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# Divine Discontent: Nathan Carter Newbold, White Liberals, Black Education, and the Making of the Jim Crow South

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DIVINE DISCONTENT: NATHAN CARTER NEWBOLD, WHITE LIBERALS,  
BLACK EDUCATION, AND THE MAKING OF THE JIM CROW SOUTH

by

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the loving memory of my parents – Vernon and Susan Malone. The journey was long, but I heeded your advice “to run the race and keep the faith.” I kept my promise.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the writing of this dissertation many people helped me along the way. First and foremost my advisor, Valinda Littlefield, warrants a special “Thank You.” She believed in this project from the beginning. I am eternally grateful and lucky to have her as a friend and mentor. Bobby Donaldson and Lawrence Glickman offered their assistance and advice from the first day I set foot on USC’s campus. They have my eternal gratitude. Minetta Newbold warrants a special note of thanks for her hospitality and willingness to share her family’s history. She is a true southern lady.

I also want to acknowledge the wonderful librarians and archivists at Duke University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the State Archives. They were extremely resourceful and dedicated to their craft. They have my sincere respect. The Archie K. Davis Grant awarded by the North Caroliniana Society supported my research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

One person in particular deserves special recognition. Barry Poole is the definition of a true friend. He read every draft of this dissertation and asked for nothing in return. I will never be able to repay this debt. Of course, any errors and mistakes in the dissertation belong to me alone. Finally, one person has stayed beside me along the path to completion. She never faltered in her faith that I’d finish this dissertation – my dear wife Elizabeth. She sacrificed so that I could spend days on end in the archives and writing. I love you deeply.

## ABSTRACT

In the first half of the twentieth century, a small but vocal group of white southerners believed it possible to protect the flanks of the South's caste system by dampening black impatience with Jim Crow. Nathan Carter Newbold, a white racial moderate and State Agent for Negro Education, became a leading voice for the "equalization without social equality" movement. Newbold believed blacks accepted the separation of the races as natural and beneficial to both, but they also expected whites to deliver equality of opportunity. The failure to meet this responsibility led blacks to engage in political and judicial activism. This "Divine Discontent," as Newbold called it, would one day lead to an upending of the New South's orderly race relations.

A study of Nathan Carter Newbold's career opens the door to the motives and consequences of southern reformers' racially moderate agenda. As both a state agent and as the Director of the Division for Negro Education in North Carolina from 1913 – 1950, Newbold's position placed him at the helm of a bureaucracy responsible for creating an infrastructure to buttress segregated education. Newbold influenced most facets of African American education including school construction, teacher certification, higher education, and curriculum development. Philanthropic organizations, white officials, and black community leaders turned to Newbold for advice and help with various projects making him an educational powerbroker and interracial diplomat.

This study charts the evolution of a white Southern liberal. At the beginning of his career Newbold envisioned blacks as a laboring class trained solely in the manual and vocational arts. By the end of his career, he was an “accidental liberal” promoting programs that helped develop the black middle class. With a career that stretched from the reign of Booker T. Washington to the eve of the Civil Rights Movement, Newbold provides unique insight into some of the debates surrounding Southern white liberalism in the first half of the twentieth century. His control over the public and private monies appropriated for African American education made him a conduit by which resources flowed into the black community. This dissertation examines the often competing interests of whites and blacks and the nexus of white liberalism, education, and race relations in the New South.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION: THE ARCHITECT OF SEPARATE BUT EQUAL IN NORTH CAROLINA

Securing access to an education was one of the foremost concerns of African Americans in the years following the Civil War. Over the next one hundred years whites, especially in the South, reacted with ambivalence and outright resistance toward the educational aspirations of African Americans. At the same time, however, an emerging class of northern philanthropists and southern reformers sought to build a New South.<sup>1</sup> The white reformers' plans for erecting this New South required stabilizing race relations without whites having to yield their economic, political, or social control over the lives of African Americans. After disfranchisement effectively stripped blacks of political power, white racial moderates increasingly viewed universal education as a useful means to achieve their political and social goals. The champions of the New South reasoned that whites needed a formal education to compete economically in the industrializing and

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Ayers defined the southern reformer as follows: "What they had in common was a willingness to use the power of the state government in more active ways than it had been used before. They shared that willingness partly because the new political environment of disfranchisement and primaries led influential white people to think that the government would now be more responsive to their needs and demands. . . . The many whites who were neither reactionary diehards nor Populist radicals . . . now perceived a chance to address some of the problems that most concerned them." Ayers added, "Despite their concern for the downtrodden, it is too simple to see the progressives as champions of the common folk. The progressives saw themselves as mediators, educators, facilitators. They wanted to encourage the forces of progress already active in the South. . . ." Edward Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 413, 417; For another seminal work that addresses white liberalism see Morton Sosna, *In Search of the Silent South: Southern Liberals and the Race Issue* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977); Also Woodward defines progressive reform as a "for whites only" proposition in C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 369 – 396.

urbanizing South. At the same time, a proper industrial education for blacks would further entrench the southern racial caste system.<sup>2</sup>

Nathan Carter Newbold's professional career provides a unique avenue by which to explore southern reformers' motives and the consequences of their racially moderate agenda. As a State Agent for Negro Education in North Carolina from 1913 to 1951, Newbold's position placed him at a bureaucratic crossroads where various factions jockeyed for power and economic spoils. Initially, philanthropic organizations funded the operations carried out by the state agents.<sup>3</sup> Newbold was able to persuade the North Carolina legislature to create and partially fund a Division of Negro Education (DNE) in 1921.<sup>4</sup> In the ensuing years the department depended on state monies and donations from northern philanthropies to cover the operating budget and the evolving mission of the DNE.

As the Director of Negro Education, practically every issue that related to African American schooling fell under Newbold's purview. Not only was he the conduit by

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<sup>2</sup> Using Hampton Institute as a frame of reference, historian William H. Watkins describes whites' perception of a suitable industrial education for blacks as "corrective and geared to rudimentary skills. . . . [The] academic curriculum was prescribed and tightly controlled. Negro education would not be left to chance. . . . [Courses] avoided social and critical inquiry in favor of lessons on thrift, savings institutions, insurance and benefit societies," as well as, "the study of character and character and character improvement." Conversely, white educators hoped to train white pupils to think critically so as to prepare them for leadership and competition in a free market society. William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865 – 1954* (New York and London: Teachers College, 2001) 128 – 129. For a detailed discussion of educating whites in the New South see James Leloudis, *Schooling in the New South: Pedagogy, Self, and Society in North Carolina, 1880 – 1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 221.

<sup>3</sup> The General Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation provided the necessary funding for the initial creation of the offices of State Agent throughout the South. However, it took a combination of contributions from the Slater, Rosenwald, Peabody, General Education Board, and Jeanes Funds for Newbold to carry out his reformist agenda. Jeffrey Crow, Paul Escott, and Flora Hatley, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992), 154 – 156.

<sup>4</sup> James Leloudis, *Schooling in the New South*, 221.

which philanthropic funds reached black communities, but he became the official head of a state bureaucracy. Philanthropic organizations, local superintendents, white politicians, and black community leaders all turned to Newbold asking for advice, performance of a service, or support. In his role as an educational powerbroker, Newbold exercised a great deal of influence over educational policy in North Carolina. African Americans lobbied Newbold for support in their efforts to build schools or to expand the offerings at black normal schools and colleges. When questions about African American education arose, white officials turned to Newbold for guidance. Over the next forty years Newbold and African American education became inextricably linked in North Carolina.

The first chapter of the dissertation, titled “The Making of a Southern Progressive,” deals with the formative years immediately preceding and following his acceptance of the post as state agent for Negro education. Specifically it explores the General Education Board’s original intent for the position and Newbold’s acclimation to it. Over the course of the dissertation Newbold wields his growing influence in various innovative ways. Not only does he mold the position to fit his skill set, but he also learns how to deal with a plethora of personalities. From the very beginning he served as a liaison between the white power structure and black educators. Newbold encountered both whites and blacks with agendas at odds with his own. A recurring theme throughout the dissertation is to what degree, if any, were blacks able to influence Newbold, and by this means affect public policy? Additionally, Newbold faced entrenched opposition from white local superintendents and communities hesitant to fund African American education. How was Newbold able to sell recalcitrant whites on the need to make even the most rudimentary of education available to blacks?

Newbold was also instrumental in the procurement of philanthropic funds for African American education. Although the role of northern philanthropy has been well documented by scholars studying southern reformers and education history, a study of Newbold more fully illuminates the role of Northern money in developing bureaucratic structures in the New South. The second chapter titled, “The Era of Good Feelings and the Paper Tiger,” studies how Newbold took an essentially powerless office and used Northern money and coy diplomacy to build a state bureaucratic infrastructure. Newbold’s career offers valuable insight into the administration of African American education as a means of social engineering.

Additionally, this dissertation studies the clash between state and local authority. Historian William Link argued that the rise of bureaucratic institutions in the South between 1900 and 1930 reflected the influence of reformers instituting administrative expertise in the South and that “southern progressivism should be understood as a clash between radically divergent views of the social contract.”<sup>5</sup> White southerners cherished the sanctity of the individual. In the eyes of many rural whites, urban middle class progressives sought to inject into their lives an invasive paternalism masqueraded as reform. As a result of this distrust, in the early twentieth century “few features of social policy were compulsory or coercive.”<sup>6</sup> The public school system exemplifies the quandary reformers faced. Throughout the South schools were poorly equipped, lacked qualified teachers, and stood in varying states of disrepair. Yet communities were reluctant to give up their control to a centralized bureaucracy. School superintendents

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<sup>5</sup> William Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880 - 1930* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), xi.

<sup>6</sup> William Link, *Paradox*, 7.

were wise to follow the whims of the local community, lest they end up in the unemployment line. Instead of becoming advocates for change, superintendents often became agents for the status quo.<sup>7</sup> Adding in black education only intensified the resistance. This study analyzes the implementation of African American education policies in the face of local opposition. As a channel by which donated monies passed from philanthropists to local communities and governing boards, how did Newbold exercise the decision-making process? If African Americans sought to bypass or circumvent the state agent's limited authority, what were the results?

This dissertation will expand on and add to the historiography about southern white progressives and reformers, as well as the historiography about African American education in the South. Though many scholars have studied African American education and southern progressives, there is still much more to learn about the white southern reformers' impact on African American education. In works that primarily address southern progressivism, reformers are often cast as turning a blind eye to African American welfare by pursuing a policy of benign neglect. Historians have traditionally argued that southern progressives perceived the black body politic as a social and political problem easily remedied by disfranchisement. Chapter three of this dissertation, "Reflexed Glory: Newbold and the Rosenwald Fund," challenges the notion of benign neglect by examining a southern reformer actively attempting to reshape southern society. Disfranchising blacks proved to be only the beginning of southern racial reform, not an end unto itself. Some progressives sensed that poor whites would support a reform movement if it did not mean surrendering their tenuous position on the social

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<sup>7</sup> William Link, *Paradox*, 18.

ladder. However, Newbold believed that educational reform was the linchpin of a southern progressive and racially moderate ideology. If for no other reason than economic self-interest, whites needed to address the poor black quality of education in the region. Improving schools anchored an increasing transient labor force.<sup>8</sup>

Newbold could be counted among the reformers that one historian called a “medley of ministers” who were out to bring a rapidly changing South under social control.<sup>9</sup> These men often waxed nostalgic about the paternalism of the Old South, a romantic time when blacks were more loyal and understood their place. To them the unnatural equivocations of Reconstruction altered the chartered course blacks were following on the road to becoming civilized. Now southern white men needed to reapply the guiding hand and halt the downward spiral set in motion by emancipation.<sup>10</sup>

Newbold went further and embraced ideas of civilizational evolution and development. Blacks were not permanently trapped in a state of inferiority, but bore the burden of their heritage. Accordingly, the Dark Continent stymied their evolution until benevolent slave masters rescued them from their ignorance. Now white racial moderates must continue the push up the civilizational evolutionary ladder. Newbold’s career is instructive in understanding how southern reformers’ ideology changed over the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> Chapter four titled “Divine Discontent & the White Man’s Burden –

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<sup>8</sup> Jack Temple Kirby, *Darkness at the Dawning: Race and Reform in the Progressive South* (Philadelphia, New York, and Toronto: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1972).

<sup>9</sup> Hugh C. Bailey, *Liberalism in the New South: Southern Social Reformers and the Progressive Movement* (Miami: University of Miami Press, 1969), 57.

<sup>10</sup> Kirby, *Darkness*, 58-68

<sup>11</sup> For other works about southern progressives and their approach to race relations see John Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900 - 1920* (Urbana, Chicago, and London: University of Illinois Press, 1977); William Link, “The Social Context of Southern Progressivism, 1880 – 1930,” in John Milton

Newbold's Racial Ideology," presents a window into how at least one state agent used philanthropic money to push an agenda and racial vision. Through his work with and in creation of interracial organizations, Newbold adroitly attempted to manipulate the discourse between blacks, southern whites, and northern philanthropists.

For many white reformers the interracial committees afforded the first opportunity to hear how blacks really felt about segregation. Blacks laid bare oft-repeated claims that whites understood black life and culture. Out of these exchanges, some reformers began to question whether it was social environment or inherent inequality that accounted for the social and economic status of blacks in America. Newbold spent the latter part of his career navigating between those two views in the changing world of white southern liberalism.<sup>12</sup> According to one historian, southern officials were largely reactionary in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. For example, a major health crisis or epidemic was necessary for the allocation of money towards health. Funds for preventive measures were rarely if ever budgeted. Compounding the problem was the deficiency of a bureaucratic infrastructure. The few local public health officials, who were also local physicians, often were ill equipped to act. Torn between either maintaining their private medical practices or advocating state intrusion into the lives of rural southerners, most health officials chose the former. Yet with Newbold, at least in the field of black education, we have a bureaucrat who was both proactive and reactive – depending on the

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Cooper, ed., *The Wilson Era: Essays in Honor of Arthur S. Link* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1991); James Leloudis has one chapter that focuses on African American education that briefly touches on the career of Newbold in Leloudis, *Schooling in the New South*.

<sup>12</sup> William Link, *Paradox*, 263-266.

circumstances.<sup>13</sup> Working with academics from the major universities throughout the state he sought to ameliorate what he labeled as African Americans' "Divine Discontent" with segregation. He established an interracial organization to study black life and to find solutions to problems in the black community – all within the context of buttressing Jim Crow.

Like many of his fellow reformers, Newbold embraced industrial education as a blueprint for interracial cooperation in the South. Northern philanthropy would generously fund an education that promised a larger pool of skilled workers for a modernizing society. Paternalistic white control over black education promised to reinstate the submissive demeanor stripped away by Reconstruction. Despite the dubious intentions of southern reformers and northern philanthropists, their contribution to black education was tremendous. In many instances local whites agreed to fund education for blacks after northern interests promised to carry the burden for part of the funding. Blacks enthusiastically welcomed the opportunity for an education adopting a self-help philosophy while promoting racial uplift. Paternalistic whites stood in the shadow of Booker T. Washington, hoping blacks would cast down their buckets in the South and not head north in search of greener pastures.<sup>14</sup>

As the field of education became more professional in the mid twentieth century, black demands for a real higher education grew. No longer was a college "in name only" acceptable. The demand for institutions of higher learning pushed Newbold to revise his vision of the proper educational model for blacks. The fifth chapter, "Right Will Win:

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<sup>13</sup> William Link, "Social Context," 58-61.

<sup>14</sup> William Link, *Paradox*, 243-247.



Separate but Equal's Last Stand," explores the impact of standardization and black activism on Newbold's educational philosophy. A central focus here was the often strained relationship between Newbold and one of the most cunning black political operatives of his generation – James E. Shepard. Lawsuits and protest movements made these two men uncomfortable allies fighting for the same result but for very different reasons.

African American education as a scholarly topic has gained renewed interest in the last twenty years. James D. Anderson provides a thorough synthesis and overview of the history of African American education in *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860 – 1935*. Anderson argues that northern whites and southern reformers intentionally used education to thwart blacks' dreams of equality and push them to accept their status as a politically, economically, and socially dominated class. Eric Anderson and Alfred Moss challenge James Anderson's interpretation of northern philanthropy. In *Dangerous Donations: Northern Philanthropy and Southern Black Education, 1902 - 1930*, Anderson and Moss contend that northern philanthropists should not be dismissed as puppeteers using education to manipulate the south's laboring class.<sup>15</sup> This dissertation shifts the focus from the intent of philanthropist to the objectives of the state agent who received and distributed the money. In many regards men like Newbold were the

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<sup>15</sup> Anderson's book was one of the first major synthesis and revisions of the history of black education since Henry Allen Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South, From 1619 to the Present* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970); James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860 – 1935* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Eric Anderson and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *Dangerous Donations: Northern Philanthropy and Southern Black Education, 1902 – 1930* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1999). For further discussions about the influence of northern whites on southern black education see the following: Louis Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader, 1856 – 1901* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); Louis Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901 – 1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Donald Spivey, *Schooling for the New Slavery: Black Industrial Education, 1868 – 1915* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978).

architects of Jim Crow. Northern philanthropists provided the money, but it was left to the state agents to turn those donations into a tangible system. An examination of the crucial intercourse between philanthropy, state bureaucracy, and local communities will help clarify the intentions of philanthropists and illuminate the extent to which state agents pursued their own agenda.

With an eye toward understanding Newbold as an interracial envoy in an evolving educational bureaucracy, this dissertation will apply two different methodologies: biography and social history. A biographical approach naturally tilts toward a chronological framework that assists in the structuring of an organized narrative. As a social history, this dissertation will focus on the various community leaders and social reformers who influenced and worked with Newbold. The combination of social history and biography fosters the study of Newbold's interactions with the various personalities, organizations, and institutions from the North and the South. For example, to discuss his relationship with the black leaders I used examples from his interactions with educators like Shepard, George E. Davis and Mary Battle. The different relationships Newbold had with each of these people reveal his deft political maneuvering and highlight the strategies used by the black elite when they engaged in policy debates with him.<sup>16</sup>

Undergirding this study is sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's assertion that the ruling class seeks to control educational functions as a means to protect and perpetuate its exalted social position while simultaneously controlling the social and economic mobility

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<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of writing a representative biography, see the following: Ulick O'Connor, *Biographers and the Art of Biography* (Dublin, Ireland: Wolfhound Press, 1991), 9 – 40; Leon Edel, *Writing Lives: Principia Biographica* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Co., 1984), 93-108; Stephen B. Oates, ed., *Biography as High Adventure: Life Writers Speak on their Art* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986).

of the lower classes. Yet this dissertation diverges from Bourdieu's theory in one important aspect. Whereas Bourdieu envisioned a French lower class that was almost complicit in its oppression because they bought into false notions of public education as inherently democratic and rooted in merit, African Americans always understood that whites used access to formal education as a political, an economic, and a social weapon to control blacks.<sup>17</sup> At the heart of this research is the conflict arising between African Americans and the alliance between northern white philanthropists and their southern co-conspirators who sought to stifle their educational aspirations. African Americans resisted by starting and supporting their own schools, contributing goods and services to these institutions, attempting to offer their students more than just a vocational education, and lobbying governing bodies and schools officials in hopes of securing increased funding. Ultimately, blacks sought to attain a liberal arts and vocational education that prepared black students to become well rounded individuals, educated citizens prepared to take part in the democratic process, and able competitors in the economic marketplace.

Newbold's educational philosophy shifted over the years. Some changes were driven by the better angels of his nature and others by his personal sense of the proper status for blacks in the South. Nonetheless, at all times he remained steadfast against any erosion of segregation. A more humane Jim Crow promised to lift the South back to its past glory. However, in what must have seemed as a cruel twist of fate, Newbold championed one of the contributing factors leading to the end of segregation. In order to

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<sup>17</sup> Bourdieu discusses the ruling elite using academic capital to maintain their social status in the following works: Pierre Bourdieu, *The Inheritors: French Students and their Relation to Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); Pierre Bourdieu, "The School as a Conservative Force: Scholastic and Cultural Inequalities," in J. Eggleston, ed., *Contemporary Research in the Sociology of Education* (London: Methuen, 1974); Pierre Bourdieu, *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* (London and Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990); Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

stem black activism and an ever increasing number of lawsuits, he reluctantly endorsed graduate education. Ironically, one of the programs, the black law school in Durham, produced some of the very lawyers who championed desegregation in the courts. Inadvertently Newbold helped author the end of the system he so desperately wanted to defend.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE MAKING OF A SOUTHERN PROGRESSIVE

In the late summer of 1950, Nathan Carter Newbold, seventy-eight years old and newly retired as Director of Negro Education for North Carolina, stood before a group at the First Baptist Church in Raleigh. His speech titled “How Christian Can I Afford to Be,” proved to be a valedictory address reflecting on his years as a Southern white racial moderate and summed up the complexities of his compelling career. It provided insight into both a conservative’s notion of a South ordered on a racial hierarchy and a moderate’s desire for a more progressive South. Newbold emphasized that his paternal grandfather, William Newbold, was a slaveholder, thereby certifying his lineage as a true Southerner. On the other side his maternal grandfather, Nathan Trueblood, was a Quaker prohibited from owning slaves. The marriage of these two bloodlines proved that tradition and change could coexist in the South. Newbold proclaimed extensive knowledge on the Negro based on a lengthy career that brought him in contact with Negro educators and community leaders. As a bona fide good white Southern Christian, Newbold freely claimed that educating blacks over the first half of the twentieth century was noble, necessary, and yes, Christian work.<sup>1</sup>

In this address, Newbold reached back fifty years placing the impetus for universal education with Governor Charles B. Aycock. As he was apt to do, Newbold

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<sup>1</sup> NC Newbold, “How Christian Can I Afford to Be,” Address to First Baptist Church, Raleigh, 21 August 1950, Nathan Carter Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

quoted Aycock's famous refrain, "Equal that is the word; on that word I plant my faith and my party," thus claiming inspiration from an era of political turmoil and racial upheaval.<sup>2</sup> In fact the quote was quite fitting for Nathan Carter Newbold. Unwittingly he personified a bridge that would link the era of Aycock's malignant white supremacy at the turn of the twentieth century with the nascent black civil rights movement of post World War II America. Though Newbold was not directly tied to the political events of the previous generation, the politics of the nineteenth century cleared the path for Newbold's ascent.

The Newbold family history is spotty, but according to family records Nathan Carter's paternal roots can be traced back several centuries to England. Family folklore suggests the Newbold name resulted from the eighth century's "days of chivalry."<sup>3</sup> King Egbert bestowed knighthood to a young soldier, named Bold, who displayed bravery on the battlefield. The king already had one knight named Bold, so he put New in front of the name – hence Newbold. Thomas Newbold, the first Newbold to arrive in the English North American colonies around 1665 or 1668, hailed from Derbyshire, England. Settling in Maryland, Thomas acquired close to 5000 acres of land and attained the rank of Esquire. A hundred years later, the governor appointed Thomas Newbold's grandson, the first in a long line of men bearing the name William Newbold, Justice of the Peace in Perquimans County, North Carolina in 1781.<sup>4</sup> Two generations later, Nathan's paternal

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<sup>2</sup> NC Newbold, "How Christian Can I Afford to Be," Address to First Baptist Church, Raleigh, 21 August 1950, Nathan Carter Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

<sup>3</sup> Newbold Family History Worksheet, ND, Minetta Newbold Collection (photocopies of all materials from the Minetta Newbold collection are in the author's possession); Family History Postscript to Letter by Helen Newbold Cross, ND, Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>4</sup> Family History Postscript to Letter by Helen Newbold Cross, ND, Minetta Newbold Collection; Notes on Family History – Family Bible, Minetta Newbold Collection.

grandfather, another William Newbold, was a slaveholder and sheriff of Pasquotank County. William and Martha Newbold gave birth to one William Alfred Newbold, Nathan's father, on September 17, 1842.<sup>5</sup>

William Alfred Newbold married Sarah Ann Trueblood on December 17, 1868. Nine months later Sarah gave birth to a baby boy, William James Newbold. Nathan Carter joined the family on 27 December 1871. Two other children born in the 1870s, Charles Ernest and Arthur Graham, died in infancy and early childhood respectively.<sup>6</sup> William Alfred Newbold farmed the land and Sarah kept house in Nixonton Township, Pasquotank County. There is very little information about the early life of Nathan Carter. He attended elementary school in Pasquotank and Perquimans County and high school at Bethel Hill Institute. Newbold enrolled at Trinity College (later renamed Duke University) in Durham, North Carolina for the fall semester in 1894.<sup>7</sup> Though brief, his time at Trinity played a pivotal role in Newbold's future.

First, while at Trinity the scholar John Spencer Bassett influenced Newbold's thinking. In the early twentieth century Bassett's career at Trinity unraveled after calling Booker T. Washington the greatest Southerner save Robert E. Lee. A letter written to Newbold regarding the founding of a historical society suggests they shared a common worldview during Newbold's stay at Trinity:

Its constitution is flavored with the old spirit of state vanity for which you know I have no toleration. All that we stood for here at Trinity is against this. . . . The management say clearly that they propose to be progressives. We shall see. As

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<sup>5</sup> Notes on Family History – Family Bible, Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>6</sup> Newbold Family History Worksheet, Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>7</sup> Tom Crum, Duke Archivist, to Brenda Neal, email, ND, NCN Biography File, University Archives, Duke University.

to your joining. I should be glad for you to come in with us younger non-political men . . . to make it a really progressive association.<sup>8</sup>

Second, Newbold, unable to afford tuition, went into debt while at Trinity. In September 1894 he avoided paying tuition by writing a promissory note to Trinity for \$25. As the spring semester opened he took out another note for \$25. The debt accrued at Trinity followed Newbold around for the next fifteen years.<sup>9</sup> Inability to pay the tuition contributed to Newbold's departing Trinity without graduating, but even though he did not complete his studies, he developed a lifelong professional and personal relationship with the staff and faculty.

After leaving Trinity, Newbold started his career in education. It is not entirely clear why he chose to become a teacher. Perhaps it was the influence of his professors at Trinity. In the late 1800s the field of education moved toward professionalization throughout the South. However, in a modernizing South, a young man with a secondary education and college coursework found ample opportunities to teach. His first job in the classroom took him to Caswell County, working in a school in Leasburg in the summer of 1895. John Kilgo from Trinity provided a reference covering Newbold's lack of experience by vouching for his character. "I only wish to say," Kilgo wrote, "that he is a noble, pure and strong young man and I feel sure will more than satisfy your people [sic]."<sup>10</sup> His former principal also endorsed Newbold's character stating, [it] "Gives me

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<sup>8</sup> John Spencer Bassett to NC Newbold, 4 November 1900, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University. For a discussion of John Spencer Bassett see Bruce Clayton, *The Savage Ideal: Intolerance and Intellectual Leadership in the South, 1890-1914*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972).

<sup>9</sup> NC Newbold to William P Few, 8 March 1911, Office of the University President, William Preston Few Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

<sup>10</sup> John C. Kilgo to BF Stanfield, 3 August 1895, Minetta Newbold Collection.



great pleasure to recommend Mr. N.C. Newbold to anyone desiring to secure the services of a hightoned conscientious Christian gentleman.”<sup>11</sup>

Newbold’s stint at Leasburg lasted two years, after which he and his brother William James ran a boarding school in LaGrange, North Carolina. The Newbolds advertised the institution as the “Best Private Fitting School in the State,”<sup>12</sup> but the school proved to be a financial drain on the young men. Early in 1900 Nathan Carter solicited funds from a William Romaine Newbold to keep the school afloat. William Romaine advised, “I am afraid that it would not be possible for me to give you any help in carrying out the financial plans which you have in mind.” To forestall any future inquiries William added, “Nor, I think, would it be possible for you to secure such a loan from anyone who was not personally acquainted with you and your brother, and was willing to stake his money on his faith in your success.”<sup>13</sup> From very early in his career, Nathan Carter learned the art of solicitation and the inevitability of rejection.

Despite his financial perils, Newbold found the social life in LaGrange much to his liking. While there he met his first wife, Mabel Wooten. The two engaged in a loving correspondence with endless affectionate references to sweetie, honey, and my dearest. The proposed nuptials for 1900 triggered a minor family feud. The nature of the dispute and whether it had anything to do with Nathan remains unclear. Nonetheless, as the wedding approached Mabel quarreled with her mother, causing a delay in the nuptials. Mabel advised Newbold not to visit and “I did not send your invitations off this

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<sup>11</sup> JA Beam to BF Stanfield, 9 July 1895, Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>12</sup> “LaGrange High School,” Newspaper Clipping, circa Summer 1899, Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>13</sup> William Romaine Newbold to NC Newbold, 26 January 1900, Minetta Newbold Collection.

morning and can't send them at all. . . . [A]nd won't you ask Mr. Petree not to put an announcement in his paper this week."<sup>14</sup> A few days later relations thawed between mother and daughter. Mabel's mother prohibited her other children from participating in the wedding. "We have her permission to send the invitations," Mabel lamented, "but I haven't her forgiveness and love . . ."<sup>15</sup> Despite her mother's reservations the couple married on 28 February 1900.

Later that year the brothers gave up their stake in the boarding school. For several months Nathan Carter described himself as a hotelier, housing boarders and members of his family, including his parents. By the end of the year he found his way back into the schoolhouse after accepting a principalship in Asheboro. The debt accumulated at LaGrange, compounded with money owed Trinity, plagued Newbold. Years later he bemoaned the boarding school debt. At close to \$1000, it made it difficult to "recover from this experience and make good my losses at that time."<sup>16</sup>

Nathan Carter devised a scheme to free himself from debt from his major creditor, the Elliot Brothers, by making installment payments guaranteed by a life insurance policy. The debtor agreed to terms but expressed concern about William James meeting his obligation, stressing, "we hope we may always have your influence with your brother" to ensure future payments.<sup>17</sup> This financial distress dogged the newlyweds and

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<sup>14</sup> Mabel Wooten to NC Newbold, 13 February 1900, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

<sup>15</sup> Mabel Wooten to NC Newbold, 15 February 1900, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Duke University.

<sup>16</sup> 1900 Census, Ancestry.com; Elliot Brothers to NC Newbold, 5 August 1902, Minetta Newbold Collection; NC Newbold to William P Few, 8 March 1911, William Preston Few Papers, Duke University.

<sup>17</sup> Elliot Brothers to NC Newbold, 13 August 1902, Minetta Newbold Collection.

Mabel echoed the Elliot Brothers' fears about William James credit worthiness. A year earlier William James asked Newbold for five dollars because "I am in a hole bad now."<sup>18</sup> Already upset over William James not helping Nathan Carter pay off the debt, her indignation rose with the request for financial assistance. She made little effort to disguise her disgust with William James. A letter from Mabel to Nathan Carter reveals the state of their perilous finances.

I think he ought to be ashamed of himself. Here you have been working all summer in the hot sun trying to get straight and what has he been doing. Has he made one effort to pay one cent on the debts that are hanging like dark clouds over your heads. . . . I am not willing for you, the weaker of the two physically, to work in this hot weather . . . and not reap any benefits . . . He ought to know you owe money instead of having some to lend.<sup>19</sup>

Though his financial woes persisted, Nathan Carter managed to attend summer school in 1901 at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, the first of many excursions back into higher education.<sup>20</sup>

Newbold's racial views no doubt paralleled most other whites in North Carolina. However, he did not support the use of violence to maintain the status quo. A lynching in 1901 may be a suggestive prism through which to look at the early formative influences affecting his views on violence and race. Mabel reported to Nathan a "negro committed some outrage at his home" resulting in a white mob trying to lynch him. The tone and style of Mabel's letters denotes a strong distaste for this festival of violence that

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<sup>18</sup> William James Newbold to NC Newbold, 23 July 1901, Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>19</sup> Mabel's comment also sheds light on Newbold's health. Referring to him as the "weaker" of the two brothers was not just bluster and spousal defense. Newbold often complained of ailments and various nervous conditions. His correspondence is littered with references to time away from work due to illness and infirmity. One can only surmise that many of his health problems may have resulted from a hyperactive work schedule throughout most of his career. Mabel Wooten Newbold to NC Newbold, 28 July 1901, Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>20</sup> Mabel Wooten to NC Newbold, 15 June 1901, Minetta Newbold Collection.

masqueraded as vigilante justice. Staying with her family while Newbold attended UNC, Mabel said the house awakened to a “terrible screaming” and the “most awful sounds” in the middle of the night.<sup>21</sup> Later she discovered the mob shot the man repeatedly and whipped him so severely it left cuts all over his body. Miraculously the man survived the attempted lynching. Mabel’s father, Shade Wooten, threatened to hang the men involved in the mob. Several years later one of Newbold’s closest friends, a minister, Charles Greaves, delivered a sermon on lynching. Greaves called lynching an injustice that interfered with the administration of justice. Those in power had little reason to fear lynch mobs. Only the weak and powerless stood vulnerable.<sup>22</sup> Surrounded by family and friends opposed to violent lynchings, Newbold likewise supported buffering the racial caste system without the use of violence.

Newbold remained in Asheboro for a couple years before accepting a position as superintendent of Roxboro schools in Person County. During the six year stay in Roxboro he honed his skills as an administrator and suffered a serious calamity in his personal life. By the time Newbold took the helm in Roxboro, he was a stalwart supporter of a progressive education agenda bringing an almost evangelical intensity to school work. Improving the public schools took first priority. Desperate for new funding sources, Newbold turned to the state Superintendent of Public Instruction, James Yarkin Joyner, for assistance. Joyner promised to check with the General Education Board

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<sup>21</sup> Mabel Wooten Newbold to NC Newbold, 19 June 1901, Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>22</sup> Mabel Wooten Newbold to NC Newbold, 19 June 1901; Mabel Wooten Newbold to NC Newbold, 23 June 1901, Minetta Newbold Collection; Newspaper Clipping, *Hawkinsville Dispatch* (Hawkinsville, GA), 16 November 1906. Newbold, like many progressives, abhorred lynching. However, even progressive Southerners who found the practice barbaric associated lynching with protecting white womanhood. In his correspondence Newbold never addressed the myth of rape as the cause of lynchings. For a discussion of the ambivalent white attitudes about lynching, see W.J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), 124 – 127.

(GEB) and the Peabody Fund to see if any monies could be made available to Roxboro. But by the early spring 1903 Joyner advised Newbold that the GEB would not honor the request, “After all our people must rely on themselves to work out their own problem of education.”<sup>23</sup>

Nathan Carter took such advice to heart and did not just pine away for outside sources for school funding. Instead he turned directly to the people of Roxboro. For Newbold an education extended beyond the traditional three R’s – reading, writing, and arithmetic. Asking for local support, Newbold appealed to a higher calling, stating, “Your object in sending your children to this graded school will be that they may attain such knowledge as will make them mentally and morally strong, and, further to help them to form characters that shall prepare them for all the responsible duties of life.”<sup>24</sup>

Newbold also faced brick and mortar issues. In his own classroom rain fell through a leaky roof. Attendance in the black and white schools remained below expectations due to the physical plant’s poor lighting and insufficient heating. The construction of a modern brick school building seemed the most pressing need. He challenged Roxboro residents to show the same support for constructing schools that they did for building churches. To Newbold’s reasoning, a well-run school reinforced the lessons in character and morals dispensed by the churches on Sunday. The city fathers must see beyond narrow interests and embrace the future.

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<sup>23</sup> The GEB formed after a series of conferences on education in the South. Funded by the Rockefellers in 1902, the fund with its interlocking philanthropic directorate had an influential impact on Southern and Negro Education. See James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860 – 1935* (Chapel Hill and London: UNC Press, 1988); JY Joyner to NC Newbold, 12 September 1902, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University; JY Joyner to NC Newbold, 20 March 2003, Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>24</sup> “To the Patrons of the Roxboro Graded Schools,” Newspaper Clipping, 10 September 1902, Duke University, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

All other public buildings in Roxboro are far superior in structure and equipment to the one in which the children live eight months in the year. These buildings are the banks, the general stores, and the court house – even the jail and the dispensary are better provided for in this respect than are the school children.<sup>25</sup>

Newbold believed no “thinking men could doubt the truth” of his proposal.<sup>26</sup> It was becoming evident to him that there existed two Souths, one rooted in the past and one turning toward the future. The town needed a school building to not only improve education, but also to serve as a call for real progress. A modern edifice placed on a hilltop broadcast a progressive view of education. To publicize the issue Newbold pressed the local government to issue bonds and invited Joyner to address a rally promoting better schools and longer school terms.<sup>27</sup>

Moving beyond the physical plant, Newbold also addressed other educational concerns. According to Newbold, the causes of low attendance extended beyond the poor facilities. Some students worked to help their families survive financially. Others, fortunate enough not to have to work, simply seemed ambivalent about going to school. In some cases parents hindered the advancement of education and their demonstrable indifference toward schools poisoned the students against attending.<sup>28</sup> In essence, Newbold faced one of the conundrums of southern progressivism. How does one

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<sup>25</sup> NC Newbold to Eugenia Bradsher, 5 December 1904, Minetta Newbold Collection; “Superintendent’s Annual Report,” *The Courier* (Roxboro, NC), 22 June 1904; NC Newbold, “Roxboro’s Greatest Public Need,” *The Courier* (Roxboro, NC), ND, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

<sup>26</sup> NC Newbold, “Roxboro’s Greatest Public Need,” *The Courier* (Roxboro, NC), ND, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

<sup>27</sup> Newspaper Clipping, *The Courier* (Roxboro, NC), 9 January 1907; “Great Educational Rally,” *The Courier* (Roxboro, NC), 26 September 1906, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Duke University.

<sup>28</sup> “Superintendent’s Annual Report,” *The Courier* (Roxboro, NC), 22 June 1904, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

convince local whites that a government supported institution - in this case, publicly funded schools – would benefit the community?

Newbold answered by preaching the gospel of educational progress. Schools for white students proved inadequate to meet the needs of a modernizing South. Pupils attended school through the eighth grade, leaving them unprepared for collegiate work. Roxboro needed to add a ninth grade, increase course offerings, and build a brick high school. Adding business courses to the curriculum readied men for the nonagricultural jobs in the New South. Interestingly, he suggested including manual training only as demand grew. This position may have resulted from the cost of starting such a program, but was just as likely a result of Newbold’s educational priorities.<sup>29</sup>

Additionally, Newbold asserted, the local government failed to meet their fiduciary burden to educate these children. Over the course of the past two years the schools had purchased encyclopedias, musical instruments, and books for a library. The county or city, however, did not pay for supplies. Instead families and pupils paid for the needed materials and, even though purchased with private funds, the schools made the resources available to the community.<sup>30</sup>

Two parallel tracks of reasoning arise from Newbold’s work in Roxboro. First, local governments were derelict in their duties if they failed to fund schools. The *laissez faire* Southern approach to social services and education would not adequately educate the next generation. Second, parents serious about their children’s education must fill the

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<sup>29</sup> “Superintendent’s Annual Report,” *The Courier* (Roxboro, NC), 22 June 1904; “A Public High School for Person County,” *The Courier* (Roxboro, NC), 8 August 1906, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

<sup>30</sup> “Superintendent’s Annual Report,” *The Courier* (Roxboro, NC), 22 June 1904, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

financial breach themselves. In Newbold's mind at least, Southern educators pleaded for governmental funding but relied on communal sacrifice. This pattern of educational funding reflected an approach to teaching white southerners. Black pupils triggered a different philosophical approach from Newbold.

In Roxboro the Negro students attended schools one month less than their white counterparts. The curriculum was limited to the bare basics. If Newbold wanted the white schools to produce college material, then the Negro schools functioned on a markedly different level.

The purpose in the colored school is to give the pupils a fair and practical understanding of the rudiments of an English education. The work done the past session has been fairly satisfactory and the principal has labored faithfully with his pupils that he might make them better subjects of the state.<sup>31</sup>

By Newbold's estimation, black aspirations extended only to becoming wards of the government. The Negro's future course required careful planning and consideration by knowledgeable whites. Education served to make blacks more compliant, not to liberate them or to promote any real form of economic or social upward mobility.

Some of Newbold's early racial views may also be revealed by reviewing the type of entertainment he brought to Roxboro's white schools. Like many whites throughout the country Newbold enjoyed minstrel acts that parroted white stereotypes of black life and culture. A minstrel show in 1905 promised to use affected Negro dialect and singing. Polk Miller, the white director of the show, told Newbold the show's Negroes knew their place and were by no means his "companions." Additionally, Polk enthused, "their

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<sup>31</sup> "Superintendent's Annual Report," *The Courier* (Roxboro, NC), 22 June 1904, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.



natural nigger ways are very amusing.”<sup>32</sup> Newbold’s career in education and early attitudes express the ethos of the time and place he worked.

He continued to push for improvement in the Roxboro schools. In private he voiced concerns about stagnant teachers’ salaries and the difficulty recruiting qualified applicants. Slowly he added books to the schools’ threadbare library. Newbold also worked to introduce a music appreciation course. To raise both money and awareness for the schools’ needs he brought in live entertainment. The perceived lack of community support sometimes left Newbold feeling discouraged. After Ralph Bingham played a show in 1906 Newbold complained, “So many people were conspicuous for their absence. Some of my good friends.”<sup>33</sup>

Throughout his tenure in Roxboro Newbold increasingly shared his musings on the future direction of education. In an article titled “The Poorly Paid Teachers,” Newbold laid out his views on the continued need to expedite the professionalization of teachers, especially superintendents. Inadequate salaries forced superintendents to leave the work for more lucrative fields. Moreover, the summer months offered few opportunities to improve one’s education. Instead of attending summer school, educators worked extra jobs just to make ends meet. This was not about personal aggrandizement. The students and community at large benefited when administrators focused their energies on schooling and not hustling to make a decent living. No doubt many of these views derived from Newbold’s personal struggle to attain financial solvency. Newbold

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<sup>32</sup> Polk Miller to NC Newbold, 20 September 1905, Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>33</sup> NC Newbold to Eugenia Bradsher Newbold, 14 June 1906, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University; NC Newbold to Eugenia Bradsher, 6 February 1905; EW Newton to NC Newbold, 26 May 1903, Minetta Newbold Collection; 20 April 1906, NC Newbold to Eugenia Bradsher Newbold, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

sold life insurance in addition to his administrative duties. Ironically, Newbold's dire financial straits placed him in the stream of progressive educational thought. The state's Superintendent for Public Instruction echoed similar sentiments in his Biennial Reports, calling for professionalization and better pay for local superintendents.<sup>34</sup>

Newbold sensed a heightened respect for teachers in the halls of power around the state. A reception for educators at the Governor's Mansion served as proof positive that the state's leaders understood the future rested upon a well-educated populace. "Such occasions will be more common in our state in future," Newbold wrote, adding, "Prominent people will now vie with each other to do honor to those who train the children."<sup>35</sup> Even as Newbold celebrated the changes taking place, he must have experienced a degree of apprehension about his future. As more people recognized teaching as a profession, where would it leave a man of talent without a formal education?

As his career steadily progressed and he won notice for his work, Newbold confronted a personal crisis. Just three years into their marriage, Mabel became terminally ill. After her prolonged sickness she died in April 1903 at the age of 25. His mother-in-law afforded him little time to grieve over the loss of his young wife. Less than a month after the funeral she advised Newbold to "not think too much of your own troubles, remember that others have trouble and you must help them bear theirs."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> "The Poorly Paid Teachers," Newspaper Clipping, 6 August 1906, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University; SJ Miller to NC Newbold, 16 September 1905, Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>35</sup> NC Newbold to Eugenia Newbold, 14 June 1906, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

<sup>36</sup> Mother-In-Law to NC Newbold, 14 May 1903, Minetta Newbold Collection.

Whatever friction existed at the time of the wedding seemed firmly in the past. She invited Newbold to stay with Mabel's family to drive away the sorrow of the loss.<sup>37</sup>

The following year Newbold began a relationship with a teacher of previous acquaintance, Eugenia Bradsher. The courtship started out slowly as Newbold experienced lingering grief over the passing of his first wife. But he slowly gave in to the growing fondness between the two. Eugenia received boxes of candies and fruit from Newbold as well as offers to assist her with school work. They relished attending church and worshipping together. In the fall of 1904 Newbold confessed his love to Eugenia, declaring, "I have given all myself to you unreservedly and completely."<sup>38</sup> But these confessions of love came tempered with worry. Again his lingering financial jeopardy caused Newbold consternation about his future. He told Eugenia he often felt "blue" because "debt is an evil, the most hateful on earth, except perhaps, disease and death."<sup>39</sup> The inability to escape debt fostered a paranoia that financial ruin was never far off.

I guess I don't work hard enough. I feel sometimes that I do, though, and I know I am not an extravagant person to spend so very much money on myself, and it worries me when I find I can't make the progress I would.<sup>40</sup>

Whatever misgivings Newbold harbored about his financial future did not prevent him

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<sup>37</sup> Mother-In-Law to NC Newbold, 14 May 1903, Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>38</sup> Carrie Wooten to Eugenia Bradsher, 14 May 1903, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University; NC Newbold to Eugenia Bradsher, 23 November 1904; Eugenia Bradsher to NC Newbold, 5 November 1904; Eugenia Bradsher to NC Newbold, 26 September 1904; NC Newbold to Eugenia Bradsher, 30 November 1904, Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>39</sup> NC Newbold to Eugenia Bradsher, 5 December 1904; NC Newbold to Eugenia Bradsher, 19 Dec 1904, Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>40</sup> NC Newbold to Eugenia Bradsher, 21 December 1904, Minetta Newbold Collection.

from becoming engaged to Eugenia in late 1904.<sup>41</sup> Nathan Carter married Eugenia in March 1905 in a ceremony the paper called “of unusual social importance.”<sup>42</sup>

That summer Newbold returned to school to shore up his academic credentials. It is not entirely clear how a man so financially strapped managed to pay for summer school. Nonetheless, attending classes at the School of the South in Knoxville, Tennessee, he enrolled in courses covering a range of topics from school administration and history to the Negro Problem and literature. Beyond the academic instruction, the time in Knoxville also served as a broader education in the lexicon of the New South. A visit to a rail yard and woolen mill provided a crash course in the power of Southern industrialization. The businesses employed hundreds of hard-working people and the constant bustle excited Newbold’s imagination. A trip to an iron works prompted a visage from the Old South.

To see those large black negroes with no clothing on their waists their eyes and teeth shining in the semi-darkness, poking with long tongs and forks into hot furnaces – gave me the impression of “Old Sambo” with his pitchfork.<sup>43</sup>

Even as Newbold imagined a progressive New South built on industry and education, he still romanticized about an Old South with blacks little more than sweaty laborers.

Newbold enjoyed many outings with colleagues while in Knoxville. Letters to his wife Eugenia provide a rare glimpse into his social life. With comrades from summer school Newbold enjoyed going out in the evenings to storyteller leagues and evening worship services. The lack of a sermon at the Christian Science church struck Newbold

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<sup>41</sup>Eugenia Bradsher to NC Newbold, 6 December 1904, Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>42</sup> “Newbold-Bradshser,” Clipping from *The Courier* (Roxboro, NC), ND.

<sup>43</sup> Summer School of the South Course Ticket 1905, Minetta Newbold Collection; NC Newbold to Eugenia Newbold, 22 July 1905; NC Newbold to Eugenia Bradsher, 14 July 1905, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

as peculiar, but the service shared common ground with the Baptists and Methodists in their musical selections. On the whole the experience registered more as entertainment with a mild dose of theological culture shock. Additionally, Nathan Carter seemingly disliked classical music, finding it utterly boring. At one concert he daydreamed of home the entire time. His favorite activities took him outdoors for strolls around the town to admire the city's architecture and the natural scenery.<sup>44</sup>

Away from home his financial pressures continued to mount. For several years prior Newbold supplemented his income by selling life insurance. In Knoxville one scheme after another arrived by mail, all of which he gave more than a fair hearing. One proposition required selling correspondence courses to teachers. Another required the door to door selling of encyclopedias. Although he continued to sell insurance, Newbold seemingly never engaged in the other endeavors.<sup>45</sup>

For the next two years Newbold remained in the Roxboro schools. In 1908 a job opportunity in High Point, North Carolina whetted his appetite for a career move. Though not offered the job, the references indicate a widening network of influential educators from around the state. Robert L. Flowers, professor and future president of Duke University, showered praise on Newbold as an accomplished administrator. William Poteat at Wake Forest College, though he barely knew Newbold, also gave an endorsement. The clerk from State Superintendent James Y. Joyner's office called him one of the "very best school men" working in the state. Eugene C. Brooks, professor at

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<sup>44</sup> NC Newbold to Eugenia Bradsher, 24 July 1905; NC Newbold to Eugenia Bradsher, 10 July 1905; NC Newbold to Eugenia Newbold, 19 July 1905; NC Newbold to Eugenia Newbold, 12 July 1905; NC Newbold to Eugenia Newbold, 15 July 1905, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

<sup>45</sup> Dodd, Mead, & Co. to NC Newbold, 8 July 1905, JB Crabtree, Doubleday, Page, & Co. to NC Newbold, 13 July 1905, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

Trinity College who later served as state superintendent, noted Newbold's interest extended beyond the school house doors to the larger field of public service.<sup>46</sup> Two inferences can be drawn from these references. First, by the early 1900s Newbold had developed into an adept networker. The brief time at Trinity College yielded lifelong associations that proved useful throughout his long career. Second, Newbold deftly used a request for a job reference to establish working relationships. Though the two barely knew each other in 1908, Newbold and Poteat collaborated together on interracial politics well into the late 1930s.

