave attitudes toward whites ranged from "You no holy. We be holy" to "No white people went to heaven."

In relations with masters and other whites, slave tales outline a social system based on trickery. The only method the slave had for self-protection was to try to trick the master. According to the ethical beliefs of slaves, a slave was justified in taking something from the master that was forbidden.
id by their fellow slaves. 

For instance, inadequate food was a constant problem for slaves. The reasoning of the slave was that taking food from the master was not stealing because the master owned the slave and the food consumed by the slave remained in the ownership of the master. On the other hand, taking something from a fellow slave was considered theft and the act was considered to be "just as mean as white folks." Typical of the slave as trickster was the story of Henry Johnson, who lured a turkey into his cabin and killed it. He immediately ran crying to his mistress that one of her turkeys unexpectedly died. She told him to stop crying and get rid of the possibly diseased bird. That night Henry ate the turkey. In another story, a slave ran to his master to tell him that all seven of his hogs died. When the master appeared at the scene, a group of slaves informed him with sorrow that the hogs had died of "malitis" and that they were afraid to touch the meat. Reaching with fear for his own health at the word "malitis," the master ordered the slaves to eat the dead hogs. "Malitis," a word the slaves created, resulted from a slave hitting each hog in the head with a heavy mallet. In another story, a slave took some chickens and began cooking them in his cabin. The master entered the cabin and the slave informed him that he was cooking a possum. The master decided to wait and share the possum. Fearing that the master would discover the chickens, the slave told him that it would take a long time to cook because slaves make their possum gravy by having the family spit in it. In disgust, the master left. The slaves happily ate the chickens. These animal tales provide a clear picture of the weak outsmarting the more powerful. 

Ira Berlin describes the result of this deculturalization and cultural transformation as not being "assimilation to a European ideal. Black people kept their African ways as they understood them, worshiping in a manner that white observers condemned as idolatry and superstition. If a new generation of American-born peoples was tempted toward Christianity, an older generation would have nothing of it. Indeed, the distinctive nature of African-American culture led some white observers to conclude there could be no reconciliation of African and European ways." 

LEARNING TO READ

Literacy was a punishable crime for enslaved Africans in the South. However, by the outbreak of the Civil War in 1860, it is estimated that 5 percent of slaves had learned how to read, sometimes at the risk of life or limb. Individual slaves would sneak books and teach themselves while hiding from their masters. Sometimes self-taught slaves would pass on their skills and knowledge to other slaves. James Anderson quotes a former slave, Ferebe Rogers, about her husband's educational work prior to the Civil War: "On his dyin' bed he said he been de death o' many a nigger 'cause he taught so many to read and write."
It was easier for slaves to learn to read if they worked in cities like Charleston and Savannah. For enslaved Africans in these communities, as opposed to those on plantations, there was a chance to earn money to purchase freedom. Also, there was greater assimilation into Anglo-American life. On the other hand, plantation life sometimes provided the opportunity for clandestine learning.

In *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery*, Leon Litwack relates a number of examples of how literacy spread the word of southern defeats during the Civil War. In one case, discussions of the Civil War by the plantation owners were usually punctuated with the spelling of words so that house slaves could not understand. However, one maid memorized the letters and spelled them out later to an uncle who could read. In Forsyth, Georgia, Edward Glenn, after going to town to get the newspaper would give it to the local black minister to read before taking it to the plantation house. Litwack writes, "On the day Glenn would never forget, the preacher threw the newspaper on the ground after reading it, hollered, 'I'm free as a frog!' and ran away. The slave dutifully took the paper to his mistress who read it and began to cry. 'I didn't say no more,' Glenn recalled." In another situation, a Florida slave kept his literacy secret from his owner. One day the owner unexpectedly walked in while he was reading the newspaper and demanded to know what he was doing. "Equal to the moment," Litwack states, "[he] immediately turned the newspaper upside down and declared, 'Confederates done won the war.' The master laughed and left the room, and once again a slave had used the 'darcy act' to extricate himself from a precarious situation."