Newbold missed out on the High Point job by a close six-to-five school board vote, but it was only a matter of days before the next career opportunity materialized. Noting that High Point's new superintendent vacated a position in Washington (Beaufort County), Newbold's sights turned to filling that position. The campaign for the job demonstrated a mix of self-confidence and aggressiveness. Within days of not getting the job in High Point, he sent out unsolicited application letters to Washington's school board. Currying favor with one school board member required a creative omission of facts. Writing John H. Small, Newbold recalled meeting him years before at a Trinity College alumni banquet. The correspondence created the impression Newbold graduated from Trinity College and Small, therefore, could help a fellow alumnus. Beyond the familial collegiate background, Newbold trumpeted educational successes in teacher hiring, increased appropriations, and salaries. "These facts could not more be stated by

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<sup>46</sup> Open Letter from Robert L. Flowers, ND, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives; William Poteat to NC Newbold, 2 July 1908, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University; Allen Barwick to J. Elmwood Cox, 2 July 1908; EC Brooks to J. Elmwood Cox, 4 July 1908, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

me,” he asserted, “except as the result of persistence, persuasion and continued effort.”<sup>47</sup>

Underneath a quiet soft-spoken exterior resided ambition and confidence. Newbold secured his new position for the school term beginning in the fall of 1908.

While in Washington Newbold’s educational approach crystallized. One example of this was his belief that proper education required firm discipline. Previous experience taught him that a parent’s lax attitude toward education hindered a child’s education. A young man could be a well-behaved gentleman in the streets, but be a holy terror in the classroom. Newbold reasoned mothers who protected sons from the principal’s corporal punishment rendered the errant student fearless of the school’s administrators.<sup>48</sup> A well run school, therefore, demanded a forceful administrator and the support of the parents. This would be a yardstick he would use in the future to measure others’ educational endeavors.

Responding to a request from Charles Coon, a fellow superintendent, Newbold outlined a legislative agenda he thought beneficial to the public schools. The plan necessitated increasing both the tax rates to fund schools and state tuition aid for teacher education programs and summer school. Additionally, echoing the calls of other educational reformers, the legislature needed to address the certification of teachers and superintendents.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> SL Davis to NC Newbold, 9 July 1908; NC Newbold to Chairman School Board, Washington, NC, 15 July 1908; NC Newbold to Collin Harding, 18 July 1908; NC Newbold to John H. Small, 25 July 1908, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>48</sup> “The Attitude of Parents Toward Their Schools,” TD, ND, written on Washington Schools letterhead, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

<sup>49</sup> Charles Coon to NC Newbold, 22 April 1912; “Suggested Legislation for NC Public Schools,” NC Newbold, attached to Coon letter, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

Moving beyond education, Newbold joined the chorus lobbying for a temperance movement in the South in general and in Washington in particular. By Newbold's reckoning, the evils of alcohol ate away at the very foundations of a moral society. One only needed to look in a school house to witness the detrimental effects. Students wasted time in pool halls at night drinking and carousing then arrived for school the next day totally unprepared. Alcohol was just the tip of the iceberg in this small town Sodom and Gomorrah.

I have in mind now some boys who have so debauched themselves by smoking cigarettes that they possess no vigor, very little mental activity, and are morally stunted. They do things and declare that it was not their intention to do so, or also tell a falsehood to evade the truth.<sup>50</sup>

Experience impressed upon Newbold that social problems did not stop at the classroom door. That in fact, social ills respected no boundaries, which forced educators to deal with not only a students' education, but also the students' social and moral needs. Therefore Newbold supported calls by temperance organizations to enforce curfews for teens and to ban boys from pool halls. To increase the vitality of young boys and girls the city must strictly adhere to the law banning the sale of cigarettes to minors. Failure to pursue such a course amounted to a dereliction of duty.<sup>51</sup>

Religion informed many of Newbold's views on reform and morality. A devout Methodist, religion played a central role throughout his life. For Nathan Carter, whether singing in the choir or serving as a lay leader, the church functioned as both a spiritual respite and a social outlet. In the Southern tradition, the church occupied not only as a

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<sup>50</sup> NC Newbold to HW Carter, 14 December 1910, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

<sup>51</sup> NC Newbold to HW Carter, 14 December 1910, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.



spiritual space, but a political one as well. Newbold tapped into this using the churches in Washington to promote public education.<sup>52</sup>

Another Southern ideal that helped shape and define the character of Newbold was that of honor. A good example of this was a confrontation he had with the husband of one of his teachers, which was steeped in the language of dueling. George Lewis wanted to know why his wife was drawn to the classroom. Not considering the possibility she enjoyed teaching more than being a homemaker, Lewis demanded that Newbold explain her decision. At the end of the previous school term his wife had resigned her position to spend more time at home. Over the course of the summer Mrs. Lewis expressed regret about quitting her job. The school board told her there were no vacancies. However, when his wife approached Newbold directly, she was given a teaching position. Advised of these developments, Lewis offered his wife a sweetened deal to remain at home, including a spousal death benefit, clothing allowance, and all expense paid vacation. According to George Lewis, his wife responded, “But there is not any fascination here for me, as compared with the school house.”<sup>53</sup> Lewis secured assurances from a school board member that his wife’s employment applications would be blocked to prevent any future domestic discord. Fearing that the lure of the school house went beyond mere academics, Lewis warned Newbold, “I have been deceived about this thing for six years and past and I do not propose to tolerate it any [longer].”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Clipping, 30 April 1912, *Washington Daily News*, (Washington, NC) Minetta Newbold Collection.

<sup>53</sup> George Lewis to NC Newbold, 15 August 1912, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

<sup>54</sup> George Lewis to NC Newbold, 15 August 1912, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

The fact that Newbold held a job open for her, even after multiple attempts to resign, confirmed for Lewis that Newbold was the elusive lure.

Newbold sent a letter asking Lewis to come by the office to discuss the situation. Lewis took the request for a face to face meeting as “plain evidence that you know more about the matter than you are willing to put on paper.”<sup>55</sup> Thoroughly exasperated at this point, Newbold fired off a curt missive that an earlier generation might have read as an invitation to draw pistols at daybreak. Calling the correspondence foolish, Newbold told Lewis it was past time for hiding behind the pen.

If you have any manhood in you and want to do the square thing you will meet me here in the office . . . at five o'clock this afternoon so the matter may be settled once for all. You bring some friends if you wish to do so. If you fail to come here as a man where you can get all the explanation you desire . . . either make good your statements or apologize for them.

If you fail to do either of these, then I unhesitatingly brand your conduct in making the uncalled for statements that you have and failing to meet me according to your own proposition as both ungentlemanly and cowardly.<sup>56</sup>

This exchange between George Lewis and Nathan Carter reveals much about Newbold's personality. Many of his contemporaries described Newbold as soft spoken, deliberate and slow to anger. Even as the accusations mounted from George Lewis, Newbold remained almost deferential. But the deference masked a quiet determination and refusal to back down. Newbold was well versed in the mores of Southern honor, invoking many of them in his exchange with Lucas. White southerners associated manhood with veracity, public perception of oneself, and demonstrations of manliness,

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<sup>55</sup> NC Newbold to George Lewis, 17 August 1912; George Lewis to NC Newbold, 19 August 1912, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

<sup>56</sup> NC Newbold to George Lewis, 27 August 1912, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Honor and Violence in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 144 - 153.

all of which Newbold found sorely lacking in George Lewis. In essence, Newbold deftly spoke the language of white Southern men.

Beginning in 1911, Nathan Carter began fielding offers from state superintendent James Joyner to join the Department of Public Instruction. Newbold declined on the grounds it was unfair to leave the school system at the start of a school year. Clearly, Newbold was on Joyner's radar for a post working with state administration. The two men enjoyed a personal and professional relationship dating back several years.<sup>57</sup>

The following year Joyner offered Newbold another position, this time as State Agent for Negro Schools, a position created and funded by the General Education Board. Washington schools were not prepared to let Newbold resign so easily. Newbold, constantly plagued by financial woes, found the chance to make more money inviting. However, the school board countered by offering to raise the superintendent's salary. James Joyner continued his lobbying efforts advising Newbold that the school system's proposed increase might trigger resentment from the meagerly paid teachers in the county. Newbold desperately wanted to take the job, but the salary increase through a wrinkle into the works. Convincing the school board to terminate the contract seemed the only way out. If a budgetary shortfall occurred or the superintendent made an egregious error in judgment, Newbold queried, surely the pay increase would evaporate. When a board member agreed to personally cover any shortfalls to ensure payment of

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<sup>57</sup> NC Newbold to AJ Barwick, 15 September 1911, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

salary at the promised rate, Newbold sensed his options melting away. Unable to find a graceful exit, he reluctantly stayed in Washington.<sup>58</sup>

The lost opportunity troubled Newbold because it “may or may not come to me again in years.”<sup>59</sup> The absence of a formal college degree caused concern, but did not weaken his self-confidence. Friends reassured him that the ability to succeed without a diploma stood as a testimony to his hard work and innate ability. Newbold, thankful of their praise, was glad to know a “thinking man respect a man because he is a man, and not entirely because he may have on his wall certain pieces of parchment.” Besides, while struggling to make ends meet one could not help but learn the “gospel of hard work.”<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, Newbold understood that the lack of a formal degree limited his options in his chosen profession. Earlier a job with the United States Bureau of Education, which paid double the salary of his current position, slipped through his fingers due to the absence of a diploma. This “unavoidable misfortune” no doubt attuned Newbold to those rare opportunities to move ahead as an administrator without a college education.<sup>61</sup>

The following year Joyner again offered Newbold the position as State Agent for Negro Schools. Citing the pecuniary rewards and the supposed healthier environment

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<sup>58</sup> A later conversation suggests that Joyner tells Newbold in light of the raise, maybe he should remain in Washington. NC Newbold to John Small, 1 June 1912; NC Newbold to Jackson Davis, 1 June 1912; NC Newbold to EC Brooks, 7 June 1912; NC Newbold to Wallace Buttrick, 7 June 1912, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

<sup>59</sup> NC Newbold to John Small, 5 June 1912, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

<sup>60</sup> NC Newbold to Charles Greaves, 15 March 1913, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

<sup>61</sup> NC Newbold to Charles Greaves, 8 March 1913, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

gained by moving his family from a coastal region, Newbold readily accepted. Eugenia supported the decision but voiced apprehension about moving to Raleigh. To prevent a repeat of the negotiations from a year earlier, he kept his own counsel and announced his resignation as a *fait accompli*. Learning of his departure, black teachers praised Newbold for demonstrating dedication to the improvement of the colored schools and guidance in pedagogy. In the fall of 1913, Nathan Carter began a new job as the state's point man on black education.<sup>62</sup>

The events of the previous century determined the early course for Newbold's job. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, Bourbon Democrats in North Carolina faced an increasingly disgruntled electorate. This distemper distilled itself into "fusionist" electoral victories for the Populist and Republican parties in 1894 and 1896. As a result, white Democrats, led by Furnifold Simmons, Josephus Daniels, and Charles Aycock, launched a campaign to wrench back the levers of government in 1898. Using Daniels's newspaper, the *Raleigh News and Observer*, as a propaganda machine, the party initiated a state wide white supremacy campaign. Cries of "negro domination," "negro corruption," and "White man's government" rang forth from stump speeches and the newspaper. The message clearly delivered to all whites – at best you were a fool to vote the fusionist ticket, at worst a race traitor.<sup>63</sup>

Race baiting, extra-legal violence, and Negrophobia carried the Democrats back into power. A planned *coup d'état* and deadly race riot in Wilmington served as a grisly

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<sup>62</sup> Newbold gives very little hint as to why he considers Raleigh a healthier environment than the coast. Nor does he fully illuminate Eugenia Newbold's concerns about moving to Raleigh. NC Newbold to William Newbold, 8 March 1913; NC Newbold to Charles Greaves, 8 March 1913; "Resolution," TD, SD, 12 May 1913, NC Newbold Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript, Duke University.

<sup>63</sup> Glenda Gilmore, *Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896 – 1920* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996), 61 – 89.

coda to the election, and forced the remaining fusionists out of office. However, the new Democratic state leaders were not the same Bourbon Democrats. The Democrats from the Reconstruction era preached a “Best Man” philosophy. Under the old guard’s meritocracy, a man’s ability determined his position. The safety valve existed in that whites thought few black men measured up to white competence. The new Democrat discarded the “Best Man” yardstick altogether and replaced it with an imperialistic mindset. Men like Aycock and Daniels considered government strictly the domain of the ruling white class. Any measure of black progress meant a move toward social equality. To ensure a government rooted in white supremacy, the Democrats pursued a two pronged agenda stripping blacks of voting rights and codifying segregation.<sup>64</sup>

White Democrats pushed a literacy prequalification for voting. Aycock and the Democrats soothed the fears of poor whites who themselves feared disfranchisement due to illiteracy. As Aycock toured the state selling the disfranchisement amendment he promised, “. . . the illiterate poor man . . . that life should be brighter for him and the partner of his sorrows and joys. I pledged the wealth of the State to education of his children.”<sup>65</sup> Of course, any discussion of universal education led directly to the issue of educating black North Carolinians.

Democrats in North Carolina forced a bargain on blacks. If blacks surrendered their voting and civil rights, then the reward would come in the form of education.

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<sup>64</sup> Gilmore, *White Supremacy*, 62 – 64, 83; John Hope Franklin discusses the codifying of school segregation during this era in Franklin, John Hope. “Jim Crow Goes to School: The Genesis of Legal Segregation in Southern Schools.” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 58 (Spring 1959): 225-35.

<sup>65</sup> Quoting Aycock in Gilmore, *White Supremacy*, 122.

Whites wore two masks – one displayed self-restraint, the other violence.<sup>66</sup> Any funding for education should be received as a gift and in a thankful manner. This was an act of white self-restraint and benevolence. However, if blacks wanted to press for civil rights, the events in Wilmington stood as a stark reminder of the consequences of such a folly. The New South industrialist Julian Carr spoke for many whites declaring black enfranchisement foolish and dangerous. Wearing the self-restraint mask, he fancied himself a true friend to blacks. Disfranchisement was neither a discriminatory act nor was it done from hate. Carr proclaimed, “We are going to give the colored people, pupil for pupil, exactly the same in dollars and cents as is devoted to the free education of the whites.”<sup>67</sup>

According to historian John Haley, the deal brokered on black education was an act of catharsis for whites arising from guilt after the ugly politics of the 1890s. If blacks abandoned politics, then whites consented to provide for the social welfare needs of blacks, building schools and orphanages.<sup>68</sup> When Aycock ascended to the Governor’s Mansion in 1900, he plotted a progressive education policy that included blacks. In one speech he stated:

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<sup>66</sup> Stephen Kantrowitz, “The Two Faces of Domination in North Carolina, 1800 – 1898,” in David S. Cecelski and Tim Tyson, ed., *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1998), 96. For other perspectives on the Wilmington Race Massacre see Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion of Politics in North Carolina, 1894-1901* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1951); Leon H. Prather, Sr., *We Have Taken a City: Wilmington Racial Massacre and Coup of 1898* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 1984); For a discussion of the impact of the Populist Movement in North Carolina on education see Prather, *Resurgent Politics and Educational Progressivism in the New South: North Carolina, 1890-1913* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1979), 119 – 204; Dwight Billings, *Planters and the Making of the a “New South”: Class, Politics, and Development in North Carolina, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of Chapel Hill Press, 1979), 188 - 212.

<sup>67</sup> John Haley, “Race, Rhetoric, and Revolution,” in *Democracy Betrayed*, 215.

<sup>68</sup> John Haley, *Charles N. Hunter and Race Relations in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1987), 132, 137.

So I repeat I am in favor of educating the negro and you are too, but you don't know it. I know the work we have done along this line doesn't seem to have done much good. The trouble is we haven't done it right. The negroes aren't as well educated today as they were before the war. Then they came in contact with their white masters and mistresses and knew what to do and how to do.<sup>69</sup>

Aycock, addressing the Negro State Fair in 1901, reaffirmed his commitment to the right kind of black education. Wearing both the mask of self-restraint and violence, he mixed the promise of a better tomorrow with threats of calamity. If Negroes learned obedience to the law and worked hard, then progress would surely follow. However, any violation of segregation “always has been and always will be inexorable, and it need not concern you or me whether the law is violated elsewhere. . . . Its violation would be to your destruction”<sup>70</sup> Three years removed from the Wilmington *coup d'état*, blacks around the state understood the carrot and stick dangled before them. The state would support some form of rudimentary black education, but whites controlled the nature and direction of policy.

Seeing the gains of the previous years erode before them, some black leaders retreated into a posture of Washingtonian accommodation. Simon G. Atkins from the Slater Industrial School in Winston Salem reassured whites that blacks understood post-fusionist politics. According to Atkins, disfranchisement was not an attack on black rights, but a call to put self-improvement before politics. Blacks should remain in the South, “stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.”<sup>71</sup> Atkins also suggested that

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<sup>69</sup> Charles B. Aycock, “Extracts from the Speeches of Governor Aycock,” Charles B. Aycock Papers, State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

<sup>70</sup> Charles Aycock, “Address to the Negro State Fair,” 29 October 1901, Charles B. Aycock Papers, State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

<sup>71</sup> “Writes an Open Letter to North Carolina Negroes,” No Paper Title, 14 August 1900, Fiche 18, Hampton Peabody Newspaper Clipping File, UNC-Chapel Hill.



slavery might well have been a blessing in disguise for blacks. Though brought over in chains, the Civil War and emancipation offered real opportunities for black advancement in America. James E. Shepard, who established a school in Durham in 1910, reflected many of Atkins's sentiments. Slavery, though brutal, permitted the civilizing of a savage. "This bondage brought him a language, and he now speaks the English tongue." Continuing Shepard prophesized a radiant future as blacks learned the "message of manhood." Stopping short of acknowledging white claims of innate black inferiority, Shepard accepted notions of blunted black social and cultural evolution. "All races," maintained Shepard, "have had to pass through years of training of progress then failure – of progress then failure – and then the final success."<sup>72</sup>

Therefore, as Newbold took the helm of black education in North Carolina, the guiding philosophy was already in place. White Southerners took antebellum ideas of Southern honor, refitting them for the twentieth century. In the Old South whites viewed gift giving as an expression of their honor. Slave-owners believed that everything given to enslaved blacks including food and lodging were not earned through labor, but instead were gifts from whites. Now progressive whites promised blacks the gift of a basic education.

In 1913 the prospects for black education seemed dire. Overall spending for public education rose in the years between 1912 and 1914, but the lion's share of revenue flowed to white education. For the most part North Carolina remained a rural agriculturally based economy, though it was possibly the most industrialized state of the

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<sup>72</sup> "A Voice From the South," No Paper Title, 7 May 1908, Fiche 18; "The Negro As An American Citizen," 6 November 1903, No Paper Title Given, Fiche 103, Hampton Peabody Newspaper Clipping File, UNC-Chapel Hill.

old Confederacy. Education highlighted the great divide between industrialization and rural agriculture. Throughout the state 7,928 school houses dotted the landscape with close to 7,600 of those in rural areas. Out of that number, schools for whites outnumbered schools for blacks by two to one.<sup>73</sup>

Even more telling was the wide disparity in school property value. The average value of a school in an urban area was close to twenty times more than one in a rural area. Factoring in race makes the differential even more staggering. A white urban school typically cost around \$18,000 while a Black school was a little over \$4,000. In rural areas the pattern for white and black schools held with the former valued at close to \$850 for white and at \$250 for black. Funds for construction filtered into white rural schools apace at nine times the rate for blacks.<sup>74</sup> Beyond the numbers teacher accounts relay the same message; black education proceeded in a state of duress. Reports from black teachers noted schools in shabby physical condition and inadequate or nonexistent educational materials.<sup>75</sup>

Carolínians in rural areas shared a hard-scrabble agricultural life of poverty. Even though the state's industrialization continued to grow, from an output of goods equaling ten million dollars in 1870 to one billion dollars by 1920, a majority of the population remained tied to an agricultural economy. As the market for cash crops ebbed and flowed, so did the farmers' and the farm workers' finances. Between the years 1900 and

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<sup>73</sup> Biennial Report, Superintendent of Public Instruction – North Carolina, Scholastic Years 1912 – 1913 and 1913 – 1914, 7-8, Department of Public Instruction, State Library, Raleigh, NC.

<sup>74</sup> Biennial Report, Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1912 – 1914, 9.

<sup>75</sup> JR Faison to NC Newbold, 11 June 1913; Annie EB White to NC Newbold, 12 June 1913, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

1920 eighty to ninety percent of Carolinians resided in rural areas.<sup>76</sup> For blacks living in rural areas the vast majority worked as tenant farmers or farm laborers. Public education in North Carolina rested on a combination of funds derived from state and local taxes. Rural counties had a limited tax base and whites were reluctant to see much of their money flowing into education, let alone black education.

Nathan Carter's earliest views on black education are largely unknown. However, Joyner's trust in Newbold's racial vision, evidenced by the heavy recruitment, may give a clue. Joyner expressed his opinion on African Americans, race relations, and education in the Superintendent's Biennial Report. When Joyner recommended Newbold for the position, he felt certain that Newbold was not given to radical ideas about education. According to Joyner, black education remained a "most perplexing problem."<sup>77</sup> Foremost, black education received only enough monies for the most basic education. To mollify white fears of blacks getting too uppity and forgetting their place, he assured whites that "nobody need have any real concern about turning the negro's head by the study of Latin and Greek and other higher branches of learning."<sup>78</sup> Joyner wanted funds flowing to black education, but openly embraced a financial disparity resulting from white privilege, stating blacks "ought not to have as much per capita for the education of their children."<sup>79</sup> Therefore, taxes would continue to go towards black

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<sup>76</sup> Joe Mobley, *The Way We Lived in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2003), 355 – 357, 361, 368; Hugh Lefler, *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1973), 576.

<sup>77</sup> Biennial Report, Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1912 – 1914, 56.

<sup>78</sup> Biennial Report, Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1912 – 1914, 57.

<sup>79</sup> Biennial Report, Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1912 – 1914, 57.

education, but only in the forms of agricultural and industrial education intended to instill morality and a work ethic.

Joyner also trumpeted a guaranteed but limited black education that must be managed by whites. Harking back to the mythology of the Old South, he envisioned a past full of happy and content Negroes working on plantations with their humane masters. Under the tutelage of masters, joyful slaves learned the skills necessary for productive work and the morals of an advanced civilization. But this ultimate industrial school ceased to exist after the Civil War. During Reconstruction unscrupulous teachers and leaders enticed the black community with toxic notions of citizenship, work, and leisure. Enlightened whites must “no longer leave the blind to lead the blind.”<sup>80</sup> Moreover, catastrophe lay around the bend. Blacks seemed determined to leave rural areas seeking better schools, leaving behind only the slothful.<sup>81</sup>

No doubt Newbold struck Joyner as a man of a similar mindset to himself and the right temperament for the job. Just four years earlier in 1909, Joyner weathered a dustup over Negro Education that reinforced the minefield that black education posed to even the most conservative Southerner. The former Superintendent for Colored Normal Schools, Charles L. Coon, caused a stir with a speech given at the Conference for Southern Education. Papers in the western part of the state reported on the speech several months later. Josephus Daniels, race-baiter and no stranger to demonizing Negroes, jumped on the story. Relying on second hand accounts, Daniels charged Coon with stating that blacks paid far more in taxes than they received in tangible benefits. By Daniels’ estimation, Coon had asserted that the “white people have been in fact sponging

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<sup>80</sup> Biennial Report, Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1912 – 1914, 59.

<sup>81</sup> Biennial Report, Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1912 – 1914, 61.

on the poor negro.”<sup>82</sup> Moreover, following that line of reasoning, whites contributed very little to the education of blacks in the South. Joyner, perhaps to undergird his own standing, provided Daniels a hodgepodge of statistics to refute Coon’s claim.<sup>83</sup>

Coon responded that at best he was misquoted and at the worst he was the object of demagoguery. According to Coon, the speech, which Daniels had not read, responded to a question about blacks being an unfair tax burden on the whites. Blacks paid their fair share of the taxes for education, but he never meant to suggest that whites contributed little to black education. Furthermore, Joyner’s support of Daniels’ erroneous statements stood in direct contradiction with his own Biennial Reports, which actually mirrored Coon’s educational philosophy. The former education governor himself, Charles B. Aycock, promised to take Joyner and Daniels to task for trying to stir up a controversy where none existed.<sup>84</sup>

Coon’s flap with Daniels reinforced the notion that whites in the state refused to accept even the slightest breach in the accepted policy for educating African Americans. For Joyner then, Newbold possessed the delicate tact and diplomacy needed for the tinderbox of black education. Newbold spoke with a soft voice, seeking compromise instead of confrontation. Rarely did he raise his voice even when upset or angry. Additionally, as a true son of the South, he understood and agreed with the region’s racial ideology. Moreover, Newbold possessed a deep empathy for the travails of administrators struggling to educate students. Though not able to comprehend the reality

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<sup>82</sup> “Negroes Not Paying More Than They Get,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, 25 September 1909; “Mr Coon’s Mare’s Nest,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, 26 September 1909.

<sup>83</sup> “Negroes Not Paying More Than They Get,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, 25 September 1909.

<sup>84</sup> “Mr. Coon Says He Never Said It,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, 28 September 1909; RDW Connor to Charles L. Coon, 29 September 1909, Charles L. Coon Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

of being black in the Jim Crow South, he understood some of the challenges of trying to educate while in a state of financial duress. Newbold's feeling that debt cursed his well-being and constricted his opportunities sowed the seeds for a sympathetic approach to blacks' complaints about building schools on little more than sweat and hard work.

James Joyner orchestrated a multi-front rollout for his new Associate State Supervisor of Rural Elementary Schools. Mayors, county officials, farmer's unions, college educators, and local chambers of commerce all received information and a job description of the new position. To forestall concerns that a radicalization of black education was at hand, Joyner urged these various constituencies to support the development of industrial education for blacks. During a time when some whites feared that even a basic education ruined blacks for field labor, Joyner's press release sought to reassure whites that Newbold did not represent nefarious interests hostile to Southern ideals.<sup>85</sup>

Accordingly, the position, though not funded by the state, directly answered to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. There would be very little opportunity for a freewheeling approach to black education. Newbold would contact the black schools through the local superintendents and work with the industrial supervising teachers who also reported to the local superintendents, ensuring the continued provincial control of black education. Negro teacher training also fell under his purview, and would be geared toward teaching youth to be "useful dwellers" and "more thrifty citizens for the state."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> "Plan to Explain Work of the State Supervisors of Elementary Schools, White and Colored, and to Encourage Cooperation"; Informational and Explanatory Letter about Industrial Work in Public Schools of the State," Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>86</sup> "Plan to Explain Work of the State Supervisors of Elementary Schools, White and Colored, and to Encourage Cooperation"; Informational and Explanatory Letter about Industrial Work in Public Schools of the State," Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

Newbold's first months on the job involved getting to know the black educators and industrial teachers around the state, as well as visiting different school districts. In September 1913 he traveled to Chowan County to promote school consolidation and local taxation. At a stop in Cumberland County he applauded blacks speaking the language of interracial cooperation. But the speeches paled in comparison to an afternoon parade. Though having supervised black teachers on the local level for many years, the procession seemed a shock to the senses. He was pleasantly surprised on seeing nicely appointed buggies pulled by handsome horses with nicely attired black owners. White notions of black depravity parted in the wake of the "well mannered crowd." Surprisingly, Newbold reported, "there was no boisterousness either on the streets, in the parade, or at the school. The white people remarked upon the good order."<sup>87</sup> Southern white conceptions of a chaotic black life and culture co-existed with a progressive approach to education.

Though he had served previous assignments as a school superintendent, Newbold seemingly experienced his first prolonged professional contact with blacks after becoming the State Agent. Traveling the state he found black schools consistently crowded and poorly equipped, pointedly calling them "typical southern Negro schools."<sup>88</sup> The meetings with local blacks struck Newbold as excitingly exotic and reminiscent of camp meeting revivals. "It was interesting," Newbold recalled, "sometimes almost thrilling to sit and listen to those who talked."<sup>89</sup> Over the course of the visit the mask of

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<sup>87</sup> "Report of NC Newbold – State Supervisor of Negro Rural Schools for NC," September 1913, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>88</sup> "Report of NC Newbold," January 1914, Box 16, Special Subjects File, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>89</sup> "Report of NC Newbold," January 1914, Box 16, Special Subjects File, DNE, State Archives.

dissemblance worn by blacks momentarily slipped away. At one event black citizens openly declared that their schools received less than their fair share of money. But the mask quickly came back in to place as “some declared it a god-send that two white men should come out to talk with them, and to advise them as to means for their uplift.”<sup>90</sup>

Education reform was to define his career. Early on, Newbold hoped to revamp the teacher education program. As noted earlier, Joyner believed agricultural and industrial work the best training to prepare blacks for the New South’s economy. Following Joyner’s lead, Newbold advocated a curriculum for summer institutes that included training in canning and growing vegetables. On the domestic front teachers should stress proper sanitation and home decoration. Hands-on learning by doing pedagogy took precedence over the abstract and lecturing. Black boys needed to gain increased knowledge in the manual arts. At the turn of the century progressives wanted the agricultural economy in North Carolina to move in the direction of scientific farming. State College in Raleigh promoted the use of modern technology in agriculture and raising livestock. Therefore, blacks needed enough education to efficiently labor in the changing South.<sup>91</sup>

To promote this vision of teacher training and education for black pupils, a conference on Negro Education convened in December 1913 at the Washington Graded School in Raleigh. For two days seventy-nine black educators, businessmen, and professionals attended the meeting. James H. Dillard made an appearance representing

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<sup>90</sup> “Report of NC Newbold,” January 1914, Box 16, Special Subjects File, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>91</sup> “Suggestions for Industrial Teachers, For Institutes, 1913”; NC Newbold to Maud Barnard, 31 July 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.



the Jeanes and Slater Funds, as well as Thomas Jesse Jones from the United States Bureau of Education. The conference served as a coming out party. First, it introduced Newbold in a formal setting to some of the leadership in the black community. Participants included influential educators such as James B. Dudley from the normal school in Greensboro, Charlotte Hawkins Brown from the Palmer Memorial Institute, Ezekiel E. Smith from Fayetteville's normal school, and Sarah Delaney from Raleigh. Simon G. Atkins from the Slater State Normal School thought the confab a success. In a state where black education might be used by demagogues to rally resentment among whites, any olive branch extended by a white official brought cautious optimism from black educators.<sup>92</sup>

Second, the presence of Dillard, Jones, and Joyner officially bestowed the mantle of leadership on Newbold. Their attendance reinforced that not only did he have the state's support, but also the backing of Northern philanthropists as well. The speeches from Jones and Joyner dripped with condescension and paternalism. Thomas Jones expressed joy at finding the dormitories at Shaw University and St. Augustine's college clean and tidy. James Joyner again beat the drum for the right kind of Negro education "so shaped that the sphere to which he is adapted might be more fully developed, thus better fitting the man for service." The task of furnishing such an education in North Carolina fell to the leadership of Newbold with the aid of the black men and women in attendance.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> "Report of NC Newbold," December 1913; SG Atkins to NC Newbold, 16 December 1913, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives; "Minutes First NC Conference for Negro Education," December 1913, Box 16, Special Subjects File, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>93</sup> "Minutes First NC Conference for Negro Education," December 1913, Box 16, Special Subjects File, DNE, State Archives.

Even as progressive whites cautiously supported an industrial education for blacks, there was at least one who thought it a possible disaster. Clarence Poe argued that whites, not blacks, really needed an industrial education. Giving blacks industrial education before whites put “future civilization” at risk. The continued emphasis that manual labor belonged solely in the domain of blacks “will be ruinous for our race.” The embracing of Booker T. Washington’s philosophy propelled industrial instruction among blacks, leaving whites on a slippery slope in an agricultural state.<sup>94</sup> However, a local superintendent pointed out improving black schools proved beneficent to white attitudes about education in general. Having built a “satisfactory school” for African Americans, Superintendent Attmore noted, spurred “white people to provide better buildings for their own race.”<sup>95</sup> Promoting black education and stability challenged whites to not get left behind.

The responses of Attmore and Poe reveal a tension within education, especially white and black Southern education that had been going on for at least a decade. With the embrace by some white leaders of a limited manual and industrial education for blacks, it inadvertently created a stigma for industrial education in general. Poe was not alone in his assertions. Throughout the South whites complained that some students turned away from industrial education because of its association with blacks. One man lamented that there were more blacks enrolled at Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee than all of the white Southern industrial schools combined. Many young white men and

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<sup>94</sup> Clarence Poe to NC Newbold, 5 December 1913, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>95</sup> “Report of NC Newbold – State Supervisor of Negro Rural Schools for NC,” September 1913, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

women considered an industrial education a hindrance to moving up the social ladder. Another white commenter suggested that white dominance in an industrial order was undermined if the ruling class did not have the same skills as those they lorded over.<sup>96</sup>

Echoing the sentiments of Clarence Poe, whites argued industrial education should be adapted from the black model to better prepare whites for the New South. The founder of Hull House and modern social work, Jane Addams, spoke in support of the “humanitarianism and idealistic side of industrial education” and the promise of increased prosperity.<sup>97</sup> Inherent in the debate was the assumption the South had settled the issue of race and class after Reconstruction ended. Segregation permitted existence in the South of two classes: one white, one black. But in reality Jim Crow was far from a settled affair. Even as progressive white Southerners inveighed that “separate but equal” humanely settled the race question, blacks and whites negotiated over the very meaning of the phrase.

Resistance to even rudimentary black education infected discussions by Southern educational reformers. For example, Southern progressives pushed for compulsory education for students. Northern reformers reasoned that the South needed compulsory education to force change on a region that lacked the will to face the future. Without laws mandating attendance the “white population will continue to be too lazy and too

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<sup>96</sup> “Practical Side of Education,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 6 December 1900, Fiche 208; “Industrial Training for Southern Whites,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 10 March 1901, Fiche 208, Hampton University Peabody Newspaper Clipping File, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>97</sup> “A Lesson From the South,” No paper name listed, 27 April 1901, Fiche 208; “Industrial Education: Great Meeting of Whites Who Want It For Themselves,” *New York Age*, 22 November 1906, Fiche 208, Hampton University Peabody Newspaper Clipping File, UNC-Chapel Hill.

shiftless to care to learn even to read and write.”<sup>98</sup> Southern educators agreed with such views. Many educators reasoned that compulsory education laws challenged white Southerners’ traditional sense of provincial control. Therefore, the state must step in to protect the interest of the student. Professor W.H. Hand from the University of South Carolina argued compulsory education forced “an indifferent, selfish, heartless parent to let his child go to school.”<sup>99</sup>

Like other reforms, compulsory education ran headway into the prevailing winds of separate but equal. White southerners who opposed reform quickly made race the primary reason for their opposition. Not only would whites surrender their personal and local control over affairs, reform threatened the very foundation of the existing political order. Southern states restricted manhood suffrage by using literacy tests and education. If blacks achieved basic literacy, then it would not be long before a return to the politics of Reconstruction. Blacks would use their education as leverage to register and vote in elections. Theoretically at least, the Fourteenth and the Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution limited the ability of Southerners to openly discriminate, so the white South must be diligent and protect their primary means of political dominance.<sup>100</sup>

White North Carolinians skipped the political argument turning instead to the ever ready canard on labor. The state’s Labor Commissioner reportedly received letters from

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<sup>98</sup> No Title, Bridgeport, CT *Standard*, 14 May 190\_(last digit unintelligible), Hampton University Peabody Newspaper Clipping File, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>99</sup> “Schools in the South,” Hartford, CT *Times*, 2 May 190\_(last digit unintelligible), Fiche 252, Hampton University Peabody Newspaper Clipping File, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>100</sup> “Compulsory Education and White Supremacy,” New Orleans *Picayune*, 10 May (Year unintelligible), Fiche 252, Hampton Peabody Newspaper Clipping File, UNC-Chapel Hill. For a discussion of Radical Reconstruction see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 228 - 281.

farmers across the state. The vast majority of them supported compulsory education, but only if it benefited whites only. Mandating school attendance threatened blacks' readiness for agricultural labor.<sup>101</sup>

It was at this intersection of economics, race and education that Newbold would spend his entire career. For the next four decades his views on education and race evolved, sometimes pushed along by exposure to black educators, sometimes out of political expediency, and at other times riding the wave of southern reform movements. His core beliefs did not readily change – separate but equal was the best means to order race relations in the American South. However, as the decades passed, the focus would shift increasingly from focusing on the “separate” to the acquisition of “equal” educational opportunities for blacks in North Carolina. What Newbold could not possibly foretell was that the push for “equal” education served to only whet black appetites to end segregation in education and public life.

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<sup>101</sup> “Educate Whites, Not Blacks,” *New York Herald*, 19 July 1905, Fiche 252, Hampton Peabody Clipping File, UNC-Chapel Hill.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE ERA OF GOOD FEELINGS AND THE PAPER TIGER

Newbold's position as state agent placed him in the middle of the conundrum whites referred to as the "Negro Problem." Since Reconstruction a debate raged about how whites should deal with the newly emancipated freedmen. One Southern commentator proffered that the possible solutions fell into three different categories. First, the ultra-philanthropists in the North and South hoped to lift blacks to full equality with whites. The means to achieve these goals required extending to blacks a full education and political rights. For this southerner these ultra-philanthropists constituted starry-eyed dreamers divorced from the reality of life in the South. Second, the conservative extreme called for maintaining a racial caste that utilized blacks as both a servile class and for entertainment. These reactionaries used violence to ensure that the South's racial caste remained firmly entrenched. Lastly, there was a group that envisioned a truly separate society, the end result of a systematic plan of removal similar to the resettlement of Native Americans. Led by industrious leaders like Booker T. Washington, blacks could build their own country and civilization entirely separate from whites. White Southerners need not fear because there were enough indolent and content blacks among the population to constitute a cheap labor source for the New South.<sup>1</sup>

Another observer of Southern life suggested a much bolder solution to the "Negro Problem." While there were a few hardworking and amiable blacks willing to accept

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<sup>1</sup> "The Future of the Negro – The Race Problem as it Appears to a Southern Woman," No Paper Title Given, 3 July 1899, Fiche 419, Hampton Peabody Newspaper Clippings, UNC-Chapel Hill.

their position in the South, the vast majority required whites to aggressively intervene. “The whole body of negroes [sic] who do not progress, who are degenerating into . . . social burdens or actual criminals, should be taken hold of by the state.”<sup>2</sup> An industrial army with forced “enlistment” fulfilled the region’s labor needs while simultaneously reasserting white control over blacks.

Throughout the South a running dialogue continued. Though whites settled on the idea of segregation, there was still a great deal of negotiation over the best means to implement the policy. Blacks themselves sought to navigate the indeterminable spaces opened by the developing segregationist policy. As a means for uplift, control, and social conditioning, education became the progressives’ approach to the “Negro Problem.” Governor Aycock envisioned a new “era of good feelings” developing when blacks better understood the virtue of work and improved their morals. The burden rested on blacks themselves to inculcate a “toleration of the black man” among white Southerners.<sup>3</sup> The task fell to men like Newbold to transform those sentiments from words to reality. For progressive white southerners, black education presented the most humane solution to the riddle of race relations.

The very notion of black education was in and of itself a tinderbox. Though many whites trumpeted Booker T. Washington as the greatest Negro leader of his generation, others feared his influence. One social critic considered Washington the most dangerous man in America. Even Washington’s limited approach to education threatened to erode

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<sup>2</sup> “To Make the Negro Work,” Charlotte Perkins Gilman, No Paper Title Given, 10 October 1903, Fiche 419, Hampton Peabody Clipping File, UNC-Chapel Hill; For additional information on the white debates about the future of blacks in the South see Paul Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (New York: Knopf, 1970), 123 - 135.

<sup>3</sup> “Negroes in North Carolina,” Frederick Fries Bahnson, *Springfield Republican*, 26 August 1900, Fiche 18, Hampton Peabody Clipping File, UNC-Chapel Hill.

the very foundations of the South's caste system. North Carolina proved the fallacy of Washingtonian accommodation. According to this commentator, criminality rose in direct correlation with increased education. A reverend from South Carolina carried the critique even further, explaining the psychological impact of overeducating a Negro.

The better educated the negro [sic] is, the more unfit for service, the more unhappy and more vicious he becomes. Even where educated he has not the brain power to compete with the white man: naturally he goes down before the superior brain, becomes sour, jealous and ready to resort to devilment of any kind.<sup>4</sup>

Representative Hardwick from Georgia also cautioned against too much education for a race born to labor. Speaking to a Northern industrialist in 1904, Hardwick suggested that educated blacks faced "miserable, dissatisfied, and unhappy" futures.<sup>5</sup>

Blacks debated amongst themselves and with whites at large about whether a Washingtonian or more broad based education served the community best. Most African Americans generally supported some form of education. To be competitive in a capitalistic society required a basic education. "Shut him out from it," a black educator warned, "and tell him that learning hard work is learning enough for him, and you have left him on his back."<sup>6</sup> For many blacks the primary debate centered around the type of education, because the need for an education was a foregone conclusion. G.C. Shaw, a black educator from Oxford, NC, advocated a mix between industrial and liberal arts.

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<sup>4</sup> "Education for Negroes," 4 April 1903, *Richmond Times*, Fiche 46; "Rev. Dr. Bass on Negro Education," 1 March 1910, *Charleston Courier*, Fiche 208, Hampton Clipping File, UNC-Chapel Hill; For more on the debate on the proper form of education for African Americans see the following: Donald Spivey, *Schooling for the New Slavery: Black Industrial Education, 1868 – 1915* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1978); August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880 – 1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963).

<sup>5</sup> "Book Learning for Negro," 26 February 1904, No Paper Title, Fiche 218, Hampton Clipping File, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>6</sup> "Industrial Education," 14 November 1897, *Independent*, Fiche 208, Hampton Clipping File, UNC-Chapel Hill.



Responding to charges that depravity follows schooling, Shaw argued the real threat came from only training the hands because “undeveloped mental and moral qualities is [sic] generally a menace to society.”<sup>7</sup>

Speaking to a gathering of educators, African-American Hugh Brown perhaps reflected the ambivalence of many. Blacks need to be pragmatic in realizing that demands of equal education only stirred resistance among whites against any type of schooling. Therefore, it was better for black students to excel at the limited professions open to them, rather than pressing for the unrealistic. Kelly Miller, a noted sociologist, rejected those assertions pointing to Brown’s own higher education as proof of the need for both a working class and professional class.<sup>8</sup>

Newbold’s job placed him firmly at the center of the aforementioned debate. As the State Agent for Negro Education his job required turning political rhetoric into implementable public policy. The very fact that Newbold and his ilk supported any form of black education positioned them as progressives in the New South. Being progressive did not mean you were out of step with the South’s worldview of a biracial south built on the supposed inferiority of blacks. It does suggest a different means for achieving the same goal. Progressives routinely denounced violence and embraced using education for social engineering. In other words, with great care blacks might be conditioned to understand and accept their predetermined place in southern society.

There existed few, if any, statewide bureaucratic mechanisms for the implementation of any uniform segregationist educational policy. Newbold started out

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<sup>7</sup> “The Education of the Negro,” GC Shaw, 11 March 1901, *Charlotte Observer*, Fiche 218, Hampton Clipping File, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>8</sup> “Natural Elegance,” 25 July 1897, *Norfolk Virginian*, Fiche 173, Hampton Clipping File, UNC-Chapel Hill.

largely as a paper tiger. He possessed little more than a nice sounding title without control over a bureaucracy, a state agency, or a budget. With access to philanthropic funds, an affiliation with the Department of Public Instruction, and proximity to black activism, he was in a unique situation that afforded him the position to wield influence. Newbold operated in this seeming power vacuum and began fashioning an infrastructure for black education.

The General Education Board (GEB) designed the state agent position to function as one part public relations and one part bureaucrat. Northern philanthropists understood that for any plan to work in the South, it must have the full backing from Southern whites. Furthermore, northern whites were no more interested in pursuing notions of social equality than their southern brethren.

Moreover, public schools can be developed only through the leadership of the Southern white. Northern philanthropy may assist, as it has assisted and is assisting, generously, intelligently, and sympathetically. But the main privilege and responsibility necessarily rest at this juncture upon the South itself, and upon that part of the Southern people that is strongest in wealth, intelligence, and power.<sup>9</sup>

They envisioned the mass socialization and civilizing of southerners, both black and white, transitioning from an agricultural to industrial society. Public education provided the most uniform vehicle for such a transformation in the region.

The GEB and the Rockefeller Foundation rightfully surmised that southerners reacted coolly to outsiders pursuing or trying to set social policy. In the early twentieth century northern philanthropists pursued a grassroots approach. First, the reformist agenda should have the seal of approval from white Southerners on the state and local level. Second, the philanthropists provided the fiduciary means for creating a rudimentary

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<sup>9</sup> *The General Education Board: An Account of Its Activities, 1902 – 1914* (New York: The General Education Board, 1915), 192 – 193.

bureaucratic scaffolding. Third, white southern elites had to sell their brethren on the benefits of turning over control to a county or state bureaucrat. According to the GEB, the South possessed the will and desire to modernize. However, the absence of the necessary professional managers presented a “defect that the states themselves are not likely to remedy entirely at this time.”<sup>10</sup>

In keeping with the gloss of a grassroots movement, the GEB only extended financial aid for hiring a state agent if invited in by state officials. The state’s education department chose the agent. Though funded by the GEB, the chain of command put the agent under the direct control of the state superintendent, thereby gaining access to every educational administrative unit in the state. Additionally, the intertwined nature of the northern philanthropic boards provided a unique access to the flow of monies from various sources.<sup>11</sup> What was needed on the ground was a basic bureaucratic infrastructure.

The Jeanes supervisors proved themselves the most indispensable resource available to Nathan Carter Newbold. At the time of his hiring Jeanes teachers worked in various counties throughout North Carolina. Ostensibly their purpose included taking manual and industrial education into rural counties to improve black teachers’ pedagogy. White administrators’ indifference to black education practically made the Jeanes teacher the assistant superintendent in charge of Negro schools. These men and women greeted Newbold with stark portraits of hard work, despair, achievement, and sacrifice.

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<sup>10</sup> *The General Education Board: An Account of Its Activities, 1902 – 1914* (New York: The General Education Board, 1915), 185 – 187.

<sup>11</sup> *The General Education Board: An Account of Its Activities, 1902 – 1914* (New York: The General Education Board, 1915), 194 – 195.

Moreover, they provided an informal network on which to build an educational bureaucratic infrastructure.

Newbold envisioned the Jeanes teachers as foot soldiers spreading the gospel of progress through the right kind of black education. In Pasquotank County, the school administrative unit wanted to end the work performed by the supervisors. A letter from Newbold highlights both his delicate diplomatic approach to negotiations and his view of the work of Jeanes teachers. First, Newbold divided whites into the enlightened racial moderates and those who need to see the light. He suggested that the superintendent write “well-informed” or “fair minded” white professionals and businessmen in another county for a fair assessment of the value of Jeanes teachers. Newbold assured the superintendent that these men held firmly to the Southern concept of a “proper education of the negroes.” Yet they could also testify to the inherent worth of having Jeanes teachers in their county.<sup>12</sup>

Second, Newbold reminded the superintendent that the Jeanes teachers are under the direct control of local authorities and adhere to a Washingtonian philosophy of race relations. These are not radical teachers of Reconstructionist lore, but educators who want to share with “the colored people the kind of education and training that the Southern people have for years believed they should have.” Third, Newbold ties the interest of the white community directly to the education of blacks. Neglecting the black community also negatively impacted whites. For example, a measles or smallpox outbreak out among blacks “is next to impossible to prevent its spreading to their white

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<sup>12</sup> NC Newbold to WM Hinton, 9 September 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

neighbors.”<sup>13</sup> Jeanes teachers proved themselves valuable resources in educating blacks about proper health and sanitation.

Lastly, Newbold challenged the superintendent to embrace the possibilities of a New South. A kindred spirit from the South, Jackson Davis from the GEB, signed the checks but he left authority in the hands of local white men. Hinton could lead his county into the twentieth century. But if he chose stagnation over moving forward, then other “progressive counties” surely welcomed the opportunity to hire his supervisor.<sup>14</sup>

Almost from the very beginning, civility and professionalism marked Newbold’s relationships with Jeanes teachers. Though Jim Crow expectations of black deference to white authority existed, a space existed for dialogue between the educators and the state agent. In 1914 the North Carolina Negro Teachers’ Association asked Newbold to put together a presentation for a program called Rural School Day. In turn Newbold asked for input from several Jeanes teachers. The approach reveals a great deal about his bureaucratic outlook. He exhibited openness to listening to less than flattering portraits of black education, within certain limits. Black educators always remembered to measure educational shortfalls against the earnest efforts of right-thinking and progressive whites. Newbold, however, requested black educators tell him “things as they are . . . Just take one of your poorest school houses, describe it in detail, appearance, inside and out . . . old, rotten, dilapidated.”<sup>15</sup> The emphasis he placed on “as they are” indicates a desire to move beyond platitudes about progress and provide factual accounts of the conditions.

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<sup>13</sup> NC Newbold to WM Hinton, 9 September 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>14</sup> NC Newbold to WM Hinton, 9 September 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>15</sup> NC Newbold to Lucy Prichard, CLW Smith, and JR Faison, 1 June 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

Certainly a conference of black educators would not be impressed with him trumpeting successes which failed to match their daily reality.