**CITIZENSHIP FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS**

Prior to the Civil War, the debates about citizenship for free African Americans highlighted the belief of some that only whites should have full U.S. citizenship. In other words, African immigrants were denied the right to become U.S. citizens. National political leaders rejected granting citizenship to enslaved Africans. But what about native-born free African Americans? Should these free Americans of African descent be considered full citizens? For those believing that the U.S. republic could only survive with a white homogenous population, the answer was No!

In southern states, freed slaves' citizenship rights were severely restricted. After the American Revolution, southern states passed laws making it difficult for enslaved Africans to achieve freedom. In addition, state laws explicitly denied free African Americans the right to vote. The upper tier of southern states adopted the North Carolina system that required free African Americans to register with state and local governments and wear shoulder patches reading "free." Free blacks were denied the right to jury trials, obtain legal counsel, and testify in court. While the American Revolution promised political
equality and liberty to “free whites,” it resulted in greater restrictions being placed over free blacks in southern states. In northern states, free African Americans were largely denied the right to vote except in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine. Despite the work of James Forten, an African American and revolutionary war veteran, to gain equal rights under the protection of the U.S. Constitution, most northern states denied blacks equal protection in the court system and created segregated public institutions.

Blacks were specifically denied U.S. citizenship and the political rights recognized in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1857 Dred Scott decision. As a result of a complicated set of events, Dred Scott, an African American, sued to win recognition as a free person, a citizen of the state of Missouri, and a U.S. citizen. Writing for the majority, Chief Justice Roger Taney argued that the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution were not intended to provide protection for the political rights of blacks. In addition, U.S. citizenship could only be achieved through naturalization, birth on U.S. soil, or birth to an American father. Blacks were specifically excluded from naturalized citizenship by the 1790 Naturalization Act. Also, Taney argued that citizenship resulting from native birth or birth to an American father included only those born into a class that qualified for rights under the Constitution. Blacks, Taney maintained, were not born into a class that qualified for these rights and, therefore, even if they were native born they still did not qualify for U.S. citizenship.

What about allegiance to state and federal governments? Taney added another link in the chain of denial of black rights. He argued that native-born blacks owed allegiance to state and federal governments even though they could not be U.S. citizens. In other words, blacks had to obey the government but could not exercise the political rights that accompanied full citizenship.

After the Civil War, citizenship for former enslaved Africans became a heated topic. Under the 1790 Naturalization Act freed slaves not born in the United States were denied citizenship because they were not “white.” The Civil Rights Act of 1866, however, declared that all “persons born in the United States . . . [are] declared to be citizens of the United States.” Those excluded from native-born citizenship by this legislation were “Indians not taxed.” Most Native Americans would have to wait until the 1920s to qualify as native-born U.S. citizens.

During the so-called radical reconstruction period following the Civil War, the Naturalization Act of 1870 was passed, which would have been unimaginable to previous generations of “white” Americans. The Naturalization Act of 1870 extended U.S. citizenship to “aliens of African nativity and to persons of African descent.” Senator Charles Sumner wanted the word “white” to be removed from naturalization laws and racial equality to be instituted for citizenship. But other radical Republicans were not willing to go that far. Therefore, while Africans and African Americans gained the right to U.S. citizenship, immigrant Asians and Native Americans were still excluded.
FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT:
CITIZENSHIP AND EDUCATION

Ratified in 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment with its clause providing equal protection under the laws has had an enormous impact on public schools. Equal educational opportunity is a right provided for by the equal protection clause. Like many aspects of the Constitution, the interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment has undergone many twists and turns, including first allowing school segregation and then later declaring segregation unconstitutional. Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment provides constitutional acknowledgment for the granting of U.S. citizenship to native-born blacks as provided for in the 1866 Civil Rights Act and the later granting of naturalized citizenship provided for in the 1870 Naturalization Act. In addition, Section 1 protects all U.S. citizens from the abridgement of their rights by state governments.