Very early in his career Newbold seemed comfortable interacting with black professionals, at least educators. Unlike some Southern whites who feared educating blacks paved the road to ruin, Newbold believed that modernizing the South required improving the education of all Southerners. Jeanes teachers were the means to begin achieving that goal. This did not mean support for an unfettered education geared toward liberal arts. However, nor did it imply an acceptance of a rudimentary education as qualification for teaching. A school superintendent asked for guidance in hiring a Jeanes teacher. Newbold rejected one applicant as too academically weak, promising to find the administrator a better educated candidate for the position.<sup>16</sup>

Though Newbold appreciated the bureaucratic potential gained from working with the Jeanes teachers, superintendents at times exhibited a more ambivalent attitude. First, one might have to overcome the administrators' aversion to hiring a Jeanes supervisor seeing them as meddling, a nuisance, or an unworthy financial investment. Second, even after clearing that hurdle, the school district's administrative unit might throw up a road block. In 1915 the superintendent of Pasquotank County thought it useless to discuss bringing back a supervisor. One board member, J.M. LeRoy, "seems to take a delight in playing to Race prejudice and using his official position to stir up petty factional jealousies."<sup>17</sup> Newbold tried to maneuver around the board's objections,

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<sup>16</sup> BT McBryde to NC Newbold, 12 June 1916; NC Newbold to BT McBryde, 13 June 1916, Box 2, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>17</sup> WM Hinton to NC Newbold, 20 March 1915, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

suggesting the supervisor get paid directly from GEB funds without contributions from the county.<sup>18</sup>

Several months later superintendent Hinton reported minimal thawing in attitudes stating, “The members exhibited no interest at all, in fact, they said plainly that they did not care to try it any longer. . . . Of course they are making a big mistake, a mistake that will affect the whites as well as the negroes, for years.”<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, Newbold continued to advocate for a Jeanes supervisor. He contacted an elected official in Elizabeth City asking him to broach the subject with the board in a “diplomatic way. . . . I shall be glad, however, if you don’t let it be known that I have brought the matter to your attention because I don’t want to take the position that I am trying to force the County Board in any way.”<sup>20</sup> The ever present fear of white backlash against black education demanded vigilance and careful treading when it came to negotiating with local leaders.

Generally, southern communities viewed bureaucratic agencies as an infringement on their right to make decisions locally. Specifically, southerners believed educational policy should not be dictated by the state, let alone by Northern financed scalawags. Jeanes teachers provided a subtle way to carefully circumvent the problem. Though financed partially by Northern philanthropists, they served at the discretion of the superintendents and local governance.

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<sup>18</sup> Under this plan, the Supervisor would continue the HomeMaker’s Club work for at least the summer. NC Newbold to WM Hinton, 23 March 1915, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>19</sup> WM Hinton to NC Newbold, 7 July 1915, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>20</sup> NC Newbold to WL Cohoon, 2 August 1915, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

Newbold tapped into the existing Jeanes network of black educators. Their early reports highlight the educators' and the black communities' endeavors in support of black schools. For example, a report from Johnston County describes students walking six miles to attend school. Jeanes teacher C. L. W. Smith moved his family into the school serving as the de facto everyman. His responsibilities included repairs to school property and the physical plant, working to obtain furniture, performing clerical work, and initiating a tax drive to raise money for the school.<sup>21</sup>

Their monthly progress reports detailed Jeanes teachers' various activities. Duplin County's Jeanes teacher raised money for both physical repairs and to fund an industrial class. Another teacher organized an Improvement League to paint a school's interior. In Gates County Annie Holland brought in community entertainment to raise money.<sup>22</sup> Holland appealed to the local church for support. The pastor and deacon board formed a committee to encourage industrial education.<sup>23</sup>

Another Jeanes teacher, W.S. Creecy, recalled arriving in a school barren of desks. To raise the money for the new furniture Creecy charged the students a small tuition. The funding shortage created a recurring predicament for supervisors. F.C. Williams decried the "terrible high cost of living" and declared that the out-of-pocket

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<sup>21</sup> "Report on Johnston County Training Schools," by WTB Williams, 26 March 1915, Box 2, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives; For more information on the role of teachers and Jeanes supervisors see Fultz, Michael, "African American Teachers in the South, 1890 – 1940: Powerlessness and The Ironies of Expectations and Protest." *History of Education Quarterly* 35 (Winter 1995): 401-422; Valinda Littlefield, "I am Only One, but I am One: Southern African American School-Teachers, 1884 – 1954." Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2003.

<sup>22</sup> "Progress Report," January 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>23</sup> Report from Annie Holland, 8 August 1914, Box1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.



“expenses are awful.”<sup>24</sup> A Jeanes supervisor entered the field not necessarily for the money. Even though the job paid better than many others open to them in the South and provided an air of professionalism, one needed an almost missionary zeal. Supervisor C.D. Smith pointed out that a lack of proper training hamstrung many teachers in their endeavors to teach industrial education. To remedy the situation Smith started a three week summer program charging teachers a small fee. The school board agreed to partially underwrite the cost and made attendance compulsory for teachers.<sup>25</sup> When teachers expressed weariness or frustration, Newbold offered gentle encouragement such as “I feel sure you can get some good results.”<sup>26</sup> Newbold’s past experience with debt mixed with Southern paternalism created empathy for the financial travails of the Jeanes teachers. It also fostered a sense of optimism, and at times willful naiveté about black education.

Working with the Jeanes teachers put Newbold in contact with middle class educated black women. Perhaps their gender allowed them more freedom than black men to lobby whites for improvements in education. Though C.D. Smith met with success in setting up a summer program, other Jeanes teachers encountered a great deal of resistance. As demonstrated above, Jeanes teachers’ proactive approach predates Newbold’s hiring. However, some of the teachers sensed that Newbold offered a voice to advocate on their behalf within a white power structure. Charlotte Hawkins Brown and

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<sup>24</sup> WS Creecy to NC Newbold, 8 January 1914, Box 1; FC Williams to NC Newbold, 14 May 1917, Box 3, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>25</sup> CD Smith to NC Newbold, 10 June 1913, Box 1, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>26</sup> NC Newbold to Lenora Cooke, 29 April 1914, Box 1, DNE, State Archives.

Mary Battle provide two examples of Newbold essentially running to jump on a moving train.

Following a statewide conference on black education in the fall of 1913, Charlotte Hawkins Brown sought to convert her privately held school into a public training school for the instruction of rural teachers. Two years earlier an effort to convert her private institution into a public school had met with resistance. At that time local officials welcomed a public high school for blacks, but only if not supported by local taxes. John Rockefeller suggested to a supporter of Brown's efforts that with "it will never be possible to induce the people of the South to tax themselves . . . so long as individuals can be found in the North who will support" black private schools.<sup>27</sup>

In many respects Newbold represented a new avenue for Brown to press her case. She informed Newbold that the school held over \$35,000 worth of property and assets. Additionally, the school constituted her life's work and she worked without any real compensation. Newbold embraced the plan to make Palmer Memorial Institute into a training school. Brown encountered ambivalence from the local school board who were willing to neither assume the school's debt nor divert monies from the white schools to fund a black high school. She courted Newbold to throw the influence of the state behind the plan and to lobby the local authorities. Without the support of the county the plan essentially stalled. Newbold counseled patience with an eye towards trying again next year.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> John Rockefeller, Jr to Mrs. Osborne W. Bright, GEB Papers, Folder NC 165, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>28</sup> Charlotte Hawkins Brown to NC Newbold, 28 January 1914; NC Newbold to CH Brown, 4 February 1914; Report of NC Newbold, March 1914; CH Brown to NC Newbold, 28 April 1914; NC Newbold to CH Brown, 30 April 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

The exercise in patience lasted for about two months. Brown again contacted Newbold, this time seeking help to secure philanthropic funds. Noting that if the county still refused to fund a high school, public or private, she hoped philanthropic money might fill the breach. The plan shifted from starting a training school to hiring two industrial teachers. This signifies his growing importance not only as a state agent, but also in securing funds for black education. For African American women educators, Newbold became the white conduit for meeting educational needs in North Carolina. Concealing a sense of frustration, Brown attempted to navigate around Newbold by directly contacting Abraham Flexner at the General Education Board only to be rebuffed. According to Flexner the only path to monies ran through Newbold and the county superintendent.<sup>29</sup> Increasingly, the philanthropic bureaucratic infrastructure required request for monies flow through Newbold's office.

Brown also asked for an introduction to a man whose organization would play a central role in Newbold's future, Julius Rosenwald. The letter to Rosenwald served several purposes. First, it validated Brown with the white philanthropist as a "safe Negro" who understood and supported the accommodationist approach to education. Bearing the double identity of race and gender in a white patriarchal society, it was important for Brown to have the validation of a white southerner, especially a man. Her years of work and her record of service did not suffice. She implored Newbold to speak to her qualifications and recommend the school for money. Newbold obligingly wrote to Rosenwald, referring to Brown as a "wise leader among her people" who practices fiscal

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<sup>29</sup> CH Brown to NC Newbold, 10 June 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives; CH Brown to Abraham Flexner, 28 January 1915; Abraham Flexner to CH Brown, 5 February 1915, Folder NC 165, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

responsibility. There was little risk, according to Newbold, that any monies attained by Brown might be misappropriated.<sup>30</sup>

Second, it created an opportunity for Newbold to formally introduce himself to Rosenwald and present his Southern moderate credentials. Newbold identified himself as a “native born Southern white man,” who fully understood “conditions in our state.”<sup>31</sup>

Though Newbold sent the letter, he attempted at the same time to dampen Brown’s expectations for immediate monies from philanthropic organizations. Funds may not be readily available and they may have to try again next year. This may have been a ploy wittingly developed by Newbold over the years in dealing with African Americans. Down play expectations so that any success, big or small, was amplified. It also aided in the cultivation of an image as a cautious diplomat. On the one hand he suggested that African Americans take their time and not push for too much too fast and always work within the system. On the other hand he could relentlessly pursue monies for African American education and not be perceived as a failure if he did not accomplish his goal.

Newbold’s interactions with Mary Battle, a supervisor in Greene County, highlight the high wire diplomacy he employed. Battle wanted to establish a training school in Greene County. Starting the school required both appropriations from outside philanthropic sources and the support of local administrators. Based on her reading of the situation, the people of Greene County are “willing to be lead [sic] to the right.” The county presented great opportunities for educational advancement and the superintendent

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<sup>30</sup> NC Newbold to J Rosenwald, 13 June 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>31</sup> NC Newbold to J Rosenwald, 13 June 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

supported her efforts permitting the organization of a two day teachers' conference that included the topics of sewing, carpentry, cooking, and sanitation.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the progress made, Mary Battle approached the situation in Greene County with great caution. A prerequisite for attaining funding for a training school required the local school administrative unit have full authority over said property. Battle feared that surrendering control of the school would essentially mean the local authorities gained control without guaranteeing the school's funding.<sup>33</sup> Newbold proposed an alliance between Mary Battle and the superintendent. In a creative approach to the problem, he recommended Battle and Debnam put forward a special tax district that would include the school's property. As a result, the school would receive the necessary appropriations.<sup>34</sup>

Even though he constantly recommended humble fealty to the southern order, Newbold continued to lobby and to work for Battle to acquire the needed monies. He asked James Dillard to bend the rules and allow Battle to receive the funding. This episode suggests that on some level Newbold could relate to black impatience for fiduciary remedies when up against the headwinds of white intransigence. Perhaps his own personal experiences running a school allowed him to sympathize with their plight. Yet he also believed that in these types of encounters blacks must remain deferential to the southern racial caste. Recognizing the friction between the two sides, Newbold sought

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<sup>32</sup> Mary Battle to NC Newbold, 6 March 1915, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>33</sup> Mary Battle to NC Newbold, 19 May 1916, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>34</sup> NC Newbold to Mary Battle, 25 May 1916, Box 2, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

a middle ground. Though Dillard did not bend the rules, it is the proposal that is most important.<sup>35</sup> This is an early demonstration of his most important bureaucratic skill, interracial diplomacy.

Apparently Newbold's sympathy did not rub off on the superintendent. In fact, Debnam asked Newbold to get Mary Battle under control. Her overtures and declarations were becoming problematic on several fronts. According to Debnam, the local community was under her sway and refusing any reasonable explanations for the county's inability to fund the school. Additionally, the black residents were beginning to question the Jim Crow tax policies of the South where blacks paid taxes and received inadequate services in return. "I do not know who started the statement," Debnam wrote, "but it is being made among the negroes in the county that they are not given a square deal in that they pay in more money than they get out. I had suspected that Miss Battle was responsible for this."<sup>36</sup> According to the superintendent, she had spoken the same words in his presence. Taking Debnam's words at face value reveals something about a woman's ability to operate in spaces a black man might find foreclosed. In this case Battle was speaking 'truth to power' to both Newbold and Debnam.

The problems surrounding education also directly challenged the fundamental tenets of Jim Crow economic policy as well. Debnam proclaimed that the county spent one thousand dollars more on black education than blacks themselves contributed through taxes. "I can't go to the trouble to go out among them and explain this nor would I like to publish it from the fact that some of the whites would have considerable to

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<sup>35</sup> NC Newbold to James Dillard, 13 June 1916, Box 2, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>36</sup> JE Debnam to NC Newbold, 18 June 1916, Box 2, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

say.”<sup>37</sup> Here was both Debnam’s understanding of Jim Crow fiscal policy as well as a veiled threat. The fact that black taxpayers also helped to fund and to support white education was largely irrelevant. If forced to openly address these charges, it would inevitably lead to a white backlash against funding education. Implicit is the proposition that Battle’s cause was best served with subservient silence, not questioning the status quo.

In fact Newbold agrees with Debnam and moves to put a “quietus” on the project stating, “I was afraid from the urgency of Mary Battle’s letters that perhaps she might be pressing the matter a little too far.”<sup>38</sup> He continued to push asking Debnam for information on any buildings that are in reasonable shape and might be utilized as a public school if properly staffed. Without entirely dropping the subject, Newbold asked if the district’s appropriations might be increased if more private monies are offered.<sup>39</sup> In this deft piece of diplomacy Newbold hoped for a return to normalcy. Trying to advance Battle’s agenda through a doctrine of moderation and gradualism, he also advised her to “not press the matter too much on the county superintendent and the board of education. They are your friends and the friends of your race, and I am sure it will not be wise to embarrass them.”<sup>40</sup>

In an exchange a week later it seems apparent that Mary Battle either had not received Newbold’s earlier missive to back off, or she was trying to test the boundaries of their professional relationship. According to Battle, Debnam now appeared indifferent

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<sup>37</sup> JE Debnam to NC Newbold, 18 June 1916, Box 2, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>38</sup> NC Newbold to JE Debnam, 19 June 1916, Box 2, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>39</sup> NC Newbold to JE Debnam, 19 June 1916, Box 2, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>40</sup> NC Newbold to Mary Battle, 8 July 1916, Box 2, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

to her concerns and stood opposed to any further conversation using “strong language” to make his point. Now the entire project seemed in limbo even though black residents raised close to \$1400. The loss of the superintendent’s support also triggered a softening of support within the black community. Many residents no doubt questioned the practicality of financially supporting a plan the white power structure was slowly turning against. She closed by suggesting that she will drop the subject, but asked Newbold to pursue it in the shadows without using her name.<sup>41</sup>

The very next day Battle appeared chastened and somewhat dejected by the turn of events. Offering the obligatory language of southern racial etiquette she reestablished her position as both a woman and an African American in the Jim Crow South. Swallowing her indignation, she called the Board of Education both a friend to her personally and the black race as a whole. “I believe,” she stated “that many steps taken for good can be mistaken by them, as well as others.”<sup>42</sup> Whether or not Newbold was counted among the “others” is not entirely clear. Nonetheless, in the end she agreed to drop the matter and not press it anymore, at least for the time being.

This early episode does provide insight into several facets of his bureaucratic style. He essentially ran parallel tracks of diplomacy that never really overlapped. There was a concerted effort to never have his agenda entirely co-opted by Mary Battle. This space between the two, mandated partially by custom, provided him the necessary room to both push for what she wanted while at the same time distancing himself from Battle when the position became untenable. Moreover, he probably gave black women a bit

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<sup>41</sup> Mary Battle to NC Newbold, 13 July 1916, Box 2, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>42</sup> Mary Battle to NC Newbold, 14 July 1916, Box 2, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.



more space to maneuver than black men. Debnam never really complained about her directly challenging the status quo, even as she spoke unpleasant truths about funding and taxation. Perhaps her gender allowed her room for folly that would not be granted to a man. For example, during the same time period a superintendent from Randolph County wanted the male supervisor fired. When writing Newbold he stated the position had “made him feel like he is the biggest man in the county and he makes himself too familiar when he comes into my office. He takes too many liberties.”<sup>43</sup>

Another superintendent reported a similar problem with a rural extension agent. E.L. Best, the superintendent in Franklin County, grew alarmed about a speech given by C.H. Moore. The supervisor “called attention to the fact that some of the colored schools did not receive justice in regard to the apportionment of the school fund.” The problem was more than the content of the speech; it was the perceived breakdown in etiquette. “If he had come in to see me yesterday,” Best continued, “and had shown the proper spirit and attitude toward the work I would have taken pleasure in cooperating and helping him in every way possible.”<sup>44</sup> This was not just idle criticism. Newbold asked the agent to recite the speech to him and to Joyner. Both men cautioned Moore to be careful about his public statements. Nonetheless, they assured Best that Moore’s statements were taken out of context and misinterpreted.<sup>45</sup> Several days later Best was prepared to put the problem to rest, but not before recasting the issue as a matter of patriotism. After what he

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<sup>43</sup> T Fletcher Bulla to NC Newbold, 16 June 1916, Box 2; Summary of Reports of NC Newbold, July 1, 1915 to June 30, 1916, Box 2, DNE, State Archives. CH Moore’s position was funded by the State Teacher’s Association. The STA organized a Rural Extension Department hiring CH Moore as their traveling agent. His goal was to travel throughout the state and build cooperation between blacks and whites.

<sup>44</sup> EL Best to NC Newbold, 17 April 1917, Box 3, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>45</sup> NC Newbold to EL Best, 18 April 1917, Box 3, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

purported to be a careful investigation turned up no evidence of a “pro-German” sentiment, he ended by suggesting that Moore was indiscreet at worst and at least had hopefully learned a valuable lesson.<sup>46</sup> This was only a temporary reprieve for Moore. Three years later Newbold would help ease Moore out of his job citing problems with superintendents who preferred a new agent be appointed.<sup>47</sup>

Returning to Mary Battle, her gender may have played a role in how the superintendent perceived and responded to her. The combination of race and gender firmly entrenched her at the bottom of the southern social pecking order. Therefore, her pronouncements may not have been seen as challenging or threatening as the same ideas coming from an African American man. In fact by 1914, Dillard stated he would gladly discontinue the work in any county that required a man as a supervisor.<sup>48</sup>

Clearly Newbold was concerned about white perceptions of those who worked under his chain of command, how he himself was perceived, and black education in general. Therefore, a large part of his job included a public relations component of presenting the New South as forward leaning and not mired in the past. Supervisor F.C. Williams from Bertie County requested Newbold’s support for her trip North to “beg some money” for the Bertie County Training School. The School Board supported the plan as long as she presented herself as representative of the school and not of the Board of Education. According to Williams, even the superintendent felt discouraged because

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<sup>46</sup> A transcript of Moore’s remarks is not available. It is to ascertain what may have been construed as “pro-German.” EL Best to AM Moore, 21 April 1917, Box 3, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>47</sup> NC Newbold to EC Brooks, 4 August 1920, Box 4, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>48</sup> James H. Dillard to NC Newbold, 14 August 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

the “county is not willing to do another toward finishing it.”<sup>49</sup> The local and community resources were tapped out. Perhaps an appeal to northern churches might generate a new income stream.<sup>50</sup>

Newbold suggested that a trip to solicit funds was ill-advised, adding “Anyone who gets the results you usually get, I think, ought not to permit discouragements to stand in the way.”<sup>51</sup> Regardless, he promised to take up the matter with Dillard. Surprisingly Dillard sided with Williams, drawing a distinction between money for completing the building of the school and the everyday operating expenses. Nonetheless, Dillard reflected Newbold’s concerns about appearances stating, “I believe you, and all of us who are interested, agree that it would be absolutely unwise to have the principals trotting off up North to raise money for the annual expenses.”<sup>52</sup>

As a paper tiger, Newbold’s power and authority resided mostly in a title. Yet he coupled his title with a creative bureaucratic impulse to slowly transform his office into a powerful intermediary between competing interests. For example, early in his tenure he suggested a novel way to transform the funding of the Homemaking Club work done by Jeanes teachers in North Carolina. The Department of Agriculture provided \$1000 for the work, but was pulling the plug on the funding in June. Wallace Buttrick, from the GEB, instructed Newbold not to make any long term plans for the program. The GEB would

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<sup>49</sup> FC Williams to NC Newbold, 5 April 1917, Box 3, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>50</sup> FC Williams to NC Newbold, 5 April 1917, Box 3, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>51</sup> NC Newbold to FC Williams, 10 April 1917, Box 3, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>52</sup> NC Newbold to FC Williams, 10 April 1917, Box 3; Dilliard quoted in NC Newbold to FC Williams, 17 April 1917, Box 3, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

cover any expenses from July until September. Newbold, however, had devised a different plan for North Carolina. First, instead of spreading the \$1000 dollars evenly over ten counties, the per county appropriation was cut in half to fifty dollars, requiring each county to contribute matching funds. Under this system Newbold added three counties. Since the federal government required the use of all funds by the end of June, he directed the federal monies cover all expenses through June. After that point, the appropriations held in arrears by the counties would cover the work throughout the summer. This plan had the added benefit of a potential financial surplus.<sup>53</sup>

Additionally, Newbold pursued an idea to keep supervisors employed year round, instead of six to nine months. If the GEB earmarked \$100 per county for the work of the supervisors, then the counties might be cajoled to contribute \$50 by slating the monies for summer work. Ultimately combining the monies from the county with the Jeanes fund, the GEB would permit the employment of the supervisors on a 10 to 12 month schedule.<sup>54</sup>

On the outside Newbold often projected a passive-aggressive approach in the role of intermediary between the state and northern philanthropists. The appearance of deference helped him secure funds. This passivity and obsequiousness both masked his aggressiveness and became a useful tool in pressing his agenda. Newbold hoped to pursue a wide ranging plan, even though he wielded little power in the beginning. In a letter he suggested that “broad visions and schemes of extension and enlargement have

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<sup>53</sup> Wallace Buttrick to NC Newbold, 2 June 1914, Box 1; NC Newbold to Wallace Buttrick, 8 June 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director DNE, State Archives.

<sup>54</sup> NC Newbold to Wallace Buttrick, 8 June 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

been ‘raging in my brain.’ I say ‘raging’ because I am anxious to see many things done.”<sup>55</sup> By most measures the job would not be limited by the few available resources or the lack of a bureaucratic infrastructure. Instead the position might be molded to fit a young man on the make. This presented an opportunity for a young man without a college education to advance in the administrative ranks in public education. In 1916 Newbold outlined his “visions and schemes” for the future of Negro education. Again he used his passive-aggressive approach when dealing with the leadership of the GEB, stating that he does not want to “burden you or your associates with much detail.” However, attached to the letter was an eleven page memorandum attesting to the fact he had “gone into this matter with care and earnestness.”<sup>56</sup>

Newbold’s proposed expansion of Negro education cut across many fields. First, he wanted to expand Jeanes supervisors’ work to as many counties as possible – increasing substantially from the 31 then working in the state, the rationale being that the presence of a Jeanes supervisor would draw additional white support for black education. The presence of a supervisor sanctioned by educational bureaucrats and northern money gave blacks in a community a conduit to plead their case, almost an assistant superintendent. If superintendents and other white officials were willing to meet with them to discuss education, then it might seem that whites were more interested in black education. Whether illusory or not, the supervisor provided the district a de facto assistant superintendent for black education and according to Newbold, “is perhaps the

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<sup>55</sup> NC Newbold Wallace Buttrick, 8 June 1914, GEB Papers, Reel NC 236, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>56</sup> NC Newbold to EC Sage, 11 January 1916, GEB Papers, Reel NC 236, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

single effort that can now be made for the uplifting of our colored schools in rural districts.”<sup>57</sup>

Second, his agenda included improving teacher education. This required a multipronged approach. Philanthropic monies needed to flow into the three state supported normal schools for African Americans. Additionally, it was important to continue funneling funds into privately run schools for teacher education “on condition that these institutions cooperate with the Southern Field Agent of the General Education Board, State and county school officials, and be jointly supervised by them.”<sup>58</sup> This effectively accomplished several goals. One, it brought the private schools more fully into the nascent public school bureaucracy. Two, if the school accepted private monies with strings attached, then the school fell in the orbit of Newbold’s authority. In essence, he wanted to offer the carrot of funding in exchange for greater centralization and oversight. He invoked southern paternalism to reassure his northern benefactors. This was a worthwhile investment because the schools were “doing definite work,” some better than others. “This, I presume, may be attributed to the fact that they are under the immediate control of white persons or are carefully supervised regularly by white people.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> “Suggested Outline of a Plan to Develop a State School System For Negroes in North Carolina that Will Fairly Meet Their Needs,” attached to NC Newbold to EC Sage, 11 January 1916, GEB Papers, Reel NC 236, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>58</sup> “Suggested Outline of a Plan to Develop a State School System For Negroes in North Carolina that Will Fairly Meet Their Needs,” attached to NC Newbold to EC Sage, 11 January 1916, GEB Papers, Reel NC 236, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>59</sup> “Suggested Outline of a Plan to Develop a State School System For Negroes in North Carolina that Will Fairly Meet Their Needs,” attached to NC Newbold to EC Sage, 11 January 1916, GEB Papers, Reel NC 236, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

Additionally, Newbold called for increasing access to higher education for black educators in North Carolina. Hampton Institute could serve as a pipeline for sending administrators and teachers to North Carolina. The college's founder Samuel Armstrong schooled a young Booker T. Washington in the ethos of industrial education and accommodation. Washington carried that political and educational outlook with him and founded the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Hampton could help perpetuate the Washingtonian philosophy by sending instructors to summer schools and workshops who may well provide "the inspiration and encouragement which Hampton can so abundantly supply." Just like Booker T. Washington before them, these teachers would become the foot soldiers for maintaining the status quo in the New South. North Carolina also needed to develop its own institutions of higher learning. He suggested that Shaw University and Biddle University might make good choices for the expansion of higher education for blacks. Money again appeared to be a means for extending control over educational institutions. Newbold noted, "If there should be a desire to extend aid to these institutions for such higher training, then there would probably need be some re-organization . . . ." There was little doubt that Newbold might direct reorganization promising that "specific inquiries will be gladly answered."<sup>60</sup>

Summer schools were also very important to improve the education of black teachers. Unlike their white counterparts, black teachers remained in the classroom well into the twilight of their careers. "When a white teacher marries," according to Newbold, "in most cases, she leaves the school room. . . . Many and, in fact, most of the negro

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<sup>60</sup> "Suggested Outline of a Plan to Develop a State School System For Negroes in North Carolina that Will Fairly Meet Their Needs," attached to NC Newbold to EC Sage, 11 January 1916, GEB Papers, Reel NC 236, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

women teachers continue teaching after marriage for many years, some of them practically until they are too infirm to teach.”<sup>61</sup> As a result they were in classrooms and ill-equipped to adequately teach their students. Summer schools would provide a means for the continuing education of those teachers already plying their trade. The summer school curriculum itself covered a range of material and disciplines. Teachers received instruction in methodology and curriculum in reading, math, social studies, and industrial education. Educators from neighboring counties and states attended the three to four week work sessions.<sup>62</sup>

Black and white women might share a similar occupation, but not a complimentary social status. It is not clear that Newbold fully comprehended the differences between the two races. For a white woman of that era to achieve the ranking of “middle class” required retreating from the work force after marriage and becoming a housewife and mother. Black women who attained the rank of the so-called “black middle class” would have worked throughout most of their lives – many times out of economic necessity. Increasingly, Newbold relied on these same black women to develop an effective educational bureaucracy.

Even something as seemingly innocuous as summer school was fraught with peril. Local superintendents, as was the case with southern society generally, did not relish the idea of too much outside input or taking directives from the state. An exchange with Charles Coon, the superintendent of schools in Wilson, reveals some of the

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<sup>61</sup> Suggested Outline of a Plan to Develop a State School System For Negroes in North Carolina that Will Fairly Meet Their Needs,” attached to NC Newbold to EC Sage, 11 January 1916, GEB Papers, Reel NC 236, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>62</sup> Report Slater Summer School, Winston-Salem, NC, 28 July 1917; Report of Negro A. & T. College, Summer School, 24 June to 3 August 1918; Report of State Normal Summer School (Elizabeth City), 2 July to 27 July 1917; Report of State Normal Summer School (Fayetteville, NC), 9 July to 3 August 1917; GEB Papers, Reel NC, Microfilm Department, Duke University.



resistance and skepticism that manifested itself in Newbold's relationship with school authorities. Newbold asked if any of Coon's teachers wished to attend a summer school session at Shaw University in the summer of 1919. The response was a dismissive venting of frustration over any encroachment into his bailiwick. Essentially, Coon objected because he had neither input into the curriculum offered nor to the hiring of instructors. "I am going to spend just as little money," Coon advised, "and cooperate just as little as I can in the present plans as to your so called teacher training. . . . The teachers who go to the ordinary summer school . . . get very little for their money."<sup>63</sup>

Additionally, from Coon's perspective, the entire program was a waste of time and resources. Those planning the program of study, meaning Newbold and his cohorts, were hopelessly out of touch with modern pedagogy and methodology. Newbold was one of the people looking from on high "in the seat of the mighty" who preferred to "lip about teaching" instead of providing educators the tools necessary for instructing their students.<sup>64</sup>

Coon's criticism was not entirely without merit nor aimed solely at one person. He seemed to relish telling administrators throughout the state that teacher education equaled a "mockery and a delusion" and those devising educational plans were little more than "pleasant figures in a Punch and Judy show."<sup>65</sup> To another educator he intoned, "Oh, Lord, why not cut out all that indefinite mess you call primary methods, which is

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<sup>63</sup> Charles Coon to NC Newbold and EE Sams, 6 May 1919, Box 4, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>64</sup> Charles Coon to NC Newbold and EE Sams, 6 May 1919, Box 4, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>65</sup> Charles Coon to EC Brooks, 25 Jan 1918, Charles Coon Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC – Chapel Hill.

only a cloak to cover up a lot of ignorance in a camouflage of glittering words . . . The day of reckoning is coming for most of the pedagogical stuff the summer schools are now offering . . .”<sup>66</sup>

Newbold knew many teachers were woefully unprepared for their chosen vocation, hence the need for summer schools. For example, William M. Cooper, a principal from a school in Johnston County, asked for assistance with upgrading his certification. Cooper feared that the lack of training left him poorly prepared to teach or lead. If the principal did not feel qualified to teach, one can only imagine the readiness of those in his charge.<sup>67</sup> Perhaps Coon was correct that some of the outlined curriculum failed to improve teacher readiness. In fact Newbold suggested that the curriculum include singing of patriotic songs and Negro spirituals. But he also wanted the teachers to receive in depth instruction in the subjects they taught. By no means was the curriculum to remain static, but would evolve over time.<sup>68</sup> Nonetheless, Coon found little value whatsoever in the summer schools and seemed personally ruffled by Newbold’s proposals stating, “my conscience and my intelligence are both in the way of my cooperation with you. . . . However, until some light shines on the road to Damascus, I shall have to go on throwing rocks at some of your pet theories and plans.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Charles Coon to WC Jackson, 19 February 1918, Charles Coon Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>67</sup> William M. Cooper to NC Newbold, 8 May 1919, Box 4, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>68</sup> NC Newbold to JA Beam, 25 August 1916, Box 2, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>69</sup> Charles Coon to NC Newbold and EE Sams, 6 May 1919, Box 4, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

Others joined Coon in questioning the value of the summer institutes. Unable to put aside their southern paternalism and belief in the inherent inferiority of blacks, it infected the superintendents' perceptions of black educators. For example, J.E. Debnam, a superintendent, contacted Newbold with a suggestion for one of the instructors. Skinner, the black teacher in question, possessed a college degree and Debnam considered him one of the best Negro teachers in his district. However, Debnam cautioned that Skinner required a great deal of supervision because, "If left alone, negro like, he might "shoot over the heads" of his pupils, as I have caught him doing at least once . . ." <sup>70</sup>

The normally deferential and civil Newbold found his patience wearing thin with Coon. Part of Coon's stated and unstated problem, in addition to a cantankerous disposition, was a sense of encroachment by Newbold into the affairs of Wilson schools. There is little doubt that Newbold sought to establish a bureaucracy and exercise more centralized control over black education. Coon seemed to push back on any and everything Newbold tried to institute – from Jeanes teachers, teacher training, to school construction. Newbold expressed dismay that Coon might misinterpret his intentions promising, "...[Y]ou know as well as I, that I have not at any time shown a disposition to supervise any phase of your work." Nonetheless, there was little cause to proceed further down this path of enmity. "If it is impossible to cooperate in frank and open terms," continued Newbold, "then we both know the remedy." <sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> JE Debnam to NC Newbold, 3 June 1919, Box 4, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>71</sup> NC Newbold to Charles Coon, 17 July 1918, Charles Coon Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC – Chapel Hill.

During the first decade of Newbold's tenure few subjects commanded his energies and attention like improving teacher education. He authored another brief on the subject. Of particular note is the fact he does not mention blacks anywhere in the report. This may have been intentional. Perhaps Newbold had designs on transitioning into a field other than Negro education. Maybe this was a way to address the underlying problems in teacher education as a whole after determining that the problems were systemic and necessitated more than a race based solution. In essence this becomes a "trickle down" approach to black education. To see any progress in black education first required an across the board reform of teacher training. Only after whites secured a place at the table could blacks begin to seek the leftovers.

In addition to the summer institutes discussed previously, he advocated Reading Circles that allowed teachers to engage in ongoing studies while improving their teaching credentials. Additionally, one person should be in charge of teacher education writ large while sharing responsibilities with two State Agents of Rural Elementary schools. Noting that "It is very evident that the forces now at work are not sufficient to extend definite aid to all who are struggling in uncertainty and doubt in the field of the school teacher," Newbold observed that, "all our teachers need help while actually at work in the school room."<sup>72</sup>

Acknowledging the limits due to money and personnel, he sought alternative methods to improve teacher education. Many of the ideas were modeled after teacher education programs in states like Michigan, Wisconsin, and California. One suggestion

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<sup>72</sup> "Suggestions for the Training of the Teacher-In-Service: From the Viewpoint of the State Department of Education," 26 November 1914, Report by NC Newbold, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

included distance learning or correspondence courses taught by the state colleges in conjunction with the Supervisor of Teacher Training. Another idea included organizing a mobile teacher's library with books and pamphlets available by request. Superintendents reserved the right to view the list and to determine which books, if any, might be suitable for his county. Again Newbold was careful to place control in the hands of local officials, but still kept the formation of policy in the hands of state bureaucrats. Another concern included the level of training for local superintendents. The state must fashion courses of study with "special emphasis upon the proper methods of teaching the regular school subjects, this to aid the Superintendents in their work of supervision."<sup>73</sup>

Not only did the training necessitate revamping, but also a restructuring of the very job itself. Too much of the superintendent's time was spent doing clerical office work, too little time spent out in the field working with teachers. Always careful not to alienate the local administrators, he referred to them as "kindly" and "sympathetic" administrators pulled in too many directions. No matter how he sugarcoated the message, Newbold identified superintendents as contributors to the wayward state of teacher education. He proposed that the local boards should furnish them clerical assistants to permit them to more fully evaluate their charges and the summer school courses designed to keep them up to date on the latest pedagogy.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> "Suggestions for the Training of the Teacher-In-Service: From the Viewpoint of the State Department of Education," 26 November 1914, Report by NC Newbold, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>74</sup> "Suggestions for the Training of the Teacher-In-Service: From the Viewpoint of the State Department of Education," 26 November 1914, Report by NC Newbold, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

By Newbold's estimation thirty-five to fifty percent of teachers lacked the professional credentials to adequately perform their jobs. Another means to improve teacher education included offering classes at so-called training schools. Training schools first appeared around 1910, funded by the Slater Fund. Under the leadership of James Dillard, the Slater Fund viewed the schools as a means to promote secondary education as the number of high schools increased drastically throughout the nation. To address the shortage of qualified teachers, training schools offered at least an eighth grade education, with a guarantee of at least one year of teacher training. The schools' educational philosophy mirrored those of Booker T. Washington and the Hampton Institute, inculcating an accommodationist approach to education and race relations. The Slater Fund provided a portion of the school's budget, with the community and local government covering the rest. As a means of ensuring cooperation, either the local school boards or the state owned the land and physical plant. Additionally, local authorities were committed to fund the schools once established.<sup>75</sup>

Newbold embraced the idea that training schools would serve several functions at one time. First, the schools served as high schools which provided the necessary academic prerequisites for students to enter into normal schools and colleges. Second, with a school in every county, they could deliver basic teacher preparatory courses throughout the state. Third, and perhaps most importantly, was the symbolic value. A readily accessible high school education whets the appetite for higher learning. The end

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<sup>75</sup> James Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*, (Columbia: New York, 2007), 109 – 110.

result promised a new and growing cadre of black teachers “with an earnest aim of becoming leaders of their race.”<sup>76</sup>

African Americans themselves actively lobbied for training schools in their communities. In Mount Olive a group of 200 black residents gathered together to lobby Newbold for his support. The group transferred to the county’s control their building, with four classrooms sitting on nine acres of land. Their plan included raising the money to pay for all or part of the teachers’ salaries. Now they wanted Newbold to secure the cooperation of the Slater Fund.<sup>77</sup> J.R. Faison made a pitch for Zion Academy in Wadesboro. Established in 1901, the Baptist school remained free of debt with two buildings on two acres of land – meaning it could be easily transferred to local or state control. Faison stressed the curriculum mirrored the public schools with an eight month school term through grade seven. The classes included instruction in sewing, cooking, agriculture and music.<sup>78</sup> In the Method community (Raleigh), Berry O’Kelly and Charles Hunter started a school. With the aid of the superintendent they also hoped to establish a training school. The superintendent cautioned Newbold that the school did not fully comply with the training school ethos. The curriculum came up short on industrial instruction. Yet a rather unique problem might be addressed by this training school.

Two neighboring black colleges supplied teachers who were otherwise too expensive to

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<sup>76</sup> Suggested Outline of a Plan to Develop a State School System For Negroes in North Carolina that Will Fairly Meet Their Needs,” attached to NC Newbold to EC Sage, 11 January 1916, GEB Papers, Reel NC 236, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>77</sup> “March 1914 – Report Nathan C. Newbold,” Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>78</sup> Memorandum from JR Faison to NC Newbold, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

employ. Dillard's partial funding "would aid us in supplying our schools with teachers properly trained and with the right attitude."<sup>79</sup>

Even though whites wanted instruction to focus on industrial education, the African Americans running the schools did not necessarily follow suit. For example, the Smithfield Training School in Johnston County did not include any industrial lessons for boys in 1915. Instead, from first grade through seventh grade, the instructors focused on the standard elementary school curriculum of math, writing, and reading. Newbold considered industrial instruction to be an "imperative" need.<sup>80</sup> At Method Training School students spent one to one and a half hours per day in industrial work. Gender seemingly dictated the amount of access to industrial education. Most of the instruction fell into categories typically considered feminine in the early twentieth century, like sewing and cooking. Therefore, boys did not receive as much instruction as the girls. The genderization of teaching into a female profession no doubt contributed to fewer opportunities for boys to receive training. Like Smithfield, the rest of the day involved standard elementary instruction in reading, writing, and math.<sup>81</sup> Very little actual teacher training occurred. In 1915 the school offered only the first through sixth grade, and the "only effort at normal training is through the example of good teaching." In the years ahead the school's physical plant and curriculum expanded. The assistant superintendent for Wake County remained skeptical about future progress in teacher preparation, stating

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<sup>79</sup> Zebulon Judd to NC Newbold, 13 February 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>80</sup> "Course of Study. Smithfield Training School, Johnston County," Report by NC Newbold, 22 March 1915, Reel NC 236, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>81</sup> "Course of Study, Method Training School, Wake County," Report by NC Newbold, 19 March 1915," Reel NC 236, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.



“We shall not hope at Method to do anything great in this line. The best results we expect to achieve through the influence of example.”<sup>82</sup> Until schools expanded their offerings beyond the eighth grade, the odds of offering rudimentary normal instruction remained slim.

Throughout North Carolina blacks lobbied, begged, and cajoled Newbold to help transform their institutions into training schools. Whenever an educator approached Dillard or the Slater Fund directly, they were immediately referred back to Newbold. This ostensibly strengthened his bureaucratic position. As the paper tiger, Newbold deftly took advantage of the opportunity to make himself indispensable as the middle man for southern whites and blacks seeking an audience with either northern philanthropists or the state educational bureaucracy. C.G. White, principal at Powellsville Normal, confirmed as much stating, “I received a letter from Dr. Dillard Saturday evening stating that establishing a training school here would depend largely upon your recommendation. I truly hope you will recommend it.”<sup>83</sup>

Within the philanthropic community, Newbold strove to find the pragmatic middle ground. Frank Bachman and Jackson Davis of the GEB differed over the type of building suitable for additional assistance as a training school. Late in 1919 Newbold and Jackson Davis met in Shelby, N.C. with people who wanted a new school for the black residents. Unable to raise the monies, the temporary plan included putting up a small building in hope that a future bond issue to improve white schools might simultaneously “raise money enough to provide more completely for the needs of the

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<sup>82</sup> Edith Royster to NC Newbold, 25 February 1915, Reel NC 236.1, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>83</sup> CG White to NC Newbold, 11 May 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

colored school.”<sup>84</sup> Bachman disagreed but deferred to the judgment of Newbold and Jackson stating, “I see that it will take considerable missionary work before my own ideas prevail, if they ever prevail.”<sup>85</sup> Newbold’s response spoke to the realities on the ground. “For the present, I am sure we shall have to be content if we can secure school buildings somewhat better than those we have had.”<sup>86</sup>

However, a year later the facts on the ground had shifted considerably. The building everyone thought might cost close to four thousand dollars now reached \$20,000. This was not the result of cost overruns or mismanagement, but instead a concerted effort by blacks, philanthropists, and white moderates to upgrade the school into a modern structure. Inevitably, Newbold became the pivot man for securing outside funding. The black community raised monies to contribute to construction. But the requests for monies from the GEB, Slater Fund, and Rosenwald Fund all flowed through Newbold. Still desperate to complete the project, Superintendent I.C. Griffin asked for additional help equipping the building, creating industrial education rooms, and offering teacher training. The GEB agreed to the request with monies to be held in escrow by the Department of Public Instruction until completion of the project. This fiduciary control over disbursement positioned Newbold as the ultimate arbiter between the philanthropist

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<sup>84</sup> Jackson Davis to Frank P. Bachman, 9 September 1919, Reel 261, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>85</sup> Frank Bachman to Jackson Davis, 2 September 1919; Frank Bachman to NC Newbold, 3 September 1919, Reel 261, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>86</sup> NC Newbold to Frank Bachman, 5 September 1919, Reel 261, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

and local government, while at the same time bestowing a power on his bureaucracy that otherwise would not exist.<sup>87</sup>

The training schools concept allowed Newbold to forge one of his first partnerships with arguably the most progressive university in the state – the University of North Carolina. The Orange County Training school never fully developed as envisioned by Newbold and Marcus Noble, the dean at the School of Education at the University of North Carolina. Nonetheless, over time the alliance between the university and Newbold became a bulwark of his approach to education and race relations in North Carolina. The university’s growing reputation for progressivism dovetailed nicely with Newbold’s racially moderate agenda. North Carolina may have been a conservative southern state, but with institutions like UNC leading the way temperate whites might be persuaded of a pragmatic course and “after they have gained sufficient momentum they have gone forward.”<sup>88</sup>

Sometime around 1917, members of the UNC faculty teamed with Newbold to consolidate two black schools in Chapel Hill – one private and one public. The Board of Education agreed to cover a portion of the operating cost, thereby paving the way for the school to become a training school. Essentially, Newbold and Noble envisioned the partnership between UNC and Orange County Training school serving two basic functions. First, the school had to meet its primary functions of addressing the teaching shortage in the area and providing a rudimentary education. Like many other black

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<sup>87</sup> NC Newbold to EC Brooks, 4 December 1920; IC Griffin to NC Newbold, ND, attached to NC Newbold to EC Brooks, 4 December 1920; WW Brierley to Jackson Davis, 28 December 1920, Reel 261, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>88</sup> NC Newbold to SL Smith, 29 June 1920, Box 4, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

schools, the local black community actively helped support the school. Male students helped paint, whitewash, and repair the physical plant. The principal devised a plan to prepare meals for his students and for the sick in the area. While male students acquired basic skills in manual labor and a rudimentary education, the female students received training in the domestic sphere. From Noble's perspective the school reinforced the reasonable skills a good education offered to blacks. "He has had two boys with him every fair afternoon for several weeks past pruning and spraying trees for our best citizens and in this way is showing in a practical way what his students are learning to do."<sup>89</sup> The public display of labor also reassured white residents that the black school sitting in the shade of the state's premier university was a miniature Tuskegee at best.

Noble and Newbold also imagined the school fulfilling a second, and far more important, function. The training school might serve as an incubator to endow young white men with a missionary zeal to promote racial moderation in the New South. As the flagship for the state, the university attracted future leaders in the fields of education, government, and business. According to Noble, "One thousand young white men are in our University annually from every section of the state and a good, practical, successful school right before their eyes from day to day will be a compelling argument for Negro education. . . ."<sup>90</sup> This was no idle commitment. Repairs on one of the buildings required taking out a bank loan. Personally guaranteeing the note and accepting full responsibility

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<sup>89</sup> Memorandum, No Author, Listed as Visited February 14, 1917 with Mr. NC Newbold and Dr. MCS Noble, Reel 236, GEB Papers; MCS Noble to NC Newbold, 27 March 1918, Reel 236, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>90</sup> MCS Noble to NC Newbold, 27 March 1918, Reel 236, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

if the loan defaulted, Noble stated, “I was so set on making the school a success that I was willing to take the risk of getting the money somehow or other.”<sup>91</sup>

The Orange County Training School provided the perfect opportunity for a lab school focused on supervising and promoting black education throughout North Carolina. Chapel Hill’s student body possessed the potential to influence opinions in every corner of the state. Noble believed the Orange County training school was well positioned because in a small town “whatever is done for Negroes will not be lost sight of as would be the case in a large city with many other overshadowing bidders for public notice.”<sup>92</sup> Additionally, white school administrators attended the summer institute at UNC. The summer sessions offered the chance for white administrators to study modern techniques in school administration at a real black school. A multi-disciplinary approach extended the school’s reach beyond educators. Students from the law, medical, and pharmacy schools could visit the training school “to build up in their student minds a more kindly and more effective belief in the value of and necessity for the best training for colored children.”<sup>93</sup> In essence, Noble wanted to make the Orange County Training School a real world laboratory for advanced studies in Negro education and life. Under this scheme the fountainhead for white ambassadors of goodwill and racial moderation would flow from Chapel Hill.

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<sup>91</sup> MCS Noble to NC Newbold, 27 March 1918, Reel 236, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>92</sup> MCS Noble to NC Newbold, 6 September 1922, Reel 236, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>93</sup> MCS Noble to NC Newbold, 6 September 1922, Reel 236, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

To allay fears that the committee running the school consisted of ivory tower scholars with radical ideas about black education, Noble promoted and pursued a Washingtonian approach to education and race relations. He promised a curriculum that provided instruction in domestic work and vocational labor:

I want to give the children a very thorough training in the usual branches, patriotism, honor, virtue, and love of home, and in addition to these subjects such vocational instruction as will mould [sic] the boys and girls into loyal American citizens able to make a living with what we have taught them, and at the same time I hope that we will be able to inspire many of the best of them to invest their talents in teaching and go out into the colored schools and teach the boys and girls of their race the useful and uplifting things of life.<sup>94</sup>

Noble held views commonly shared by white racial moderates, including the notion of the white man's burden to uplift the backward and downtrodden. Whites at the training school, Noble reasoned, could unite African Americans "together into a common mass for public good and break them away from the deadening effect of denominational separation and petty local factions." The best way to accomplish this was through mass meetings held at the school because, "The Negro likes a crowd, likes to gather in a mass, and in that mass and in the enthusiasm and inspiration which the mass gathering arouses in him he can be guided successfully and happily toward better things."<sup>95</sup> It is easy to dismiss this assertion by Noble as white southern paternalism – it certainly was.

However, Noble, perhaps inadvertently, understood the central role of black schools in the community. In some locales the school's influence may have ranked right behind the black church. From a certain perspective, the school's reach might even exceed the church, knitting an entire community together through cultural and social activities.

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<sup>94</sup> MCS Noble to NC Newbold, 6 September 1922, Reel 236, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>95</sup> MCS Noble to NC Newbold, 6 September 1922, Reel 236, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

Nonetheless, Noble envisioned using the school as an instrument of social control and a means to uplift the presumably inferior Negro.

Newbold bought into the idea of the school as a model for cooperation between training schools and universities. If it succeeded in North Carolina, then other southern states might follow suit, inspiring a whole new generation of southern progressives. Newbold's primary contribution consisted of lobbying for additional monies for the school. Fire destroyed the physical plant in 1922, leaving only a plot of land owned by the school committee. Two years later the community, school committee, and Newbold managed to gather the resources to rebuild. Unfortunately, their grandiose goals never reached fruition.<sup>96</sup>

Despite such setbacks Newbold's stature grew with the establishment of the Division of Negro Education in 1921. Embedded in the Department of Public Instruction, the Division received funding from the state and the General Education Board. As the new agency's director Newbold was officially in charge of a state bureaucracy. As the twenties opened the paper tiger's clout proved far less illusory and became increasingly formidable. That said, the fulcrum of the Director's power still emanated from the ability to marshal monies from state and philanthropic organizations. Few men experienced the full impact of Newbold's growing influence like James E. Shepard, the founder of the National Training School in Durham. From the perspective of black education, Newbold became the most powerful administrator in the state.

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<sup>96</sup> NC Newbold to Wallace Buttrick, 25 October 1922; NC Newbold to Wallace Buttrick, 2 May 1923; Wallace Buttrick to NC Newbold, 12 May 1923; Jackson Davis to NC Newbold, 11 June 1924; HJ Thorkelson to Jackson Davis, 19 June 1924, Reel 236, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

Roughly a year after first starting his job in 1914, Newbold received a letter from industrialist Julian Carr vouching for James E. Shepard's character. With the southern ritual of a reputable white man vouching for a black man's bona fides now completed, Shepard then introduced himself and his new school. Though only a few years old, the school's purpose was to "reach the emotional nature of the Negro because he is largely religious, and direct it into practical channels, making it a means of uplift and self help." Coloring within the lines of middle class respectability and white southern expectations for black advancement, Shepard foresaw a curriculum focused on Christianity, morality, and training "along the higher education or along industrial lines."<sup>97</sup> It is clear early on that Newbold held a very low opinion of Shepard and his work. In 1917 the Lend-a-Hand Society enquired about the National Training School's request for aid. According to Newbold, the school held promise but was poorly managed. Problems included the possible misappropriation of funds and he suggested, "A little probation may do this school good."<sup>98</sup>

Apparently, over the next decade his opinion somewhat evolved, at least in his willingness to solicit support on its behalf. After the school became the Durham State Normal School, Newbold lobbied Jackson Davis and the GEB for \$15,000 in aid to upgrade the physical plant. Again, when the school sought to become a college, Newbold asked the state superintendent A.T. Allen to support the effort. By the middle of 1925, using his position as the intermediary between black institutions and philanthropic

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<sup>97</sup> Julian Carr to "To Whom It May Concern," 24 March 1914; James Shepard to NC Newbold, 4 December 1914, Box 1, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>98</sup> Annie F. Brown to NC Newbold, 13 December 1917; NC Newbold to Annie Brown, Date Unintelligible on Copy, Box 3, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.



organizations, he requested \$50,000 from the GEB to support the school's conversion to a college. Within a matter of weeks he upped the ante to \$100,000, stating that the tobacco rich Duke family would contribute \$50,000 if the GEB would provide matching funds. Included in the request was a brief statement that unwittingly led to a battle royal between the new college's Board of Trustees and Newbold.<sup>99</sup>

In a letter to Frank Bachman at the GEB, Newbold notes that as president of North Carolina College, Shepard must give up all outside activities. James Shepard served as a Grand Mason in the Masonic order. Newbold's stated reason for wanting the post abandoned was fairly straightforward. The position drained valuable resources from the college. Not only did it siphon off the president's time, but also required the college's support staff to use their work time on Masonic endeavors. There may have been other issues at play here. For one, Newbold believed the Masons paid Shepard anywhere from \$3,000 to \$7,000 a year. That salary range, coupled with his wages for running the college, substantially elevated Shepard's annual pay above Newbold's. A black man making more money than his white counterpart fundamentally shifted the dynamics of the proper place for blacks in the Jim Crow South. Another may have been that Newbold felt threatened by the growing power of Shepard. Between Shepard's activities with the Masons and his involvement with black teachers, it's quite possible he wanted to curb his growing influence. Adding to the milieu was Shepard's belief that Newbold bore a personal grudge as a result of an unattributed newspaper attack against the Division of Negro Education. Writing a white benefactor, Shepard pled "I desire to state that for Mr. Newbold, personally, I have not indulged in any criticism of him or the Negro

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<sup>99</sup> NC Newbold to Jackson Davis, 7 February 1924; NC Newbold to AT Allen, 29 January 1925; NC Newbold to Frank Bachman, 5 June 1925; NC Newbold to Frank Bachman, 6 July 1925, Reel 224, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

Department of Education. . . . [M]y white friends has been the means of my salvation . . .  
I shall never be ungrateful to them.”<sup>100</sup>

It is clear that in 1925 Newbold believed that one of the preconditions for Shepard to assume the presidency included surrendering his post with the Masons. It also clear that Newbold did not let Shepard’s position with the Masons curtail his efforts to garner support for the college, stating to James Dillard at the GEB, “I am still standing for that appropriation and hope it will be made.” Shepard’s perception of Newbold’s coldness may not have been too far off the mark. Newbold snidely implies in the same letter that failure to make the appropriation would make “the individual to become martyrized [sic] \_persecuted\_ and he would make great use of it.”<sup>101</sup> It is not entirely clear why Newbold decided in 1927, two years after initially stating his opposition, to actively force Shepard to resign his post with the Masons. Perhaps Shepard merely got caught in the middle of a drama in which he had no control or recourse – a slow developing play of southern honor.

In May of 1927, the following men met in conference to discuss funding and the future of the North Carolina College for Negroes (NCCN): Newbold; James Dillard, representing the GEB; Angus McLean, Governor of North Carolina; and Robert Lee Flowers, on Duke’s faculty and the Board of Trustees at NCCN. The governor was working with the legislature to secure a \$200,000 appropriation for the college. Part of the deal partially hinged on matching funds from other sources. Dillard seemingly wanted

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<sup>100</sup> NC Newbold to Frank Bachman, 29 January 1925, Reel 224, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Perkins Library, Duke University; “A Statement” attached to letter NC Newbold to RL Flowers, 3 January 1928; James E. Shepard to RL Flowers, 21 May 1925, Flowers Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

<sup>101</sup> NC Newbold to James H. Dillard, 20 April 1927, Reel 224, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

reassurances that everyone in the room supported Shepard's administration and the application for funds. Calling Shepard a "man of ability" and "visionary," the governor and Flowers offered full throated support. Also new auditing measures promised to reign in any excesses from the past. At this point Newbold broke company with his fellow Carolinians. Shepard was a loose cannon and difficult to control. When the governor called Shepard one of the leaders of his race, Newbold objected, saying a survey of blacks proved otherwise. At best Shepard proved skillful at the art of self-promotion and "was the best advertiser."<sup>102</sup> Lastly, the situation with the Masons continued to distract Shepard and his staff. Flowers defended Shepard, suggesting outside work was no hindrance at all. Notably, Newbold did not demand the resignation of Shepard from the Masonic post at this meeting.<sup>103</sup>

Newbold left the meeting feeling slighted and angry. Months later the feeling remained. The governor called a second meeting to continue working on the request to the GEB and the state's appropriation to NCCN. The response from Newbold was a torrent of emotions steeped in the traditions of southern honor. Apparently, the last meeting with the governor was the last straw. No longer would Newbold accept the most hideous charge in southern culture – a man of honor being called a liar. It had begun two years earlier and culminated with the disagreement over Shepard in the last meeting. "I

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<sup>102</sup> "Memorandum" by James Dillard, Meeting at Governor's Office – NCCN, 19 May 1927, Reel 224, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>103</sup> "Memorandum" by James Dillard, Meeting at Governor's Office – NCCN, 19 May 1927, Reel 224, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

am not the offending party,” Newbold informs Flowers in a letter dated 1927, “and therefore not the one to initiate any effort looking toward an understanding.”<sup>104</sup>

The letter to Flowers described a trustee’s meeting from two years prior. At that meeting Newbold asked for the board to remember the conditions agreed upon regarding Shepard’s position with the Masons. According to Newbold, Flowers said Newbold’s recollection about Shepard resigning was false, but that Newbold was merely “mistaken not malicious.” Having forewarned Flowers of his remarks, Newbold took this as a direct slap in the face. “It had the same effect ... as if my father or my dearest and most loved kinsman had done what you did,” Newbold said, adding “Nothing that has happened to me in my whole life has cut and hurt me so through and through.” Still feeling the sting, “It was impossible for me to recover from the shock of your action.”<sup>105</sup> Another letter, not mailed when written a year earlier, but attached to show the depth of his anger, included a Biblical verse, “...if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his faults between thee and him alone.”<sup>106</sup> Years later the smoldering discontent from the trustee meeting still burned, and the prospects of going into another meeting in the presence of the governor troubled Newbold.

At the heart of the problem was Flowers did not recall the trustees agreed to the stipulation that Shepard resign. What seemingly irked Newbold was not the difference of recollection, but the underlying implication that his version of events was false – in other words, a lie. The only remedy appeared to be either an apology from Flowers or a public

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<sup>104</sup> NC Newbold to RL Flowers, 3 October 1927, RL Flowers Papers, University Archives, Duke University; To read about the intersection lying and honor in Southern culture see Kenneth Greenberg, *Honor and Slavery* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3 - 16.

<sup>105</sup> NC Newbold to RL Flowers, 3 October 1927, RL Flowers Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

<sup>106</sup> NC Newbold to RL Flowers, 1 March 1926, RL Flowers Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

acknowledgement of the veracity of his version of events. Within the code of southern honor, even if one believes a version of events to be false, one must hold it reasonable for another man of honor to hold said beliefs. Since an apology did not appear forthcoming, Newbold had only one card to play. Shepard needed to resign his position, thereby lending support to Newbold's assertion of the facts. A few days after the missive describing the perceived slights, Flowers received another letter from Newbold, this one with far reaching consequences for NCCN. "It is with a matter of keen regret to me that I feel compelled to withdraw my promise to aid you," Newbold wrote, continuing, "I am well aware that I do not have any legal or moral right to interfere with any man's personal or private affairs, nor do I have any right to meddle in the affairs of an institution with which I am not connected, but I do have a right to give or to withhold my personal support to any person or cause."<sup>107</sup> In one fell swoop, all future support from Newbold for the NCCN required Shepard's resignation from a leadership position with the Masons. The letter's salutation suggests that the issue has become personal, intoning, "The statement omits only one detail; that is why I am asking you to release me from my previous promise," but he promises to discuss in person if desired.<sup>108</sup> A week later, in another letter, the code of southern honor was again upheld. Suggesting that Flowers must be confused, Newbold writes, "Frankly, I have not believed that you know many of

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<sup>107</sup> NC Newbold to RL Flowers, 7 October 1927, RL Flowers Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

<sup>108</sup> NC Newbold to RL Flowers, 7 October 1927, RL Flowers Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

the basic facts involved in the situation under discussion.”<sup>109</sup> Funding for NCCN was now in perpetual limbo.

No one else seemed to view Shepard’s position with the Masons as prohibitive to fulfilling the role of a college president. The governor and the NCCN Board of Trustees seemed unconcerned. The trustee, Luther Carlton, credited by Newbold as having made the motion requiring Shepard’s resignation, stated unequivocally he had no objection to Shepard holding the position now or in the past. Therefore, he certainly never made such a motion. Another attendee at the meeting echoed Carlton, not recalling either the motion being put forward or the necessity for such an admonishment. Even the GEB appeared ambivalent with James Dillard referring to Shepard’s holding the post as an “asset” to NCCN.<sup>110</sup> Nonetheless, the chances dropped to almost nil of the GEB honoring Shepard’s request for funding. Newbold was no longer just a paper tiger, but ostensibly the Pope of Negro Education in North Carolina. Shepard and the Board of Trustees desperately needed his blessing to turn on the spigot of northern money.

Turning to everyone and anyone to plead his case, Shepard saw this as a further sign of a growing animosity from Newbold. “He is not fighting for the school,” Shepard told the governor, “It is against me personally.”<sup>111</sup> Even a sympathetic hearing from his “white friends” did little to thaw Newbold’s intransigence. With little room left to maneuver, in late 1927 Shepard resigned his post as a Masonic leader. Having gained

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<sup>109</sup> NC Newbold to RL Flowers, 12 October 1927, RL Flowers Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

<sup>110</sup> Luther Carlton to JE Shepard, 14 October 1927; NW Walker to JE Shepard, 2 November 1927; James Dillard to James Shepard, 21 October 1927, RL Flowers Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

<sup>111</sup> JE Shepard to Angus McLean, 15 October 1927, RL Flowers Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

Shepard's acquiescence, Newbold threw his full support behind NCCN, blaming Shepard for any of the past problems. The endorsement still required that some "tangles" be straightened out. To sort out these complications required a final reconciliation of the facts as Newbold understood them. A lengthy statement recounting the original meeting and motion to require Shepard's resignation was drafted and sent to Flowers and the Board of Trustees. Problematically, only one person seemed to have a recollection similar to Newbold's. In the end Newbold ostensibly won because Shepard resigned. To a certain degree that gave validity to Newbold's assertions. Yet he never achieved the full validation of his view of events. More realistically, it was a direct reflection of Newbold's stature and sway over black education.<sup>112</sup>

The depth of Newbold's influence should not be underestimated. James Dillard said as much in straightforward terms, "Mr. Newbold's opposition to the president of the institution was the real cause for turning down" the request from NCCN.<sup>113</sup> In fact, even after Newbold signed on again blessing the request for money, Trevor Arnett asked Jackson Davis to "look into this matter thoroughly from every angle, and particularly from the angle of Newbold's endorsement . . . I think there should be no doubt about his wholehearted approval before the Board acts."<sup>114</sup> During the 1920s Newbold's role had truly evolved. His vision for education and his place in North Carolina's bureaucracy

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<sup>112</sup> JE Shepard to NC Newbold, 27 December 1927, RL Flowers Papers, University Archives, Duke University; NC Newbold to Frank Bachman, 23 July 1928, Reel 224, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University; NC Newbold to RL Flowers, 27 December 1927; JB Wright to RL Flowers, 6 January 1928; "A Statement" attached to letter NC Newbold to RL Flowers, 3 January 1928, RL Flowers Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

<sup>113</sup> James Dillard to Frank Bachman, 18 October 1928, Reel 224, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>114</sup> Trevor Arnett to Jackson Davis, 21 November 1928, Reel 224, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

attracted attention from the South and Northeast. By most measures he was one of the most powerful bureaucrats in the state. Newbold wielded that newfound power from the 1920s to the 1950s and in the process helped solidify North Carolina's growing reputation as a bastion of southern progressivism.



## CHAPTER 4

### REFLEXED GLORY – NEWBOLD AND THE ROSENWALD FUND

By the onset of the 1920s and 1930s Newbold exemplified racial moderation in North Carolina. Due to his extensive work in the state and numerous connections with philanthropists his reputation for interracial diplomacy spread throughout the South. Newbold believed advancements in Negro education promised rewards not only for blacks, but were also beneficial for public relations and the promotion of interracialism. “White people of the state,” Newbold wrote in the state’s paper of record, “have also come to feel that they are now beginning to do their duty and as a prominent citizen expressed it, understand the meaning of the ‘reflexed glory’ which come to those who help another people.”<sup>1</sup> Whether by design or an unexpected turn of phrase, “reflexed glory” aptly described the role Negro education played in shaping the state’s progressive image in the early twentieth century. Many observers considered North Carolina the epicenter of progressive educational policy. Basking in the reflective glory of others permits individuals to claim credit for a success, even accomplishments for which they have borne little responsibility. In the case of North Carolina, the state built its progressive reputation by taking undeserved bows for the work of the Division of Negro Education, philanthropists, and black educators. Often the achievements of the division,

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<sup>1</sup> “Negro Policy Extolled,” 23 March 1927, *News and Observer*, Microfilm Reading Room, DH Hill Library, NC State University.

limited though they may have been, occurred in spite of the state's bare bones commitment to black education.

Newbold's tireless commitment to build and improve schoolhouses for blacks was largely responsible for his reputation as a progressive reformer. For two and half decades North Carolina led the South in the construction of so-called Rosenwald schools. The record number of schools built under this program solidified Newbold's standing as a leading voice among white liberals in the region. Throughout much of his career the notion of *noblesse oblige* permeated his thinking. According to Newbold, this need to ensure basic fairness for blacks was born from the turmoil at the turn of the century. After the tribulations of Reconstruction, the White Supremacy Campaign of 1898, and the disfranchisement of blacks, white Democrats wrested the levers of power from the Populists, Republicans, and African Americans in the election of 1900. But regaining control also carried a "tremendous responsibility." With the racial hierarchy restored in North Carolina, whites were "honor bound now to see to it that the Negroes shall have justice in the courts and a square deal in educational opportunity, public health, and other civic affairs."

For years it had been claimed that the state was too poor to build and support a dual system of schools as they should be. Unfortunately, the claim had been true. It prevented proper development of any schools, and was used long after it was a dead issue by the reactionaries to prevent all school progress as far as possible. This of course was to prevent taxation. But the tide has turned.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Excerpt from Unfinished Draft of Newbold's Thesis, Attached to letter Wallace Buttrick to NC Newbold, 5 July 1922, Series 236, GEB Papers, Microfilm Dept., Perkins Library, Duke University; A historian noted that for progressives disfranchisement was an accomplishment to be celebrated. "Instead of the barbarism of extralegal violence, intelligent southern opinion had "settled" on white political control and separation.... The comparatively sanitary policies of disfranchisement and segregation appealed to progressives who sponsored moderate change through discrete adjustments to the social order. Dennis, Michael. *Lesson in Progress: State Universities and Progressivism in the New South, 1880-1920* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 43 - 44.

In Newbold's agenda moral obligations rested side by side with economic and labor concerns.

Historian James Anderson examined the confluence of school construction and black labor. According to his findings, from 1910 to 1930 the number of black children engaged in agricultural labor declined from 50% to 16.1%. Blacks were migrating to cities and towns, seeking better educational opportunities and facilities. Something had to be done to stanch the drain in order to maintain a ready supply of cheap labor.<sup>3</sup>

Initially, Newbold viewed school construction as a means to tamp down black resentment and slow the outward migration of blacks. Even if whites wanted to ignore an imperative to uphold their *noblesse oblige*, perhaps the economic argument might hold sway.

If we can build a great many school houses throughout the state my belief is that it will encourage the Negroes to feel that the school officials are trying to give them a square deal and that they will be more content to remain where they are because of better school advantages. Many of our county superintendents are realizing that this is really an economic proposition . . . Otherwise dissatisfaction will set in and many of them will leave.<sup>4</sup>

The establishment of the Rosenwald Fund allowed Newbold to promote a vigorous school construction agenda. As discussed in an earlier section, Newbold was a paper tiger whose ultimate authority rested with his diplomatic skills and the ability to control access to monies from philanthropic groups. Racial moderates could talk *ad nauseam* about

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<sup>3</sup> James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860 to 1935* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1988), 152.

<sup>4</sup> NC Newbold to Wallace Buttrick, 14 February 1919, GEB Papers, Series NC 236.4, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

improving race relations in the region, but school houses, Newbold reasoned, served as a concrete example of what earnest southern reformers were doing for the Negro and interracial cooperation. Rosenwald school construction placed state agents at the crossroads of power, interacting with the black community, a state bureaucracy, and philanthropic money. Wielded correctly, this arrangement provided a great deal of leverage for a bureaucrat. Plus it produced a tangible result easily held up as evidence of improving race relations.

Julius Rosenwald was an executive with Sears, Roebuck at the turn of the twentieth century. He amassed enormous wealth turning a then struggling mail-order business into a major retailer. After Rosenwald read Booker T. Washington's autobiography *Up From Slavery*, he developed an interest in Negro education. Like many of his contemporaries he viewed the Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes as the ideal models for Negro education rooted in accommodation and vocational pursuits. For several years he visited Tuskegee to witness first-hand Washington's version of Negro education in action. Washington took advantage of these encounters to persuade Rosenwald to invest in school house construction.<sup>5</sup>

In the realm of school construction, the Fund operated under a fairly straightforward premise. Unlike other charitable foundations, this one planned to spend its principal in full and one day cease operations. Julius Rosenwald's central idea was to encourage black self-help, racial uplift, and spur moderate whites to support school construction for Negroes. The Fund's intent was not to overturn Jim Crow or push for

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<sup>5</sup> "Julius Rosenwald: The Great American Philanthropist Who Decided What Blacks Should Teach," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* no. 24 (Summer 1999): 52 – 55.

social equality. Rosenwald's views reflected those of many other whites in the North and South. School construction coupled with industrial education was a way to help wayward blacks progress without upsetting the racial caste system. To fulfill the promise of self-help and racial uplift, blacks had to contribute to the construction of the school either through in-kind pledges of labor and materials or financial donations. This fed into the white reformer's narrative that blacks needed to take more responsibility for their education and not lean too heavily upon whites. Taken in this context, universal education was a birthright for whites and a gift bestowed upon deserving blacks. But unlike typical gifts, these had to be earned.

Although the fund sought to encourage southerners to embrace school construction, it was not to become a crutch that allowed a state to skirt its duty. The Rosenwald Fund required state or local government to provide financial support, vesting the white community with an interest in the schools. Additionally, it helped to buttress the fund against claims of being a northern agency dictating southern policy. Over time the Rosenwald Fund necessitated that each construction project adhered to certain architectural plans and pass a post-construction inspection before receiving aid. This bureaucratic trifecta where local communities, state government, and philanthropy converged allowed Newbold to influence school construction policy throughout the state.

North Carolina, like much of the South, developed a yawning disparity between white and black school construction. In the decade prior to the establishment of the fund, white school property values grew twenty-nine times as fast as black. In fact, the value of black property declined during that same period. The state started a schoolhouse loan fund, but of the 871 grants given for construction only thirty-eight went to African-

American projects. Even though blacks made up 32% of the school population, they accounted for only 13% of the appropriations. Moreover, for every dollar spent on a black student, a white student received a little over three. During that same decade counties and school districts moved toward a local taxation model to partially fund education. Black education entered the debate usually as a bloody shirt waved against using local taxes to fund education. No whites seriously considered black education part of any scheme to build schools.<sup>6</sup>

The Rosenwald fund had the potential to fill this vacuum and really start a serious conversation about school construction. Newbold sensed this from the beginning and became a staunch advocate. After a brief period of experimentation in Alabama, the fund officially opened for business in June of 1914. That same year Newbold wrote Booker T. Washington, seeking additional information about the fund and its agenda. Another black educator, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, prompted his first real exchange with Julius Rosenwald. Asking for an endorsement on a ten thousand dollar request for her school, she asked Newbold to write a letter in support of the application. Though Brown did not receive the funds, it established Newbold as the state's gatekeeper to one of the biggest sources of philanthropic money in southern education.<sup>7</sup>

In many ways the philosophical outlook of the Rosenwald Fund both informed and mirrored Newbold's view of race relations. Julius Rosenwald placed Edwin Embree in charge of the organization. Embree supported a strategic alliance between black

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<sup>6</sup> Louis Harlan, *Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States 1901 to 1915* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 110 – 115, 131.

<sup>7</sup> Anderson, 158; Report of NC Newbold, August 1914, Special Subjects File Box 16, DNE, State Archives.

leaders and moderate southern whites to stabilize racial tensions in the region. He did not seek to alter the southern orthodoxy, yet embraced an approach to the race question that improved access to education and equal opportunity within the context of segregation.<sup>8</sup> This notion somewhat predates Newbold's later thinking about equality of opportunity. Yet it reflects his idea that doing nothing or very little was unacceptable and counterproductive.

During an era when many white southerners questioned the need for even basic school construction for blacks, Newbold championed building modern schools throughout the state. However, he was not advancing an idea of equality in education or school construction. The crusade for construction was often couched in white paternalism, promising to curtail black aspirations or cure blacks of some perceived social ill. For example, a superintendent in Anson County professed a reluctance to pursue school construction. The superintendent had nothing to fear, according to Newbold, because building a modern school was both necessary and proper to help blacks become productive citizens. Plus he was certain that blacks did not labor under any misconceptions about equal facilities.

I am sure you understand that a school that would develop good white citizens, I mean one that is properly constructed and equipped with the furniture necessary, is the only type of school that will develop good citizens of any race. The colored people do not expect that as much money shall be spent on their school, but I feel sure they have the right to expect a comfortable, well equipped building . . . where the school officials make reasonable and just provision for Negro schools, the attitude of the Negro people and the type of citizens produced by that school are in every way much better . . .<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2006), 128.

<sup>9</sup> NC Newbold to CL Cates, 13 March 1923, Box 6, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

It was this sort of split the difference approach that characterized his earliest views on the campaign to build schools. Later Newbold became a leading voice heralding “separate but equal” as a necessary goal. But initially the number one priority was construction, even if it meant separate but unequal.

Convincing whites that modern school construction might prove beneficial was problematic on several fronts. First, southerners’ parochial nature made them wary of ceding any control to those perceived as outsiders – especially reformers and state bureaucrats. Working for an agency financed by northern money risked setting the state official at loggerheads with the locals trying to set their own policy. A case in point, a dispute about the funding of schools at Elizabeth City’s schools, triggered a scathing exchange between Newbold and the school board. The chairman of the board, E.F. Aydlett, lambasted Newbold as a well-paid bureaucratic know-nothing with “plenty of time with your good salary” to write long letters and meddle in the affairs of others. In a rare display of anger Newbold responded in kind, “Like the scuttle fish you hope to muddy the water to divert attention from the facts...believing you to be a trained attorney I thought you would want the facts, but you will pardon me if I placed too high a value upon your type of intelligence.” For good measure he added, “It will be consoling to you (it is to me) to know that you nor any other taxpayer in North Carolina contribute one penny to my ‘good salary’. . . think of the good money which you are saving.”<sup>10</sup> For a man who practiced a great deal of self-restraint in pursuit of his objectives, this was a rare

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<sup>10</sup> EF Aydlett to NC Newbold, 30 July 1923; NC Newbold to EF Aydlett, 31 July 1923, Box 6, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.



glimpse behind his mask of southern gentility. Pursuing his agenda required a delicate balancing act to placate easily bruised egos.

The second problem confronting school construction arose from finances. School systems throughout the state were strapped for cash and education was not always a top priority in a largely agricultural society. Adding race to the equation only made matters worse. Many whites felt that spending money on black schools was a waste of time and resources. A dubious argument arose that blacks were lucky to have any sort of publicly financed education. In the first decade of the twentieth century legislators debated a bill to divide the tax revenue according to race. Though the bill failed to pass, the sentiment lingered that white tax money should only go towards white education. Helen Corson lamented to Newbold that among even “intelligent and interested white people,” the attitude held that blacks deserved little because they paid less proportionately and substantively in taxes. Historian Louis Harlan noted, “The defeat of such bills did not mean that Negroes had been receiving or would receive equal per capita share of school funds. It meant only that unequal apportionments would be made through subterfuge by men with uneasy consciences.”<sup>11</sup> Harlan’s interpretation misses the crucial point. Whites had neither uneasy consciences nor did they use subterfuge. Superintendents and school boards openly discriminated without shame, normally with the full support of the white community, and displayed little discomfort with their actions.

Newbold dismissed those sentiments as misguided and pointed to the inherent flaws in such reasoning. The statutes did not permit divvying up tax revenues by race. If

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<sup>11</sup> Harlan, 105; Helen Corson to NC Newbold, 11 May 1928, Box 9, DNE, Correspondence of the Director, State Archives.

driven merely by the letter of the law under “separate but equal,” then even in the Jim Crow South, blacks had a right to an education.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, blacks paid their share of the taxes but authorities diverted the money to white education. Moving beyond merely looking at property or income taxes, one must also include the fees paid when blacks conducted business throughout their daily lives. Following this to its logical conclusion “it would only be fair to give them not the actual amounts they pay in taxes but also a pro-rata share of the railroad, telephone, telegraph, electric lights, and other corporation taxes, and also what they actually pay in as fines, forfeitures and penalties.” In sum, officials had a moral, legal, and financial responsibility to build these schools because blacks were taxpayers.<sup>13</sup>

Even though Newbold defended the Negro as a taxpayer, he wore blinders when dealing with raising additional money for school construction. In one instance he told an aide to put the pressure on a “well to do colored man” because “I do not think that some of the colored leaders as yet realize what they can do and how important is for them to make some personal sacrifices.”<sup>14</sup> Newbold embraced and promulgated a racial double standard. Blacks deserved their rights as taxpayers and those rights should be protected. But they came with limits and carried a price. Whites might build schools for blacks, but only after these taxpayers proved they were worthy and bore a burden not required of

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<sup>12</sup> NC Newbold Statement, 15 May 1928, Box 9, DNE, Correspondence of the Director, State Archives.

<sup>13</sup> NC Newbold to Byrd I. Satterfield, 16 August 1927, Box 8, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>14</sup> NC Newbold to GE Davis, 23 August 1927, Box 8, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

whites, rich or poor. Historian James Anderson referred to this phenomenon as double taxation.

Since the end of the Reconstruction era black southerners had adapted to a structure of oppressive education by practicing double taxation. They had no choice but pay both direct and indirect taxes for public education. Southern public school authorities diverted school taxes largely to the development of white public education. Blacks then resorted to making private donations to finance public schools. To have their black privately financed schools recognized and even partially supported by state and local authorities, black southerners had to deed the state their contributions of money, land, and school equipment.<sup>15</sup>

Newbold's philosophy ignored this reality. In his mind Negro sacrifice demonstrated a commitment to education. Perhaps his past personal experience with finances and schools shaped this impression. If so, then it gave him a sense of empathy but also skewed his views on Negro education.

The third challenge played off the two mentioned above - general indifference on the part of whites. Writing in response to a question about southern attitudes, Newbold said, "So many of our white people, as a rule, have gone on in the same old way paying no attention to the Negro schools . . . There is among a certain class of people, of course, antagonism. In most cases these people are descendants who did not own slaves during the war."<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the obstructionists were those whites who never learned the values of *noblesse oblige* and paternalism that slavery taught and passed from one generation to the next. As the descendent of a slaveholder, apparently, this was a part of Newbold's genetic inheritance.

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<sup>15</sup> James Anderson, 156.

<sup>16</sup> NC Newbold to Charles Sims, 19 October 1920, Box 5, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

Convincing local authorities to build schools required more than just handing out philanthropic money. Newbold organized his staff with an eye toward interracial diplomacy and southern mores. He often commented on the need to take racial attitudes into consideration when making administrative decisions. For example, after reading an article in a newspaper that a school in Lumberton planned to hire a black supervisor with a white underling, Newbold dismissed this as folly. The arrangement by which a black man “will be at the head of the institution and a white man business manager is most surely not going to succeed,” he informed a colleague. The black man would be “handicapped all the way through” by having to deal with a white employee. He ends on a note that rings of white Southern honor stating, “I have a feeling a white man would not be willing to take a subordinate position.” Besides, there was little need for concern by whites. Even if the school hired a black supervisor, a white board of trustees governed the institution, thereby guaranteeing “the right kind of supervision.”<sup>17</sup> Newbold’s awareness of race, time, and place influenced his staffing decisions and the campaign to support school construction.

The members of the staff who were largely responsible for promoting and overseeing construction of Rosenwald schools embodied that racial policy. From the very beginning Newbold envisioned two men running the program, one white and one black. Initially, the black teachers association paid for Charles Moore to travel the state and encourage black school construction in rural districts. However, the organization directed the state Department of Public Instruction to set his agenda, effectively putting him under

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<sup>17</sup> NC Newbold to LR Varser, 19 December 1924, Box 7, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

Newbold's supervision. Next Newbold acquired the services of T.B. Attmore, a southern white man and superintendent sympathetic to the Rosenwald agenda. Citing the already pressing demands on Newbold to travel across the state, Attmore provided another voice to spread the gospel of school construction. The racial implications were even more important. "You can easily understand," Newbold wrote Buttrick at the GEB, "that it is not so easy for a Negro to reach the county school officials as it would be for a white man."<sup>18</sup>

Though Moore and Attmore were there briefly in the beginning, throughout the 1920s and early 1930s the three state officials who dealt most extensively with the Rosenwald fund were George E. Davis, William F. Credle, and Newbold. Davis, an African American educator, functioned as the state's building agent. As such, his duties included traveling to various counties and school districts to publicize the plan, support and encourage local community fundraising, negotiate with white officials, and inspect the completed construction. Davis's interactions with Newbold and Credle provide a unique insight into the working dynamics between white moderate reformers and the African American leadership class.

Racial assumptions existing during this time in the South defined their professional relationship. Newbold and Davis could never be social equals, and neither believed that professional equality was immediately attainable. Historian Mary Hoffschwelle argues that Newbold, Credle, and Davis, though separated by the obvious barriers of Jim Crow, bore similarities. According to her, all three were "affluent, highly

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<sup>18</sup> NC Newbold to Wallace Buttrick, 14 February 1919, GEB Papers, Series 236.4, Microfilm Department, Perkins Library, Duke University; Report of NC Newbold, July 1915; Report of NC Newbold, September 1915, Special Subject File Box 16, DNE, State Archives.

educated, and well connected in their separate worlds” and that this life of privilege led to a paternalistic outlook.<sup>19</sup> The reality was far different. As noted in this work’s first chapter, Newbold attended but never graduated from Trinity College (now Duke University) and felt somewhat inadequate as result. Financial concerns persistently dogged Newbold throughout his career. For example, the General Education Board arranged free medical care for Newbold at Johns Hopkins in the 1920s. Aside from genuine affection, Jackson Davis cited Newbold’s strained finances as the reason for arranging the *pro bono care*.<sup>20</sup> Newbold was neither affluent nor a college graduate. On paper Davis was his academic and intellectual superior. Davis graduated from both Biddle University and Howard University, earning a doctorate. Therefore, the source for both men’s paternalism flowed from two different sources. Davis echoed the ethos common among black academics, calling for racial uplift and an educated leadership class.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, Newbold’s paternalism arose from the context of the New South. It was his race and bureaucratic position overseeing Negro education, rather than his education, wealth, or birth right that afforded him the chance to fully embody the essence of paternalism.

This Rosenwald triumvirate developed a complex working rapport with each other. Hoffschwelle somewhat accurately described the relationship as “benevolent

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<sup>19</sup> Hoffschwelle, 182.

<sup>20</sup> Jackson Davis to Abraham Flexner, 25 October 1926; Abraham Flexner to Winford Smith, 5 November 1926; Abraham Flexner to A.T. Allen, 3 December 1926, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>21</sup> Hoffschwelle, 182.

white supervisors and deferential black employees in interracial contexts.”<sup>22</sup> However, that characterization misses the mark. Together they led a campaign to build hundreds of Rosenwald schools throughout the state. Though each person understood their place in the racial hierarchy, it does not mean that they interacted in predictable ways. For example, both Credle and Newbold referred to Davis by his earned title – doctor. This type of social interaction no doubt gained white racial moderates currency with black leaders who often found their titles rejected out of hand by most white southerners. Additionally, they engaged Davis as an intellectual, if not social, equal. The exchanged correspondence contained numerous literary references. A discussion of the weather by Davis included a quote from Shakespeare, that read “Ye merrie England never looked upon a sight so dreary.”<sup>23</sup> Davis’s letters contained a descriptive and narrative quality not often found in bureaucratic epistles. “Today as I sit here in the little eight by three depot,” he wrote while waiting for a train, “I hear the distant booming of white caps and the raucous cry of curlews . . . sand dunes lift their heads like banks of snow amidst the brown clumps of scrubby oaks and wire grass.”<sup>24</sup> Credle and Davis engaged in a book club of sorts, exchanging books and recommending new works. One suggested reading by Davis drew the following response from Credle: “If it pleased you, I am sure that I

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<sup>22</sup> Hoffschwelle, 182-183.

<sup>23</sup> GE Davis to NC Newbold, 20 February 1926, Box 2, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>24</sup> GE Davis to NC Newbold, 20 February 1926, Box 2, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.

shall have no cause to find fault.”<sup>25</sup> Though race set the parameters of their working relationship, Davis’s class and education also influenced it.

The three men operated within a set of loosely defined roles. Particular circumstances might temporarily alter an individual’s duties, but there was general agreement on each person’s function. Credle served as the chief administrative contact between the state and the fund’s main office in Tennessee. He was responsible for the day-to-day operations of Rosenwald school house construction throughout the state. Davis was primarily a field operative who went into communities to check on the progress of construction, promote local projects, conduct public relations, negotiate with the black and white leaders, and inspect the finished product. Freed by Davis and Credle from administrative oversight, Newbold operated mostly as a CEO, lobbyist, and strategist.

From the very beginning race dictated some of these responsibilities. Newbold firmly believed that Davis’s ethnicity was a critical element for gaining access to and support from the black community. Conversely, recalcitrant whites might more readily open up to Newbold or Credle than to a black man. The triumvirate took turns negotiating with various officials as circumstances dictated. Davis reported that in one county the black community raised their required share and gave the money to county officials. A standoff ensued with little to no progress on actual construction. Perhaps

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<sup>25</sup> GE Davis to WF Credle, 20 May 1926; WF Credle to GE Davis, 22 May 1926, Box 2, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.



Davis realized the time was right for Credle to step in because someone white “will accomplish more with the white Board of the district I think than I could.”<sup>26</sup>

This biracial lobbying also worked the other way. Sometimes Credle encountered opposition from white officials and needed Davis to find ways to apply pressure. According to Credle, a superintendent named Reece stated that the “Lord forgot to provide any school site [for blacks] when he was making this little town. I wanted to tell Reece that the Lord didn’t put much sympathy in his heart for colored people when he made him but I didn’t.”<sup>27</sup> Credle proposed that Davis prod the black community into pressuring the school board. Having a biracial staff allowed fluidity in dealing with circumstances as they arose.

At times Davis approached his job with a fervor that mixed religious martyrdom and missionary zeal. Formulating his rhetoric in religious overtones provided a common language for the men and permitted Davis a degree of freedom to directly criticize the failings of Negro education. In one report on the progress of Rosenwald schools in a rural area, Davis veered into a discussion on the length of school terms. White students received a nine month school term while black students attended for six. According to Davis, “God looks with disfavor on such injustice. His face will not always shine on those who take advantage of the poor. . . .” To make sure the point was not lost he identified the people God would punish. The fault was with “white men [who] ‘shoe-stringed’ the corporate limits so as to put the Negroes outside the town limits.” He

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<sup>26</sup> GE Davis to WF Credle, 9 November 1925, Box 2, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>27</sup> WF Credle to GE Davis, 24 January 1925, Box 1, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.

concluded by slipping into deference, flattery, patriotism, and apologia stating, “That’s cowardly. That’s contrary to Anglo Saxon claims to fair play!” Playing on the one hundred percent Americanism still lingering from World War I, he suggested that these whites might be of German descent.<sup>28</sup>

Davis’s ire over the school term had yet to subside a year later. Combining scripture and English idiom he told Credle that “[W]e must suffer it to be so.’ A wise head keeps a still tongue . . .”<sup>29</sup> This mixing of the literary and the religious created a language by which the men could communicate without crossing the prescribed lines of interracial interaction. Davis did not come across as a militant looking to overturn the system, but as an accommodationist well versed in the language of gradualism. Therefore, Newbold and Credle did not see his frank remarks as a call to arms, but more as the venting of a man who shared a similar agenda and world view. The fact that Newbold and Credle did little to curtail his openness may have only encouraged Davis even more. “I wish to make clear,” Credle informed Davis, that “I did not wish to in any way appease your wrath toward the powers that be. . . . Really no just excuse can be offered for the situation that exists there.”<sup>30</sup>

Additionally, Davis proved very adept at using the language of the white South to his advantage. In one instance he went so far as to suggest switching to the party of white

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<sup>28</sup> GE Davis to WF Credle, 16 January 1926, Box 2, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>29</sup> GE Davis to WF Credle, 25 January 1926, Box 2, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>30</sup> WF Credle to GE Davis, 26 January 1926, Box 2, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.

supremacy, “I am inclining more and more to be an out and out Democrat when I note how some of these Republican counties deal with their colored citizens.”<sup>31</sup> On another occasion he sang the praises of Rosenwald and the Washingtonian benefits the schools inevitably instilled noting, “In securing them, the Negro learns thoroughly one lesson in economics – self help.”<sup>32</sup> He even dabbled in the racist social science movement of the day noting that Negroes in the western part of the state constituted a “finer physical type” when compared to those of the “low swampy sections” in the eastern part of the state. According to Davis, this all resulted from ethnicity and place of origin.

Slaves from the coasts of Africa could live in these lower sections. The finer types from the African plateau could only survive in the Piedmont and Mountain Regions. All through the North Carolina mountains, where Negroes are found at all, they are of a fine physical type . . . They are more capable mentally and physically and from such stock the race should develop.<sup>33</sup>

The way that Davis used language afforded him a means to openly attack one of the sacraments of white southern honor - a man’s perceived trustworthiness. A black man dared not call a white man a liar, especially if speaking to or corresponding with a white man. Davis treaded right to the edge of that line when discussing the white officials he encountered. He suggested that one superintendent’s promises and assurances meant little. “There isn’t a thing to him but talk,” Davis advised Credle, “As I looked into his benign countenance . . . He seems out of place in that beautiful court house in his lack of

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<sup>31</sup> GE Davis to WF Credle, 24 September 1924, Box 1, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>32</sup> GE Davis Report, September 1924, Special Subject File Box 8, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>33</sup> GE Davis Report, September 1924, Special Subject File Box 8, DNE, State Archives.

progressive ideas. .. I am sorry to say that I do not know what can be done about it. Mr. McBryde will promise one almost anything and that is about all.”<sup>34</sup>

Though Davis was a skilled accomodationist, he believed that the status quo must eventually yield. In his letters and reports on school construction he was quite open with Newbold about his views. Education was a powerful force with the ability to reshape the social geography of the south. Enlisting the rhetoric of the politics of respectability, he concluded that the gradual move to social equality emanated from class, not racial considerations.

The more education white people and black people have the less do they fear the bugbear of social equality. There is too much contact between the baser elements of both races and not enough on the higher levels. If there were, “white folks” would so have much less to fear. I know a number of white men in this good state of ours who would be too much concerned about saving his state, his country and his God to have any concern about whether the Congressman from Illinois was a Pole, Scandinavian, Swede or just an ordinary brown skinned American; or whether their temporary dwelling places were adjacent . . .<sup>35</sup>

For his part Newbold often ignored allusions to social equality. Rarely does he respond, at least in his correspondence, to these types of remarks. This silence created a blank slate onto which others projected their vision of him as a gradualist.

As an integral member of the Rosenwald supervisory triumvirate, Davis travelled extensively throughout the year. For example, in October 1922 he spent a total of six days at home in Charlotte. The rest of the month he visited numerous cities and towns dotting the state’s landscape. In an era before interstates and integrated hotels or

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<sup>34</sup> GE Davis to WF Credle, 27 February 1926, Box 2, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>35</sup> Report of GE Davis, March 1929, Special Subject File Box 8, DNE, State Archives.

boarding houses, this was difficult travel and at times the work courted an air of danger. Credle warned Davis his next stop was a “stronghold of the Ku Klux Klan but I have never known of their interfering with our work.”<sup>36</sup> Davis brushed aside the warning stating the “KKK didn’t and don’t give me alarm.” That rejoinder may very well be true, but the threat of violence was real. Davis himself reported the burning of schools by whites who resented any form of black education.<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, he kept up this hectic routine month after month.

For many people, black and white, Davis became the human face of the Rosenwald state bureaucracy. His most important assignment was to serve as a conduit into the black community. Working with and in support of Jeanes supervisors, he aimed to educate blacks about the Rosenwald program and enlist their financial support at rallies and meetings. Jeanes supervisors directed a lot the grassroots work, which allowed Davis to assume a role as a state representative who parachuted in and lent weight to assertions from local black leaders and educators. His reports are scattered with references to a community’s failures and successes at raising the requisite money. His exasperation surfaced when the black residents seemingly kept their end of the bargain to only have the local authorities balk at keeping theirs. For example, blacks in Mount Airy had a “little unfurnished dog kennel (hound dog, not a Rin Tin Tin) that house their children.”<sup>38</sup> The superintendent made assurances that construction would begin when the

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<sup>36</sup> Report of GE Davis, October 1922, Special Subject File Box 8; WF Credle to GE Davis, 18 November 1924, Box 1, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>37</sup> GE Davis to WF Credle, 12 September 1922, Box 1, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>38</sup> GE Davis to NC Newbold, 5 October 1927, Box 9, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

black residents raised \$900. After initially raising \$500, the superintendent expressed little interest in construction so the fundraising halted.<sup>39</sup>

Davis took his concerns about the stalled construction to the white school board. As the meeting progressed the school board approved funding for eight new white schools. Finally granting Davis the floor, the superintendent stated the plans to build a school for blacks had already been reviewed and rejected by the county commissioners. Davis tried a different tack and suggested building a smaller school. If blacks fulfilled their \$900 pledge combined with money from the state and the Rosenwald fund, the county carried little financial burden. Again the superintendent rejected the plan out of hand.<sup>40</sup>

This rejection prompted Davis to write a scathing indictment of the superintendent stating, “I am convinced the matter hinges on the superintendent’s attitude. His heart is not right.” He then proceeded to inveigh against an inherently unjust system for funding the schools stating, “White people in our state are not asked to sweat blood that their children may be helped . . . If I were a white man I would be ashamed, of and for, my group . . . We are our brother’s keeper, whatever the color of his skin. I am aware in all this I am carrying coal to Newcastle . . . you are of the same mind. But ‘you

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<sup>39</sup> GE Davis to NC Newbold, 5 October 1927, Box 9, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>40</sup> GE Davis to NC Newbold, 5 October 1927, Box 9, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

have come to the kingdom for such a time as this.”<sup>41</sup> Davis made it clear he did not see Newbold in the same light as the superintendent, but rather on the side of the enlightened whites fighting for fairness. Instead of an attack on whites in general, this was now a simple plea for justice. Nevertheless, several days later Davis wondered if his musings had gone too far. “I am writing today in a rather different frame of mind,” Davis stated, and “I am afraid that the blue devils of fatigue may have directed my thoughts in the last letter,” thereby reclaiming his place as a deferential Negro.<sup>42</sup> Newbold absolves Davis telling him to relay the facts as they are and not to feel so discouraged about the work.<sup>43</sup> Newbold and Credle rarely pushed back or advised him to tone down his commentary. If anything, their benign responses only encouraged him.

An attempt to build a twelve classroom schoolhouse in Plymouth provides an informative glimpse of how the triumvirate worked together and utilized interracial diplomacy. First, Newbold and Credle visited the city and met with the white authorities to review potential school sites. While Newbold and Credle selected what they thought was the best location, a plot of land called Stubbs, the blacks in the area disagreed. The men from Plymouth assured Newbold that the blacks in the area were just as happy with a different piece of land called Burgess. Newbold and Credle deemed Burgess as a possibility but not the best site. They also doubted that blacks actually wanted to build at

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<sup>41</sup> According the records a Rosenwald school was never built in Mt. Airy. However, two years later a school was built in a neighboring community. GE Davis to NC Newbold, 5 October 1927, Box 9, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>42</sup> GE Davis to NC Newbold, 11 October 1927, Box 9, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>43</sup> NC Newbold to GE Davis, 12 October 1927, Box 9 Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

Burgess. In response Newbold sent Davis to Plymouth on a recon mission among the black residents. Davis was to determine if the alternate site was indeed acceptable and, if so, start the fundraising campaign. In the meantime as Davis planned to meet with the black residents, Newbold and Credle orchestrated a conference among the whites to work out the local “tangle.”<sup>44</sup>

According to Davis, the blacks in Plymouth did not like the sites chosen by whites. He listed a myriad of concerns including the small number of blacks who lived near the plot of land, the lack of access by road, and an inadequate sewage system. Black residents feared the county would do very little to rectify these problems either before or after constructing the school. They voted unanimously in support of the location picked by Newbold and agreed to raise extra money to acquire the land.<sup>45</sup> With the vote of the black residents in hand, Newbold met with the school board, superintendent, county commission, chamber of commerce, and the town council. This meeting excluded blacks from attending, which would allow the whites to speak freely since no blacks were present. According to Newbold, this gave him a sense of where the obstruction lay and a chance to identify any possible solutions. During the conference the chamber of commerce made known their intentions to develop the Stubbs property and threatened a court order to halt construction of a school. Burgess was the only offer on the table, with a promise to build access roads and make any other needed improvements.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> NC Newbold to GE Davis, 24 January 1928, Box 9, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>45</sup> GE Davis to NC Newbold, 13 February 1928, Box 9, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>46</sup> NC Newbold to GE Davis, 2 March 1928, Box 9, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.



The ball was back in Davis's court to persuade the black residents to get on board with the Burgess site. He told the two men considered leaders in the school movement that it was time "to agree to the Burgess site. It is better to build there than not to have the building."<sup>47</sup> Credle also sent a letter in support of the Burgess site to validate that whites had settled on the Burgess option.<sup>48</sup> According to the records a Rosenwald school was never built in Plymouth. Although Newbold's interracial diplomacy failed here, the dynamics of negotiation were quite clear. Like the pieces on a chess board, Newbold, Credle, and Davis each had a specific role to play in their attempt to get a Rosenwald school built in the city.