Section 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. 38

In 1896, the protection provided under the Fourteenth Amendment was severely restricted by a U.S. Supreme Court decision that declared segregation of blacks from whites, including segregation of schools, constitutional. The 1896 decision involved Homer Plessy, who was one-eighth black and seven-eighths white and had been arrested for refusing to ride in the “colored” coach of a train, as required by Louisiana law. At issue was the last clause of the first section of the Fourteenth Amendment, which guarantees that no state governments shall “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

Do segregated public facilities, including segregated schools, deny “equal protection of the laws”? In the 1896 Plessy decision, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation did not create a badge of inferiority if segregated facilities were equal and the law was reasonable. In establishing the “separate but equal doctrine,” the Supreme Court failed to clearly define what constitutes equal facilities and what is reasonable.

Concurrent with the “separate but equal ruling,” the citizenship rights of African Americans in the 1880s and 1890s swiftly disappeared in southern states as state laws curtailed the right of black citizens to vote, created segregated public institutions, and restricted judicial rights. Full citizenship for African Americans was not achieved until the 1950s and 1960s, when federal voting rights and civil rights acts made it possible for black Americans to experience political equality and the right to vote like other U.S. citizens.
THE GREAT CRUSADE FOR LITERACY

Despite school segregation and harassment from the white population, the African American population of the United States made one of the greatest educational advancements in the history of education. Denied an education by law in slave states and facing inequality of educational opportunities in free states, only 7 percent of the African American population was literate in 1863. Within a 90-year period, the literacy rate jumped to 90 percent.

After the Civil War, former slaves struggled to establish schools, and in many cases they were assisted by African American and missionary teachers from the North. In Reconstruction conventions following the Civil War, blacks fought for the establishment of state school systems. In the words of W.E.B. Du Bois, “Public education for all at public expense was, in the South, a Negro idea.” In the early 1870s, black children were enrolled in school systems at percentages higher than those for whites, but by the 1880s this began to change as whites exerted greater control over the state political systems and passed discriminatory laws. By the 1890s, as a consequence of sharecropping and other forms of economic exploitation and discriminatory laws, many blacks found themselves living in conditions that were close to slavery.

During and immediately after the Civil War, former slaves took the initiative in establishing schools. The first of these efforts was made by a black teacher, Mary Peake, who organized a school in 1861 at Fortress Monroe, Virginia. The role of freed slaves in establishing schools was recorded by the first national superintendent of schools for the Freedman’s Bureau, John W. Alvord. Based on his travels through the South in 1865, Alvord’s first general report for the Freedman’s Bureau in 1866 described former slaves’ efforts at self-education. Everywhere in the South, he found ex-slaves studying elementary textbooks. He described a school in North Carolina organized by two freed slaves with 150 students in attendance. An illustration in Harper’s Weekly in 1866 showed a large classroom full of freed slaves and a black teacher in the Zion School in Charleston, South Carolina. The administrators and teachers of the school were African Americans, and the average daily attendance was 720 students.

By the middle of the 1870s, differing ideas on education were struggling for dominance in the South. Because of their need for children as farm laborers, planters resisted most attempts to expand educational opportunities for black children. On the other hand, former slaves were struggling for an education that would improve their economic and political positions in southern society. Often, former slaves wanted practical knowledge that would help them deal with contracts, and weights and measurements. Missionaries from the North wanted to provide an education that emphasized morality. Some groups of white southerners believed that the expansion of education was necessary for the industrialization of the South. These white southerners supported schooling for African Americans as a means of teaching them industrial habits and keeping them on the lowest rungs of southern society. For those...
southerners who supported industrialization, blacks represented a potential source of cheap labor who, unlike northern workers, would not form unions. 42

Within the black community in the 1890s, divisions developed over how to pursue the struggle for education. This division is most often associated with two major black leaders—Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. Washington accepted compromise with white demands and the establishment of segregated industrial education; Du Bois maintained that no compromise with white demands should be made and that black education should be concerned with educating the future leaders of the black community. To a certain extent, however, the preceding statements oversimplify their positions. Their hopes for schooling were intertwined with their hopes for their race, the realities of southern society, and their political strategies. In the history of schooling, Washington is most often associated with the establishment of segregated schools, whereas Du Bois was instrumental in the founding in 1909 of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which has led the successful struggle against school segregation in the United States.