Getting a school started was one challenge, getting it through to completion was another set of problems. Newbold turned to his man in the field to both apply pressure and provide updates. Davis wielded a bit of power with superintendents through his role as inspector. During and after the construction of a building, he determined if the school met the requirements to receive Rosenwald aid. Southern racial etiquette dictated that his conclusions, especially the rejection of a project, come from a white man. In keeping with Newbold's biracial approach to running his bureaucracy, Davis funneled the decisions through Credle. "Just say to Mr. Beam," Davis wrote Credle about a school in

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<sup>47</sup> GE Davis to NC Newbold, 4 March 1928, Box 9, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>48</sup> WF Credle to LS Mitchell, 5 March 1928, Box 9, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

Lincoln County, “that if he will build and equip Tucker’s Grove and Mount Vernon according to the contract . . .,” then we will approve the aid.<sup>49</sup>

Even when a superintendent agreed to construct a school, as Beam did, the journey to completion created tension and disillusionment. Credle informed Davis that construction on a different school in Beam’s district was taking too long to build and should not receive any help from Rosenwald, but that the final decision rested with Davis. Even with three Rosenwald construction projects in Lincoln County going on at the same time, Davis felt resigned to failure. According to Davis, the attitude of Beam, “seems something more than indifference, almost hostility. . . . [T]here are abandoned white school buildings falling into decay along the road side better than the best Negro rural school in the county. . . . I always come from Lincoln schools with a feeling of sorrow.”<sup>50</sup> The black residents worried that their school house dreams were slowly evaporating and all their work for nil. “This is to say,” lamented one frustrated black resident to Credle, “we are still in our dungeon yet. . . . Mr. Beam is only making promises as before.”<sup>51</sup>

As complaints mounted from black residents and Davis’s reports of stalled efforts continued, Newbold tried personal diplomacy. He remained diligent to walk the line between offering assistance, pushing his agenda, and respecting local sovereignty. Beam

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<sup>49</sup> GE Davis to WF Credle, 3 November 1925, Box 2, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>50</sup> WF Credle to GE Davis, 31 October 1925, Box 2; GE Davis to WF Credle, 3 November 1925, Box 2, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>51</sup> Harvey Foster to WF Credle, 21 November 1925, Box 2, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.

personally assured Newbold that the projects were well underway. The blame rested with the blacks who “wrangled considerably among themselves” wasting time instead of raising their share of the funds.<sup>52</sup> Ultimately, Newbold sided with the superintendent finding little reason to fault his actions. The number one priority now required motivating the Negroes to do their part. This was part of his orchestrated diplomacy - when necessary agree the fault lies with the Negroes, not on the shoulders of white intransigence. Of course, that called for a familiar play from the playbook. Once again Newbold called upon Davis “to talk with the colored people and encourage them to do everything they can to help [Beam] under the difficult circumstances . . .”<sup>53</sup> Each of three projects eventually passed inspection and received aid, but not without a great deal of delay, broken promises, and hand wringing.

Under Newbold’s guidance the Rosenwald construction program flourished in North Carolina. From the very beginning the movement provided an opportunity that no other fund matched. It played into white southerner’s paternalistic imagination that African Americans needed someone to inspire and lead them to do better, whether it was the Jeanes supervisor, George E. Davis, the superintendent, or Newbold. By default it propelled the South haltingly forward with the construction of modern school buildings. Newbold’s primary function can best be described as an “architect” of the statewide movement. His gift for organization and diplomacy proved invaluable to the widespread building of Rosenwald schools.

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<sup>52</sup> NC Newbold to L Berge Beam, 24 November 1925; L Berge Beam to NC Newbold, 27 November 1925, Box 8, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>53</sup> NC Newbold to L Berge Beam, 1 December 1925, Box 8, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

Early on Newbold explained to a fellow educator his success in developing the program. First, county officials agreed to build several school houses. Next, the superintendent notified several other districts and invited them to a meeting. Members of the various school boards talked with an official about school construction. If a superintendent expressed some interest, then either Newbold or someone else from the office met with him and discussed the guidelines set by the state and Rosenwald. This was a sales pitch that, according to Newbold, “serve[s] to create interest in districts nearby those that receive help, and thus in a very short time the building program will be extended to other needy parts of a given county.”<sup>54</sup> This method carried an important benefit in the closed South. By using one local authority to sell the idea to another, it created the veneer that this work was being done by the county at best, or by the state at worst. It stripped away the sense that a bunch of busy-body reformers from the North were interloping into local affairs.

After persuading the superintendent or local officials, the other concern for the “architect” was to encourage black involvement. To that end he outlined a general plan of attack. A county or school district started out by holding a meeting of the blacks in the area to talk about Negro education, the school building campaign, and to figure out the demographic spread of blacks. With that information in hand they could begin to sort out the best possible locations for a new school. Members of the school board should be present to demonstrate the project had the backing of the white community. Finally, Davis would be sent in to give an inspirational speech about Rosenwald schools, Negro

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<sup>54</sup> NC Newbold to Abraham Flexner, 18 June 1919, Box 4, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

education, and money raising.<sup>55</sup> Of course, the hard work of actually raising the funds was left to the local teachers and Jeanes supervisors. Nevertheless, Newbold provided the face of benevolent white paternalism, and in the context of the times, that face projected the real possibility that a school might finally be built.

To his credit, Newbold skillfully cajoled, begged, and pleaded for additional money from Rosenwald and received more than any other state in the South. Even though the money was genuinely needed, like a good salesman, he started negotiations with a higher number and then let the other side bargain it down. He used the same business-like approach when the cost of building materials was increasing, while simultaneously the Rosenwald fund wanted to cut back appropriations. Newbold made it clear to Clinton Calloway, an early supervisor of the fund, that as the requests from counties kept growing, any reductions would hinder the great progress under way. Instead of cutting back, the fund needed to increase their appropriations to keep up.

Under these conditions it would be all the colored people can do in most cases to raise one-third and the counties, owing to limitations placed upon their building fund by law will scarcely be able to exceed one third of the cost. That is, of course, if we are going to build several houses in a single county, and perhaps you already know I am urging superintendents to build six to a dozen if possible in counties where the Negro population is largest.<sup>56</sup>

Reducing appropriations carried another risk. Why would a superintendent jump through all of the Rosenwald hoops if they could build a school cheaper without any restrictions? Rosenwald required the use of their approved blueprints and even dictated the positioning

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<sup>55</sup> NC Newbold to Hoy Taylor, 11 August 1924, Box 7, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>56</sup> NC Newbold to Clinton Calloway, 12 March 1919, Box 4, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

of the physical plant on the property. If appropriations fell through after Newbold had guaranteed them, then superintendents would threaten to abandon not only the approved Rosenwald plan, but any other construction as well.<sup>57</sup>

Calloway seemed ambivalent to those concerns. The fund was meant to serve as a stimulus, not as the main source of money. Once again Newbold attempted to enlighten him about the mentality of superintendents stating, “Then too, it is easier for an official who is much subservient to public opinion to do this rather than put up a much better building which might by contrast show to better advantage over buildings for white children in the same county.”<sup>58</sup> Not every request was met with success. Nevertheless, larger and larger sums of money flowed into the state from the Rosenwald fund throughout the 1920s. North Carolina was far and away the single greatest beneficiary of the fund. By the mid-1920s the state accounted for twenty-five percent of all the rural schools built by the fund. For example, in 1924 Credle and Newbold asked for an appropriation topping \$131,000. Writing to Samuel L. Smith, an administrator with Rosenwald, Newbold tried to soften the blow, “Your first impression, I am sure, will be that it is unusually large.”<sup>59</sup>

It is important to note that all of the work of the triumvirate counted for little without the men and women working in the local communities. From the beginning

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<sup>57</sup> NC Newbold to Clinton Calloway, 7 November 1919, Box 4, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>58</sup> Clinton Calloway to NC Newbold, 21 November 1919; NC Newbold to Clinton Calloway, 21 November 1919, Box 4, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>59</sup> Negro Schoolhouses in the South, 1925 to 1926, Box 3, General Correspondence of Supervisor of Rosenwald Fund; NC Newbold to SL Smith, 20 February 1924, Box 7, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

blacks were wary of whites' duplicity requiring blacks to pay taxes and then raise additional money. Even when blacks cloaked their discontent in terms like "self-help" and "uplifting the race," it did not obscure reality. Rosenwald promoted school construction, but it also gave whites cover on the injustice at the heart of Jim Crow. Blacks had to willingly acknowledge that their "white friends" tried to help them or end up with nothing. Additionally, blacks had to endure a white mindset that failure to build a school reflected the indifference of African Americans toward education. More in straitjacket than having a real choice, blacks accepted these Pyrrhic victories and championed the building of schools. George Davis explained as much to Newbold:

The Negroes themselves, have not been merely recipients of gratuities, conscious of the fact that they are paying their due proportion of the tax; that money collected by taxation for public education is not the property of any class or race but the property of the state to be used for the education of all her people, yet out of their limited means, in addition to their tax, on the schools built in the year just closed, they gave out of their personal resources \$85,000 to help buy the land to build and to equip the schools. Who can say the negro does not value education and the benefits it confers?<sup>60</sup>

Despite its various shortcomings, the Rosenwald fund nonetheless provided an outlet for black activism. It was the parents, teachers, and Jeanes supervisors who carried out the difficult task of raising money from a poor populace. The push to build Rosenwald schools was not really a bureaucratically driven enterprise. It is better described as a grassroots affair. Local educators and black communities readily understood the possibilities that the Rosenwald fund presented for improving the schools in their region. Blacks around the state did not wait for representatives of the Rosenwald fund to point the way. Regardless of his underlying ideology, to blacks Newbold was a

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<sup>60</sup> GE Davis to NC Newbold, 3 August 1922, Box 5, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

state official serious about building schools. Suddenly, constructing a school seemed like a real possibility.

In many cases the local community got ahead of Newbold and other officials. Take as an example the residents in Wake Forest. In the 1920s the black residents of the Wake Forest township pushed for a new school to accommodate their children. On the grounds of a local church they started the Wake Forest Graded School (Colored). The church and community refurbished an old log cabin and converted it for use as a school. A couple of years later the graded school purchased land with the intent of convincing the county to erect a school. The Wake County Board of Education agreed to build the school with a mix of Rosenwald, state and local money. Blacks raised their share through in-kind donations, bake sales, and church collections. Wake Forest was not populated with individuals waiting for the state to send a bureaucrat to convince them of their need for an education. Instead they moved ahead with plans using the resources at hand.<sup>61</sup>

Not all community projects met with success. Black activism could easily run afoul of white officials already indifferent about black education. Newbold always cautioned that black demands be contained within certain bounds. In Caswell County, for example, blacks ran a private school because the county refused to build a public one. Fed up with the lack of progress and trying to force the county's hand, blacks padlocked the door and refused to open it as a school in 1926. Black residents hoped this pressure

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<sup>61</sup> Barry Malone, "Before Brown: Cultural and Social Capital in a Rural Black School Community, WEB DuBois High School, Wake Forest, North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review* 85, no. 4 (October 2008): 416 – 448; For a discussion black community and schools see Vanessa Siddle Walker, *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).



would lead to the construction of a modern public school. The plan backfired almost immediately. The superintendent disregarded his constitutional obligations and threatened dire results for this effrontery. Davis told Newbold about the fallout from the lockout.

They have, in such action made an unfavorable impression both on the Board of Education and the county superintendent. Especially is this true, since they are willing to have the building used for lodge purposes, while the education of the children is of greater importance. [The superintendent] expressed not only an unwillingness to do anything for them under present conditions, but intimated that if they persisted they might be cast into outer darkness.<sup>62</sup>

Pursuing the accomodationist course, Davis placed part of the blame squarely on the shoulders of blacks and a lack of commitment. He suggested that they open the doors immediately to receive at least a rudimentary education. Better to take a conciliatory stance and get a little something versus an aggressive one and end up with nothing at all. “There is no need of sticking a pin in the lions [sic] loins while your head is in his mouth,” Davis warned and tried to use the carrot of Rosenwald money to persuade the superintendent to build a school in the following year.<sup>63</sup> The conclusion to the stalemate is not clear. Resentment apparently lingered because the records indicate the county never built a Rosenwald school. Without the right diplomacy Rosenwald money proved worthless.

The Fund did not limit itself to building schools, though that was its most lasting contribution. Newbold leveraged its resources and convinced local communities to

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<sup>62</sup> GE Davis to NC Newbold, 9 November 1926, Box 98, Correspondence of the Superintendent, DPI, State Archives.

<sup>63</sup> GE Davis to NC Newbold, 9 November 1926, Box 98, Correspondence of the Superintendent, DPI, State Archives.

acquire properties and improve the overall quality of schools. With the Fund supplying blueprints and details on school placement it modernized school construction throughout the region. Beyond the physical buildings the Fund aided in the promotion of school consolidation and helped blacks gain access to public school buses. Fellowships offered by Rosenwald allowed black teachers to further their education in college and graduate school. The Fund even impacted the curriculum with the launch of school library collections.

Newbold understood the fund's ability to gain much needed access. "This movement has enabled us to get a hearing from certain county school officials which nothing else has so far," Newbold noted, "By entering the county thru this means, we shall be able to get other lines of work started among the Negroes."<sup>64</sup> This was especially true in the twenties when the state pushed a school consolidation program requiring the erection of larger schools. School administrators increasingly called for designs that accommodated more students traveling from greater distances. Rosenwald money helped Newbold promote consolidation and the modernization of schools. At the same time consolidation laid bare the glaring inequalities beneath the surface of the Rosenwald success stories, especially in the field of bus transportation.

The Rosenwald fund promoted the consolidation of schools by changing the way it funded them. This was not by happenstance, but an articulated part of their agenda.

I feel confident that the future of this fine work being done by the fund will depend in a measure on how well we who are in charge of it in the South live up to the expectations, particularly in stimulating efforts for consolidation and larger types of

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<sup>64</sup> NC Newbold to Abraham Flexner, 18 June 1919, Box 4, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

buildings. I am counting on North Carolina to take the lead in this as it has done in everything else pertaining to our work in the South.<sup>65</sup>

Consolidation only worked if students gained access to motorized transportation. Early on the plan consisted of asking county officials to pay individuals to transport students in their personal automobiles. There was little outside money to offer after the General Education Board declined to permit the use of their funds to cover the costs of transportation.<sup>66</sup> The Rosenwald fund offered a three-year plan to encourage the purchase and maintenance of school vehicles. To partially cover the cost in the first year, the fund promised to match dollar for dollar contributions received from local sources. In the second year, the fund provided one dollar for every two put in the by the local district. The amount dropped again in the third year providing one dollar for every three. Finally, the school district accepted full responsibility for maintenance the following year.<sup>67</sup>

The beginning of the transportation revolution for black schools spurred by Rosenwald was slow and incomplete. Newbold might boast that the consolidation was underway in Negro schools, but the numbers told a woefully different story. Comparing white and black transportation statistics reveal the shortcomings of what philanthropic money could accomplish. For example, in 1931 blacks watched the consolidation movement take hold as 4,095 busses carried white children to 1,097 schools throughout the state. In contrast, even with the promise of support from Rosenwald, blacks rode a

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<sup>65</sup> SL Smith to WF Credle, 28 January 1928, Box 4, Supervisor of the Rosenwald Fund, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>66</sup> NC Newbold to J. Edward Allen, 25 November 1925, Box 8, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>67</sup> Statement Attached to Letter, SL Smith to AT Allen, 16 May 1929, Box 110, Correspondence of Superintendent, DPI, State Archives.

measly 145 busses to 91 schools. Black parents complained that the double-edged sword of building larger schools and lack of transportation effectively curtailed their access to an education. A few lucky students might go to school across county lines. For others, staying at home became the only option. In one three week period, Newbold received requests for help from 500 to 800 students in 25 different communities.<sup>68</sup>

The gloomy national economy also dealt a blow to the transportation and consolidation movement. Confronting the Great Depression, the administrators of the fund scaled back their appropriations. “It seems now that this fine demonstration in North Carolina and other states,” a Rosenwald administrator advised Newbold, “has gathered sufficient momentum to carry the bus transportation project on without further aid.”<sup>69</sup> Julius Rosenwald never intended for the fund to survive in perpetuity, but the economic depression hastened the scaling back of operations. This presented a severe problem for Newbold’s agenda. Much of his power flowed from his role as gatekeeper to philanthropic monies. Money served as the perfect bludgeon to push and prod both whites and blacks to follow the moderate plan for a more humane Jim Crow. Now on the subject of transportation he offered little more than platitudes and counseled patience. Fannie Beaty, a Jeanes supervisor, described the dire situation in Union County. Students

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<sup>68</sup> Thomas Alston to NC Newbold, 2 March 1932, Box 11; NC Newbold to WA Nowell, 1 November 1932, Box 11, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>69</sup> SL Smith to NC Newbold, 12 September 1932, Box 11, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

relied on one poorly maintained bus to get them to and from school. To ensure the bus made all of its scheduled stops students often arrived at school late and left early.<sup>70</sup>

Newbold's response offered little more than throwing oneself on the mercy of the court. First, to protect the Division of Negro Education from charges of interfering in local affairs, he instructed the Jeanes supervisor to stay out of any public debates and to keep the teachers and principals sidelined. Experience had taught him that in tough financial circumstances, black education was an easy expenditure for local whites to put on the budgetary chopping block. Challenges to the educational status quo by black educators always carried the risk of alienating or antagonizing white officials. Alternatively, black people should draw up a list of needed transportation to the various schools and try to locate a few influential whites who might plead the case on behalf of the black students. For the first time in two decades Newbold could not sweeten the deal with promises of Rosenwald money.<sup>71</sup>

One Jeanes supervisor asked for similar help in her county. The superintendent instructed her to ask the Division for help with purchasing a bus. She offered a relatively simple alternative re-routing one of the busses used by whites to accommodate some of the black students in the area. It is telling that the suggestion did not go directly to the superintendent; but instead flowed to Newbold for clearance. His suggestion deviated little from the advice given Beaty in Union. Protecting their jobs and the Division came first.

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<sup>70</sup> Fannie Beaty to NC Newbold, 11 November 1935, Box 12, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>71</sup> NC Newbold to Fannie Beaty, 11 November 1935, Box 12, Correspondence of the Director, DNE State Archives.

I am sure you can understand that if it will be very much better if the fathers and mothers of the children themselves make this matter their responsibility and their concern. They have lived in the county for many years . . . it will be less embarrassing to you if they will do it.<sup>72</sup>

Rosenwald opened the door to the consolidation by promoting the building of larger modern schools, but progressive rhetoric and philanthropic money could not paper over the injustices of the dual education system. Throughout the 1930s consolidation in black schools lagged behind white consolidation. Over seventy percent of black schools accommodated no more than two teachers. Ironically, Rosenwald had spurred much of the early one and two teacher school construction that now posed the logistical problem of spread. Black residents watched the consolidation of neighboring white schools as their own interests remained at best secondary, or more likely, ignored. When consolidation did occur, the state and county acted as if their obligation began and ended with the construction of the black school.<sup>73</sup>

The Rosenwald fund also spurred the nascent library movement in black schools. In the early 1920s neither the state nor the public schools offered library services to African Americans. Newbold told a fellow progressive, Walter C. Jackson of the North Carolina College for Women, that blacks needed libraries and the South must “develop such a standard of thinking as will make it immoral to discriminate to the point of doing absolute injustice to a race of people who are not responsible for being here.”<sup>74</sup> He first

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<sup>72</sup> Gladys M. Whitfield to NC Newbold, 21 September 1934, Box 12; NC Newbold to Gladys Whitfield, 24 September 1934, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>73</sup> “Problems in the Education of Negroes: A Preview of the Report of the Governor’s Commission for the Study of Problems in the Education of Negroes in North Carolina,” North Carolina Teachers Record, Vol. 6, No. 4, October 1935, 62 – 64, North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>74</sup> NC Newbold to WC Jackson, 21 October 1922, Box 6, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

inquired about a basic library system in 1923. Newbold asked the state library commission to create a list of books for use in either an elementary Rosenwald school or in a secondary level county training school. They enthusiastically agreed that “the time had come for the Commission to begin lending books to rural negroes.”<sup>75</sup> As always, Newbold turned to philanthropic organizations for money to cover the cost. The General Education Board declined his request for financial assistance. However, the Rosenwald fund reacted positively to the proposal in 1927. The fund put together a library valued at \$165, but sold it to the schools for \$105. Rosenwald bore a third of the cost leaving the local community responsible for the rest. Newbold jiggered the plan, asking blacks to raise additional money. The extra money allowed for the purchase of an even larger book collection. Once again Jeanes supervisors were responsible for selling the plan to the local community and getting the residents to ask the school board to allocate money.<sup>76</sup> African Americans reacted enthusiastically to the scheme. One superintendent reported that within 48 hours one school had raised their share. In short order Rosenwald reversed previous restrictions that limited aid only to Rosenwald schools. Now any rural school with the bookshelf space and facilities could apply. With books more readily available, it became apparent teachers needed basic training in library service. One proposed course covered general topics like understanding the parts of a book, cataloging books with the

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<sup>75</sup> NC Newbold to Mary Palmer, 27 March 1923; Mary Palmer to NC Newbold, 5 April 1923, Box 6, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>76</sup> Wallace Buttrick to NC Newbold, 9 July 1925, GEB Papers, Series NC 254, Microfilm Department, Perkins Library, Duke University; “Circular Letter,” NC Newbold, 19 October 1927, Box 9, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives; NC Newbold to Lillian Griggs, 1 August 1927, Box 8, State Library Commission, Annex – State Archives.

decimal system, and shelving books.<sup>77</sup> Each advance prompted by Rosenwald funding revealed another shortcoming in black education.

Mary Douglas, the State Director of Library services, credited the Rosenwald fund with establishing school libraries for Negroes. Blacks still lagged behind whites in access, inventory, and services provided. Nonetheless, black high schools in North Carolina held about 97,333 books in the 1932-1933 academic year. That averaged out statewide to a little over 5 books per pupil. Douglas estimated that those same books circulated close to 189,575 times that year. Elementary schools held roughly 28,996 books, yet their circulation topped 208,997. Rosenwald opened the door to library service, but the state requirement that high schools have libraries quickened the pace. Another factor in the extension of service was the pedagogical demands voiced by black educators. Students received a sub-par education without access to research in libraries. Libraries also improved reading skills and comprehension. In other words, libraries were more than a luxury or appendage to a school, they were vitally important to modern pedagogy. Additionally, libraries offered an alternative to social vice and intellectual sloth.

The library must offer encouragement to the proper use of that leisure. Poolrooms, cafes, billiard parlors, and 'hang outs' are absorbing an undue portion of this leisure. The rural community especially is in need of the library. Adolescents have intervals of leisure between school hours and home work. For four months the rural child is out of touch with the cultural influence of the teacher and the school.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> LS Inscoc to NC Newbold, 28 November 1927; SL Smith to NC Newbold, 26 September 1928; "Plan for Instruction in the Care and Use of School Libraries, Memo, Circa 1928, Box 9, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>78</sup> Mary P Douglas to AT Allen, 2 June 1934, Box 11; Mary Peacock to Anita Hostetter, 23 February 1938, Box 13 Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives; Nell B. Wright, "How the School Library Can Help Decrease Reading Difficulties," NC Teachers Record, May 1940, (5-6); GE Davis, "An Appeal for Increased Library Facilities," NC Teachers Record, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1936 (12).



Serving as caretaker of Rosenwald money also drew Newbold into the developing field of welfare and social work. Kate Burr Johnson, the director of the State Board of Public Welfare, approached Newbold in 1927 about a proposed study on the well-being of African American youth in North Carolina. Unable to secure the appropriation from the state to conduct the project, she needed the support of an outside benefactor. The staffing plan for the program came right from Newbold's blueprint for interracial diplomacy. Hire a white woman to supervise the study because "it would be easier for her to get access to records . . . and to make contacts with institutions and agencies." Of course, for the plan to be effective, they also needed a couple of black field agents to work directly with African Americans.<sup>79</sup>

The study proposed to take an in-depth look at child welfare, including issues of juvenile delinquency and child abuse. By visiting orphanages and reviewing court records, the Board of Welfare hoped to gather data for a comprehensive statewide strategy to improve the lives of "defective" children. Not surprisingly, Johnson turned to Newbold for assistance since he held the ear of the major philanthropic benefactors. Johnson informed a colleague that an official with the Rosenwald fund "offered, through his friend Mr. Newbold . . . to make a small grant . . . provided we could meet his appropriation on a fifty-fifty basis."<sup>80</sup> Even after Johnson secured the pledge of funding, she had to trust Newbold to act as an intermediary by selling her ideas to the

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<sup>79</sup> Notes on a Conference of the State Board of Charities and Public Welfare, 4 October 1928; Kate Burr Johnson to NC Newbold, 19 March 1927, Box 4, State Board of Public Welfare, Annex – State Archives.

<sup>80</sup> Kate Burr Johnson to CC Carstens, 7 June 1927, Box 4, State Board of Public Welfare, Annex – State Archives.

administrators at the fund. Julius Rosenwald himself suggested that she allow Newbold to present her views at an upcoming meeting.<sup>81</sup>

Over the next few years Johnson experienced the hard truths learned by Newbold throughout his work. A pledge of financial support was not always a promise kept. As matching funds trickled in slowly, Johnson fretted Rosenwald might renege on their allotment. Newbold offered reassurance to the fund administrators that, though progressing at a sluggish pace, the study still warranted their financial support. The goodwill built up by Newbold, his lobbying, and his stellar reputation as a steward of Rosenwald money bought the project extra time.<sup>82</sup>

In the early 1930s the Board of Welfare completed their study. Newbold signed off on the report but joined with two others to block the inclusion of one troubling chapter. The omitted chapter gave an overview of the racial attitudes and opinions of county officials. The men interviewed characterized blacks as inferior and ignorant. Education only served to turn a content Negro worker into a slothful malcontent who forgot his rightful place in society. No doubt whites in the North shared similar sentiments. However, if the state sought to bask in the reflexed glory of Newbold's Division of Negro Education, then this one chapter, if circulated, might destroy the carefully constructed progressive narrative. Even a black accommodationist, not living in a full blown state of self-denial, already knew this to be the case. Yet this one section threatened to rip back the curtain on all of the white moderate's empty rhetoric and the

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<sup>81</sup> Kate Burr Johnson to NC Newbold, 27 April 1928, Box 4, State Board of Public Welfare, Annex – State Archives.

<sup>82</sup> Kate B. Johnson to NCN, 20 September 1927; NC Newbold to Alfred Stern, 13 October 1927, Box 4, State Board of Public Welfare, Annex – State Archives.

promises of racial progress. With this honest recounting of white views in print, it would be very difficult for Newbold or black leaders to tell Negroes to trust their “white friends,” at least with a straight face. Johnson heeded Newbold’s advice and published the report without the offending section.<sup>83</sup>

His work leading the Rosenwald crusade also established for him a reformer’s reputation that extended all the way to Washington, D.C. During the administration of Herbert Hoover, the White House organized a Conference on Child Health and Protection. Newbold served as chairman of the subcommittee addressing the health needs of Negro children. Apparently his standing as an expert in Negro education granted him expertise in all fields related to Negro well-being. Relying on a tactic that served him well throughout the years, Newbold immediately tapped into an established network of black scholars and educators, asking for their input. Many of the ideas submitted highlight the push by black educators to modernize and reform education. James E. Shepard suggested that schools should ensure access to a decent lunch in order to battle malnourishment. E.E. Smith, president of the normal school in Fayetteville, promoted extending access to quality health care, medical and dental, for students and faculty as well as paying attention to the eating and sleeping habits of school-aged children. Others took a more holistic approach. One respondent thought it short-sighted to merely focus on medicine and nutrition stating, “That the health of the Negro child would be very much better if the economic conditions among the masses of the Negroes

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<sup>83</sup> The omitted section is available at the NC Collection at Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel. NC Newbold to WT Bost, 30 May 1932, Box 4, Box 4, State Board of Public Welfare, Annex – State Archives.

were improved.”<sup>84</sup> Another challenged an oft stated notion that blacks had an inferior immune system and, therefore were unable to ward off infections. Dr. Sebastian from Greensboro tied black health to the institution of segregation itself, observing that as long as blacks were forced to walk to school exposed to the elements and “bust the mud” while denying them access to school buses, then the black students would always encounter medical challenges not confronted by their white counterparts.<sup>85</sup>

Not everyone Newbold solicited thought the committee worthwhile. One comment in particular pointed to the seeming futility of the endeavor. According to black scholar Carter G. Woodson, the conference was little more than a waste of time and effort. “While I do not take Hoover’s conference seriously and have long since passed his . . . program by as a joke,” Woodson intoned, “I shall be polite enough to reply to you because I know that you are interested in the Negro. Very few persons are really thus concerned.”<sup>86</sup> In many ways Woodson’s statement laid bare the dichotomy that was Newbold’s work. Though he meant well, his failure to address the core political, social, and economic problems confronting the black community, caused many blacks to see his efforts as a futile attempt to improve black life. Newbold came across like an earnest physician confronting a cancer patient who has developed a rash pouring all of his energy and time into healing the rash, but ignoring the disease that is ravaging the body. In Newbold’s worldview, Jim Crow was inevitable and preferable, at least for the

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<sup>84</sup> James E. Shepard to NC Newbold, 21 February 1930; EE Smith to NC Newbold, 21 February 1930; FD Buford to NC Newbold, Box 10, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>85</sup> SB Sebastian to NC Newbold, 24 February 1930, Box 10, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>86</sup> Carter G. Woodson to NC Newbold, 14 July 1930, Box 10, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

foreseeable future, so there was no point wasting time trying to resolve it. It was better to invest time and resources in softening the harder edges. As Woodson correctly pointed out, while other whites ignored black concerns wholesale, at least Newbold worked to cure the metaphorical rash. At the very least that gained him some political currency within the black community.

The final document released by Newbold's subcommittee was both a progressive proposal and a southern apologia. The committee called for improving health education in public schools and in institutions of higher learning for Negroes, echoing many of the recommendations collected from black educators around the South. But it also included a spirited defense of the southern way of life and its racial mores. Threading the needle to prevent heaping scorn upon the region, yet acknowledging the obvious inequality, the report stated that Jim Crow did not cause the inadequate educational system in the South. In fact, any shortcomings in Negro education were a direct byproduct of the sluggish economy of the 1930s. "It is believed," the report avowed, "that poor and inefficient schools for all peoples, Negro and white alike, will be things of the past when the South has the means to provide good schools for all."<sup>87</sup>

For Newbold, improving race relations in North Carolina always came back to education and the schoolhouse. As mentioned previously, the Great Depression accelerated the end of the Rosenwald fund. Julius Rosenwald's vision for the endowment was to spend the principal and sell off its primary source of income, the Sears and Roebuck stock. With the price of the stock cratering, by the early thirties the fund slowly

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<sup>87</sup> Report by the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, Sub-Committee: The Negro School Child, Box 10, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

wound down operations and began to cease payouts on projects. Newbold lost his biggest source of prestige, leverage, and power. He wielded that power not only to build schools, but also to cut off sources of funding to private institutions when it was clearly deficient and competed against a public school. For example, Allen Young ran a private institution in Wake Forest. A prospective donor inquired about sending money to Young's school. Newbold used the presence of a Rosenwald school to stall any donations to Young. Describing the work at the school as of "poor character," Newbold then dismissed Young as a charlatan. "It is an independent venture, and judging from reports that come to me it appears that the principal is thoroughly unreliable or else is visionary."<sup>88</sup> Rosenwald money not only aided in the construction of schools, but in the hands of Newbold could shutter an institution deemed undesirable.

Nonetheless, the record Newbold left behind on school construction solidified his reputation as one of the leading voices of progressive reform in the state and of Negro education in the region. North Carolina led the South with 813 schools built using Rosenwald money. Mississippi clocked in a distant second with 633 schools. Missouri occupied last place with only four schools. The state held over five million dollars' worth of property and equipment in Rosenwald schools, almost double the second closest state. Including the libraries and buses purchased, North Carolina was the fund's crown jewel. Close to half of North Carolina's black teaching force worked in a Rosenwald school. For the most part the schools tended to be larger, have longer school terms, and

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<sup>88</sup> Wake Forest would not build a Rosenwald school for 6 years. Newbold may have been referring to one in a neighboring community known as Wakefield. SL Smith to AT Allen, 1 June 1932, Box 11; NC Newbold to Meigs Russell, 3 November 1919, Box 4, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

house more students. Entering the 1930s, there were close to 114,210 black students attending Rosenwald schools, taught by nearly 2,538 teachers.<sup>89</sup>

The visible successes of the Rosenwald program did not solve the endemic problems of disparity between black and white schools. A study conducted six years after the Rosenwald program ended painted a dire picture of Negro schools in the state. According to the findings of Credle, close to 845 of the 1,600 Negro schools in the state deserved to be classified as “bad.” The report maintained that “a considerable number of the rural schools for colored children are small, poorly built, dilapidated, unfurnished, insanitary, and in most every way inadequate to serve modern school purposes . . .”<sup>90</sup> That statistic was hardly a ringing endorsement for the work of the previous two decades.

North Carolina heralded its achievements in Negro education and reveled in Newbold’s reflexed glory. The state’s main newspaper barely stopped short of crowning him the prince of progressives.

The meeting here of those charged with responsibility of the education of the negroes of North Carolina has resulted in paeans of praise for what the State has done for its colored citizenship. Most of the praise, we think, deserved. . . . But the State is in no position to sit back and bask itself in a glow of self-satisfaction. Those few who have attempted to meet the obligations of the entire citizenship to these wards of North Carolina are asking for increased facilities for training negroes to educate the members of their race. . . . North Carolina will never make a Governor or a United States Senator of Mr. Newbold. The majority of even his thoughtful fellow citizens will never realize the load he keeps off their consciences by imposing it on his own. . . .

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<sup>89</sup> “Brief Statistical Survey of Negro Schools – Compiled by Rosenwald Fund,” SL Smith author, 22 September 1928, Box 9, Correspondence of the Director; “Report on Schoolhouse Construction, Transportation, and School Libraries to July 1, 1932,” Box 11, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>90</sup> NC Newbold to Gov. J. Melville Broughton, 26 January 1943, Box 14, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

[B]ut a conscience of our own that stirs at times moves a vote of thanks for the most real home missionary of our acquaintance.<sup>91</sup>

Even though wide disparities still existed between white education and black education, by the time Rosenwald ceased operations, an educational infrastructure existed throughout North Carolina. Most southern whites still approached black education as begrudging obligation on a good day and as a secondary concern on most others. Separate and unequal stood as a farcical reminder that a progressive agenda to improve education and race relations was resting on an untenable foundation.

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<sup>91</sup> “What Newbold Requires State Should Give,” 11 November 1924, Raleigh Times, North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.



## CHAPTER 5

### DIVINE DISCONTENT & THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN: NEWBOLD'S RACIAL IDEOLOGY

Over the first half of the twentieth century Newbold joined a group of moderate and liberal southern whites who hoped to soften the harsher edges of Jim Crow. These “interracialists” believed that whites and blacks working together held the key to the South’s future. Many of these men and women worked in organizations that promoted social projects aimed at uplift, dialogue, and education. The interracialists, often motivated by a sense of charity and Christian obligation, hoped to construct a biracial South that kept what they considered a fair and just promise of “separate but equal.” Being careful in limiting social interaction was paramount in order not to promote any notion of social equality. Yet in the context of meetings and conferences intermingling was encouraged, up to a point. Observing how Newbold navigated and interacted in this world provides insight into his racial ideology and what it meant to be a white southern liberal in that era.

As one of the state’s leading interracialists, Newbold’s racial ideology evolved over his forty year career. When he began working for the state in 1913, there was little to suggest his views differed from most southern whites. The only transgression from orthodoxy may have been his belief in providing a basic education to Negroes.

Emanating from a diverse mix of influences, there is little doubt that his southern heritage

played a central role in shaping his view of race relations in the early twentieth century. But Newbold was not a rigid ideologue either. He maintained the belief that blacks were not locked indefinitely into a lower caste system. Social equality, neither readily attainable nor desirable, was an outgrowth of moral regeneration that might take blacks generations or centuries to achieve. It was the natural curve of social and cultural evolution each race followed. At no time in the foreseeable future could blacks hope to achieve equality - it simply defied the logic of nature. However, it was not impossible for blacks to progress and improve. For Newbold, social equality meant moving toward a world with less discrimination, but not free of the natural differences that dictated the ultimate separation of the races. In a letter to a colleague he suggested considering “it from the stand point of an ascending scale with a possible basis of three points in a very large way, the whites as a whole may have reached two on this scale while the negroes are still struggling with one.”<sup>1</sup> In this social Darwinian schemata, blacks were running the race, but not quite as fleet of foot as their white counterparts. The fount for some of his evolving views on race probably was his advanced studies in educational administration and the accepted social science at the time. Scientific racism infected the academic scholarship of the era.

Newbold directly cited the following study as influencing his early thoughts on Negro education. During World War I the government performed intelligence tests on draftees called up for service. A social scientist studied the results and reached a stark conclusion. The test grouped people into four categories. First, categories “A” and “B” were the upper echelon. These groups formed the armed forces’ best pool from which to

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<sup>1</sup> NC Newbold to WF Credle, 4 May 1922, Box 5, General Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

select officers. Second, category “C,” constituted another cohort for those deemed adequately qualified to attain the rank of non-commissioned officers. Lastly, the worst soldiers were placed in the categories “D” and “E.” The military deemed these men inherently inferior and only fit to fill the most menial positions, if not an outright discharge from the army for cognitive incompetence. Running parallel with these findings, the test also charted a young man’s chronological development. The findings suggested that the soldier with superior intellect achieved a mental age of eighteen years or older. Soldiers labeled with a mental faculty from seven to twelve years old operated, in the lexicon of the day, in the range from an imbecile to little more than a high functioning moron. Generally, anyone classified as less than nine years old was pigeonholed as inferior. Those of the inferior class “are speedily recognized as a problem, and often as handicap and a menace. . . . [T]hey contribute more than their quota to our juvenile courts, our reform schools, our jails and houses of prostitution.”<sup>2</sup> In a nutshell, these people were deviants who contributed little to society and, in all probability, sped along its moral decay.

Taken at face value the IQ tests painted a disconcerting picture of black intellectual capacity and moral dysfunction. With a test based partially on English literacy, it was not surprising that some groups excelled where others failed. Immigrants, ranked in the lowest categories, were no doubt hampered by their lack of fluency with a new language. African Americans joined immigrants on the bottom rung, waylaid by the poor educational opportunities available to them throughout the South. Accordingly, the test placed eighty percent of blacks at level “D” and eighty-nine percent of them at a

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<sup>2</sup> Cornelia J. Cannon, “American Misgivings,” *Atlantic Monthly Magazine*, February 1922, 145 – 157.

mental age of thirteen - one step away from being certified idiots. In contrast only twenty-two percent of whites dropped to level “D” in the testing while forty-seven percent placed in the thirteen years of age and under category.<sup>3</sup> Taken out of context these differences are staggering. When viewed through the prism of the educational, social, and cultural opportunities afforded African Americans during the age of Jim Crow, these findings are more readily understood.

The author of the study stated that the limited intellectual capacity of African Americans warranted a “special kind” of education. As a result, blacks were better suited for “training in activities, habits, occupations which do not demand the more evolved faculties.”<sup>4</sup> Here was an argument for segregated education not predicated on skin color alone, but also an inherent mental defect in African Americans. If blacks were constitutionally incapable of playing ball in the same league with whites, then why permit them to play the game at all? In this scenario even science dictated what was obvious to most white southerners - segregation was a necessary and positive good.

When he accepted the job as state agent, this view closely aligned with Newbold’s approach to black education. For example, he readily embraced the idea that blacks and whites should pursue different courses of study in teacher education due to the natural handicaps hindering black achievement. But after working in black education for eight years his views slowly evolved. Newbold’s experience and study of the subject

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<sup>3</sup> Cannon, “American Misgivings,” 156. For more on the scientific racism that informed these types of studies see William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865 – 1954* (New York and London: Teachers College, 2001), 24 -43; and for more on the IQ Test see John L. Rury, “Race, Region, and Education: An Analysis of Black and White Scores on the 1917 Army Alpha Intelligence Test.” *Journal of Negro Education* 57 (Winter 1988): 51- 65.

<sup>4</sup> Cannon, “American Misgivings,” 156; I.A. Newby discusses the role of social scientist employing scientific racism in his work *Jim Crow’s Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900-1930* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968).

convinced him “of the fallacy of this point of view. The only difference, I may say is in degree or rate of progress.”<sup>5</sup> Therein lays the key to better understanding Newbold’s racial ideology. Human civilization moved along a continuum. Therefore, blacks and whites, due to past circumstances and places of origin, also existed on a continuum. Though blacks and whites existed at different intervals on the spectrum, blacks possessed the linear mobility to move from one position to another, albeit at a slower rate and far behind their white counterparts.

Another study also seemingly influenced his reasoning on race relations, *The Mind of the Primitive Man* by Frank Boas. The work topped his list of recommended books when asked by a colleague for information on race relations. According to Boas, environment and society were far more important than heredity in determining the potential for a race to advance. Blacks in America learned negative behaviors like laziness. Studies proved indigenous Africans possessed an appreciation for hard work and a committed work ethic. Quite pointedly, Boas concluded that “no proof of an inferiority of the negro type could be proven,” notwithstanding the fact that the race may produce fewer intellects.<sup>6</sup> Thus Boas presents the scientific undergirding for Newbold’s burgeoning racial ideology. Just as Booker T. Washington believed, blacks and whites functioned socially as separate fingers on a hand, only the separateness need not suggest an innate inferiority. For Newbold, social equality might neither be readily attainable nor desirable, but uplifting the primitive black American and making him into a civilized man – that was the “White Man’s Burden.”

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<sup>5</sup> NC Newbold to WF Credle, 4 May 1922, Box 5, General Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>6</sup> Frank Boas, *The Mind of the Primitive Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), 244-250, 268, 271.

This racial ideology and his position at the head of a bureaucracy placed Newbold among the state's leading voices in the interracial movement. Working in an almost incestuous fashion with the same familiar roster of members serving in other organizations, these white interracialists defined southern liberalism for a generation. By Newbold's estimation, the work championed by this collective divided into three broad categories. The first phase occurred after the First World War. The attitudes of black soldiers returning from military service alarmed white southerners. The rhetoric of the era and the "New Negro" movement signaled a renewed willingness by African Americans to resist their continued oppression. Some whites thought the perfect panacea to any such resistance rested with violent opposition. The interracialists hoped to curtail such events from developing in North Carolina. They responded with their favorite tactic - a conference with black and white leaders to discuss the issues. Citing "much disturbance and controversy between and among the races in the South," the intent was not to address black grievances, but to bring about "harmony and cooperation between the races."<sup>7</sup>

White liberal fears regarding black unrest in the interwar years led to the establishment of a more permanent organization, marking the second phase of interracial work, the North Carolina Commission on Interracial Cooperation. The national Commission on Interracial Cooperation provided a permanent forum for interracialism. North Carolina established a statewide branch of the organization in 1921 with Newbold sitting on the executive committee. Over the next three decades the commission counted among its members and supporters everyone from governors, who served as honorary chairmen; clergy, including Episcopal Bishop N. A. Penick; academics, such as Howard

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<sup>7</sup> NC Newbold to Person Unknown at the Office of War Information, Date Unknown, North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

Odum, Guy B. Johnson, and Franklin Porter Graham from the University of North Carolina; and black businessmen, including Charles C. Spaulding, the president of NC Mutual Life Insurance. Up until World War II the mission of the interracialists on the commission remained largely the same, even if the rhetoric changed. In the Thirties the executive committee defined their guiding theory as “the welfare and highest interest of white and Negro peoples are mutual; that if they knew each other and the facts in a given situation, the best of each race could be trusted to do the right thing.” In other words, they provided a venue for conservative and moderate blacks to politely vent their frustrations while in turn receiving white assurances that the “sanest local leaders of both races” might reach accommodations to satiate black grievances.<sup>8</sup> Ten years later, the melody may have changed, but the song remained the same. The commission’s revised constitution adopted in 1944 utilized more egalitarian language such as removing obstacles that prohibited full participation “in the rights and duties of citizenship” and correcting “injustices or inequalities which have been imposed upon certain groups or citizens because of their racial or economic status.”<sup>9</sup> But it was well understood that full citizenship did not mean social equality, it just connoted a more humane Jim Crow.

The Commission’s primary function centered on creating spaces for dialogue, education, and restrained activism. With many of North Carolina’s most prominent white and black people serving on various committees, it became a veritable clearinghouse for advocacy. They often pushed local politicians and the state government to support

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<sup>8</sup>“Building Goodwill Through Conference and Cooperation: An Effort to Improve Human Relations.” Pamphlet issued by Executive Committee, NC Commission on Interracial Cooperation, Chapel Hill, 1931, North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>9</sup>“Constitution of the NC Commission on Interracial Cooperation,” Adopted 1944, North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

institutional changes such as building reform schools for Negroes and eliminating the pay differential between black and white teachers.<sup>10</sup> The commission also utilized different forms of media to spread their message. Legitimized by their public positions, in the 1930s they gave radio addresses on race relations. Newbold, of course, spoke about the challenges ahead in Negro education. The head of the Commission on Public Welfare, W.T. Bost, discussed how the state's social welfare program benefitted African Americans. A representative from the health department, G.M. Cooper, addressed the health issues facing the Negro community.<sup>11</sup>

Additionally, the Commission supported efforts to paint a fuller and more intricate picture of African American history. The title and content of a booklet they published reveals their approach to race relations. The dissemination of a pamphlet with a positive portrait of black accomplishments would promote greater toleration and understanding between the races. In the book, "Knowledge Helps Understanding," the North Carolina Commission reinforced the standard white southern narrative that slavery existed, but was a relatively benign institution. Kind masters seldom if ever displayed cruel behavior, instead "rewards were used more often than punishment as incentive to work hard, and there were few whippings." The work romantically recalled the period before the invention of the cotton gin as the "fairly serene days of colonial slavery."<sup>12</sup> However, the text deviated in many ways from the traditional white southern narrative of

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<sup>10</sup> "Cooperation in Community Planning and Action," by the NC Commission on Interracial Cooperation, No Date, North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>11</sup> LR Reynolds to Members of the Radio Committee, 29 October 1934, Howard Odum Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>12</sup> "Knowledge Helps Understanding: Stories of the Negro in the Life of the United States of America," by NC Commission of Interracial Cooperation, No Date, North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.



the past. For example, blacks arrived in the Americas with some of the earlier explorers, putting them in the New World before both Jamestown and the Mayflower. Blacks were more than casual bystanders to American history; they played an active role in the shaping of major events. From the death of Crispus Attucks in the Boston Massacre to fighting during the American Revolution, African Americans helped the country gain its independence. The booklet also chronicled the achievements of historical figures, many of whom rarely crossed the radar screen of white southerners. In these pages one read about the lives of Benjamin Banneker and John Chavis.<sup>13</sup> For Newbold and the commission, this book served as “Exhibit A” that southern whites acknowledged blacks’ humanity, their place in American society, and only wanted the best for them.

Though effective at spreading their message, the commission ran into difficulty trying to address the concrete problems of race relations. They faced the conundrum of advocating the elimination of inequality while simultaneously supporting a system with inequality at its very core. Blacks seeking simple justice revealed the powerlessness of the commission to effect real change or live up to its own rhetoric. On at least two different occasions the black head of NC Mutual Life Insurance and treasurer for the commission, Charles C. Spaulding, asked for aid to rectify an injustice. First, in the 1920s, the NAACP utilized Spaulding’s connections to request the commission investigate a police officer who shot an unarmed black man in Hamlet, NC. The response was a classic pass the buck. Citing limited resources and finances, the

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<sup>13</sup> “Knowledge Helps Understanding: Stories of the Negro in the Life of the United States of America,” by NC Commission of Interracial Cooperation, No Date, North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

commission declined, but not before referring the matter to the State Commission of Charities and Public Welfare.<sup>14</sup>

Several years later Spaulding pressed even harder for help, this time investigating a lynching in Louisburg, NC. Spaulding pushed the commission to hire a private investigator to uncover the truth and find the culprits. The director of the commission, L.R. Reynolds, confided to Newbold that an investigator was impractical and would likely alienate the local whites. Using a stalling tactic, Reynolds implied to Spaulding that he conducted a “quiet investigation” and awaited the input of others before proceeding. To move ahead with an investigation only made it more difficult for the governor and state prosecutor to bring the guilty parties to justice. The commission revealed in stark relief both their inability and lack of will to move beyond platitudes if the status quo was threatened.<sup>15</sup>

What the commission was more adept at was defending segregation and calling their victory a triumph for equality and interracialism. In the early twentieth century busses in North Carolina routinely banned black passengers. The North Carolina Commission pushed a lawsuit to force the bus companies to allow for the segregated transport of blacks. Their brief from the case declared that the state’s official policy required “segregation and separation with justice, under the constitution.” Without noticing the irony, the commission called this necessary to foster “peace and goodwill

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<sup>14</sup> William T. Andrews to CC Spaulding, 14 March 1928; WA Robinson to WT Andrews, 19 March 1928; WC Jackson to LR Reynolds, 20 March 1928; William T. Andrews to Kate Burr Johnson, 22 March 1928, Commission on Interracial Cooperation Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>15</sup> LR Reynolds to NC Newbold, 26 August 1935; CC Spaulding to LR Reynolds, 24 August 1935; LR Reynolds to CC Spaulding, 26 August 1935, Commission on Interracial Cooperation Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

between the sensible elements of the race.”<sup>16</sup> Since Negroes paid taxes, they deserved the protections offered by the law. Lest anyone mistake their position as a clarion call for integration, the interracialists endorsed using a physical partition to designate the color line. The North Carolina Supreme Court concurred with their argument and commanded the bus companies to permit the segregated transportation of black passengers.<sup>17</sup>

Even the half measures endorsed by the commission stirred suspicion and resentment in the white South. World War II especially seemed to stoke fears that the racial landscape was shifting under their feet. White southerners eyed the interracialists warily casting them as potential “outsiders” interfering in local affairs. One man warned that race relations “can be adjusted without discussions and without meetings.”<sup>18</sup> Another intoned that if his locality was “not interfered with by would-be reformers from other sections, who have no practical knowledge, we will continue to enjoy amicable relations in this section.”<sup>19</sup> A concerned white southerner offered a stern warning to the head of the University of North Carolina, Franklin Porter Graham, a well-known southern liberal. A combination of “Axis agents,” foolish black leaders, and “liberals” were playing with fire. “We are heading for trouble on the race question,” he wrote Graham, “and unless something is done to reverse the present trend, there will be an explosion of the most serious consequences.” But the weak tea offered by the commission was not the solution

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<sup>16</sup> NC Corporation Commission v. Transportation Committee of NC Commission on Interracial Cooperation, North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>17</sup> NC Corporation Commission v. Transportation Committee of NC Commission on Interracial Cooperation, North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>18</sup> LE Smith to Ernest Arnold, 4 December 1944, Commission on Interracial Cooperation Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>19</sup> H Galt Braxton to Ernest Arnold, 5 December 1944, Commission on Interracial Cooperation Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

because, “Now is no time, however, to agitate for swift and comprehensive reforms in race relations.” In fact, the commission might very well “fan into life the dying ember of white prejudice against the Negro.”<sup>20</sup>

By the middle of the twentieth century Newbold was considered one of the most important interracialists in North Carolina. His work in Negro education put him in the center of debates about race in the region. Never was it more evident than when William T. Couch, the editor of UNC Press, asked Newbold for input on a manuscript under review. In the 1940s the black historian and scholar Rayford Logan submitted a book proposal titled *What the Negro Wants*. At first Couch readily signed off on the project assuming the book would follow the conventional southern reasoning with oblique calls for justice and equality. However, the collection of black scholars assembled by Logan, ranging from the radical to accomodationist, unified behind a theme that segregation was no longer sustainable and must end. Couch sought the input of interracialists around the state and wrestled with the notion of whether UNC Press’s imprimatur should adorn Logan’s manuscript. Guy B. Johnson, a white sociologist and member of the interracial commission, pushed for Couch to include more conservative black voices. To their chagrin, even old school Negro accomodationists waived in their support for “separate but equal.”<sup>21</sup>

Finally, Couch turned to N.C. Newbold for input, believing the draft as it stood presented a chance to cause great damage and prove that “the influence of white leaders

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<sup>20</sup> D. Hiden Ramsey to Frank P. Graham, 14 September 1942, Frank Graham Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Janken, *Rayford W. Logan and the Dilemma of the African American Intellectual* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 145-149.

on Negro leaders has not been salutary.”<sup>22</sup> In other words, the interracialists were losing ground to an ill-informed cadre of Negro leaders. Newbold was also troubled by the manuscript in its current form. “I can very well imagine that many of the persons in the South whom we designate as politicians and perhaps many others will not be moved to greater cooperation and a helpful attitude toward Negroes by many statements made in these papers,” Newbold wrote.<sup>23</sup>

The underlying message of the book was that interracialist position was now archaic. Newbold’s comments suggested a change in tone, if not substance, to salve the sensitive racial sensibilities of white southerners. For example, Langston Hughes needed to remove a reference to educating the South on the principles of democracy. Du Bois should replace a veiled attack on the life and work of Booker T. Washington. Any mention of overturning the ban on interracial marriage must be removed or drastically reworded. These and other suggestions provided by Newbold became the predicate for publishing the book. Couch advised Newbold that the board “approved publication of the book provided the authors make revisions in line with your suggestions so that the manuscript in its final form will get your approval.”<sup>24</sup> They may have persuaded the author to make the editorial changes, but both Couch and Newbold failed to completely comprehend that Logan’s book was not an aberration, but a philosophical shift in race

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<sup>22</sup> WT Couch to NC Newbold, 8 November 1943, Box 15, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

<sup>23</sup> NC Newbold to WT Couch, 20 October 1943, Box 15, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>24</sup> “Comments: What the Negro Wants,” NC Newbold, copy attached to letter, WT Couch to NC Newbold, 8 November 1943; WT Couch to NC Newbold, 12 November 1943, Box 15, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

relations reflecting post war America. Whether Newbold understood it at the time or not, the interracialists' sway was fading.

For Newbold, race relations constituted a work in development. Phase one, after World War I, yielded great progress by starting a dialogue. Phase two built on that effort and institutionalized it in the NC Carolina Commission on Interracial Cooperation. In both cases Newbold was actively involved, but did not have the final word. Phase three promised to take it a step further, but this time Newbold would be at the helm.

Newbold first sought to gain influence over the interracialist agenda in 1920. The lifeblood of interracialism and Negro education required money. Newbold often cast his work in the context of serving the greater good of improving race relations. Negro education and interracialism were one and the same. Education constituted the front lines of the battle to win the hearts and minds of Negroes and whites. Additionally, it was not lost on Newbold that philanthropic funds indirectly dictated policy. Northern organizations sent money South with strings attached, thereby setting the terms of the debate on any number of subjects related to pedagogy, school construction, curriculum, and teacher education. In the 1920s Newbold contacted the tobacco baron and fellow North Carolinian Benjamin Duke, asking for financial backing to start an endowment to promote Negro education and racial harmony.

Newbold's plan called for an initial endowment of \$500,000 with an appointed board of trustees for oversight. While stipulating that much progress in education had been made in the last two decades, much work remained to be done. For example, the difference between white and black per capita student expenditures stood at seventy-five cents at the turn of the century. Now the state spent \$26.74 per capita on white students,

more than doubling the \$10.03 spent on black students. “Being a son of the South yourself,” Newbold reminds Duke, “you know why these conditions still exist, - regardless of the promise and pledges” written into the state’s laws and constitution.<sup>25</sup>

The state stood at the precipice of a pivotal point in race relations. Blacks seemed eager to accept their position in the South, but only if whites kept the promises made for a truly “separate but equal” education. With the right leadership and resources, North Carolina could develop into the Shangri-La of racial harmony, becoming a model for the rest of the South. “The attitude of the two races in our population toward each other is better than ever before,” Newbold intoned, and “the Negroes are more contented, and therefore more prosperous and better citizens.”<sup>26</sup>

According to Newbold, the proposed Duke endowment met various needs. First, even if the state or school district aided in building a physical plant, maintenance costs still had to be addressed after construction. The fund could help pay the maintenance cost at high schools, normal schools, and colleges. The benefits to this were twofold. Not only would this bridge an institution’s shortfall between allocated funds and budgetary needs, it was also be a selling point for reluctant whites. Holding out a promise to partially defer maintenance costs on new a building might persuade a superintendent or state official to support the project. Second, the endowment could make loans to local school districts to cover the cost of new construction. When districts repaid the loans

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<sup>25</sup> Copy of Letter from NCN to BN and JB Duke attached to Letter from NC Newbold to RL Flowers, 21 September 1925, Robert Flowers Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

<sup>26</sup> Copy of Letter from NCN to BN and JB Duke attached to Letter from NC Newbold to RL Flowers, 21 September 1925, Robert Flowers Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

with interest, the dividends earned provided a self-financing means to cover the expenditures for maintenance.<sup>27</sup>

Third, black students also stood to benefit from the endowment with loans granted to further their education. This promised to both increase the pool of teachers while simultaneously improving the overall quality of teaching in the classroom. Finally, to train a new generation of interracialists with a sympathetic outlook on black education, some of the money should also go to white colleges and universities for the study of Negro education.<sup>28</sup> No doubt, Newbold envisioned himself at the head of this endowment's board of trustees, resulting in a great deal of power. The plan never came to fruition. But another organization devised by Newbold mirrored his vision for blending education and interracialism.

On April 25, 1938, Nathan Carter Newbold stood before the North Carolina Conference for Social Service to deliver the report of the association's Race Relations committee. Steeped in the language of white Southern paternalism and reform, the monologue focused on the disparity existing between the education of blacks and whites in North Carolina. According to Newbold, as blacks gained knowledge about their rights and duties as citizens, they became agitated with the Southern racial caste system. The frustration resulted in blacks suffering from "Divine Discontent." The problem then was not segregation itself. Blacks accepted the separation of the races as natural and beneficial to both races. Newbold asked his audience "is it surprising that many of these

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<sup>27</sup> Copy of Letter from NCN to BN and JB Duke attached to Letter from NC Newbold to RL Flowers, 21 September 1925, Robert Flowers Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

<sup>28</sup> Copy of Letter from NCN to BN and JB Duke attached to Letter from NC Newbold to RL Flowers, 21 September 1925, Robert Flowers Papers, University Archives, Duke University.



intelligent citizens do, perhaps, grow weary when they know the significance of many of our laws as they are written, and difference which occur in their execution?”<sup>29</sup>

To Newbold, Divine Discontent was an alarm meant to awaken what he called “right-thinking” whites to action. These right-thinking whites understood they had a real stake in alleviating the economic and the social plight of blacks. Failure to do so could lead down a path ending in catastrophe. “If a break comes in the matter of segregation,” Newbold warned, “it will probably be because some community or state failed to live up to the laws they have made.”<sup>30</sup>

The solution to the “Negro Problem” required a bi-racial South teaming with the economic and the educational opportunities necessary for black advancement. Therefore, Newbold enlisted North Carolina’s institutions of higher learning to the cause. With the help of trained academics, whites could certainly find a salve for “Divine Discontent.” He spearheaded a cooperative effort between the University of North Carolina, Duke University in Durham, and the Department of Public Instruction. The resulting collaboration, known as the Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, operated from 1935 to 1945. Only in retrospect does the real irony of the Division come into relief. As a major spokesperson for a more benign white supremacy, Newbold became a leading voice in the state advocating the serious study of black life, history, and culture.

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<sup>29</sup> Speech by Nathan C. Newbold - Report of the Committee on Race Relations in North Carolina – NC Conference for Social Service, April 25, 1938, Speeches of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>30</sup> Address to Conference, NC Newbold, [circa 1922]; “How Can Race Relations Be Improved?” Speech by N.C. Newbold, November 5, 1943, Speeches of the Director, DNE, Department of Public Instruction, State Archives, Raleigh, NC; John Cell describes this view of racial conciliation and progress in *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 179 - 180.

The Division originated in an attempt by Newbold to introduce a course on school administration at Duke University in 1930. It seemed evident to Newbold that white administrators “do not even think in the same terms when they come to managing their colored schools.”<sup>31</sup> Those who tried to address the needs of black education were often ill-equipped to do so. One of Newbold’s earliest overtures was to Duke University’s President William P. Few. Newbold reasoned white students at Duke might learn the intricacies of negotiating and advocating for black education.

Such a course would make it possible to inform persons who are trying for places of leadership in education to know how to handle this problem; that is, how to handle it in a definite reasonable and scientific way with the Board of Education and with political leaders wherever that is necessary. I think I can assure you that there is certainly an element of science in knowing how to handle such questions diplomatically and wisely.<sup>32</sup>

Several months later Newbold again approached Few about implementing a new curriculum at Duke. Now, however, the plan was more involved than one individual course. Newbold proposed the founding of a Department of Studies in Negro Education and Negro Life. This department moved beyond teacher training and education to include an interdisciplinary focus on health care, religion, and welfare, thereby, placing Duke on the interracial vanguard.<sup>33</sup> From Newbold’s perspective, when the future white leaders understood their responsibility to both blacks and the South, only then could harmonious race relations exist in the region. Though Few was open to discussing the

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<sup>31</sup> NC Newbold to William P Few, 2 June 1930, WP Few Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

<sup>32</sup> NC Newbold to William P Few, 2 June 1930, WP Few Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

<sup>33</sup> NC Newbold to William P Few, 15 October 1930; 18 October 1930, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

possibilities with Newbold, budgetary concerns and the onset of the Depression left the project in limbo.<sup>34</sup>

The challenge of securing funds was nothing new to Newbold. Courting money from philanthropic organizations consumed much of his time and resources. Newbold's success as the Director of Negro Education in part resulted from his connections with Northern philanthropies like the Rosenwald Fund and General Education Board (GEB). Therefore, it is not surprising that Newbold pitched his scheme to Jackson Davis at the GEB. His past experience gave Newbold cause to believe the plan would receive a fair hearing. In 1931 Newbold drafted a letter to Davis stating that, "The more I study this proposal the more important it seems and the wider its possible field of service grows."<sup>35</sup> Newbold explained why Duke University would make an ideal site for a Department of Studies, Information, and Statistics on Negro Education and Life. First, Duke boasted an accomplished faculty cutting across a variety of disciplines. Outside scholars would not have to be recruited to the campus, they were already there. Many of the faculty already demonstrated a commitment to improving race relations. Newbold stood ready to provide them a mission and marching orders.<sup>36</sup>

Second, the generous endowment from the Duke family put the institution on firm financial footing. Third, Duke's physical plant continued to expand and improve each year. In other words, this was not some Podunk college struggling to survive during

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<sup>34</sup> NC Newbold to William P Few, 15 December 1930, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>35</sup> NC Newbold to Jackson Davis, ND (circa March 1931), Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>36</sup> NC Newbold to Jackson Davis, ND (circa March 1931), Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

the Depression. Fourth, Newbold also implied that the benefits of such an undertaking would stretch far beyond the borders of North Carolina. Duke, with a student body from around the country, was establishing itself as a regional institution with a national reach. Newbold appealed to Davis's southern parochialism, imagining a generation of right-thinking whites learning interracialism from those who knew the Negro best – southern whites. White preachers leaving Duke's School of Theology "trained to preach the Gospel of Jesus will also be trained to preach the Gospel of interracial cooperation and righteousness." Not only the preachers, but the doctors, lawyers, and teachers who matriculated through Duke will have "a fairer, more liberal, and more righteous attitude toward the 'black man' in our midst."<sup>37</sup>

Jackson Davis's response to Newbold is not known. When it came to lobbying for a cause or seeking funds, Newbold was often forced to adapt plans to win approval. Because of his diligence and flexibility, it is not surprising that three years later the department at Duke was still on the table. This time Newbold used as a main selling point the close proximity of Duke to the University of North Carolina. Duke could focus on the educational and religious problems facing blacks, while Carolina addressed the economic and social challenges. "It seems to me," Newbold told Davis, "that the two departments located in nearby institutions could, and would, cooperate usefully and helpfully both in gathering and distributing information throughout this section."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> There are two other reasons Duke may have been attractive to Newbold. First, he attended Duke in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Though he never graduated he always felt a close bond to the faculty and administration. In fact, two of his sons attended Duke University. Second, as a private school Duke might offer more freedom to operate than a state institution beholden to the state legislature. NC Newbold to Jackson Davis, ND (circa March 1931), Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>38</sup> NC Newbold to Jackson Davis, 22 February 1934, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

To aid in the solicitation of funds from the GEB, Newbold recruited President Few at Duke and Howard Odum, a sociologist, at the University of North Carolina. Odum was no stranger to either the GEB or Newbold. The GEB provided the principal funding for many of Odum's projects at the University. Also Newbold and Odum served together on the North Carolina Commission for Interracial Cooperation and the North Carolina Conference for Social Service. Odum suggested to Davis that the proposed department would not only involve collaboration between Duke and UNC, but also break new ground in interracialism:

In exploring this field, along with others of a similar nature, it seems apparent there is a great need for both a new type of intensive study and research and of gathering of original data, on the one hand, and a certain sort of functional study and work in closer cooperation with Negroes and Negro institutions, on the other, than we have heretofore, been able to attempt.<sup>39</sup>

Several years earlier, Mabel Carney at the Columbia Teacher's College in New York, praised Newbold's proposal, but cautioned such a department was ill-suited for a southern institution. Such an endeavor was better situated in the North, where black and white scholars could join together on research projects.<sup>40</sup> Odum's suggestion seemed to render her point moot. What better way for black scholars to conduct research than under the guidance of southern whites?

In reality, Few and Odum advocated an investment in Newbold more so than the plan itself. At best the plan Newbold laid out was a vague agenda of interdisciplinary study that would improve race relations. Therefore, it was Newbold's reputation as a successful bureaucrat, as well as feelings of personal affection toward him, that attracted

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<sup>39</sup> Howard Odum to Jackson Davis, 29 May 1934, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>40</sup> NC Newbold to William P Few, 15 October 1930, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

the support from the faculty at Duke and UNC. Few told Jackson Davis he would gladly welcome “grants provided for this undertaking at least during the rest of Mr. Newbold’s active life.”<sup>41</sup>

Though Newbold kept pushing, the campaign for a department at Duke stalled. In June 1934, Leo Favrot, an official with the GEB, made a suggestion to Newbold. Favrot relayed to Newbold the details of an earlier meeting between Favrot, Odum and UNC President Frank Graham. Favrot told Odum and Graham that it was very unlikely that the GEB would fund Newbold’s proposal. In a way the plan was a victim of its hype. If everyone supported it and Duke enjoyed a state of financial solvency, why should the GEB finance it? Furthermore, there was concern the Department would overlap with similar work conducted at Peabody College in Tennessee. All was not lost though. Favrot laid out a sketchy idea involving students from Duke and UNC working with the Department of Public Instruction. Favrot informed Newbold that both Odum and Graham appeared intrigued with the idea. If the principals worked out the details, Favrot promised to present the plan at the next GEB executive board meeting.<sup>42</sup>

Newbold’s past affiliation with philanthropic organizations served him well here. He knew an opening when he saw one, and knew half a loaf was better than none at all. Though Favrot’s proposal was ambiguous at best, Newbold praised “the opportunity for a type of service which I believe will be of genuine worth.”<sup>43</sup> Again it was the force of

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<sup>41</sup> William P Few to Jackson Davis, 10 April 1934, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>42</sup> Leo Favrot to NC Newbold, 11 June 1934, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>43</sup> NC Newbold to Leo Favrot, 14 June 1934, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

Newbold's personality and past associations that drew support to the project. Frank

Porter Graham told Newbold:

The details of the suggested plan were not presented to me. As I understood it, Mr. Favrot made the proposal to you for your consideration. I know that Dr. Odum stands ready to cooperate in these matters. We both join Mr. Favrot in deep appreciation of the work that you have done, and of the work that you can do. . . . I say now to you . . . that we will be glad to cooperate.<sup>44</sup>

Over the next few months Newbold hammered out a blueprint for the collaborative effort called the Department (or Division) of Cooperation in Education in Race Relations. The outline called for the Division to pursue five primary objectives. First, have the two university libraries collect books, manuscripts, essays, and dissertations covering all aspects of black life. Second, have researchers conduct studies and gather data on blacks that could be furnished to public agencies, interracial groups, and civic organizations. Third, have faculty and others affiliated with the Division serve on other committees working to improve interracial relations. Fourth, get theological and divinity schools, black and white, to devise curriculums aimed at improving the education of black ministers. Fifth, hold conferences to share ideas about interracial relations. The Division would double as a social science research consortium and propaganda machine, showing the way to improved race relations in the South.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, in April 1935, the GEB agreed to fund the Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations with Nathan Newbold serving as part-time director. The GEB stipend covered half the expenses while Duke and UNC were responsible for the

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<sup>44</sup> Frank P Graham to NC Newbold , 30 July 1934, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>45</sup> Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations - Proposal, 18 April 1935, Early Southern Education Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University

other half. It was essentially a fourteen-month trial period to see if the project yielded any tangible results.<sup>46</sup> This likely did not trouble Newbold. He fully appreciated the machinations necessary to acquire philanthropic donations. The first step always required getting your foot in the door. After that one hoped for continued funding from the same source, or hoped that the project proved valuable enough to secure other funds from the private or public sectors. Newbold no doubt saw this as the first real chance to establish an academic department at some point in the future.

The Division recruited a membership roster of scholars and public figures to immediately bestow an air of legitimacy to the enterprise. Years of work in black education and southern reform afforded Newbold access to black and white leaders throughout the region. The Division enjoyed input from two of the South's leading sociologists - Howard Odum and Guy B. Johnson, at Carolina. The historian William K. Boyd and theologian Mason Crum, both from Duke, offered their advice and services. Newbold also enlisted the aid of James E. Shepard at the North Carolina College for Negroes, President William Stuart Nelson from Shaw University, and businessman Charles C. Spaulding. The roster of out-of-state affiliates included President John Hope from Atlanta University, Carter G. Woodson and Benjamin E. Mays at Howard University, Robert R. Moton, the president emeritus at Tuskegee Institute, and Charles Loram from Yale University.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Memo to Duke University from WW Brierly, et al., 17 April 1935, Early Southern Education Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>47</sup> Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations - Tentative Program for a Conference, TD, 20 May 1935, Guy B. Johnson Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.



From its inception the Division planned to address various topics affecting blacks ranging from health care and graduate education to history and theology.<sup>48</sup> This was not merely an academic exercise or intellectual pursuit. Newbold, a pragmatic bureaucrat, believed in demonstrable results. The Division would be a clearinghouse for information and ideas to reshape race relations, at least from the perspective of right-thinking Southern whites. Newbold maintained that when white southerners had all the facts in front of them, whites would work more readily with level-headed black leaders who sought equalization and not equality:

We have found after long experience that it is highly desirable to use what we may call positive or affirmative psychology in dealing with race matters as far as possible. That is to say, if any good things are happening it is wise to call attention to them and use them to show that good conditions can be worked out by the races working together harmoniously. Having done that, we of course call attention to differentials but try as far as possible to use the psychology of encouragement to stimulate activity where it is needed most.<sup>49</sup>

At the Division of Cooperation's first conference, Howard W. Odum echoed Newbold's call for easing Divine Discontent through equalization without equality. According to Odum, the American promise was one of equal opportunity. The large number of African Americans living in the country made the United States the "most nearly perfect laboratory of cultural evolution." Additionally, Odum added, "The Negro population affords a striking example of maladjustment. Mass power of emotion will

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<sup>48</sup> Minutes Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, TD, 20 May 1935, Southern Education Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University; This approach to education put Newbold in line with other progressives seeking to use education as a means to decrease the levels of discrimination in American society. See Ronald Goodenow, "The Progressive Educator, Race and Ethnicity in the Depression Years: An Overview," *History of Education Quarterly* 15 (Winter 1975): 365 – 94.

<sup>49</sup> NC Newbold to Lee Brooks, 7 August 1940, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

grow unless ways for closing gaps are discovered.”<sup>50</sup> Southern academes had to chart a new course to racial reconciliation; it could no longer be left to a handful of politicians and educators. Frank P. Graham’s speech mirrored Odum’s in tone and temperament. After the Civil War and Reconstruction ended, the white South tried domination, intimidation, and discrimination to control the masses of blacks. Nothing worked until men like Booker T. Washington and North Carolina Governor Charles B. Aycock developed plans for “adjusting the relations between the races by education and cooperation.”<sup>51</sup> The men who gathered together for this enterprise were the true ideological heirs to Washington and Aycock.

The conference participants debated a wide range of concerns. The pragmatic agenda on which the Division of Cooperation focused its energies can be narrowed down to three. One, devise a plan to improve theological education for southern black ministers. Two, work with the libraries at Duke and UNC to catalog, gather, or publish books, manuscripts, and material culture related to black life. Three, try to develop a coherent system for the collection and preparation of data on the economic, political, health, and social issues confronting blacks. Newbold’s tenure as director can be measured as successful on some fronts as well as a failure on others. A strict adherence to “adjusting” race relations and limited financial resources severely restricted the

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<sup>50</sup> Proceedings from the Conference of the Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, TD, 20 – 21 May 1935, Morning Session 20 May 1935, Early Southern Education Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>51</sup> Proceedings from the Conference Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, TD. 20-21 May 1935, Evening Session, 20 May 1935, Early Southern Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

Division's efforts at true reform. However, even initiatives that delivered little more than lip service reveal a great deal about white racial moderates' goals and objectives.<sup>52</sup>

Whites and blacks in the Division worried about black ministers' shoddy training and declining influence within the black community. Certainly the discussion of theological training was not new to the Division. Three years before the Division formed, William Stuart Nelson addressed the Nineteenth Annual Minister's Conference at Hampton Institute. Nelson argued the black minister held the potential to be a "moral engineer," but their incompetence rendered organized religion ineffective within their own community. As blacks gained greater access to education, the traditional religion invariably suffered. Nelson said, "The youth become critical in proportion to their educational advancement. They are not satisfied with precisely the same types of sermons to which their fathers listened." Nothing less was at stake than the ministers' traditional claim to leadership.<sup>53</sup>

Undoubtedly Nelson shaped Newbold's thinking on training ministers. Newbold was an avid reader and contributor to the *Southern Workman*, the monthly which printed a copy of Nelson's speech. Additionally, in his role as the head of the Division of Negro Education, Newbold frequently conversed with Nelson and Benjamin Brawley, both of whom worked at Shaw University and studied the Negro ministry. Nelson also served as the chairman of the Division of Cooperation's "Religious Leadership, Ministerial

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<sup>52</sup> Proceedings from the Conference of the Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, TD, 20 – 21 May 1935, Evening Session, 20 May 1935, Early Southern Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>53</sup> Nelson, William Stuart, "Theological Education for Ministers," *Southern Workman* 61, no. 12 (December 1932): 505 - 506.

Training, and Local Parish Problems” committee. When discussing the crisis in the black ministry, Newbold cribbed language from Nelson:

The rank and file of Negro ministers are perhaps the poorest trained from the educational standpoint of any of the leaders of the Negro race. The educational and business leadership among Negroes, in my judgment, have gone far beyond the religious leadership.<sup>54</sup>

This was a very real concern to Newbold. Black progress required not only improving education and social services, but also firming up their morality. Newbold feared that an educated black man might turn his back on the church, if the preacher appeared a poorly trained buffoon:

It should be understood here that there is not the slightest desire nor intention to reflect in any degree on upon any individual who is conscientiously and faithfully rendering genuine service in the Gospel ministry. The purpose is to emphasize the real need of intelligent sacrificial spiritual leadership for the thousands of young alert active men and women who are yearly graduated from our high schools and colleges.<sup>55</sup>

Newbold assigned three different committees the task of drawing up a plan to advance theological education. Each year the committees issued reports with a list of recommendations. The solutions most commonly bandied about included six-week long Minister Institutes and extension courses. These programs of study appealed to Newbold because they were similar to programs used to improve teaching standards in black schools.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> NC Newbold to Paul H Garber, 30 October 1935, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>55</sup> Eruditio et Religio [Education and Religion], Commencement Address for Johnson C. Smith University, 21 May 1932, Speeches of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>56</sup> Newbold kept a binder of the minutes and programs for the Division. A copy of the binder’s contents is available in the Division of Cooperation, Early Southern Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

As promising as these solutions appeared to be, the Division was unable to really push any plan forward for several reasons, the foremost being a lack of funding. Scholars and theologians could agree on what needed to happen, but there simply was not enough money available for implementation. For example, throughout the early forties John H. Satterwhite and William J. Trent at Livingstone College sought aid from Newbold to continue and expand an extension curriculum tailored to ministers. They estimated having close to thirty ministers interested in taking classes. They requested Newbold's Division contribute \$150 - \$175 each semester for the undertaking.<sup>57</sup> Newbold responded with encouragement and platitudes, but not much funding. "At the present time I may state that our funds are rather limited for any one particular project . . ." <sup>58</sup> Though Newbold promised to cover some of the expenses for the current semester, he realized the program's long-term development and survival was precarious. Novel ideas were plentiful when members of the Division met. However, the Division operated on a tight budget without any surplus monies for aiding other organizations and schools.<sup>59</sup>

Another tension ran through the discussions about black ministers – integration. Newbold agreed with Mason Crum, a Duke University theologian, who believed white southerners had a Christian obligation to uplift blacks. In fact, according to Crum, "It is our preeminent moral issue."<sup>60</sup> A devout Methodist, Newbold's correspondence and

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<sup>57</sup> J.H. Satterwhite to NC Newbold, 21 October 1942, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>58</sup> NC Newbold to JH Satterwhite, 28 October 1942, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>59</sup> NC Newbold to JH Satterwhite, 3 November 1942, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>60</sup> Notes on the Division of Cooperation, Mason Crum, AD, ND, Mason Crum Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

speeches express the same sentiment. Nonetheless, the mission to uplift did not include allowing blacks to attend schools with established theology departments. This inconsistency was not lost on blacks. Miles Mark Fisher, the minister of White Rock Baptist Church in Durham, informed Newbold that the time for debating was over. “It appears that the few Negro ministers who could qualify and who would have the time for graduate study might be admitted to the nearest school which is already operating in the field of advanced ministerial training.”<sup>61</sup> Charles S. Johnson from Fisk University voiced a similar dissent stating that “because so few Negroes enter the ministry from colleges at present . . . that an attempt be made to secure admission to graduate schools in theology that are already established.”<sup>62</sup> Newbold rarely responded in mixed racial company to such proposals with a flat out “No.” Instead he let contrary ideas suffer from benign neglect, almost as if silence and double-speak could suddenly smooth out thorny issues.

The quandary over training the black ministry was irreversibly tied into the larger concern over graduate education for blacks in North Carolina. Newbold’s Division could not realistically gain traction on graduate theological instruction, at least not until the state seriously confronted the larger issue head-on. All he could provide were piecemeal band-aids. The Division arranged for the North Carolina College for Negroes to begin offering a course on the Old Testament in January 1940. The following year Shaw University presented a similar offering on the New Testament. But Newbold’s hopes of permanently institutionalizing ministerial education at black colleges failed. Ultimately

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<sup>61</sup> Miles Mark Fisher to NC Newbold, 31 January 1940, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>62</sup> Committee Report from Binder, TD, 9 May 1939, 177, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, Early Southern Education Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

the black colleges that developed divinity departments did so without any real aid, input, or financial support from the Division of Cooperation.<sup>63</sup>

Newbold was on stronger ground with other initiatives started by the Division. They succeeded largely because Newbold knew how to work within the constraints of the system by recalibrating existing programs to focus on the Negro Problem. One of his earliest pitches to Jackson Davis avowed that Duke's greatest strength was a faculty committed to improving race relations. Now Newbold envisioned the Division giving these academics a functional outlet for their proclivity toward interracial work.

For example, the Division's library program effectively piggy-backed on projects already begun at Duke and Carolina. In the early thirties William K. Boyd, a Duke University historian and librarian, used a grant from the General Education Board and the Flowers Fund to start purchasing books and manuscripts on diverse Southern topics. Also Carolina had already begun the Southern Historical Collection.<sup>64</sup> With this in mind, Newbold provided a forum for discussing how the libraries could directly address race relations. His strategy involved using the libraries as a central hub connecting black and white colleges from around the state.

Beginning in the summer of 1935, Carolina and Duke initiated work on a Negro union catalogue. Under the guidance of R. B. Downs and Guy B. Johnson at Carolina, the

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<sup>63</sup> Shaw University did start a Divinity School. But it was not under the auspices of the Division of Cooperation and without any aid from Newbold. Mason Crum to NC Newbold, 31 January 1940; NC Newbold to OT Binkley, 5 March 1940; NC Newbold to JE Shephard, 6 March 1940; Kenneth W. Clark to NC Newbold, 6 March 1941, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>64</sup> Jensen, Howard K., "The Race Relations Collections of the Duke University Libraries," *Library Notes: A Bulletin Issued for Friends of Duke University Library*, no. 23 (January 1950) Microfilm Department, Duke University; WK Boyd to NC Newbold, 23 Feb 1935, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

Division cataloged all the materials in both libraries pertaining to black life. The lists were then made available to all the black colleges and public libraries in the state and a few white colleges. Newbold's reluctance to send the list unsolicited to every white institution was most likely driven by budgetary constraints. But Newbold's racial philosophy may have also played a role. Courting white southerners to a moderate stance on the Negro problem required skill and tact. Even the slightest overtures could be misinterpreted as radical and put the project in jeopardy. Newbold learned this lesson from his years of negotiations with white school administrators. Even if some white college librarians might welcome the list, others might perceive it as the state's flagship university running amok.<sup>65</sup>

The Division sought to be the embodiment of interracial cooperation. To that end, the library committee made sure that black scholars knew what was available at the universities, and could make special arrangements to access the materials either on campus or through inter-library loan. In an effort to gather more materials on black life and history, Newbold asked black principals and college professors for their graduate theses. Requests for institutional histories went out to black college presidents. Newbold also used his contacts in public education to solicit manuscript materials from various sources including the Charles Hunter family and the American Missionary Association. In these two cases, skepticism on both sides tested interracialism's limits. Blacks wanted their records controlled by black institutions while white moderates still struggled to find academic value in black material culture. Lena Hunter wanted her father's materials divided up evenly between Duke and two black institutions. William K. Boyd at Duke

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<sup>65</sup> "A Brief Account of Activities" May 1, 1935 – May 10, 1938, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, Early Southern Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University



welcomed Newbold's enthusiastic outreach to the black community, but condescendingly cautioned, "Encourage all Negroes to send in anything, but remember they will often send in material that does not amount to much."<sup>66</sup>

Newbold considered the cooperative library scheme an important achievement. In a report he enthusiastically raved, "The efforts of this Division did not begin this collection, but have probably accelerated the increase in number of volumes and material of this kind."<sup>67</sup> According to Newbold, the Division was partially or entirely responsible for various achievements. Thousands of dollars went into the purchase of books and manuscripts. Thanks to the efforts of those associated with the Division, both Duke and UNC now housed materials cutting across disciplines and fields of study. A researcher could find resources from religion, history, folklore, education, and health. Newbold trumpeted the Division's contributions to growing the collection from a couple thousand pieces to "about 10,000 books and pamphlets, and it is reported that these are made available to colleges, groups, and individuals, and are extremely used."<sup>68</sup>

Another principal pursuit for the Division focused on the collection and organization of data regarding the economic, social, and political condition of black southerners. The intent was not to produce research for publication in scholarly journals.

Rather the findings would have practical real-world applications. Newbold's interracial

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<sup>66</sup> "A Brief Account of Activities" May 1, 1935 – May 10, 1938, Division of Cooperation, Early Southern Program, GEB Paper, Microfilm Department, Duke University; NC Newbold to RB Downs, 3 February 1936; Lena Hunter to NC Newbold, 23 Sept 1935; Lena Hunter to NC Newbold, 25 June 1935; WK Boyd to NC Newbold, 13 Sept 1935, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives; NC Newbold to RH Woody, 6 March 1944; WK Boyd to NC Newbold, 3 May 1937, William Boyd Papers, University Archives, Duke University.

<sup>67</sup> "A Brief Account of Activities" May 1, 1935 – May 10, 1938, Early Southern Education Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>68</sup> Report Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations in North Carolina, September 5, 1935, Early Southern Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

philosophy rested on the premise that whites merely needed the facts placed before them. He was confident with the information in hand white community leaders would take decisive action to alleviate Divine Discontent.<sup>69</sup> Though he had the cooperation of faculty, Newbold ran into difficulty from the outset. Without fellowships and grants to hand out there were few carrots to offer academics. However, a plan to write a book on black educators spurred the creation of undergraduate “Associate Units,” thereby, providing the Division a cadre of student scholars.

Newbold wanted to produce a monograph that championed black achievement for use as a supplemental text in the public schools. The book outline called for biographical sketches recounting the careers of five black educators – Annie W. Holland, from the Division of Negro Education; Peter W. Moore, at the Elizabeth City State Normal School; Ezekiel E. Smith, at the Fayetteville State Normal School; James B. Dudley, from the Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro; and Simon G. Atkins, from the Winston-Salem Teacher’s College. Recalling Booker T. Washington’s specter, these were “useful Negroes” who pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps. This celebratory text would mark the educators’ “high service to their race and to the state.”<sup>70</sup> The individual bios could demonstrate “good education and race cooperation” if an interracial group of students conducted the research and the writing. Therefore, Newbold utilized his statewide network to recruit groups of black and white students

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<sup>69</sup> Department (or Division) of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations [Original Proposal], TD, ND, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>70</sup> “Notes – Sketches of the Life and Work of Five Prominent Negro Educators of North Carolina,” Nathan C. Newbold, TD, ND, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

from different schools to work on the mini-biographies. Newbold described how the collaboration worked to Sallie Joyner at the East Carolina Teacher's College:

I have taken the [white] Duke students to Fayetteville [black college] three times and on the first trip they collected material and divided parts of it between the two groups of students. . . . last Monday the Duke students went back to Fayetteville with a practically completed paper covering the first half of Dr. Smith's life and work. This paper included about twenty type written pages. They divided the task into four parts, each student writing a paper . . . and then they compiled the four papers into one. Their visit to Fayetteville Monday was to compare again the sketch prepared by them with the one prepared by the Fayetteville students on the last half of Dr. Smith's life and to fit it together as a complete whole.<sup>71</sup>

This personified Newbold's racial philosophy - white college students in contact with the Negro Talented Tenth, each learning their respective steps in the dance of racial accommodation.

In March 1938 William T. Couch, the editor for the UNC Press, received a completed manuscript for *Five North Carolina Negro Educators*. "This work, it seems to me," Newbold told Couch, "represents a first-rate piece of cooperative effort between white and Negro college students and college professors."<sup>72</sup> Couch sent the draft to A. M. Proctor at Duke University for a critique. In his hands the manuscript received a scathing rebuke. Proctor thought the collections "rather thin" and not quite rising to the "usual standards for biographical studies." Additionally, the "literary style fails to develop interest and at times tends to be too eulogistic."<sup>73</sup> Therein lay the rub. Newbold, the pragmatic problem solver, was not interested in a penetrating or insightful

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<sup>71</sup> NC Newbold to Sallie Joyner Davis, 13 May 1937, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>72</sup> NC Newbold to William T Couch, 3 March 1938, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>73</sup> AM Proctor to William T Couch, 11 May 1938, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

scholarship. He wanted a celebratory history for use in the schools. To Newbold, the interracial process producing the book was just as, if not more, important as the final product. Additionally, young people of both races were exposed to the accomplishments of “useful Negroes.” Proctor’s literary and scholarly standard’s had little to do with easing Divine Discontent.

Over the next year the manuscript went through a series of rewrites. The Division devised plans for selling the book to school systems and the North Carolina Negro Teachers’ Association. Meanwhile, the clash over form versus function continued. One reviewer found the book “interesting and inspiring. I knew each of the subjects personally and feel that the job was well done.”<sup>74</sup> Another reader suggested the only purpose for such a book “would have to rest on the generous impulse to place something, however modest, in the hands of Negro teachers . . .”<sup>75</sup> Nonetheless, by 1940 the book was on sale doubling as both a supplemental textbook and as an advertisement for interracial cooperation.

The committees formed to work on *Five North Carolina Negro Educators* eventually evolved into undergraduate Associate Units. Black and white faculty at college campuses wanted to transform their ad hoc committees into something more permanent. No doubt Newbold immediately perceived the value derived from undergraduates conducting research. First, it got past the funding obstacle that hindered the involvement of established scholars and academics. Students worked for free

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<sup>74</sup> William T Couch to NC Newbold, 13 January 1939; Readers Report on Five Distinguished Educators, attached to Letter from WT Couch to NCN, July 26, 1938, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>75</sup> Readers Report on Five Distinguished Educators, attached to letter from WT Couch to NCN, July 26, 1938, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

receiving class credit in sociology, history, education, or any other discipline. Second, it raised the Division's profile throughout the state, region, and nation. Heightened public awareness helped justify the continued funding from the GEB and the two universities. Third, this was proactive interracial work. In the past many interracial organizations did little more than hold conferences and issue position papers. After Guy B. Johnson left a meeting, he mused that the Division's objectives were unclear and "much like a usual interracial meet."<sup>76</sup> The Associate Units seemed a remedy to these concerns.

Newbold's approach to interracial relations relied heavily on presenting facts to educate and to persuade. The Associate Units provided an efficient mechanism for collecting data. Howard Odum was delighted to have the Units "join in this laboratory atmosphere in which we try to get the facts about our people and resources."<sup>77</sup> Beginning in 1938, public and private colleges started Associate Units across the state. Some of the participating institutions included Shaw University, Raleigh; Bennett College, Greensboro; Winston Salem Teachers College, Winston Salem; Elon College, Elon; and the Women's College of UNC, Greensboro.<sup>78</sup>

Associate Units produced a wide array of research on topics ranging from black crime rates, voting patterns, and juvenile delinquents, to teacher training, and the attitude

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<sup>76</sup> Report of the Activities of the Associated Unit – Shaw University, 1938 – 39, TD, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives; Memo, AD, Guy B. Johnson, Guy B. Johnson Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>77</sup> Minutes, May 12, 1941, Associate Units Conference, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, Early Southern Education Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>78</sup> Minutes - Meeting of Certain of the Associate Units, 9 March 1939, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, Early Southern Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

of whites towards black soldiers.<sup>79</sup> Whatever good intentions Associate Units harbored, inherent biases inevitably worked their way into many of the studies. The Women's College of the University of North Carolina researched the status of domestic servants in Greensboro. The study's purpose was to "see what sort of servants were employed, [and] what the conditions of work were . . ." <sup>80</sup> A young white southerner assumed white employers were privy to their black servants most personal information. Therefore, students and faculty took it at face value that employers *truly knew* their maids. In fairness the Woman's College report does acknowledge "ignorance on the part of [many] employers concerning the health of servants."<sup>81</sup> But those who professed to know details claimed to have very intimate knowledge regarding their employees. As historian Darlene Clark Hine suggested, black women often "dissembled" in their public and private lives to protect themselves emotionally and physically, thereby, making some of the findings all the more suspect.<sup>82</sup>

As indicated by the report, a fourth of the respondents reported that their employees had a sexually transmitted disease. Other respondents laid claim to not only general health information regarding their employee, but also that of the employee's family. The survey also questioned employers about the domestic's work place such as the use of telephones, number of days off, and visitation rights. Not surprisingly all

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<sup>79</sup> "Studies Made by Associate Units" 1938 – 1940, 1940 – 1941, 1941 – 1942, TD, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>80</sup> "Domestic Servants' Survey," Early Southern Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>81</sup> "Domestic Servants' Survey," Early Southern Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>82</sup> Darlene Clark Hine, "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West: Preliminary Thoughts on the Culture of Dissemblance," *Signs*, 14 (1989), 912 – 920.

questionnaires yielded answers casting the employers in a favorable light. Though some of the information may have been accurate, blacks who reviewed the report prodded Newbold to request a black associate unit conduct a similar study from the perspective of the black servant.<sup>83</sup>

In some of the reports good intentions quickly gave way to racial stereotyping. The statement of purpose for another study, “Public Welfare Work Among Negroes in Wilson County,” reflected Newbold’s racial philosophy:

Before making this study many of us thought that Negroes were constitutionally weak and that the race was peculiarly prone to disease. We now believe that racial differences are negligible and that environment plays the greater part in the health of the Negro. If some of the white people who believe the Negro is especially prone to diseases of all kinds could see the living conditions of a great majority of the Negroes, we believe they, too, would think differently.<sup>84</sup>

But the research focused more on voyeuristic expressions of black deviancy than the public welfare of the subjects. The report estimated that sixty-percent of the blacks in Wilson suffered from syphilis. Black wives carried the weight for delinquent husbands and fathers. Black women “were left in poverty” by itinerant husbands, or “supported herself and also a drinking husband.” A different women’s husband “was in jail for forging a W.P.A. check,” while another “lost his job for drunkenness.” The report

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<sup>83</sup> Newbold asks the faculty at Johnson C. Smith to conduct a survey from the black perspective. There is no evidence that they followed up on the request. “Domestic Servants’ Survey,” Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, Early Southern Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University; NC Newbold to John G. Turner, 12 November 1941, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>84</sup> “Public Welfare Work Among Negroes in Wilson County, North Carolina,” 7 May 1940, Early Southern Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

concluded that blacks were “ignorant of even the simpler rules of health and heedless of sanitation and personal hygiene.”<sup>85</sup>

Even if some reports strayed more toward reaffirming white assumptions, there were many that tried to identify problems and provide constructive solutions. Johnson C. Smith University, a black college, investigated the type and quality of recreational facilities accessible to blacks in Charlotte. Addressing white fears of Negro crime, the report asked “. . . what becomes of those unemployed over ten years of age? How do they spend their enforced leisure?”<sup>86</sup> Unlike the aforementioned Wilson County study, this research did not revel in black deviancy. The report wanted to address a phenomenon that cut across racial lines. Adhering to an old adage that idle hands are the Devil’s workshop, these student scholars suggested that juvenile crime resulted from a lack of leisure opportunity, not an innate criminal aptitude. The study maintained that the facilities available to blacks were not adequate in diversity, quantity, or quality. The Associate Unit’s report recommended further study by an interracial committee and an annual education program to train city leaders in the field of recreation.<sup>87</sup>

How effectively each Unit’s research fulfilled its stated purpose is difficult to gauge. Many studies sought to achieve ethereal results like creating “a favorable feeling among Negroes toward voting” or “help[ing] to eliminate the tendency to classify all

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<sup>85</sup> “Public Welfare Among Negroes in Wilson County, North Carolina,” 7 May 1940, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, Early Southern Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>86</sup> “A Survey of the Recreational Facilities for Negroes in the City of Charlotte, North Carolina 1938 – 1939,” Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>87</sup> “A Survey of the Recreational Facilities for Negroes in the City of Charlotte, North Carolina 1938 – 1939,” Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, Early Southern Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.



Negroes as having Criminal tendencies.”<sup>88</sup> The findings circulated among the usual participants in interracial organizations. Newbold certainly believed they could be used as propaganda to stir white officials to action, and he gladly met all requests for copies. The Associate Unit’s research attracted attention and found practical uses outside the classroom. The city of Raleigh used data from “Public Housing For Negroes in Raleigh, NC” to develop their plans for a low-income community. Doxy Wilkerson at Howard University requested copies of the studies as additional research material for Gunnar Myrdal’s *American Dilemma*.<sup>89</sup> Just as in the case with the writing of *Five Negro Educators*, it was the process that mattered most to Newbold. He was no doubt heartened when a white college professor raved about the impact of an Associate Unit conference on white attendees:

Two of the [white] students I brought to the conference stated most positively that they definitely gained a new insight into the negro problem just by realizing as never before that there were so many of them that really had the intelligence to think coherently and with unmistakable evidence of good scholarship.<sup>90</sup>

By the early 1940s the Division had Associate Units on nearly twenty college campuses. Newbold desired to see even more institutions affiliate themselves with the Division but several things hampered him. A string of illnesses kept him inactive for several months at a time. Constant worries about continued funding made it difficult to strategize too far into the future. Moreover, the Division was developing an image that

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<sup>88</sup> Minutes – Third Annual Conference, Duke University, 10 May 1938, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>89</sup> NC Newbold to Glenn R. Johnson, 16 January 1940, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>90</sup> Paul A. Toll to NC Newbold, 4 February 1942, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

Newbold found difficult to control. Newbold always imagined the Division as having an innovative, but staunchly conservative, approach to race relations. Neither the Division nor its Units were vehicles intended to bring down Jim Crow. Most white Southerners did not share Newbold's generous approach to interracialism. Where he saw progress, other whites saw upheaval on the horizon and a disaster in the making.

Olin T. Binkley at Wake Forest College wanted to start a Unit on his campus, but he advised Newbold that the time was not right:

As you probably know, there is a great deal of racial prejudice here in Wake Forest, our approach to the situation will have to be tactful, gradual, and well informed. Every year I take about three weeks in my course with juniors and seniors to talk about the Christian approach to race relations.<sup>91</sup>

Claudine Lewis at the Women's College voiced a similar sentiment stating, "I have taken all precautions before writing you since things are a bit tense regarding interracial matters and the University at present . . ." <sup>92</sup> Even so, Newbold campaigned to bring Associate Units to additional campuses. Following a suggestion from Frank Porter Graham, the Division initiated a college lecture series. Newbold thought the lectures served two essential purposes. On the one hand it further spread the gospel of interracial cooperation to college campuses winning new converts to the cause. On the other hand it was an opening salvo in starting an associate unit on a campus.<sup>93</sup>

Many of the speeches were short innocuous affairs not meant to challenge prevailing racial assumptions. UNC professor Phillip Russell spoke at Presbyterian

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<sup>91</sup> OT Binkley to NC Newbold, 2 March 1942, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>92</sup> Claudine Lewis to NC Newbold, 14 February 1939, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>93</sup> NCN to Frank P. Graham, 3 July 1941; NCN to Henry C. Bedinger, 23 July 1941; NCN to Henry C. Bedinger, 24 April 1940, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

Junior College on the subject “We owe the Negro gratitude,” a text lifted from former Governor Aycock. Using a speech from the Governor, who led the campaign to disfranchise blacks, sent a clear signal that the Division was supporting interracialism, not social equality. Other speeches dealt with general themes of brotherhood, Christianity, and the moral obligations a superior race owes to an inferior race. Speakers often reported to Newbold that the faculty and the student body gave them a warm reception.<sup>94</sup>

On occasion the speaker represented a temporary break across the academic color line. Elizabeth Stone at Atlantic Christian College rhapsodized after A. Heningburg, a black college professor, spoke on her campus.