The speech that most clearly outlined the southern compromise and the role of blacks in the developing industrial order was given by Washington at the International Exposition in Atlanta in 1895. Washington tried to convince his all-white audience of the economic value of African Americans to the new industrial South by beginning his speech with a story about a ship lost at sea whose crew was dying of thirst. The ship encountered a friendly vessel, which signaled for the crew to cast down their buckets in the surrounding water. After receiving the signal four times, the captain finally cast down his bucket to find fresh water from the mouth of the Amazon River. This, Washington told his audience, was what the South needed to do to build its industrial might: cast down its buckets and use black workers. Washington continued his speech by outlining the advantages of black workers for the South. Of primary importance was that the South would not need to rely on foreign workers. "To those of the white race," Washington exclaimed, "who look to the incoming of those of foreign birth and strange tongue and habits for the prosperity of the South, were I permitted I would repeat what I say to my own race, 'Cast down your bucket where you are.'" 43 Washington continued by extolling the virtues of black workers and their faithfulness during the years of slavery. He claimed that blacks could show a devotion that no foreign workers would ever display and called for an interlacing of the interests of black and white southerners.

Then, in one sentence that would become famous in both the South and the North, Washington presented the compromise he saw as necessary for winning white southerners to his argument: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." Here was the great compromise—acceptance by blacks of social segregation for the opportunity to participate in the new industrial order of the South. As Washington explained in the conclusion of his speech, he believed that once the economic value of blacks had been
represented a potential threat, would not form the basis for compromise, often associated with E.B. Du Bois. Washington believed the establishment of segregation-what he called compromise with white supremacy—should be concerned with a certain extent, how- er the realities of southern schooling, Washington is ed schools, whereas Du Bois National Association for has led the successful compromise and the given by Washington at Hampton tried to convince Americans to the new about a ship lost at sea a friendly vessel, which the surrounding water cast down his bucket liver. This, Washington tried to build its industrial Washington continued its work for the South. Of need to rely on foreign claimed, “who look to civilize and habits for the peat what I say to my Washington continued faithfulness during the devotion that no foreign cing of the interests of in both the South and was seen as necessary for things that are purely hand in all things promise—acceptance by participate in the new ed in the conclusion of the due of blacks had been established, social acceptance would follow. “No race,” he argued, “that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized.” In Washington’s mind, “The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera-house.”

Washington believed that African Americans would be able to prove themselves economically by receiving the right form of education. Before that speech, Washington had received recognition throughout the South for his establishment of the Tuskegee Institute. The Tuskegee idea originated in Washington’s educational experiences at the Hampton Institute. Washington had been born into slavery and after the Civil War attended Hampton, which had been established by General Samuel Armstrong, whose missionary parents had organized an industrial school for natives in Hawaii.

Washington was strongly influenced by General Armstrong’s vision of the role of education in adjusting former slaves to their new place in the southern social order. Armstrong believed that the purpose of education was to adjust African Americans to a subordinate position in southern society. He also believed that blacks should be denied the right to vote and that they should be segregated; in short, that they should not be granted the same civil equality as whites.

As part of the process of adjusting African Americans to permanent subordination in society, Armstrong argued that the primary purpose of educating African Americans was the development of “proper” work habits and moral behavior. This argument was based on a belief that “savages” were mentally capable but lacked a developed morality. Historian James Anderson quotes Armstrong: “Most savage people are not like ‘dumb driven cattle’, yet their life is little better than that of brutes because the moral nature is dormant.”

As Armstrong envisioned the process, Hampton graduates would become teachers who would educate the rest of the African American population in the moral and work habits taught at Hampton. Taking its cue from attitudes regarding the education of Native Americans, Hampton was to be the agent for civilizing freed slaves. With Hampton teachers spread across the South, Armstrong believed, African Americans would be “civilized” and brought to accept their subordinate place in society.

The key to the civilizing process advocated by Armstrong and incorporated into Hampton’s educational program was hard work. Armstrong believed that hard work was the first principle of civilized life and that through hard work people learned the right moral habits. He believed that African Americans needed to be educated in the value of hard work if they were to assume their proper place in southern society.

Consequently, the curriculum at Hampton emphasized hard manual labor as part of teacher training. In addition, Armstrong believed that classical studies only developed vanity in black students and should not be part of the teacher-training curriculum for black students. Therefore, rather than studying the traditional liberal arts, Hampton male students worked in a sawmill, on the school farm, as dishwashers and busboys in the kitchen, as waiters in the dining room, and as houseboys in the living quarters. Hampton
female students sewed, cooked, scrubbed, and plowed fields on the school's farm. 

According to many southern whites, the type of work performed by Hampton students was the type of work African Americans should perform. In the context of Armstrong's larger philosophy, the occupational training at Hampton reflected the subordinated roles African Americans would play in the new economic order. By learning the habits and moral values associated with doing these tasks, Hampton graduates, Armstrong believed, would teach other African Americans the habits and values required to make these tasks lifelong occupations.

Therefore, when General Armstrong and Booker T. Washington used the term "industrial education," they primarily meant the development of good work and moral habits as opposed to learning a particular vocational skill. For instance, historian James Anderson in his history of black education reproduces photographs of prospective female teachers at Hampton plowing and tilling a farm field. These future teachers were not being educated to be farmers; they were learning the work habits that Armstrong wanted his graduates to pass on to their students.

It was Armstrong's philosophy of education that guided Washington in the establishment of Tuskegee. Washington scorned the traditional forms of education brought south by northern teachers. He felt that traditional education was useless and left the student with false promises for a better life. In his autobiography, Up from Slavery, he tells the story of mothers who taught their daughters the skill of laundering. "Later," Washington says, "these girls entered the public schools and remained there perhaps six or eight years. When the public-school course was finally finished, they wanted more costly dresses, more costly hats and shoes." Washington summarizes the effects of a traditional public school education: "In a word, while their wants had been increased, their ability to supply their wants had not been increased in the same degree. On the other hand, their six or eight years of book education had weaned them away from the occupation of their mothers." In another situation, Washington criticizes a young man fresh out of high school who "sitting down in a one-room cabin, with grease on his clothing, filth all round him, and weeds in the yard and garden, engaged in studying French grammar." Washington's message was heard throughout the North and South. It was particularly welcomed by those trying to organize the southern school system. The idea of segregated industrial education that stressed proper moral and work habits also received support from major educational conferences and private foundations. It was this support that made segregated education a permanent fixture in southern states until the 1950s and 1960s. In Henry Bullock's words:

The industrial curriculum to which many Negro children were exposed, supposedly designed to meet their needs, reflected the life that accompanied their status at that time. They had always farmed. The curriculum aimed to make them better farmers. Negro women had a virtual monopoly on laundering, and Negro men had [worked] largely as mechanics. The industrial curriculum was designed to change this only in so far that Negroes were trained to perform these services better."
As James Anderson tells the story, segregated industrial education as the model for black southern education received support from southern industrialists and northern philanthropists. For instance, steel magnate and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie gave the first major endowment to Tuskegee because he believed that educating black workers was necessary to maintain the United States’ position in the world economy. Carnegie stressed the importance of maintaining proper work habits among the black southern population. In comparing the black workforce in South Africa to that in the United States, Carnegie wrote, “We should be in the position in which South Africa is today but for the faithful, placable, peaceful, industrious, lovable colored man; for industriousness and peaceful he is compared with any other body of colored men on the earth.”