In talking with him after the meeting, I found out that it is quite unusual thing for a negro speaker to be invited to speak at a white college in this state. From the immense success of our experiment I would like to recommend it as a means of building understanding between the races. Many of our students had never met an educated negro before, and he was so popular that there was a crowd of students around him for an hour and a half after the meeting.<sup>95</sup>

She concluded with a hint that only the right kind of Negro “who is as open minded and tactfully frank as Dr. Heningburg” should be sent to talk at white colleges.

Other schools refused to blur the color line. H.G. Bendinger at Flora McDonald agreed to have a speaker, but made no bones about the ground rules.

We would prefer a white professor from Duke or the University. You know that Flora McDonald College represents a very conservative constituency and we would not like to have a speaker who would present a radical point of view to one who would create sympathetic understanding in this difficult subject.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Brief Outlines of Lectures on Race Relations, January – April 1941, Division of Cooperation, Early Southern Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>95</sup> Elizabeth Stone to NC Newbold, 18 June 1942, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>96</sup> HG Bedinger to NC Newbold, 21 December 1943, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

The mere discussion of interracialism raised a red flag on many white campuses. Guy B. Johnson lectured on race relations at Lenoir Rhyne College. The moment his speech was over the President “jumped to his feet” denouncing Johnson’s message as “one of the most dangerous things that could possibly be done for the welfare of the colored people in the South.” In a private conversation that followed the college president advised Johnson he was traveling down a slippery path. “You shouldn’t criticize the white people of the south,” he intoned, “because they have given him [blacks] every opportunity that he needs. You are doing a dangerous thing.”<sup>97</sup> The lecture series garnered other criticisms for style and content. Speakers were charged with having “no vital message” or stepping up to tell a few jokes while making “a few platitudinous remarks.”<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, most of the speeches stirred little controversy.

In the Division’s last few years it became increasingly difficult for Newbold to promote an agenda of equalization without equality. In essence the Division suffered from an identity crisis – people saw in it what they wanted. Reactionary southerners perceived any interracial organization as being the home of Negro-loving whites who harbored designs on social equality. Some blacks believed that the liberal whites in interracial organizations were pursuing a gradual course toward integration. Others thought the white liberals were hypocrites or were moving too slow. The president of Morgan College in Baltimore attended a conference sponsored by the Division. He was ecstatic to find white college students referring to blacks with the titles Mister and

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<sup>97</sup> Brief Outlines of Lectures on Race Relations, January – April 1941, Division of Cooperation, Early Southern Program, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>98</sup> Hunter T. Blakely to NC Newbold, 10 March 1942; Hunter T. Blakely to NC Newbold, 17 November 1943, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

Doctor. Holmes believed Newbold's scheme of putting white and black students together in cooperative endeavors would one day change race relations. According to Holmes, "The day will come before you know it when the members of this conference will take luncheon together."<sup>99</sup> Holmes could not have been more wrong. Newbold deftly ignored such sentiments and instead focused on generalities about improving race relations and the progress being made in the South. All the while, the tension between perception and social equality resurfaced repeatedly throughout the forties.

Newbold, like many white reformers, simply could not grasp the reality of black life in the Jim Crow South. The conferences of the Division served as staging areas for a growing dialogue on the future of race relations. In May 1941 Professor Heningburg asked Newbold to make special luncheon accommodations for the blacks attending the upcoming conference. With the conferences on the campuses of either Duke or Carolina, black students experienced difficulty at lunch time. Turned away from campus cafeterias, the "Negro delegates," Heningburg informed Newbold, "have been served in a "hit or miss" fashion in the small restaurants of Durham."<sup>100</sup> Newbold's response was striking, especially in the light of his proclamations to understand blacks and Divine Discontent. There's not the slightest trace that he remotely understood the humiliations of segregation.

In this connection may I say that neither of the Universities has ever accepted any responsibility for luncheon for the white or any other students. Everybody is expected to get their luncheon at any place they prefer. Some of the white students go to hotels and restaurants in Durham and others go to eating places at one or the

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<sup>99</sup> DOW Holmes to NC Newbold, 16 May 1938, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>100</sup> A. Heningburg to NC Newbold, 6 May 1941, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

other Universities, but they do this on their own responsibility. There is no difference so far as the races are concerned. I have wondered if the Negro students misunderstood this arrangement. I think you know how we must handle such matters as these in North Carolina.<sup>101</sup>

Unfortunately for Newbold, the issue was far from handled.

Though Newbold did not know it at the time, his brand of interracial cooperation was drawing to a close. By the end of the decade interracial organizations like the Division and the North Carolina Commission for Interracial Cooperation found their fundamental missions challenged by both internal dissent and external pressures. The young black delegates sent to the conferences of the Division did not feel as beholden to right thinking whites like Nathan C. Newbold. In 1943 black college students openly asked why they were not permitted to dine with whites at the luncheons. Older black apologists gave Newbold cover stating, "I know it has not been an easy job for you to go to the bat for our group but you have done it and thoughtful people are appreciative."<sup>102</sup> Another wrote Newbold expressing deep regret that, "Many of our Negro delegates do not realize the extent to which all white persons who participated in such meetings as ours are liable to criticism and rebuke."<sup>103</sup> The response was classic Newbold when dealing with the concerns of blacks - never come out in direct opposition to integration or social equality. Simply sidestep the matter without yielding any quarter.

I think it is easy to understand how our younger group do not know much of the history of the past thirty or forty years and longer and cannot quite appreciate some of the conditions which exist and which prevent the doing of many things that might be

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<sup>101</sup> NC Newbold to A. Heningburg, 7 May 1941, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>102</sup> AH George to NC Newbold, 21 May 1943, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>103</sup> A. Heningburg to NC Newbold, 12 May 1943, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

possible under other conditions.<sup>104</sup>

Newbold adroitly said just enough to allow people to hear what they wanted to hear, while at the same time reaffirming his support for the status quo.

Whites affiliated with the Division also questioned an unending commitment to Jim Crow. Charles Loram at Yale University hinted to Walter White, president of the NAACP, that the long slog of ending segregation had already begun. Throughout the South some whites needed to become “bolder in advocating what they really believe.” Conferences of the Division made clear that Duke and UNC should lead the way in admitting black graduate students. “Let the [black] students so admitted,” Loram said, and “and let them conduct themselves with such reasonableness,” that whites will see the inherent folly of discrimination and segregation.<sup>105</sup> Loram revisited the issue with Newbold, this time focusing on seminaries admitting capable black students. He implied a school in Nashville would admit blacks if given the support, and cover, of the Division. The answer was positively Newboldian in its evasiveness. Newbold, focusing on Loram’s request for a syllabus for an interracial course, used a slight of hand to distract from the question raised about admission to seminaries. “If we go ahead,” Newbold advised Loram, “I should like to study very carefully all the suggestions which you have made and particularly the one concerning a thoroughly reliable syllabus.”<sup>106</sup> Newbold’s two primary visions for the Division never came to pass. The Division never transitioned

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<sup>104</sup> NC Newbold to AH George, 1 June 1943, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>105</sup> Charles Loram to Walter White, 21 December 1936, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>106</sup> Charles Loram to NC Newbold, 12 May 1938; NC Newbold to Charles Loram, 24 May 1938, Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations, DNE, State Archives.

into a self-supporting Black Studies department on Duke's campus, nor did it ease what Newbold called Divine Discontent. In fact, funding cuts and Newbold's advancing age caused the Division to cease operations in 1945.<sup>107</sup>

The interracialists also felt pressure from another source, black activism and the United States Supreme Court. Throughout the Thirties and Forties blacks threatened the very foundations of the interracialists worldview. Challenging the orthodoxy of Newbold's brand of interracialism, the NAACP and individuals began an asserted attack on the very foundations of Jim Crow – that separate can never be equal. For decades the interracialists in North Carolina pointed to their educational approach and gains as proof positive that progress was being made in race relations. More importantly, this was the bedrock on which Newbold relied to identify himself as moderate reformer. Now radical developments in North Carolina and other southern states portended an ominous shift.

In the 1930s, Thomas Hocutt presented himself to the registrar at the University of North Carolina and asked for admission to the school's pharmacy department. As one historian noted, this was the beginning of a twenty year effort by blacks to gain access to professional and graduate education. James E. Shepard seized on the opportunity to push for tuition grants for black students barred from white schools and establishing graduate programs at the North Carolina College for Negroes.<sup>108</sup> Newbold reacted coolly to any plan that tilted the playing field toward integration. Relying on familiar formulations, he made his case to black and white leaders. The state has always met the educational needs

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<sup>107</sup> NC Newbold to RL Flowers, FP Graham, and Clyde Erwin, 21 May 1945, Duke Treasurer File, University Archives, Duke University.

<sup>108</sup> Augustus Burns, "Graduate Education for Blacks in North Carolina," *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (May, 1980): 195-198.



of blacks and there was little reason to believe they would somehow fall short now. Perhaps outside agitators were trying to stir up problems that did not heretofore exist. Certainly, local blacks must pause for a minute and think carefully about this course of action. Are the so-called “responsible” Negro leaders willing to embarrass the governor, university, and the state? Employing his trademark diplomacy, Newbold delivered a threat wrapped in overtures of racial goodwill. He advised Spaulding that, “You and your friends will know how to deal with local North Carolina persons concerned, and prove to the people of this state that the responsible independent Negro leaders here are not subservient to any outside individual or group [and] ... will cooperate with the best white people in the state.”<sup>109</sup> Howard Odum, academic and head of the commission, echoed those sentiments telling Newbold that the NAACP was only interested in pushing their agenda without any regard to its impact on southern Negroes.<sup>110</sup>

Pressure also mounted from outside the state. In 1936 courts ruled in a case from Maryland that a black applicant had a right to attend the University of Maryland’s law school. Two years later the courts declared that states must provide genuine equality to meet the burden of “separate but equal.” Initially, though he did not support the decisions, Newbold was not overly alarmed. These rulings could be addressed within the interracialist paradigm. In fact, the commission established a committee of blacks and whites to study the issue and make recommendations to the legislature for changes. These court decisions, no matter how wrong headed, merely required the states to uphold the equal in “separate but equal.” This was the archetype that undergirded Newbold’s

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<sup>109</sup> NC Newbold to CC Spaulding, 14 March 1933, Howard Odum Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>110</sup> Howard Odum to NC Newbold, 15 March 1933, Howard Odum Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

philosophy. Evolution and change within that context was not really problematic.<sup>111</sup> The courts' rulings in the next few years made this position untenable.

By the late 1940s an internal debate developed within the commission. Some of the members interpreted the court decisions and the calls for black activism after World War II as a signal that the times were changing. The old moderate center had difficulty holding against the increasing demands for equality. Roy Brown drafted a resolution calling the organization "outmoded" and no longer able to address the issues of the day. "The time has come," he informed the new director, Cyrus Johnson, "when we must take steps to put these ideals into practice or have the changes involved forced upon us."<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, he asserted that the organization's policies failed to match its own lofty ideals. It was time to integrate graduate and public schools.

Newbold used his influence within the commission to stymie Brown's efforts. His ploy reflected the many years spent navigating the contours of interracialism in North Carolina. Instead of outright rejection, why not seek additional input. Newbold's list included Governor Cherry, newspaper publisher Jonathan Daniels, and Clyde Erwin. There was little reason to believe any of these men would support any movement toward integration. Yet the disingenuous idea was shrouded in the commission's favorite language – study and conference. "I had not the slightest desire nor intention to try to defeat the resolution. . . . My sole aim was to seek further study and investigation,"

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<sup>111</sup> NC Newbold to LR Reynolds, 14 January 1939; NC Newbold to EA Penick, 9 January 1939, NC Commission on Interracial Cooperation Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill; Augustus Burns, "Graduate Education for Blacks in North Carolina," *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (May, 1980): 200-203, 213.

<sup>112</sup> Roy M. Brown to Cyrus Johnson, 10 May 1948, Commission on Interracial Cooperation Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

intoned Newbold.<sup>113</sup> Rather naively Brown gives Newbold his blessing, thereby delaying any real discussion or final vote on the resolution.<sup>114</sup>

The White Man's Burden personified by Newbold would soon give way to the modern civil rights movement. Southern white liberalism was on the cusp of being redefined. Though he spoke of the rising demands from a new generation of blacks tempered by World War II, he still believed the remedy to Divine Discontent revolved around dialogue and negotiations. Instead of assuaging black frustrations, however, the Division laid naked the limitations of interracialism. Older black apologists might remember fondly the contributions made by Newbold in the field of education, but a younger generation no longer considered gradualism and equalization progress.

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<sup>113</sup> NC Newbold to Leon Russell, 2 June 1948, Commission on Interracial Cooperation Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

<sup>114</sup> Roy Brown to NC Newbold, 14 June 1948, Commission on Interracial Cooperation Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

## CHAPTER 6

### “RIGHT WILL WIN” – SEPARATE BUT EQUAL’S LAST STAND

At the end of his career in 1950, no other person in North Carolina was more closely identified with Negro education than Nathan Newbold. Some of his aura derived from sheer staying power as he managed to outlive or stay on the job longer than most of his contemporaries. Late in life rapidly changing events altered his world view and approach to the perplexing “Negro Problem.” An older generation of white moderates and black leaders promoted progress through cooperation and accommodation. But Newbold discovered that approach no longer commanded the respect of the younger generation. Increasingly it appeared that fewer blacks in post-war America wanted to follow the constrained path of interracial cooperation.

Several forces shaped the final years of his administration. First, early in the twentieth century, flush with money from Northern philanthropists, he pursued an offensive approach to Negro education. However, shorn of philanthropic funds to distribute, he lost the ability to cajole local officials and assumed the role of a lobbyist guarding the flanks of segregation. Second, the standardization and professionalization of teaching bore unintended consequences. As the state authored new regulations, Newbold’s views about black teachers, teacher education, and classroom curriculum would be directly impacted.

Lastly, growing black activism redefined the playing field of Negro education. On the local and national level blacks increasingly asserted their rights as citizens and challenged the very premise of separate but equal. Facing a new generation of blacks not tempered by events like the Wilmington Massacre of 1898 and the disfranchisement campaign of 1900, Newbold's unrelenting support for segregation flew straight into the headwinds of the nascent civil rights movement. Like a tragic figure in a play, Newbold futilely fought until a historic court decision imperiled his life's work.

From the outset Newbold believed teachers held the keys to black salvation. Black teachers formed an army of moral soldiers with the potential to remake black life. In one of his earliest addresses to the Negro State Teachers' Association, he advised the audience of their unique burden.

I used the opportunity to impress upon those present the importance of the leaders of the Negro race to establish among their people the need for high moral character and to encourage the white people of the State to expect of Negroes the same standards of character, conduct, scholarship, living conditions and the like as is generally expected of white people.<sup>1</sup>

The state superintendent of public instruction echoed these same sentiments in an open letter to local superintendents. "Teachers are in a real sense the leaders of the race," Joyner said, "and how necessary it is that these leaders shall possess good character, correct purposes, a real desire to help their people . . . they should also be qualified to teach some industrial subjects."<sup>2</sup> Both men stressed the need for properly educated teachers, but only if the training reflected the correct attitude and approach to black

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<sup>1</sup> Report of NC Newbold, June 1917, Box 16, Special Subject File, DNE, State Archives, Raleigh.

<sup>2</sup> JY Joyner to County and City Superintendents, Memo, 15 July 1916, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

education. This included personal hygiene, cleaning up the home front, and maintaining the school grounds. Cooking and sewing as well as housekeeping and gardening also factored prominently. Instruction in farming, care for livestock and manual labor rounded out a solid industrial arts education and prepared them for work in the New South.<sup>3</sup>

Not long after Newbold assumed his duties, the state began the slow process of standardizing teacher certification. The days of a teacher knowing only a little more than their students slowly drew to a close. Progressive educators advocated professionalism and standardization as a means to improve the quality of education throughout the state. Beginning in 1921 the State Board of Education oversaw the early stages of a statewide program. Black and white educators had to meet certain benchmarks to teach in the classroom. Therefore, each race was required to have the same qualifications – at least on paper. Over the next two decades the profession required increasingly higher levels of education. By the mid-1920s a teacher needed at least three years of high school. Before the decade closed an elementary school teacher had to complete at least one year of college to receive a first class “A” license and a high school teacher had to finish at least 3 years of college to get the second class “B” license. At the opening of the 1940s teaching in either a high school or elementary school required holding a four year college degree.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Industrial Training for Negro Teachers in Rural Areas, circa 1918, Record Group NC 236, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>4</sup> “Three Decades in Building a Teaching Staff in North Carolina,” *The Quarterly Review of Higher Education Among Negroes* Vol. 20, No. 1 (January 1952): 9 – 10.

Standardization also dictated acquiring a litany of new academic skills. This presented challenges on several fronts. First, the state's supply of black teachers barely kept pace with the growing demand. Black and white schools conservatively reported at least 403 openings for teachers in 1920. The actual number of unreported vacancies pushed the projections even higher. Revising the standards upward for certification ran the risk of driving demand up for qualified educators while at the same time shrinking the potential labor pool. The problem grew worse in black schools. For example, in one county with twenty-six black schools, fifteen remained closed due to a teacher shortage. As a result Newbold vigorously pushed for black teachers to meet the new and changing qualifications.<sup>5</sup> The response of black educators also prodded Newbold to this position.

Black teachers eagerly sought to upgrade their certification and prepare themselves for the professionalization of education. Sujette Smith, a black educator, wrote Newbold asking for guidance on starting a summer school to improve the teachers' credentials in her county. He outlined a plan that cost little beyond a commitment of time and resources. On another occasion he devised a broader scheme for black teachers who seized the initiative to further their studies. Newbold proposed teachers organize themselves into groups of ten to fifteen under the guidance of a supervisor and meet on Saturdays for a year. The classes focused on mastering subject matter, not methodology and pedagogy. It was more important to review math and grammar to pass the certification tests. Even though the black teaching corps counted among its ranks nearly

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<sup>5</sup> NC Newbold to Jackson Davis, 17 September 1920, Box 5, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

3,500 people, seventy percent of them held second class certification. Unless something changed, that might mean barring many of them from the classroom.<sup>6</sup>

The teachers' initiative soon encountered another hurdle. A general indifference to black education characterized the reaction of some superintendents to any mention of bringing their teaching force up to par. In the wake of standardization Sallie Joyner Martin, a supervisor, organized an institute without first clearing it with the superintendent. The superintendent barred the program from continuing. "What an awkward place I am in!" Martin lamented, "What shall I do . . . teachers are anxious for better things." Martin goes on to paint a dire picture of the prospects in the county.

[Superintendent] Best will have to be handled with kid gloves. I shall be frank to you – he doesn't mean, in my opinion, that first grades are to be held by these Negro teachers. . . . If you see him, please don't let him feel that I tell you anything out the ordinary. Let him know I look to him and that he is the boss of the situation. He will cut the work out I fear if matters don't first please him.<sup>7</sup>

Martin faced a superintendent who cared little about black education, even if the teachers attained certification. For Negroes at least, any teacher sufficed. But even the superintendents who purportedly supported black education bristled against standardization as a usurpation of their authority.

In the mid-1920s the state moved toward a uniform curriculum for summer schools to aid teachers in upgrading their credentials. As a result superintendents lost a measure of control over the continuing education of their teachers. Charles Coon,

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<sup>6</sup> Sujette Smith to NC Newbold, 27 January 1920; NC Newbold to WD Spear[?], 28 January 1920, Box 4, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>7</sup> Sallie Joyner Martin to NC Newbold, 8 December 1919, Box 4, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.



himself responsible for African American education at the turn of the century and now a county superintendent, chafed at the guidelines from the state and the Division of Negro Education. When asked to follow the guidelines from the Division of Negro Education to organize summer schools in Wilson, he offered a blistering reply. Any “self-respecting” superintendent would refuse the request because “‘cooperation’ means that you tell who will have summer schools, what will be taught, and who will teach in them.” He promised to take the “few shreds of self-respect hanging to my outer garments” and only work with the Division when he had equal input. Newbold beat a tactical retreat asking for a face to face meeting to iron out a plan of action.<sup>8</sup>

Leaders at black institutes of higher learning also faced an adjustment in their relationship with the state in lieu of the new certification requirements. James Dudley in Greensboro devised a plan for summer school that mixed the moral with the academic. Teachers taking classes must be in by curfew and attend chapel. Classes fell into four broad categories - academic, pedagogical, commercial and industrial. Leisure activities reflected the ethos of the politics of respectability with an emphasis on tennis and croquet. Newbold reviewed the plans and found no serious flaws. Nevertheless, he reminded Dudley that his plans must align with the Department of Public Instruction’s guidelines for certification and the proposed outline was problematic. In the upcoming

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<sup>8</sup> Charles Coon to NC Newbold, 17 December 1924; Coon to NC Newbold, 27 December 1924; NC Newbold to Coon, 31 December 1924, Box 7, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

years Dudley's holistic approach might not properly prepare students to pass the necessary academic tests.<sup>9</sup>

The move toward standardization also extended Newbold's advocacy for black teachers with philanthropic organizations. On their behalf he asked the General Education Board for fellowships permitting them to take coursework not available at black institutions. Ever the careful gatekeeper, Newbold selected a specific kind of black educator to reward with fellowships. Atkins, the principal at the normal school in Winston Salem, deserved a scholarship because he had "splendid home training" and conducted himself in a "clean, up-right fashion." Others, like Emma Lewis, were safe bets because of their educational background at Hampton.<sup>10</sup>

Setting aside his views on social equality, teachers sought him out as a sounding board and as a buffer with white authorities. It was from these relationships that a paternalistic empathy for the plight of black teachers grew. "I have no disposition to meddle in your affairs," he told one superintendent and proceeded to discuss the morale of the teachers in the county. If the teachers in the area seemed discouraged, "I suppose it is, perhaps, due to low salaries which they receive for teaching. . . . [Y]our own sense of what is right and fair will lead you to have some sympathy for them."<sup>11</sup> Newbold also broke with two standard practices common in southern racial etiquette. As the racial

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<sup>9</sup> James Dudley to EC Brooks, 29 March 1921; NC Newbold to James Dudley, 9 April 1921, Box 5, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>10</sup> NC Newbold to Wallace Buttrick, 25 January 1923, Box 6, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>11</sup> NC Newbold to BT McBryde, 17 December 1920, Box 5, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

designation Negro came into wide use, the word often appeared in the lowercase as “negro.” Newbold asked for the printed word to be capitalized as a gesture of interracial goodwill towards African Americans. For example, the white teachers association periodically published a newsletter. Reluctantly, the editor acquiesced to Newbold’s request to edit their word choice. “I am glad to report that the board of editors considered the question of capitalizing the word Negro,” a teacher’s association official informed Newbold. “It makes a peculiar looking sentence sometimes to find the Negro school spoken of with a capital letter and the white school spoken of with a small letter.”<sup>12</sup> Additionally, throughout the history of the Division of Negro Education, the office staff made it a point to address blacks by their titles, such as Mr. or Mrs., instead of just using their first or last names.<sup>13</sup>

Standardization revealed that North Carolina was ill-equipped to properly educate an indigenous teaching force. Demand for teachers outstripped the home grown supply. Based on death, retirement, and marriage statistics, Newbold revised earlier predictions upward and projected needing close to 600 new Negro teachers a year. The evolving certification standards made filling the posts difficult at best.

Our problem, of course, is where to get these men and women who have had training of sufficiently high grade to entitle them to certificates in our North Carolina system. Applications are coming to us from many parts of the country, North and South. Will we be wise to accept any of these people, about whose training we know nothing, or shall we lower our standard of certification to accommodate Negro teachers?<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> MR Trabue to NC Newbold, 9 February 1925, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>13</sup> NC Newbold to Rachel Huntington, 19 October 1946, Box 16, Correspondence of Director, State Archives.

<sup>14</sup> NC Newbold to AT Allen, 26 June 1923, Box 6, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives; NC Newbold to James Gregg, 28 June 1921, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

Newbold frowned upon hiring teachers who lacked the “proper” education. He preferred individuals who had fully imbibed the Hampton and Tuskegee elixir of accommodation. To that end he ruminated, “We could begin now to select a few successful Hampton trained men, let them go back there and get higher academic and professional training, thus continuing their education under the same influence, they would then be in a position to do the work we want them to do.”<sup>15</sup>

As much as Newbold supported the Hampton model, he also sensed that it no longer held much sway with a younger generation. In a letter to Abraham Flexner, an official with the General Education Board (GEB), Newbold sounded the alarm about the challenges ahead.

There is a phase of the question which I suppose might be designated negro psychology that we are willing to consider. You perhaps know that there is abroad in the land a spirit among many negroes that Hampton’s opportunities for higher training are very limited, and that it is more – shall I say, respectable? – to go to some institution where at least higher sounding titles may be sought. Please understand that I am not approving this condition of things but merely stating that such a condition exists. I suppose we have no right to blame these colored people for this attitude of mind. We all know where they got it.<sup>16</sup>

Newbold seemingly picked up on a desire by blacks to have access to a real college education. However, he crudely dismissed it as blacks aping whites in a desire to attain higher degrees. His southern heritage prevented him from understanding that blacks wanted a college education for the same reasons as whites – to secure a better life for

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<sup>15</sup> NC Newbold to James Gregg, 28 June 1921, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>16</sup> NC Newbold to Abraham Flexner, 7 May 1921, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

themselves and their family. Blacks could not possibly appreciate the inherent value of a higher education; the superfluous “title” was the real prize.

Flexner responded in kind to Newbold that blacks must be diverted from any false notions of an equal college experience. “Can’t you tell our colored friends that Hampton is going to develop Advanced opportunities in Normal work? I should avoid the word ‘college’ because in its train fall Latin, Greek, and other subjects not calculated to advance real education.”<sup>17</sup> A few days later Flexner reiterated the need to avoid any reference to college education stating, “I should under no circumstances call the Hampton affair a normal college. I should call it The Hampton Training School for Teachers. Mr. Doermann is comparatively new to Negro education and does not yet realize the potentialities for mischief contained in the word, “college”, when it is applied to Negro schools. . . . On the essence of the problem, namely the importance of providing gradually improved facilities, we are of one mind.”<sup>18</sup> In both name and substance, even southern reformers recoiled at the idea of instituting a true college curriculum for blacks. Opening this Pandora’s Box meant seriously contemplating the future of blacks in society as a whole. If blacks were capable of academic college level work, then what did that mean for one of the cornerstones of Southern racial ideology – the Negro’s innate intellectual inferiority? Still schools like Hampton that produced the “right kind” of teachers hardly provided enough to meet demand.

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<sup>17</sup> Abraham Flexner to NC Newbold, 9 May 1921, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>18</sup> Abraham Flexner to NC Newbold, 9 May 1921, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

Moving toward college as a requirement for certification presented a real educational dilemma for progressive southerners. Newbold expressed concern about the implications of not providing Negroes a traditional college education. First, was the state tactically endorsing a dual certification system, one for whites and one for blacks, with “it being understood in this case that the Negro teachers cannot have the same opportunities or the same standard of training as the white teachers?” Secondly, if the state refused to afford the same training to both races, then they faced a conundrum. “Because of this inability, or lack of opportunity of the Negro teachers to get the same grade of training as the white teachers (if that be admitted),” he said, “shall the State pay the Negro teachers the same salary having the lower grade certificates, as it pays the white teachers having the higher grade certificate?”<sup>19</sup> His interactions with African Americans taught him that a separate certification system for black teachers held little promise of acceptance.

Finally, the whole concept of not offering a college education threatened the very idea of interracialism and progress in North Carolina. “Shall we follow this to its logical conclusion and settle the question definitely by law,” he wrote, “that the Negro does not and cannot, therefore, ever hope to get to the point where he can have an equal opportunity with white man for the best in education?”<sup>20</sup> For Newbold, it was folly to believe that denying a credible college education was a sustainable policy. Black teachers must receive the same certification as white teachers, even if it meant whites accepting a broader definition of black higher education.

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<sup>19</sup> NC Newbold to James Gregg, 28 June 1921, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>20</sup> NC Newbold to James Gregg, 28 June 1921, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

The new rules governing certification also necessitated reviewing the educational attainments of those already in the classroom. “At present, we have very few principals or instructors, who are prepared to meet the requirements,” Newbold informed the president at Hampton Institute, “There are a number of old teachers and some who are still young who have completed their education in institutions with standards not higher than high school.”<sup>21</sup> Therefore, even veteran teachers needed to upgrade their credentials or risk being left behind. Newbold reluctantly drifted to the position of black colleges with the narrow purpose to train the next generation of black teachers.

Based on the state of affairs in the early twenties, even a gradual movement toward requiring a college degree for teacher certification seemed like a daunting task. Newbold’s assistant G.H. Ferguson visited all but five of North Carolina’s county training schools between August 1921 and June 1922. The apathy of white administrators created a vacuum of local supervision whereby schools functioned as they wished without any repercussions. Attendance fluctuated wildly throughout a school year and “inefficient teachers have developed a system of retardation which almost destroys high school possibilities.” Even superintendents with a positive attitude failed to comprehend the school’s goal to educate rural teachers. He rated the schools as collective failures in the field of teacher education.<sup>22</sup> Now the state upped the ante to college level work.

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<sup>21</sup> NC Newbold to James Gregg, 28 June 1921, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>22</sup> “Summary of Reports by GH Ferguson,” 30 June 1922, Box 5, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

Additionally, within the black teaching force there existed educational disparities. Urban teachers tended to be better educated than their rural counterparts. For example, on average a teacher employed in a city completed at least a year of normal school (post-secondary) course work versus a rural teacher who may have three and half years of high school level training. Teachers in more affluent districts with a wealthier tax base were apt to be better educated than teachers from poorer districts. When the state first began to improve certification requirements, only twenty-five percent of black teachers finished high school and only seven percent completed two years of post-secondary study.<sup>23</sup>

Black principals at the state's public normal schools also pushed for transforming their nominal colleges into real institutions of higher learning. Establishing traditional four year colleges required jumping the hurdles of gaining white support, receiving public funding, and preparing black students for college work. No one worked harder than James Shepard from the Durham State Normal School. Personal animosity between Newbold and Shepard marked their often tumultuous relationship. Each man viewed the other as a direct challenge to his authority and leadership among black educators. With standardization bringing a black college closer to reality, their exchanges became a mix of personal animus and amicable diplomacy. Years later a contemporary of theirs recalled, "Dr. Shepard and this white fellow didn't get along at all."<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, they both needed each other. Newbold regarded Shepard as a reliably conservative voice with sway among black educators and community leaders throughout the state. Shepard

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<sup>23</sup> EC Sage, et. al. "Negro Education in North Carolina," November 1926, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>24</sup> James Dudley to NC Newbold, 16 October 1922, Box 6; Interview with Conrad Pearson, 18 April 1979, Southern Oral History Program, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.



coveted Newbold's influence with the white power structure and philanthropic agencies. However, southern society dictated that Shepard dissemble and hide his animosity toward a white man. Though not bound by any such stricture, Newbold remained circumspect in his writings. They both played the game of two friends with mutual objectives who have occasional misunderstandings.<sup>25</sup>

For example, Shepard and Newbold squabbled over North Carolina College for Negroes (NCCN) prematurely offering college classes. When four young men at Durham Normal enrolled in courses that the state considered beyond the purview of a normal school, Newbold voiced astonishment accusing Shepard of trying to backdoor his way into a college curriculum. For his part Shepard declared disappointment that Newbold thought his activities were untoward and assured him there was no secret plan afoot. In short order Shepard changed his story and acknowledged the four men had taken college classes. Not letting the opportunity go to waste Shepard then asked for the right to establish a college. Each of the five black normal schools jockeyed to win the prize. Newbold's chilly reply offered little hope to Shepard: "So far as I am personally concerned, I wish to assure you that I shall try to use such influence as I have to see that the frist [sic] college which is established for Negroes is located at the place where, in my judgment, with all the facts before me, it should be placed."<sup>26</sup> Over the next couple of years Newbold gravitated to the idea of converting the normal schools into colleges with

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<sup>25</sup> V.P Franklin discussed the role of the black educator as community spokesperson and leader in "They Rose and Fell Together": African American Educators and Community Leadership, 1795 – 1954." *Journal of Education* 172, no. 3 (1990): 39 – 64.

<sup>26</sup> NC Newbold to JE Shepard, 5 December 1923; JE Shepard to NC Newbold, 7 December 1923; JE Shepard to NC Newbold, 27 December 1923; NC Newbold to JE Shepard, 1 January 1924, Box 7, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

each fulfilling different missions. As always, the issue of race relations informed his decision. If the state initiated a program of raising the standards at more than one normal school, then “it would guarantee the most genuine and helpful interest of the best white leaders in these communities in these higher Negro institutions,” he told the State Superintendent. “The same may be said with equal emphasis of the best Negro leadership. Thus a long step forward would be taken in the solution of our inter-racial problem.”<sup>27</sup>

In the mid-1920s the state legislature officially reorganized black higher education. Still hesitant to launch a full-fledged system, the legislature tasked the colleges to prepare students for certification as teachers. In a legislative debate rich with Old South romanticism, the legislators relied on old tropes of the humble slave and loyal Negro to advance the cause of higher education. According to the accounts, “Negroes of the ‘Black Mammy’ type and those who, during the War Between the States, protected the house holds of southern soldiers fighting in the armies of the Confederacy, received arm tributes during the discussion in the house today on the establishment of a grade A college for negroes.” A member of the legislature “was so moved that he could hardly speak.” Nevertheless, he also offered a stirring homage to “my old black mammy. As a physician I see negroes in their homes and elsewhere. I know some are black – very black – whose souls are pure and white. The negro, as a rule, was true to his master; he is true

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<sup>27</sup> NC Newbold to AT Allen, 29 January 1925, Box 7, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

to his God and many of them are trustworthy, honest, honorable and upright. I heartily endorse this bill.”<sup>28</sup>

This floor debate indicates a slight shift in interracialism. Many southerners held dearly a belief that any type of education ruined blacks for real labor. Pressed by the new certification requirements, some white North Carolinians made an ideological pivot. Now they cast these blacks as the good loyal Negroes of Old South lore. There was nothing to fear from educated Negroes, in fact there was much to be gained. Harkening back to the dark resentful days of meddling outsiders during Reconstruction, another legislator noted that “if North Carolina educated its own negro teachers it will do away with the necessity for having negro teachers who are trained in other sections and, consequently, have viewpoints that are not in accord with those held in North Carolina.” Some, of course, objected to the idea stating the time simply was not right. Nevertheless, the legislature launched a new era in black education.<sup>29</sup>

In the mid-twenties North Carolina reorganized three of the five existing black schools as public institutions for higher learning. First, in Greensboro the Agricultural and Technical School (now North Carolina A & T) assumed the responsibility to prepare teachers in the fields of agriculture and trade. Second, the Winston-Salem Teachers College (now Winston-Salem State University) evolved into a four year college to prepare elementary level teachers and principals. Third, the North Carolina College for Negroes (now North Carolina Central University) offered a normal school with plans to

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<sup>28</sup> “House Passes Measure for Negro College in Durham,” 18 February 1925, *Durham Morning Herald*.

<sup>29</sup> “House Passes Measure for Negro College in Durham,” 18 February 1925, *Durham Morning Herald*.

develop into a four year liberal arts college training high school teachers. Lastly, the schools in Fayetteville (now Fayetteville State University) and Elizabeth City (now Elizabeth City State University) continued to offer a normal school curriculum. On paper at least North Carolina now boasted three black public colleges. One important element remained to be worked out. As a report noted, “The school at Durham is not yet firmly established as a college. It has been called a college by the Legislature, but it has not been given the financial assistance necessary to make it one. The records show that it has only the shell of a physical plant. The facts presented indicate that before anything is done for this school its place in the state system should be more definitely determined.”<sup>30</sup>

Many of the white institutions in the state also started out as teacher colleges, yet the state only sought to limit the form and type of higher education available to blacks. Over the next few years the black colleges and the state bureaucracy debated the preferable curriculum. One of the more difficult problems was preparing students for the realities of black life in rural North Carolina without imposing limitations on black education. For example, how is a teacher to be trained to work in a rural environment without making agriculture the predominate focus? A report released by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction encouraged the colleges to “make use of the rural environment and rural activities to give point and meaning and vitality to the regular school subjects. Teachers who are appropriately trained can profitably organize some of

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<sup>30</sup> EC Sage, et. al. “Negro Education in North Carolina,” November 1926, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

the work in arithmetic, reading, language, and nature study around projects that involve gardening, poultry-raising, and other rural activities.”<sup>31</sup>

Black colleges also reckoned with the shifting expectations of the student body. Heading into the thirties, black college students scoffed at manual labor as part and parcel of the curriculum. The days of Booker T. Washington admonishing his students to cook and clean had faded into distant memory.

Regarding the use of the farms and the development of other means of supplying remunerative work for students, we were told in one of the colleges that many of the students were unwilling to do manual work. We do not know how general this disposition is, and perhaps as outsiders our view of the situation is a bit prejudiced. It is our judgment, however, that if this attitude is at all typical of the students, then these colleges have a manifest duty to discharge in changing the attitude. . . . [T]here is an opportunity in connection with student- labor to impress upon them the lessons of independence, individual and group responsibility, and self-support.<sup>32</sup>

President Atkins at Winston-Salem Teachers College voiced a similar sentiment to Newbold. Black students expected something fundamentally different than earlier generations. He advised Newbold that, “the most tremendous difficulty is that of attitude and point of view. The Negro college student today goes to college principally to get away from hard work through getting a job teaching school. . . . We think our first task is to create a more wholesome regard for hard work of all kinds.”<sup>33</sup> A generational shift

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<sup>31</sup> “Study of Institutions of Higher Learning for Negroes, North Carolina, 1929 – 1931,” DPI, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>32</sup> “Study of Institutions of Higher Learning for Negroes, North Carolina, 1929 – 1931,” DPI, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>33</sup> FL Atkins to NC Newbold, 25 August 1940, Box 14, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

precipitated a further reevaluation of the very meaning of higher education for African Americans.

Black colleges had to address a social and economic dilemma. For all of the talk about progress, what other professional opportunities besides the classroom were there for blacks in the South? In an article Newbold pondered what black colleges could do to help students achieve success in the “various types of work which they will do after leaving college . . . and fit them . . . for helpful cooperative living in a bi-racial civilization.”<sup>34</sup> Atkins correctly diagnosed the core problem, but totally misread this new generation of students. College students wanted the middle class respectability attached to a college degree and drudgery did not fit the bill. For example, if students learned the latest cleaning techniques, then “with their college degrees, [they’d] be able to convince employers that they are more valuable than the ordinary untrained and unskilled janitor.” Along the same line, pairing cooking in the campus cafeteria with a four year degree alerted an employer that graduates “should be more than ordinary cooks and waiters.” He concluded with a dubious argument stating, “We feel confident that done by college trained people who are just as proud to earn their livelihood in these ways as teaching school, such jobs would be lifted in their dignity, and that pay would be at least as much if not more than the teacher’s pay.”<sup>35</sup> In a reply Newbold agreed with Atkins that beyond training future teachers, colleges should prepare students for the other jobs open to

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<sup>34</sup> NC Newbold, “Negro Colleges and Life” *The Quarterly Review of Higher Education Among Negroes* 1, no. 4 (October 1933): 1.

<sup>35</sup> FL Atkins to NC Newbold, 25 August 1940, Box 14, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

Negroes.<sup>36</sup> Both men seemed oblivious to the fact college students did not seek to become better janitors and more efficient cooks. They wanted more than the limited offerings given the previous generation.

Though reluctantly accepting four year colleges, Newbold welcomed new initiatives when they fit into the progressive agenda. The American Child Health Association (ACHA) contacted the state superintendent with a plan to integrate health education into the program of study at Winston-Salem. Improving health care was a staple of southern progressivism. From the perspective of whites the black colleges operated as subsidiaries of the state bureaucracy and not as individual institutions. ACHA took the outline for health education first to white bureaucrats, not directly to Winston-Salem's president. As an organization based out of New York, they wanted to make sure not to run afoul of white southerners dictating the terms of black education. The plan involved trying to improve the overall health in the black community through the teacher corps. By surveying the black students in a public school, they hoped to ascertain the health needs of blacks and devise a plan to use student teachers to address any deficiencies. Newbold embraced the idea because it both ceded control to the state and addressed the health issues thought to be endemic to blacks.<sup>37</sup>

Standardization not only impacted teacher education, it also led to Newbold reconsidering the curriculum in the public schools. The Department of Public Instruction

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<sup>36</sup> NC Newbold to FL Atkins, 6 September 1940, Box 14, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>37</sup> Margaret Edwards to AT Allen, 14 February 1927; Margaret Edwards to NC Newbold, 24 March 1927; Margaret Edwards to NC Newbold, 23 April 1927, Box 8, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

did not officially sanction a race based curricula. Newbold skillfully used the early educational inequalities to his advantage. By doing so he could both endorse an equal curriculum while at the same time suggest the time was not right. For example, a principal at a black school asked Newbold about teaching Latin to eighth graders. Feel free to teach them Latin, Newbold insisted, but only after they have demonstrated full mastery of the English language. In the meantime, focus on the basic subjects and sanitation. Like a good magician, Newbold brilliantly used one hand to distract attention away from the trick in the other. On the one hand he embraced a sound pedagogical approach to secondary education. Who could argue with raising undereducated students to grade level and then focusing on other subjects? On the other hand, he promoted a race based curriculum cloaked in the guise of merit and ability. He utilized this approach on another occasion when an official asked about blacks taking algebra. This time he passed the burden on to a white school official to test black students' proficiency in math. "If you find it comes up the standard grades in the white school," Newbold advised, "then I would have no hesitancy in teaching any of the high school subjects they desire."<sup>38</sup>

Early in his career Newbold endorsed using materials in the classroom that reinforced his objectives for black education. For example, he heartedly recommended using as a text *The Industrial History of the Negro Race of the United States* in black classrooms. The book, though written by two African Americans, read like a paean to white southern progressivism. The two authors described the relation between masters and slaves in North Carolina as "exceedingly harmonious." The treatment of slaves

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<sup>38</sup> NC Newbold to DB Mdo drama, 4 November 1919, Box 4; NC Newbold to MC Guthrie, 17 September 1920, Box 5, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.



compelled “a fair historian to say that upon many a Southern plantation the Negroes were treated in the kindest possible way.” Furthermore, slavery did not cause the Civil War because, after all, it was clearly protected by the Constitution. The debate over tariffs ripped the country apart and the North acted as the true aggressor. “Though the South actually began the war,” the authors posited, “the North no doubt was the cause of this open act on the part of the Confederate government.” Finally, just like during the era of slavery, whites had little to fear. Due to their innate docility, blacks turned to preachers and teachers as leaders, not to soldiers and militants. Paired with Newbold’s other favorite recommendation, Booker T. Washington’s *Up From Slavery*, these books presented an image of the humble and content Negro harboring no resentment about the past and optimistic about their future.<sup>39</sup>

Over time Newbold’s position on race based education changed. As he embraced ideas of racial progress on a slow moving scale, he fastened to the notion that curriculum must not be fitted for a particular race, but for where a race stood on the ladder of social evolution.

So far as the course of study being adapted to Negro children my judgment is that in the fullest sense it is as much adapted to them as to anybody. A good many years ago I found that a number of people held the opinion that we should offer different courses of study for the training of negro teachers from those offered white people. I found myself inclined that way, however, my past eight years’ experience have rather convinced me of the fallacy of this point of view. The only difference, I may say, is in degree or rate of progress.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> NC Newbold to LH Hammond, 21 July 1920, Box 4, Correspondence of Director, DNE, State Archives; Giles B. Jackson and D. Webster Davis, *Industrial History of the Negro Race of the United States* (Richmond, VA: Negro Educational Association, 1911) , 5,35-36, 39-40,44,52-54.

<sup>40</sup> NC Newbold to WF Credle, 4 May 1922, Box 5, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

The standardization movement softened Newbold's position even further. Having a race based curriculum proved problematic in an era of professionalization. "This is true because it requires the same curriculum for a Negro to get a teacher's certificate as it does for a white person," Newbold advised a superintendent. "The same holds good with reference to license to practice law, to practice medicine, to be a trained nurse," he concluded.<sup>41</sup> He discarded the magician's sleight of hand and openly defended expanding high school offerings. "Since more than 37% of the graduates of Negro high schools in June 1939 went to college last fall, it seems to me it would not be necessary to eliminate the possibility of French or other classics altogether from the curriculum of the North Carolina high schools."<sup>42</sup>

However, Newbold drew a clear distinction for vocational training. While he heartily backed the training for both black and white students, the difference lay with the perceived and potential outcomes of the students' lives after high school. "These programs are planned to be of the greatest possible service," he said in a speech, "and are devised for fitting white boys and girls for the types of vocational or industrial positions which they will hold after finishing high school, and like-wise, in fitting Negro boys and girls for the types of vocational or industrial positions which they will probably hold in the world of actual work."<sup>43</sup> According to Newbold, potential jobs for whites included

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<sup>41</sup> NC Newbold to HF Srygley, 9 January 1924, Box 7, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>42</sup> NC Newbold to DB Bryan, 9 September 1940, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>43</sup> Jeffrey Crow, et. al., *A History of African Americans in North Carolina* (Raleigh: NC Division of Archives and History, 1992), 134 – 135; Newbold Speech, No Title, circa 1930 to 1931, Box 1, Articles and Speeches, DNE, State Archives.

mechanical drawing, furniture manufacturing, dress making, stenography and typing. Though there was some overlap, especially for girls, other service jobs applied strictly to blacks like chauffeuring, janitorial service, and domestic labor. The door remained open for changes as “the need or such arises.”<sup>44</sup> Even as he gravitated to an equal curriculum for the purposes of college admissions and teacher education, vocational education remained a place to tailor the program for the presumed racial outcomes.

Standardization was not the only force influencing Newbold. Increasing black activism fundamentally recast the last years of Newbold’s career and forced a reconsideration of his progressive philosophy. As blacks turned to civil disobedience and the courts, the white progressives’ and black accommodationists’ influence slowly eroded. The building wave of change that began in the 1930s and 1940s overwhelmed the white moderates leaving their gradualist ideology in tatters. Nonetheless, they fought to build a barricade against their greatest fear – social equality.

The first tell-tale sign of trouble happened in 1933 when two attorneys from Durham decided to challenge segregation in higher education. With the support of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Conrad Pearson and Cecil McCoy set out to sue the University of North Carolina’s (UNC) graduate program for denying admittance to blacks. But first they needed a litigant. Thomas Hocutt, who had attended the North Carolina College for Negroes (NCCN) and worked in a pharmacy, agreed to sign on as the litigant. One afternoon Austin and McCoy

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<sup>44</sup> Newbold Speech, No Title, circa 1930 to 1931, Box 1, Articles and Speeches, DNE, State Archives, Raleigh.

presented Hocutt to UNC's registrar asking for admission into the school of pharmacy. As expected the registrar refused to even consider the proposition. The doctrine of separate but equal now faced its first real legal challenge in the state.<sup>45</sup>

This news alarmed Newbold, but the events playing out at UNC were out of his political and educational bailiwick. Other than sharing a similar mindset with the university's president and some of the faculty, he had little influence at UNC. He held even less sway over the two attorneys and the NAACP. In fact Newbold personified everything they were fighting against. Nonetheless, he needed a pressure point to have any impact on the progress of the lawsuit. He knew the best chance for having any bearing whatsoever rested with the older, more conservative black leadership. Charles Spaulding, president of North Carolina Mutual, and James Shepard fit the bill. For once James Shepard and Newbold shared a common goal, even if it was for different reasons. Both men wanted to derail the lawsuit. Shepard, however, hoped to leverage Hocutt for a graduate program at NCCN. Newbold sought to protect a way of life which meant keeping African Americans out of an unpredictable court system.

In fact, Pearson secretly approached Shepard in the early stages of the Hocutt case. To his chagrin Shepard promptly leaked the information to a newspaper in Greensboro. If he played his cards right, Shepard surmised, the state might authorize graduate level education at NCCN. Therefore, he wasted little time aligning himself with Newbold. Embracing a Newboldian approach Shepard said, "There is a great deal of agitation among the younger group of Negroes to have North Carolina pay the tuition for

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<sup>45</sup> Jerry Gershenson, "Hocutt v. Wilson and Race Relations in Durham, North Carolina during the 1930s," *North Carolina Historical Review*, (July 2001): 291-294.

them in professional subjects in schools outside of North Carolina . . . While there be great justice in this course, I am urging that everything regarding Negro education wait two years.”<sup>46</sup> Shepard wanted a seat at the table and any form of delay gave him time to navigate the political waters of black education in North Carolina. He also wanted Newbold’s backing on any future endeavors and knew this approach carried favor with white racial moderates. More importantly, Shepard’s statement revealed a fracture in the black leadership in Durham between a younger, more assertive generation and the old guard, a cleavage Newbold tried to exploit.