Indeed, southern industrialists welcomed the idea of segregated industrial education because it promised cheap labor and the avoidance of labor unions. One of the things Washington argued in his Atlanta speech was that the industrialists in the South had to choose between immigrant labor and black labor, and the problem with immigrant laborers was that they formed labor unions. For instance, southern railroad magnate and Tuskegee supporter William H. Baldwin, Jr., argued that for the South to compete in international markets it would have to reject the high wages demanded by white labor unions and rely upon the labor of African Americans.

Despite some southern industrialists and educational leaders supporting segregated industrial education for blacks, government financial support declined rapidly after the 1870s. In his classic study The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order, Horace Mann Bond collected information on school expenditures from a variety of southern states. For instance, a table illustrating spending in Alabama shows that from 1875 to 1876 expenditure per capita was higher for blacks than for whites. This relationship existed until the 1880s. By 1900, the situation had reversed so far that the per capita expenditure for whites was four to five times higher than that for blacks. Bond found similar statistics throughout the South.

Therefore, by 1900, African Americans in the South faced a segregated public school system that made few expenditures for the education of their children. The major resistance to increased school expenditures for black students came from planters, who considered education a direct threat to their use of black children as agricultural laborers. As I will discuss in the next section of this chapter, the concerns of southern planters were similar to those expressed by farmers in Texas and California regarding the education of the children of Mexican American farm workers. Southern planters foresaw the possibility that schooling would cause African Americans either to leave menial agricultural work or to demand higher wages. In addition, planters depended on the use of child labor and, consequently, opposed compulsory education laws. Some planters forced schools to begin their school year in December, after the harvest. In addition, they fought efforts to increase state financing of schools.

By 1875, according to James Anderson, the planters’ efforts resulted in halting the expansion of schools for African Americans in the South. Between
1880 and 1900, Anderson writes, “the number of black children of school age increased 25 percent, but the proportion attending public school fell.” Consequently, by 1900 the dream of education for African Americans in the South was shattered as the majority of public expenditures went to support white segregated schools, and large numbers of black children were kept working in the fields. In 1900, 49.3 percent of African American boys between the ages of 10 and 15 were working, while 30.6 percent of the girls in the same age category were employed. The majority of these children, 404,225 out of 516,276, were employed as unskilled farm labor. In the end, the segregation of public schools resulted in the denial of education to large numbers of black children.

RESISTING SEGREGATION

The major resistance to school segregation came from the NAACP, which has struggled for integrated education since its founding in 1909. W.E.B. Du Bois, a founder of the NAACP and editor of the magazine Crisis, became the leading opponent of Booker T. Washington’s southern compromise. Du Bois was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, earned a PhD at Harvard, studied in Europe, and became one of America’s leading sociologists. However, like most blacks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he had difficulty finding a university teaching position. Some of his most famous works were done while he taught at Atlanta University; The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study was written with the support of the University of Pennsylvania but without an appointment to its faculty. One of his major public statements attacking the arguments of Booker T. Washington is The Souls of Black Folk, published in 1903.

In The Souls of Black Folk, Du Bois claims that Washington’s compromise resulted in disaster for black people in the South: “Mr. Washington distinctly asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things—First, political power, Second, insistence on civil rights, Third, higher education of Negro youth—and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the conciliation of the South.” The result, Du Bois argues, was the “disfranchisement of the Negro,” the “legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro,” and the “steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher education of the Negro.”

Du Bois envisioned a different type of education for blacks, one that would provide leaders to protect the social and political rights of the black community and make the black population aware of the necessity for constant struggle. He also wanted to develop an Afro-American culture that would blend the African background of former slaves with American culture. In part, this was to be accomplished by the education of black leaders.