In his correspondence Shepard emphasized the rift stating to Newbold, “There is a growing feeling among the younger Negroes that they are not getting a square deal. There is also a feeling the Negro leaders are not aggressive enough.” Leaving little room for doubt on where he stood, Shepard continued, “I know that we cannot have any real progress without the fullest support, confidence and good will of the white people.” Shepard concluded by intimating that loyalty came with a price. Due to its close proximity to Duke and UNC and with a little additional funding NCCN “could add a great many of the things which the younger element of Negroes are now demanding.”<sup>47</sup>

Using a mix of revisionist history and wishful thinking, Newbold responded that but for the Great Depression, the state was planning to offer graduate studies. Now a proposed two year study on graduate education and future legislative action promised to

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<sup>46</sup> Interview with Conrad Pearson, Southern Oral History Project, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill; JE Shepard to NC Newbold, 17 February 1933, Box 11, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>47</sup> JE Shepard to NC Newbold, 1 March 1933, Box 11, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

yield more fruit than a lawsuit. This scheme amounted to little more than a stalling tactic. For Newbold, the ‘past is prologue.’ “In all our efforts in North Carolina,” Newbold wrote Shepard, “we have endeavored to work on a cooperative basis – that is, to talk freely and frankly with those concerned on both sides of the fence and arrive at as fair and just decision as possible. This may not be the best way, but I still have faith in this procedure.”<sup>48</sup>

This case tested the power of older leaders to still influence decisions and shape events. Another member of the old guard, Charles Spaulding, initially supported the case, but withdrew his support in rather quick order. In a very direct letter Newbold questioned Spaulding’s control over the proceedings in Durham. Employing a typical white moderate canard, he asked if an “unseen hand stretched out from afar” prompted the lawsuit and pushed Spaulding to act. The Hocutt case presented the opportunity for Spaulding and his ilk to “prove to the [white] people of this state that the responsible independent Negro leaders here are not subservient to any outside individual or group, that these leaders know how to manage their own affairs.”<sup>49</sup> For a black man like Spaulding schooled in the extremes of white resistance, the implication was clear. Even influential racial moderates like Newbold could not prevent a severe backlash from reactionary whites.

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<sup>48</sup> NC Newbold to JE Shepard, 6 March 1933, Box 11, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>49</sup> NC Newbold to CC Spaulding, 14 March 1933, Box 11, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

Shortly thereafter Spaulding called a meeting with Pearson, McCoy, and others to discuss the case. The meeting laid bare the generational cleavage. Asked by Ed Merrick, one of Spaulding's colleagues, to abandon the case, Pearson responded by calling him a handkerchief head. In turn Merrick threatened to throw Pearson out of a window. In the meantime as Pearson and McCoy pressed ahead, Newbold and Shepard continued their reluctant partnership. Shepard vowed continued cooperation while lobbying for graduate education at NCCN. For his part, Newbold countered with increasing pressure to make sure Shepard never wavered. "If the publicity continues, will it place these trusted leaders in an embarrassing position, and force them either (a) to endorse and support the demand now being made, or (b) to repudiate it publicly in no uncertain terms," Newbold asked.<sup>50</sup> It's clear from the correspondence what Shepard wanted, but Newbold was not ready to offer concrete assurances about graduate education. Instead Newbold resorted to bullying and innuendo about Shepard's declining leadership. After reminding Shepard about the progress made when blacks trusted their white friends, he acknowledged that the "objective has not been denied by the state," thereby opening the door to graduate studies. First the Hocutt case must suffer a quick death.<sup>51</sup>

Frustrated that Newbold refused to relent, Shepard dropped pretense and explicitly explained that Newbold faced a new generation of blacks increasingly immune to interracial diplomacy. They had become wary of white racial moderates who preached

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<sup>50</sup> Interview with Conrad Pearson, Southern Oral History Project, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill; JE Shepard to NC Newbold, 14 March 1933, Box 11, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>51</sup> NC Newbold to JE Shepard, 17 March 1933, Box 11, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

patience and future legislative action. Older black leaders risked being labeled “an enemy to the race” if they openly opposed Hocutt.

[They believe] the reason they did not secure their rights was because they had no representative on the floor and their vote did not count. When such conditions exist, it would be a part of folly if the Negro leaders should preach that everything is alright . . . [Young Negroes] think that the older Negroes represent the servile type and that a more aggressive leadership is needed. . . . If a Negro leader in North Carolina were to publicly denounce the effort of Negroes to secure their supposed rights by going to the courts, he would be denounced by every Negro in the United States. . . . There is no such thing as social equality. The Negro is simply asking for justice in the courts . . .<sup>52</sup>

Additionally, Shepard noted that under these circumstances whites should offer something substantive, like out of state vouchers. Newbold remained unmoved by Shepard’s exposition on the evolving expectations of young blacks and the demands for justice. In fact, he asked Shepard to gather fifty black leaders to publicly declare their independence from outside influence. Though the NAACP supported Hocutt, they were not the instigator of the case, yet this fact mattered little. Such a statement “would put people who would meddle in the affairs of Negroes in this state on notice that no such meddling is desired.”<sup>53</sup>

Shepard managed to produce a resolution from a mass meeting of local blacks to mollify Newbold. Using fairly milquetoast language, the resolution called for ending the case and pointed out the danger of losing. A failure weakened the old guard because they would appear feckless, while simultaneously stripping the young leaders of any influence. Some might even question the legal acumen of the lawyers for bringing such a

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<sup>52</sup> JE Shepard to NC Newbold, 18 March 1933, Box 11, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>53</sup> NC Newbold to JE Shepard, 22 March 1933, Box 11, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.



flawed case. Continuing with the case courted the white press's hostility. Newbold welcomed the resolution as evidence "that the group is coming to a wise decision, that is as far as my thinking is concerned."<sup>54</sup>

Ultimately, Shepard shrewdly delivered the death blow to Hocutt's case. By refusing to provide Hocutt's transcript from NCCN, the court cited the incomplete application as a reason to rule against the plaintiff. The court also listed the lack of accreditation at Hocutt's high school. The court's decision mocked Newbold's approach to black education. He pressed blacks to abandon the case because of all the great work accomplished by the Division of Negro Education in the previous two decades. However, the plaintiff's high school stood as stark testimony that inequalities persisted despite the Division's best efforts.<sup>55</sup>

Having temporarily dodged a judicial edict, Newbold joined the vanguard who believed the state must act quickly to prevent catastrophe. An editorial in the *Durham Sun* reflected the progressive view of Hocutt's impact. The editorial said in part, "Unless the state takes some action, it will, at some time or other, be compelled to open the doors of white institutions of higher learning to Negroes. While Hocutt failed, it may be accepted as certain that a perfected case would succeed in the courts."<sup>56</sup> Additionally, the growth of the NAACP caused handwringing among whites all along the political spectrum. Right on the heels of the Hocutt decision Walter White, the executive

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<sup>54</sup> JE Shepard to NC Newbold, 23 March 1933; NC Newbold to JE Shepard, 27 March 1933, Box 11, Correspondence of Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>55</sup> Gershenhorn, 300-301.

<sup>56</sup> "Equal Opportunity," 7 April 1933, *Durham Sun*.

secretary of the NAACP, delivered a rousing speech to 2,000 blacks in Raleigh's Memorial Auditorium. White promised to press on and "continue to bring such suits until the educational inequalities burdened upon the qualified Negro in Carolina are eliminated." He directly challenged North Carolina's vaunted status in Negro education declaring, "We're trying to establish a principle there; to push back the horizon so Negro youth can get equal opportunities in the field of learning." Additionally, in a not so subtle swipe at Shepard's role in the Hocutt case, White characterized blacks who were afraid to challenge the status quo as weak-kneed administrators relying on the state for money.<sup>57</sup> Any other blacks who refused to rally to the demands for equality were "handkerchief headed Negroes." Taking aim directly at white racial moderates he said, "If they were good white folks they won't be antagonized by a clean-cut stand for Negro rights."<sup>58</sup>

The speech stoked the ubiquitous anxiety of whites that outside forces sought to stir up perfectly content Negroes. The state's paper of record dismissed White as a "clever propagandist" and worried about the effect of his speech on feeble minded blacks. Admitting openly that Walter White never advocated violence, the paper still mused that "the Negroes to whom he was talking are not as smart or intelligent as he is" and therefore might misconstrue his nonviolent call to action. Relying on an old southern standby, the newspaper reassured blacks that "every forward step for the advancement of

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<sup>57</sup> "Asks Equality in Negro Education," 23 May 1933, *Raleigh News and Observer*.

<sup>58</sup> "Militant Speech Made to Negroes," 30 October 1933, *Raleigh News and Observer*.

Negroes in North Carolina has been due to the leadership of white citizens.”<sup>59</sup> Following White’s speech Newbold mirrored those same sentiments. Years later he recalled inviting black leaders to a meeting in Raleigh to discuss White’s comments. He condescendingly asked if they had “both the brains and courage to study their own problems and to work them out cooperatively and in the wisest way possible with the white people in the state?”<sup>60</sup>

Walter White’s speech sent a clear indication to white southerners that the Hocutt case was not the end of litigation, but the opening salvo. White North Carolinians could either refuse to yield any ground and entrench themselves for a long fight or move toward some modicum of graduate education. In the wake of Hocutt the legislature tried to establish a fellowship for out of state graduate study. Opposition defeated the bill with one senator pledging “the Supreme Court would have to force him to do so before he would vote for such a measure.”<sup>61</sup> Several years later another attempt to establish out-of-state fellowships for blacks to pursue graduate study also suffered a quick death in the legislature. For the time being there was very little appetite for seriously addressing the issue.<sup>62</sup> The legislature’s paralysis proved that the younger generation’s view of the

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<sup>59</sup> “A Clever Propagandist,” 31 October 1933, *Raleigh News and Observer*.

<sup>60</sup> NC Newbold to James Dombrowski, 4 August 1942, Box 14, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>61</sup> NC Newbold to Mary Bynum Holmes, 22 November 1944, Box 15, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>62</sup> NC Newbold to Mary Holmes, 22 November 1944, Box 15, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

white legislature was accurate and further eroded the power of white moderates and the old black guard.

Slowly Newbold drifted toward a softer stance on introducing graduate education. He still advocated further study and discussed various options with Shepard. Of course, the conversations meant little without state action. Only the ever present threat of new lawsuits stirred Newbold. Though Pearson and McCoy dropped any further action on the Hocutt case, the NAACP was open to another lawsuit. Two years after the Hocutt case Newbold continued to rail against court action. Sensing that litigation was inevitable, he drew a distinction between the right and wrong kind of cases. He felt it was both foolhardy and counterproductive for blacks to sue in the courts. In rare instances a complaint orchestrated with the input of white racial moderates might pass muster. When blacks had the backing of the Interracial Commission, for instance, then perhaps the case deserved review. Even then he cautioned that whites must weigh the implications of pursuing such a dangerous option.<sup>63</sup>

If the legislature and white moderates needed motivation from the courts to institute graduate level study for blacks, then the courts provided the impetus in two landmark decisions. The first case involved Donald G. Murray, who sought admission to the law school at the University of Maryland in 1936. The NAACP was anxious to finish the work started by the Hocutt case. Murray's solid academic credentials avoided the problems that developed with Hocutt. Even though Maryland did not have a law school

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<sup>63</sup> "First Things First," 5 January 1935, *Raleigh News and Observer*; Shepard to NC Newbold, 22 July 1935; NC Newbold to WTB Williams, 9 March 1935, Box 12, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

for blacks, the NAACP's lead attorney, Charles Houston, reasoned the courts would neither demand the opening of a black law school nor close the white law school. The state might try providing an out of state voucher, but Houston believed vouchers could be challenged under the Fourteenth Amendment. Admitting Murray to the white law school looked to be the only solution. The lower courts agreed with that reasoning as did the Maryland Court of Appeals. Rather than appeal the case to the Supreme Court, the state admitted Murray to the law school.<sup>64</sup> This case sent a tremor through the South. The citadel of segregation, state supported education, had suffered a real defeat in the courts. Moderates like Newbold took cold comfort in the fact a state court made the ruling. It was only a matter of time before the federal courts ruled.

Two years later another court decision forced the hand of the racial moderates. This time Houston and the NAACP decided to pursue a case from Missouri. Lloyd Gaines agreed to sign on as a litigant for the case. The intent was not to strike down *Plessy*, but instead to argue that Missouri must offer blacks a law school that was equal in all particulars to the white law school. The Supreme Court agreed with Houston and ruled that Missouri had two options; either admit Gaines into the white law school or provide a black law school equivalent to the white one. Adding to the far reaching repercussions of the ruling, the justices ruled the decision applied to an individual. It was not necessary to have a group large enough to constitute a class.<sup>65</sup> Fence sitters like Newbold understood the ramifications of this case. How long before the men who

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<sup>64</sup> Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York: Vintage, 2004), 187 – 193.

<sup>65</sup> Kluger, 201, 211-212; Mark V. Tushnet, *The NAACP's Legal Strategy Against Segregated Education, 1925 – 1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 70 - 77.

litigated the Hocutt case primed another lawsuit for the Supreme Court? In a speech about the Gaines decision, Newbold suggested the ruling impacted not only graduate education, but the entire sphere of black education calling Gaines a “burden of considerable proportions upon the South. . . . In its effects upon the South, probably, nothing even remotely comparable to this decision has occurred in this country since the adoption of the [F]ourteenth and [F]ifteenth amendments to the Constitution of the United States.”<sup>66</sup> In response to Gaines one commentator implored the old guard of “Negro and white leaders [fight] side by side to preserve the supremacy of the white race.”<sup>67</sup> Newbold and Shepard quickly obliged.

The way some blacks and whites in North Carolina interpreted the ruling added to the urgency for older white moderates. At an interracial forum in Chapel Hill a racially mixed crowd gathered for a forum on the best course of action on the controversial topic. The group tackled three main issues. First, they debated if UNC should admit African Americans. Second, they discussed whether to start graduate programs at NCCN and the Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro. Lastly, they talked about giving out-of-state fellowships for graduate study. At the end of the meeting they voted unanimously for a resolution asking for blacks to be admitted into UNC.<sup>68</sup> This definitely was not Newbold’s type of interracialism. Several years later when a fellow

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<sup>66</sup> “A Brief Outline of the Status of Graduate and Professional Training for Negroes in North Carolina,” Speech by NC Newbold, 17 April 1939, Box 2, Articles and Speeches, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>67</sup> “The Negro Graduate School,” 1 July 1939, *Durham Carolina Times*.

<sup>68</sup> “Interracial Forum Sends Resolution to Legislature Regarding Race Education,” 18 February 1939, *Durham Carolina Times*.

white moderate suggested the same idea to Newbold, his reply was succinct and to the point. Leaving little room for debate he simply signed the memorandum “No – NCN.”<sup>69</sup>

The Gaines decision finally forced the hand of the state legislature. The agents of obstruction retreated making way for legislation establishing graduate education. The years of lobbying by James Shepard opened the door for NCCN to start graduate programs in English, social science, science, education, and law. The college’s proximity to Duke and UNC allowed it to utilize both the faculty and resources at the neighboring universities. Additionally, in a provision known as the Murphy Law, the state provided vouchers for students to take classes in other states. In order to qualify the graduate program must be offered at an in-state public white university but not at NCCN. In a testament to his political acumen and lobbying, the state gave Shepard control over approving applications and disbursing the fellowship.<sup>70</sup>

Establishing a graduate program on paper was one thing, funding it was quite another. One black newspaper thought that complying with Gaines in both substance and spirit meant sufficiently funding the project. The editorial questioned the state’s commitment to really build an equitable program at NCCN. To adequately operate a graduate school on a par with UNC required millions of dollars in new appropriations. As if to underscore the paper’s point, the state authorized a paltry \$54,000 the first year. The philanthropic money flowing into the state for black education before the Great Depression had slowed to a trickle. Nevertheless, Shepard turned to the GEB for aid in

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<sup>69</sup> Executive Committee Meeting, North Carolina Interracial Commission, 9 June 1947, Special Subjects Box 4, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>70</sup> “UNC Profs.,” *Durham Carolina Times*, 5 July 1939.

developing the science department and a library. Newbold resumed his role as gatekeeper and gave the request his blessing. Money was the lifeblood of college and graduate programs. The state paper, *News and Observer*, directly tied increased funding to the Gaines decision.

But it serves no purpose to build a creditable plant for the Negro college and then expect it to operate efficiently on the same amount of money as was expended before the plant was enlarged. . . . Since the decision by the Supreme Court in the Missouri case, it has been assumed that North Carolina would meet that decision by establishing graduate schools at Durham. . . . [M]embers of the General Assembly should make their own investigations and think carefully before voting for less appropriations than were recommended . . .<sup>71</sup>

Blacks were more forthcoming, calling the poorly funded graduate school a ruse to forestall a lawsuit. Louis Austin, the fiery editor of the black newspaper *Carolina Times*, labeled the proposed graduate school a “villainous attempt to fool Negroes of this state and at the same time make pretense at obeying the constitution of the United States.” The state had no intentions of truly equalizing the programs at NCCN and UNC. Therefore, according to Austin, if one took the Gaines decision at face value, the only real solution was to integrate graduate school at UNC.<sup>72</sup>

Knowing early on that black graduate education would never receive the same funding as whites, Newbold latched onto the prospect of regional graduate schools. Instead of one state attempting to equalize their programs at great cost, spread it among

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<sup>71</sup> “The Negro Graduate School,” 1 July 1939, *Carolina Times*; JE Shepard to Leo Favrot, 21 April 1939; Leo Favrot to NC Newbold, 4 April 1939; NC Newbold to Leo Favrot, 8 April 1939, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University; “Graduate Courses for Negroes,” 14, January 1939, *Durham Carolina Times*; “Injustice,” 22 February 1939, *Raleigh News and Observer*.

<sup>72</sup> Louis Austin, “The Proper Course to Pursue,” 25 February 1939, *Carolina Times*; For more information on the career of Louis Austin see Jerry Gershenhorn “A Courageous Voice for Black Freedom: Louis Austin and the *Carolina Times* in Depression Era North Carolina.” *North Carolina Historical Review* 87 (2010): 57 – 92.



all of the states in the old confederacy. For example, Tennessee had an established black medical school. Under this plan every state promised to pay for upgrades and maintenance of the facilities. Newbold promoted this attempt to circumvent the Gaines decision writing, “If something like this could be done, it would probably be possible for the various states interested, in certain regions or combinations, to secure the permission of the Supreme Court to operate on regional basis.”<sup>73</sup> A surprising voice supported the notion of regional graduate schools. Louis Austin dismissed the notion of any southern state appropriating money to ensure equal graduate opportunities as preposterous. Since admitting blacks to UNC seemed unlikely, he argued, “The lack of finance and as well as many social problems ought to be carefully considered before thumbs are turned down on the idea of regional graduate schools.”<sup>74</sup> The plan never gained much traction. Southern governors rallied to the proposal as means to save money and satisfy the courts. Many black educators roundly rejected it as nothing more than a plan to create a “regional Jim Crow ghetto.” Newbold continued to use the proposal as part of any broad plan to address equalizing graduate studies, but in reality each state acted individually to ward off lawsuits.<sup>75</sup>

As a realist Newbold’s pragmatism persuaded him to endorse graduate and professional education. However, one field of study gave him pause. The legislature pledged to open a law school at NCCN. Perhaps the prospect of homegrown black

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<sup>73</sup> NC Newbold to Jackson Davis, 18 June 1943, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>74</sup> “Regional Graduate Schools,” 8 July 1939, *Durham Carolina Times*.

<sup>75</sup> “Governors Back Proposal of Regional School Plan,” 21 October 1947; “Southern Educators Reject Regional Jim Crow,” 20 May 1948, *Raleigh News and Observer*; NC Newbold to Clarence Poe, 16 September 1944, Box 14, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

lawyers one day challenging Jim Crow frightened him. Regardless, the lessons of Murray and Gaines were clear. The NAACP intentionally struck at law school admissions. Houston reasoned justices more readily understood law admissions as they were graduates themselves. The reality of Murray and Gaines trumped any reservations about a law school. “I may say that personally that I was not much concerned about the beginning of the Law School at Durham,” Newbold confided to Jackson Davis, but the president of UNC “had a feeling that it was essential to prevent possible lawsuits so he insisted upon it.”<sup>76</sup> In the feverish atmosphere following Gaines no cost was too high to preserve segregation. Newbold informed Jackson that the law school “has been very expensive, but Frank Graham had a feeling it would be safe under existing conditions to spend whatever was necessary.”<sup>77</sup>

From a financial perspective, the promise to bear any cost became the Achilles Heel for white racial moderates. The North Carolina legislature never intended to appropriate enough money to maintain a law school truly equal to UNC’s. Appearance mattered more than reality. The law school opened on the second floor of the library with classes taught by law faculty from both Duke and UNC. Newbold and other progressives desperately wanted the law school and other programs to at least appear successful. North Carolina had jumped into the forefront offering black graduate education and Newbold believed that “many important people in the country are watching with keen

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<sup>76</sup> NC Newbold to Jackson Davis, 10 July 1943, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>77</sup> NC Newbold to Jackson Davis, 18 June 1943, GEB Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

interest our state's experiment in graduate training for its Negro people.”<sup>78</sup> This characterization as an “experiment” fit into the arc of Newbold’s career in which black education seemed like an open field for a white man with ambition and imagination. But for the first time the cost of failure could be catastrophic – the death of the white progressive agenda.

Seven years after the law school opened a report surfaced that in southern parlance “gave the lie” to the graduate experiment in North Carolina. Gordon Gray, a state legislator and publisher of the Winston Salem *Journal*, alerted Governor Cherry about a review of the new law school written by one of its students. Horace Woodland, the author of the report, listed three main complaints. First, years after opening the school still lacked a suitable library. Second, absent a designated building, students had to meet in a few random classrooms. Finally, the report requested that a full-time librarian be employed to organize the books and to help with research. Gray openly acknowledged the shortcomings. Adding fuel to the fire, another law school case, this time from Texas, was moving through the courts and openly challenged segregated education as inherently unequal. Accordingly, North Carolina needed to protect its flanks and provide “adequate facilities for Negroes.” The governor and Gray turned to their best asset in the field of black education.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> “NC College Law School Not to Begin Until ’40,” 7 October 1939, *Durham Carolina Times*; NC Newbold to JE Shepard, 9 November 1940, Box 14, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>79</sup> NC Newbold to Frank Graham, 22 August 1947; Gordon Gray to Gov. R. Gregg Cherry, 18 July 1947, Box 16, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

Newbold met with Woodland and afterwards described him as a reasonable man open to discussion. Obtaining the law school books did not pose a major hurdle. Shepard assured him that in fact the law school possessed 60,000 books, but did not have the shelf space to put them out for student use. By offering this rebuttal to Woodland's report Shepard also revealed the weakness of Newbold's position. Private sources covered more than a fourth of the cost for the books. Despite the rhetoric of racial moderates, the state refused to truly bear any cost. Even a skilled accomodationist like Shepard had trouble papering over the physical plant. The Legislature passed the last budget without an allocation for a law school building, thereby, leaving Newbold and other moderates without a viable defense.<sup>80</sup> Newbold proffered a middle course until the Legislature convened again. Expedite the construction of an already scheduled classroom building and set aside part of the building for the law school. Because Woodland worked inside the preferred system by taking his grievances to whites for remedy, Newbold stated to Gray, "I am not unduly disturbed by the fact that the committee of young Negroes has tried to bring pressure upon the state." Even so, the fear of potential lawsuits dictated that the "State is obligated to be fair and just with all its people."<sup>81</sup>

Notably, this constituted Newbold's last major interaction with Shepard. A month and half later Shepard passed away. Newbold lost a man who was hardly a friend, but whom he relied on to temper militant action in the debate over black education. In one of their last exchanges Newbold lashed out at the impending public release of the

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<sup>80</sup> NC Newbold to Gordon Gray, 22 August 1947; NC Newbold to Gordon Gray, 20 August 1947; JE Shepard to NC Newbold, Box 17, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>81</sup> NC Newbold to Gordon Gray, 22 August 1947, Box 16, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

Woodland report. At the same time he complimented Shepard for acting as a public counterweight to the charges should they appear in the paper. From Newbold's perspective, Shepard's passing signaled the passing of the torch to a new generation further removed from the Wilmington Massacre era. Instead they appeared to draw motivation from the "Double V" campaign of World War II. This younger generation increasingly viewed Newbold's approach to black education and race relations as an anachronism. Stifling activism and court cases became increasingly difficult and futile.<sup>82</sup>

An example from Lumberton in 1946 illustrates the new realities in black education. The city of Lumberton, situated in Robeson County, did not own any black public schools in the 1940s. Instead they leased two schools from white citizens. One school known as Red Stone Academy accommodated students from elementary to high school age. The Lumber River Baptist Association leased out the other school called Thompson Elementary School. More than a decade earlier a publicly owned black school had burned down. The white school authorities collected the insurance money but plowed the proceeds into white education. A local lawyer, Herman Taylor, described the white schools as follows:

The white high and elementary schools, which are only a stone-throw from the Negro school are of recent construction, the high school having been built around 1937 or 1938; the elementary school, around 1942. Both are ultra-modern, of brick construction, with several buildings comprising the whole.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Western Union Telegram, To NC Newbold, Re: JE Shepard's Death, 6 October, 1947; NC Newbold to JE Shepard, 22 August 1947, Box 17, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>83</sup> Herman L. Taylor to Robert Carter, 8 May 1947, NAACP Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

Taylor painted a far different picture of the black schools in Lumberton. White progressives in the past had trumpeted North Carolina's school building as one of the signature achievements in black education. Lumberton's quasi-public schools illustrated that inequality permeated education, even in the state considered the leader in the field. According to Taylor, the Red Stone Academy hardly qualified as a school.

Big bell stoves [are] the only heating unit in each room. The electric wiring in the building is exposed, and because of its construction makes the building nothing but a firetrap. If the building has not already been condemned, it should be. The high school has no facilities for teaching science, no vocational courses of any kind, no cafeteria, no gymnasium, nor recreational facilities of any kind. . . . The thing they call a library looks like a junk shop and is a disgrace.<sup>84</sup>

His description of the elementary school offered more of the same. Faculty and students used outhouses and the building did not have electricity. Large cracks in the sides of the building allowed one to stand inside and see out as if looking through a window. Both buildings suffered from unsanitary and hazardous conditions putting students and faculty at risk.<sup>85</sup>

Years earlier Newbold also noted the terrible circumstances in Lumberton. With outside agitators and potential lawsuits never far from his mind, the state of affairs in Lumberton required immediate attention. Adhering to his belief in local control, at the time he suggested a committee of twelve white men visit the schools and then meet with authorities to remedy the obvious problems. To not act only invited meddling. "I am hoping to live to see the time when our State and various communities will go ahead and

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<sup>84</sup> Herman L. Taylor to Robert Carter, 8 May 1947, NAACP Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>85</sup> Herman L. Taylor to Robert Carter, 8 May 1947, NAACP Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

do what is fair and just and right under the law,” Newbold wrote, “and not make it possible for anyone from outside to offer any suggestions.”<sup>86</sup> Apparently, none of the whites in Lumberton took his recommendations to heart. Five years later Credle, the state supervisor of Rosenwald schools, reported little progress in either upgrading the facilities or building new schools.<sup>87</sup> Bringing Newbold’s worst fears to fruition, black residents took matters into their own hands.

Tired of relying on what progressives called their white friends, black school children in Lumberton went on strike. Close to four hundred children refused to attend class at either school in October 1946. G.H. Young, the principal at Thompson, estimated attendance dropped by 50% and J.H. Haywood, the principal at Redstone, recorded a 40% decrease in attendance. Some students marched through the streets carrying placards with slogans like “How Can I Learn When I’m Cold,” and “It Rains On Me.” Other students joined in with signs reading “Down with Our School,” and “We Want a School.” The National Youth Council of the NAACP supported the effort solidifying in Newbold’s mind notions of outside trouble makers.<sup>88</sup>

In an effort to protect himself from white reprisals, principal Young dismissed the strikers as misguided and striking for the “novelty of it” and characterized the movement as propelled by radicals with sinister motives. Sure the schools warranted attention, he

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<sup>86</sup> NC Newbold to LR Varser, 25 March 1941, Box 14, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>87</sup> WF Credle to NC Newbold, 10 October 1946, Box 16, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>88</sup> “School Strike Continued by Negroes in Lumberton,” 8 October 1946; “Negro Children Protest Conditions at Two Lumberton School Units,” ND, No Newspaper Name, Clipping File, DNE, State Archives.

conceded, but the students should work within long established channels. Not willing to go quite as far as Young's denunciation of the striking students, Haywood postulated that a heavy rain led to the poor attendance. Black officials tried to curry favor with whites in hope of improvements. In the past Newbold used Rosenwald money to diffuse black agitation and soothe white recalcitrance. Without that purse to draw upon Newbold became more of a senior statesman. Unlike their forbears this younger generation felt neither the same sense of indebtedness nor gratitude toward him. At the close of his career he increasingly found his prescriptions unsatisfactory as younger blacks abandoned his gradualist interracial policy.<sup>89</sup>

In Lumberton students acted as their own agents of change. Their march essentially indicted the entire system as ineffective. Making matters worse for white moderates, the NAACP filed suit against the local authorities. Thurgood Marshall, chief counsel for the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund, called the strike "one of the finest things ever pulled in the NAACP and needs our cooperation."<sup>90</sup> In perhaps a cruel twist of fate for Newbold, a lawyer associated with the law school at NCCN, Herman Taylor, represented the plaintiffs. At the time Shepard was still alive, so Taylor resigned from the law school faculty to avoid any conflicts with the old guard. Taylor wanted to pursue the case as a direct challenge to the doctrine of separate but equal. He told Thurgood Marshall that, "The inequality in the situation is so patent that a court could fall over it

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<sup>89</sup> "School Strike Continued by Negroes in Lumberton," 8 October 1946, ND, No Newspaper Name, Clipping File, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>90</sup> Memorandum to Mr. Current from Thurgood Marshall, 20 January 1947, NAACP Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.



even in the dark.”<sup>91</sup> Additionally, the NAACP had in the works a court case to move beyond Gaines and openly challenge segregation on the graduate level. One of Marshall’s associate’s pondered using Lumberton “to try out anti-segregation policy on the lower school level which at least has some material in it.”<sup>92</sup> Lumberton was threatening to become the perfect storm Newbold had long dreaded.

Without waiting for the customary invitation from local officials, State Superintendent Clyde Erwin sent Newbold in to investigate the matter. Agreeing with the black students, Newbold wrote, “It would be difficult for the most gifted writer to picture the actual conditions as being worse than they really are.”<sup>93</sup> He met with blacks and whites to discuss future action. Seeking to end the confrontation, he asked blacks if the county commissioners’ pledge to set aside \$167,000 for school construction meant the end of the strike. Blacks agreed to delay any more demonstrations if construction began in earnest by the next school year. The events in Lumberton highlight the limits of Newbold’s power of persuasion at the end of his career. The march and the lawsuit pushed Lumberton to act. Newbold ran to Lumberton to jump on a moving train. Other than acting as a seasoned voice of moderation he had very little to offer either the black protestors or the white officials. The pressure of litigation was what really forced the hand of white officials, not Newbold’s diplomacy. The case remained in the courts for the

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<sup>91</sup> Herman Taylor to Thurgood Marshall, 28 October 1946, NAACP Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>92</sup> Memorandum to Mr. Marshall from Miss Perry, 29 January 1948, NAACP Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>93</sup> NC Newbold, “Lumberton School Strike,” Report, 21 October 1946, Box 16, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

next couple of years until the building of the promised schools in Lumberton.<sup>94</sup> Once again North Carolina and Newbold barely dodged a possibly damaging Supreme Court decision.

Lumberton symbolized a growing movement. Across the landscape court cases threatened to derail Newbold's vision of a more humane segregation. Notions of Divine Discontent slowly gave way to organized demands for change. In Wilson black residents protested the glaring inequalities between black and white schools. R.O. Barnes, a black doctor, notified Newbold that the old avenues of patient accommodation no longer held currency in the black community. "Every avenue that we have traveled with hopes that we would find a solution to our school problem has turned out to be a dead end road," Barnes stated. "Our hopes are still great and our determination has increased for we believe that: 'Right will win.'"<sup>95</sup> For Barnes "right will win" meant moving beyond white moderates' promises of a better tomorrow. The glaring educational disparities between the two races warranted immediate action. Wilson city schools enrolled nearly 2,092 African Americans compared to 2,353 whites, yet the county operated five accredited schools for whites and only one for blacks. Additionally, the county invested over \$600,000 in white schools versus less than \$250,000 in black schools.

After years of frustration, representatives from local church groups, social clubs and fraternal orders formed the Negro Citizens' Committee to advocate for better

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<sup>94</sup> NC Newbold, "Lumberton School Strike," Report, 21 October 1946, Box 16, Correspondence of Director, DNE, State Archives; Herman Taylor to Robert Carter, 26 April 1949, NAACP Papers, Microfilm Department, Duke University.

<sup>95</sup> RO Barnes to NC Newbold, 22 December 1949, Box 18, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

schools. The Committee hired attorneys to file a suit to force the city and county to equalize expenditures. An announcement in the paper made it clear that the litigants did not seek social equality, just fairness as defined under the state's segregation law. When notified of these developments, Newbold replied like a weary reformer coming to terms with the limits of his power. Though not yielding any ground, he squarely faced the new reality of black activism. "I would not be true to my principles if I did not say that I am sorry that your special committee found it necessary to take the step which you have outlined," he lamented. "However, I know that you and other members of your committee owe it to yourselves and to your people to do all you can for the improvement of colored schools."<sup>96</sup>

The threat of a pending lawsuit forced white administrators to the negotiating table. Three days before his retirement, Newbold contacted Barnes to confirm a deal to end the standoff. The county and city agreed to spend over \$1,000,000 in bond money to improve the schools in exchange for the Committee dropping the lawsuit.<sup>97</sup> The Wilson case ended, but white moderates slowly realized that lawsuits more readily yielded results than overtures for patient perseverance. A newspaper editorial validated Newbold's belief in Divine Discontent stating, "If we want to keep segregation, then, we must bend

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<sup>96</sup> DPI Report Attached to letter RO Barnes to NC Newbold, 22 December 1949; Negro Citizens Committee to NC Newbold, 24 January 1950; "An Open Letter to the Citizens of Wilson," Newspaper Clipping, ND or Newspaper Name; NC Newbold to RO Barnes, 11 January 1950, Box 18, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>97</sup> BO Barnes to NC Newbold, 20 May 1950; NC Newbold to Barnes, 28 June 1950, Box 18, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

over backward to see that facilities are equal. . . For where facilities are equal, no race has any complaint. Where one is given unequal facilities, it has.”<sup>98</sup>

Another court case reached its denouement at the moment of Newbold’s retirement. Heman Sweatt, an African American postman, applied for admittance to law school at the University of Texas in Austin. Not surprisingly, the university rejected his application and Sweatt sued. This time the NAACP planned to directly challenge the constitutionality of separate but equal graduate education. Complying with a lower court decision in favor of the segregation, the state set up a rudimentary law school in Houston called Prairie View. The only thing missing was the faculty and library. The lower court ruled this did not meet the bar set by separate but equal. The state attempted to shore up its defense by appropriating an additional one million dollars for a better equipped law school. Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP instituted an almost four year journey to the highest court in America.<sup>99</sup> As the case slowly wound its way to the Supreme Court, the defendants asked for statements in defense of segregated education. In one of his last acts as a public official, Newbold authored an amicus curiae brief on behalf of the defendants.

Like a collection of an author’s greatest works, his brief covered familiar ground. The state bravely soldiered through the dark days of Reconstruction and started a public school system. A succession of progressive governors and social leaders fought to ensure all Carolinians received an education. Sure inequalities existed, but the story of North

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<sup>98</sup> “Segregation,” Clipping, ND and No Newspaper Name, Box 18, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

<sup>99</sup> Kluger, 259 – 265.

Carolina was constantly moving forward. Striking down legal segregation promised real tragedy and hardships for blacks and whites. Blacks would flock to white schools only to find crowded classrooms, sending them right back to their own schools. Setting aside his trademark subtlety he warned of race wars, stating, “Some people believe that dozens, perhaps hundreds of miniature civil war conflicts would occur in many parts of the state.” In a desegregated South, black teachers stood to lose their jobs as whites refused to have them teach their children. The only reasonable solution was to leave the South alone to sort out its own problems or risk causing “unhappiness, discord, and controversy for both white and colored people.”<sup>100</sup>

Simone de Beauvoir wrote, “If you live long enough, you’ll see that every victory turns into a defeat.” That quote epitomizes Newbold’s career that ended at age seventy-nine on June 31, 1950. That same month the Supreme Court ruled for the plaintiffs in *Sweatt* finding segregated graduate school education inherently unconstitutional. Newbold could only watch as a lifetime’s work promoting a more compassionate segregation teetered near collapse. Within four years the courts overturned *Plessy*, thereby launching the modern Civil Rights Movement. His professional life covered the arc of legalized Jim Crow in southern society. As a southern progressive he sought to build a biracial New South where both races coexisted peacefully. As the head of the Division of Negro Education he gained a regional profile as an advocate for a truly separate but equal educational system. Guided by shifts in politics, economics, and racial attitudes, Newbold adapted throughout his career.

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<sup>100</sup> NC Newbold, “Brief: North Carolina Moves Positively Toward Equality in Public Education as Between White and Colored People,” 4 January 1950, Box 18, Correspondence of the Director, DNE, State Archives.

Being a pragmatist at his core allowed his views to change from supporting industrial education to promoting graduate education. It was this dexterity which made him such an able diplomat and advocate on behalf of black education. Nonetheless, he could not fight the torrent of change rising in the South. Newbold lived long enough to see the court strike down segregated education and with it his belief in Divine Discontent. A philosophy rooted in the oxymoronic idea of segregated equality collapsed under growing demands for full citizenship. Yet Newbold and other white progressives served as a bridge between the promises of Reconstruction to the new form of racial liberalism resulting from the Civil Rights Movement. After enduring an extended illness Newbold died in December 1955. Like the South itself, he left behind a complicated legacy on race relations.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION: TOMORROW IS A BLANK CHECK – THE END OF NEWBOLDIAN LIBERALISM

In the wake of the *Brown* decision Lillian Smith, a white southerner, offered a view of the changing nature of liberalism when she lamented that a “magnolia curtain” separated the North from the South and stifled the voices of those who endorsed any form of desegregation. Among old-guard white liberals a philosophy of gradualism mixed with obstructionism still ruled the day. Supporters of the magnolia curtain held fast to an imagined New South where both whites and blacks cheerfully adhered to a rigid color line. As this manufactured reality faced mounting challenges from rising black activism white liberals defended their way of life. The historian David Chappell defined a pre-Civil Rights Movement white southern liberal as one who “seeks a formalized legal structure, believes in progress, and sees education as a way to achieve material progress and overcome moral “problems”. There is in liberalism as such nothing that precludes racial prejudice.”<sup>1</sup>

Newbold’s career presented the chance to study how one liberal met the challenges posed by the changing racial and political landscape of the first half of the twentieth century. Proudly descended from a slaveholding lineage, he openly embraced the “Gone with the Wind” revisionism of an Old South populated with noble slaveholders and content slaves. Blacks benefitted from slavery because whites helped guide them

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<sup>1</sup> David Carlton and Peter Coclanis, “Another ‘Great Migration’ From Region to Race in Southern Liberalism, 1938 – 1945,” *Southern Cultures* 3, no. 4, (1997): 37- 62; David Chappell, *Inside Agitators: White Southerners in the Civil Rights Movement* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994), 4.

down the stony path of civilization. The New South promised to carry forth that tradition by retooling white southern paternalism and in the process prepare blacks for life in a biracial and segregated America. If blacks willingly accepted their second class citizenship, then the region could rise and prosper economically, socially, and politically. His correspondence was littered with casual references from colleagues about the innate inferiority of blacks and revulsion at the thought of any sort of social interaction that might suggest the slightest nod toward equality. He rarely offered any objection when confronted with such statements. He remained throughout his career an adamant defender of segregation. Nevertheless, a confluence of experiences pushed him to change his assessment of African American life, culture, and aptitude.

Newbold's financial problems from early in life fostered an empathy that guided his approach to black education. There was no way for even the most enlightened of white men to possibly comprehend the slights and injustices that blacks endured with Jim Crow. But as a former school administrator who had struggled to run and fund a school, Newbold sympathized with the plight of educators working to improve the lot of black children. Another force that drove Newbold was the desire to gain respect of other white men and to establish his place of prestige and honor in the American South. Though the prospects for advancement in an industrializing and urbanizing South seemed endless for a young man with the right mix of education and ambition, his lack of a college education hindered his ability to pursue some career paths. As progressives pushed for reform throughout the region education suddenly became a field rife with opportunities. Ironically not holding a degree made working in Negro education far more attractive to him and provided the chance to gain the respect of his peers. As the Director of Negro



Education he became an influential voice in the region's educational policy circles.

Throughout the state black education became synonymous with Nathan Carter Newbold.

His views on the role of black education evolved throughout his career. Several factors contributed to this shift. Some of the scientific racist scholarship reinforced his early views on black ineptitude. If blacks were by nature social deviants and inferior, then a basic industrial education rooted in rudimentary instruction, morality, and hygiene sufficed. But Newbold constantly engaged in self-study and took courses in educational administration. His studies opened him up to the idea of black progress resulting from civilizational evolution that occurred over generations and centuries. If blacks were not inherently inferior, then there was a possibility for advancement – at least in academics. Newbold developed a rationalization that allowed for both black progress and maintenance of the status quo. All southerners had to do was live up to the spirit of Booker T. Washington's Atlanta Compromise. "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers," Washington promised, "yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress."<sup>2</sup> Most white southerners cheerfully embraced the former part of Washington's bargain and ignored the latter. Newbold joined the frontlines of the debate and pushed for a "mutual progress" that used segregated education as the springboard.

Over time an educational and social philosophy crystalized that undergirded his liberal views and was the linchpin of his educational philosophy. Blacks were content in the Old South because the system provided order and advancement. Benevolent slaveholders put their charges on the path to civilization. The journey was not yet

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<sup>2</sup> Booker T. Washington, Speech to the Cotton States and International Exposition, 18 September 1895.

complete. Bathed in the paternalism of their forefathers this new generation of whites had their own mission. Southern progressives alluded to some remote form of social equality in the distant future. The contours never had to be fully explained because it was generations in the offing. In the meantime white progressives gave blacks an education, and this access to a decent education promoted the continued journey down the road to civilization. The added benefit was, at least from Newbold's thinking, the potential to assuage black grievances and dispel Divine Discontent.

Ultimately, Newbold became frozen in amber and proved incapable of evolving beyond that view. Events forced him to shift rhetorically and choose different tactics, but he never strayed far from that philosophy for harmonious race relations. The massive Rosenwald school construction campaign and the Division of Cooperation manifested the possibilities for a New South with orderly race relations. However, the advent of the modern Civil Rights Movement altered the definition and contours of white liberalism in the South. Newbold had retired from his position as Director of Negro Education by the time the movement gained traction in the 1950s. Even though he passed away one year after *Brown*, his life's work lived on for another decade. After the Supreme Court gave the lie to segregated education, Newbold's views on race relations, once considered progressive and liberal, became the default posture for southern conservatives. The white dissenters, those who objected to racist laws and practices, would redefine liberalism for the next generation. Liberals and progressives like Newbold and former governor Kerr Scott espoused positions that two decades prior put them on the vanguard of interracialism. Scott's statement in reaction to *Brown* could have been drafted by Newbold. It certainly leaned heavily on Newbold's legacy for legitimacy. "Under the

wise and time-tested formula of equal but separate facilities,” Scott said, “the Negro race, particularly in North Carolina, has progressed in education, economic standing, business, and in the professions.” He finished with an old-guard liberal flourish stating segregation was predicated on “customs that can’t be uprooted by legislation, that are respected and honored by both races.”<sup>3</sup>

His work provided the backdrop by which white liberals made bold claims of progress and racial harmony in North Carolina. That was the central part of Newbold’s legacy. It netted the state the distinction of being the model of progressive government in the region. Charles Aycock earned the sobriquet the “education governor” because he championed schooling for whites and blacks at the turn of the twentieth century. The fact Aycock led the white supremacy campaign of 1898 that culminated in the Wilmington massacre of untold blacks mattered little. That stain was washed from his public image by supporting universal education for both races. Newbold’s work in black education provided a later generation of white politicians and civic leaders the cover to claim the mantle of progressivism for themselves.

At the end of his career Newbold still proclaimed that equalizing black education was the key to progress. He advised a conference of school superintendents that race relations in the state had been “good to very good.” However, over the last few years there were “several unhappy eruptions in various parts of the state.”<sup>4</sup> These “eruptions” in the courts propelled Newbold to grudgingly support graduate education for blacks.

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<sup>3</sup> “Legislators Against Any Integration,” *Durham Sun*, 5 April 1955.

<sup>4</sup> NC Newbold, “Conference of Superintendents,” Speech Transcript, 7 August 1947, Box 2, Articles and Speeches, DNE, State Archives.

Growing black activism alarmed him and he spurred the superintendents to build better schools to forestall further “eruptions.” Though white politicians parroted those words many African Americans openly rejected this approach. John Wheeler, a black bank president, represented the post-*Brown* zeitgeist and signaled the rhetorical death of Newbold’s vision when he said, “The shackles of segregation have retarded the progress of the state as whole.”<sup>5</sup> The fight continued though Newbold was no longer around to protect the flanks of segregation. In the upcoming years his ideas held less traction with a new generation of white liberals and black activists. The African American push for civil rights altered Newbold’s brand of liberalism. To establish one’s bona fides as a liberal in the Fifties and Sixties required that whites participate in public demonstrations, joined organizations, or spoke openly about supporting civil rights.

In retrospect Newbold was a true southern liberal and progressive. His views on race mirrored those of his contemporaries as few southern whites questioned the racial caste system. A public career that stretched from 1913 to 1950 covered almost the entire history of legalized segregation in the South. For close to forty years he wielded unmatched power over Negro education in North Carolina. Newbold challenged southern orthodoxy without ever moving beyond the parameters of accepted racial attitudes. He opposed lynchings as barbaric, but considered it a moral issue not remedied through legislation. His professional success rested on securing money from Northern philanthropists, but steadfastly defended the rights of the South to handle their own affairs and remained suspicious of outsiders. Newbold grew to support blacks entering the professions, but dragged his feet on state supported graduate education. On an almost

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<sup>5</sup> “Any Legislation to Delay School Integration Opposed,” *Durham Sun*, 23 February 1955.

daily basis he interacted with black educators either through correspondence, on the phone, or in personal meetings. He treated them with a level of respect not afforded many blacks by white officials. Nonetheless, it breached his sense of propriety to have a social interaction with the same black men and women he called friends and allies. As a result of his tireless efforts and support blacks built modern schools, established libraries, received scholarships, and constructed college campuses and the state solidified its reputation as a leading voice in regional public policy. Though the state and black education benefitted from his leadership, he could not overcome the inequalities endemic to a dual race-based school system.

Newbold did not live long enough to witness the dramatic changes that swept the South after the *Brown* decision. During the Civil Rights Movement his brand of liberalism was dismissed as nostalgia for a dying system. Revisionist today might label him as a racist for the views he espoused. That label does not fairly reflect the nuances of the positions he held and the forces acting upon him. For many blacks Newbold was a real ally. The black community had few white supporters in either local or state government. Their choices for white advocates arrayed along an axis between those who all but ignored black education and some who supported only the most rudimentary education. Newbold's access to funding and his real bureaucratic activism on behalf of black education made him an invaluable interracial diplomat. Even black educators who did not like Newbold worked with him. Many blacks understood that whatever constricted racial agenda led him to his various positions regarding black education, he aggressively pursued his agenda. For many he was the only game in town.

Martin Luther King, Jr. sounded the official death knell for Newbold's brand of old-guard gradualism and liberalism in his famous *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*. "I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is . . . the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice," King wrote, and added, "who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice . . . who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom."<sup>6</sup> Newbold's views were officially out of step with the new generation of blacks and white liberals tempered by the New Deal and World War II. All across the South direct action replaced Newbold's favored strategies of discussion and conferences. A Newboldian liberalism that was once forward leaning had become obstructionist.<sup>7</sup>

In the final analysis the secret to Newbold's appeal was probably his optimism. He truly believed that black education and regional advancement were intertwined. Only when whites and blacks worked together would the South be able to again embrace the fabled interracial familial paternalism of the Old South. For him the future was not predetermined. If thoughtful men and women, black and white, worked together then they could build a harmonious biracial South. For close to four decades his vision helped shape the white progressive promise for a New South. Racial conciliation was an attainable goal not beyond the reach of those committed to progress. Of course Newbold had to ignore the reality that his way of life was built on the premise of black inferiority.

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<sup>6</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., "A Letter from a Birmingham Jail," 16 April 1963, Web Access, University of Pennsylvania, [http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles\\_Gen/Letter\\_Birmingham.html](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html).

<sup>7</sup> Tony Badger, "Fatalism, Not Gradualism: Race and the Crisis of Southern Liberalism, 1945 to 1965," in *The Making of Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement* (Washington Square: New York University Press, 1996), 67 – 88; Morton Sosna, *In Search of the Silent South* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 106 – 110.

Up until the very end he believed that the South could correct its course and solve the perplexing Negro problem. “Tomorrow is a blank check,” Newbold said in one his last known speeches, “We can write upon it whatever we will.”<sup>8</sup> In a twist of fate it was southern blacks who answered that call for action and in the process swept away the Jim Crow system Newbold spent his life trying to fortify.

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<sup>8</sup> NC Newbold, “Conference of Superintendents,” Speech Transcript, 7 August 1947, Box 2, Articles and Speeches, DNE, State Archives, Raleigh.

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