What Du Bois hoped to accomplish through education is well described in his study of John. In the story, a southern black community raises money to send John to the North for an education. The community’s hope is that he will return to teach in the local black school. After receiving his education in
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the North, John does return to teach. He goes to the house of the local white judge and, after making the mistake of knocking at the front door instead of the rear door, is ushered into the judge’s dining room. The judge greets John with his philosophy of education: “In this country the Negro must remain subordinate, and can never expect to be [the] equal of white men.” The judge describes two different ways in which blacks might be educated in the South. The first, which the judge favors, is to “teach the darkies to be faithful servants and laborers as your fathers were.” The second way, the one supported by Du Bois and most feared by white southerners, is described by the judge as putting “fool ideas of rising and equality into these folk’s heads, and...[making] them discontented and unhappy.”

What was most important for Du Bois was to educate blacks to be discontented with their social position in the South. Unhappiness—not happiness—was his goal. Du Bois describes John, before his meeting with the judge, standing on a bluff with his younger sister and looking out over an expanse of water:

Long they stood together, peering over the gray unsettled water.
“John,” she said, “does it make everyone unhappy when they study
and learn lots of things?”
He paused and smiled. “I am afraid it does,” he said.
“And, John, are you glad you studied?”
“Yes,” came the answer, slowly and positively.
She watched the flickering lights upon the sea, and said thoughtfully,
“I wish I was unhappy and,” putting both arms about his neck, “I think I
am, a little, John.”

Du Bois’s ideal of an educated black citizenry struggling against oppression became a reality even within a segregated society and educational system. Certainly, the combination of segregated education and the lack of funding of schools serving African Americans hindered the social and economic advancement of blacks. It took more than a half-century for the NAACP to win its battle against segregated education in the South. During that period of legal struggle, segregated schooling was a major factor in condemning blacks to an inferior status in society.

THE SECOND CRUSADE

The first crusade for black education in the South took place during and after the Civil War, while the second crusade occurred from 1910 to the 1930s. The second crusade involved the expansion of segregated schools for African American children paid for by a combination of personal donations of time and money by black citizens, donations by private foundations, and government money. It was through these efforts that by the 1930s common schools were finally established for black children. In the second crusade, black southern citizens had to pay directly from their own income to build schools for their children, while, at the same time, they paid local and state taxes, which went primarily to support white segregated schools.
One of the important private foundations supporting the second crusade was the Anna T. Jeanes Fund. The Jeanes Fund paid up to 84 percent of the salaries for teacher supervisors and elementary industrial education. The Jeanes teachers, as they were called, spent the majority of their time raising money for the construction of schoolhouses and the purchase of equipment. According to James Anderson, Jeanes teachers raised approximately $5 million between 1913 and 1928. In this respect, Jeanes teachers played an important role in helping African Americans raise the money for black education that was being denied them by state and local governments dominated by white citizens.

The Julius Rosenwald Fund, named after its founder, Julius Rosenwald, the president of Sears, Roebuck and Company, led the campaign in building schools for black children. The first Rosenwald school was completed in 1914 in Lee County, Alabama. The construction of this one-teacher schoolhouse cost $942. Indicative of how the costs were being shared, impoverished local black residents donated $282 in cash and free labor. Local white citizens gave $360. The Rosenwald Fund gave $300.\(^9\)

Between the building of the first Rosenwald school in 1914 and 1932, 4,977 rural black schools were constructed that could accommodate 663,615 students. The total expenditure for building these schools in 883 counties in 15 southern states was $28,408,520. James Anderson provides the following breakdown for the financial sources of this massive building program: Rosenwald Fund—15.36 percent; rural black people—16.64 percent; white donations—4.27 percent; and public tax funds—63.73 percent.\(^9\)

According to historian Anderson, the public tax funds used to build the Rosenwald schools came primarily from black citizens. He argues that the majority of school taxes collected from black citizens went to the support of schools for white children. Anderson writes, "During the period 1900 to 1920, every southern state sharply increased its tax appropriations for building schoolhouses, but virtually none of this money went for black schools."\(^9\)

Booker T. Washington complained, "The money [taxes] is actually being taken from the colored people and given to white schools."\(^9\)

In reality, because of the source of funding, many of these public black schools were owned by local black citizens. One analysis of school expenditures in the South concluded that blacks owned 43.9 percent, or 1,816, of a total of 4,137 schools. Many of the schools identified as being in the public domain were paid for through the voluntary contributions of black citizens.\(^9\)

Therefore, the second crusade for black education in the South involved a great deal of self-help from the black community. It was through the struggles and sacrifices of the black community that by the 1930s African American children in the South had a viable system of education. The major drawback to this system was segregation and unequal financial support by state and local governments.

Despite the lack of financial equality between segregated schools, many schools serving black students provided an excellent education. In her study of segregated schools in Caswell County, North Carolina, Vanessa Siddle Walker documents that despite the limited resources resulting from unequal
funding, the local African American public school provided an excellent education. Part of the reason was the sense of community created by parental participation in the financial support of the school. In addition, teachers and administrators in the school cared about the success of their students and worked to ensure their academic success. Walker concludes, “Caring adults gave individual concern, personal time, and so forth to help ensure a learning environment in which African American children would succeed. Despite the difficulties they faced and the poverty with which they had to work, it must be said that they experienced no poverty of spirit.” Walker cites other studies that found positive academic outcomes from segregated black schools because teachers and parents shared a common commitment to the success of their students.

Of course, Walker’s conclusions raise the same issues faced by African American parents in Boston in the early nineteenth century. Segregated schools meant unequal funding and poor facilities but included teachers interested in the success of their students. Integrated schools meant equal funding and facilities but also raised the possibility that white teachers might not be dedicated to ensuring the success of their black students.

CONCLUSION

The history of African Americans illustrates how the denial of an education can be used to exploit a population. As with Native Americans, Europeans rationalized the enslavement of other humans by classifying them as an inferior racial and cultural other. While Native Americans faced planned attempts at cultural genocide after the conquest of their lands, African Americans experienced cultural genocide after capture and removal from their homelands. The traumatic passage across the ocean in slave ships and the brutal and degrading state of slavery contributed to a loss of languages and cultures. Thrown together under regimes of violence, Africans from varied language and cultural groups had to devise their own culture and language. Embedded in these cultural and language patterns were remnants of their African ancestry. After the end of slavery, educational segregation became another method for attempting to ensure the continued exploitation of African Americans.

The resistance to actual slavery, and later wage and social slavery, erupted in the twentieth century in demands for equal educational opportunity for African Americans. Embodied in this, these later educational debates were questions about the meaning and dimensions of African American culture. The African American culture created under the horrors of slavery eventually defined American popular music and culture.

NOTES

7. Ibid., p. 181.
8. Ibid., p. 187.
10. Ibid., p. 184.
13. Ibid., p. 7.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
25. Ibid., pp. 33–34.
26. Ibid., p. 125.
27. Ibid., pp. 81–135.
31. Ibid., p. 23.
33. Ibid., p. 179.
34. Ibid., pp. 263–271.
35. Ibid., p. 267.
36. Ibid., p. 306.
40. Ibid., p. 7.
41. Ibid., pp. 6–8.
42. See Litwack, Been in the Storm, pp. 450–501.
44. Ibid., p. 149.
45. Ibid., p. 36.
47. Ibid., p. 55.
48. Washington, pp. 77, 94.
50. Quoted in Anderson, p. 91.
51. Ibid., pp. 90–91.
54. Ibid., p. 23.
55. Anderson, p. 149.
57. Ibid., p. 373.
58. Ibid., p. 372.
60. Ibid.
61. Anderson, p. 156.
62. Quoted in Anderson, p. 156.
63. Anderson, p. 156.